



Report of the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees, November 6, 2015

Can Aslan, Graduate Student Organization President

Inclusion of Students in Decision-Making Processes, Communications

I would like to acknowledge and express my appreciation in all of the work done by the University leadership, administrators, and staff in improving inclusion of students in decision-making processes since Fall 2014. More students are now engaged with administrators than before in discussions on changes and improvements that affect all students at SU. The number of regular meetings with student leaders have significantly increased, allowing much better feedback from students. In addition, better inclusion of undergraduate and graduate students in workgroups is allowing more diverse voices to be heard across campus. Students hope to continue to be included in high-level decision-making processes that directly impact students, for instance, the new student health insurance requirement and plans for the upcoming year.

I believe that these changes in the positive direction will be best complemented by more frequent and/or clearer communications to students by University leaders, in addition to student leaders' efforts in doing so. Many students continue to reach out to the GSO regarding concerns about changes and updates they hear from their colleagues and lack of official communications from the University, both from academic and non-academic units. I look forward to continue working with the University leadership, administrators, and staff on addressing concerns of students, as well as improving student governments' own communication procedures and processes.

GSO Senate Passes Resolution on Altering Budget Procedures

The GSO Senate passed a resolution on altering the budget procedures for recognized (graduate) student organizations (RSOs) in the regular business meeting in October. Changes in the GSO Constitution and Fiscal Policy will allow RSOs easier and better access to funds available to them, as well as significantly increase efficiency in GSO Executive Board oversight responsibilities. These changes will help overcome financial restrictions newly elected RSO boards face after taking on their new roles; particularly, having to carry out their predecessors' event and activity plans for the following year, instead of being able to create new plans to carry out during their terms.

Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity Office (AIO) held tabling events during the Academic Integrity Week in October, followed by an Academic Integrity Tournament, a half-day brainstorming session that included students,

faculty, staff, and administrators. The GSO participated in both activities, and will continue to work with the AIO to help increase awareness among students and improve academic integrity procedures.

Sexual and Relationship Violence Trainings Being Scheduled, Policies Developed

The GSO Executive Board is working with SVP and Dean Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz and Office of Health Promotion on the requirements of the recently passed “Enough is Enough” legislation, “a new, uniform sexual assault policy to protect New York’s college students.” The legislation requires all officers of registered student organizations (RSOs) to complete a sexual and relationship violence training prior to recognition. We are in the process of scheduling officer trainings and developing policies to govern and aid in oversight.

National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) National Conference

The NAGPS is a student-run national, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of graduate and professional students across the U.S. The GSO will be participating in the 29th Annual National Conference of NAGPS that will be held at the University of Southern California between October 29th and November 1st. A GSO delegation of four graduate students, including the President and Internal Vice President of the GSO, will represent SU GSO at the NAGPS Conference. Several GSO officers and SU graduate students will also run for positions on the NAGPS Board of Directors in the upcoming elections at the national conference.

GSO ‘Revamping’ Continues

The GSO Executive Board continues to work on several improvements in the structure, functions, and services of the GSO. We are reaching out to service providers and registered student organizations (RSOs) to engage in conversations and collaborations to better serve the graduate students, while improving engagement and involvement. We believe that organizational (internal) improvements and/or changes, such as officer training methods and GSO policies, will significantly improve efficiency of our functions and quality of our services.

We are also in the process of developing a feedback system for graduate students to reach out to the University leadership through the GSO with their concerns, including academic-related issues, such as conflicts with faculty and/or staff, and non-academic issues. All feedback will be anonymous, which will be collected, analyzed, and included in a report to be created by the GSO Executive Board. This will allow the GSO to better voice concerns of students, who are unwilling to speak up in order to avoid the possibility of negative outcomes that might impact or jeopardize their studies at SU.

GSO Welcomes Peter Vanable, Interim Dean of Graduate School and VP for Research

I am pleased to have met with Peter Vanable, Interim Dean of Graduate School and VP for Research, and look forward to working with him. I believe that, with his leadership, the Graduate School will continue to move forward with open communication and collaboration with students and the GSO.