

President’s Report to the Senate

October 3, 2018 Regular Business Meeting

Jack Wilson, GSO President

**Civic Engagement**

We have reached out to the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) to partner with them in getting grads at SU registered to vote. NYPIRG already has a working relationship with SA in this regard. SA representatives volunteer to help NYPIRG man voter registration tables at Schine and other venues; this is an approach that we could also take. Grads are distributed throughout the entire campus and there are few locations where most or all grads tend to congregate. That said, I recommended to them a few open areas that see concentrations of grads pass by—Whitman, Eggers, and the Inn Complete came to mind—and I’d like to know where else may be a good place to table.

We have also reached out to the Balter and Katko campaigns (both running for the NY-24 House seat) to offer opportunities for grads to volunteer. The 24th New York Congressional district is a competitive race. Both campaigns consider the NY-24 race important in determining the majority party in the House of Representatives. This email is sent to the graduate student body on Thursday, September 27.

**Slutzker Center**

On July 2nd, it was announced that Pat Burak would no longer be Director of the Slutzer Center after over a 30 year term. George Athanas has been named in the interim. Enrollment and the Student Experience has formed a search committee, but as of my meeting with SVP Dolan Evanovich and VP Hob Hdrasky no students were to sit on this committee. Roughly 40-50% of GSO members are international students. The Slutzker Center is therefore arguably the most common point-of-contact for grads (outside the Graduate School) and its Director has an outsized impact on the graduate community. Typically, the GSO is asked to name grads to sit on search committees for positions of a Dean level or higher, but there are exceptions.

**Multifactor Authentication**

Two-factor authentication will in the coming months be available for @syr.edu email accounts. There is currently a working group dedicated to issues of implementation of the system, timing of when to bring the system on line, if and when this should be required of the SU community, and how best to acclimatize the community to the system. Our Comptroller, Joshua Fenton, currently sits on this working group, and I attended one of the meetings in the interim.

**Preferred Names, Pronouns, and Genders**

We have named Aley O’Mara and Chris DiCesare to the Preferred Name, Pronoun, and Gender Advisory Council, and I have attended one of the meetings in the interim. As of the time of this report, this council was in the process of designing a survey to determine the level of absolute and relative interest in each of these topics. This is a continuation of an issue brought to my attention last year where one’s preferred name was presented alongside (but not instead of) their legal name on public-facing websites.

**Representation for Grads outside Main Campus**

At Syracuse University there are approximately 2000 grads enrolled through online programs or are otherwise officially classified as outside main campus. The GSO officially represents approximately 4600 enrolled, matriculated main campus graduate students outside the College of Law. The 2000 online grads therefore do not enjoy representation in the GSO currently. Furthermore, an increasing number of main campus grads study abroad, although they main campus students they are not in the Syracuse area and cannot benefit from certain services we provide, such as the Inn Complete discounts and Student Legal Services.

In response to these changes to the makeup of the graduate body I have begun the process of exploring how these students may be represented. The questions being asked include: Should they be represented? Do online students want representation? What form should this representation take? What institutional changes would be necessary to achieve these ends? To that end, I’ve asked the Board of Trustees to provide me with a copy of the Executive Board’s resolution to recognize the GSO in the 1968-1969 academic year. This should inform us as to the scope of the grads we can officially represent, which in turn will allow us to, at least, answer the final question after other questions have been addressed.

**Wage Issues**

We have learned of anecdotes that some grads have faced wage issues of various flavors. The most common issue thus far is one related to the implementation of a new online payroll system. I am attempting to compile a list of specific issues by department and school/college. Payroll at the university is an intersection of activity in the schools and colleges, HR, and the Bursar, therefore it is likely that the specific issues vary greatly and differ from department to department or school to school. I encourage anyone with such an issue to reach out to me directly. I ask anyone with systematic data on the topic to reach out to me directly with said data on the level of school/college and department.