



## **Report of the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Trustees**

Board of Trustees Executive Committee, December 3, 2015

Can Aslan, Graduate Student Organization President

### **Student Health Insurance Requirement: Implementation**

The GSO would like to express, once again, gratitude for the incredible effort put forth by the administrators and staff serving on Student Health Insurance Committees and Subcommittees. As we continue to collect feedback from graduate students regarding the implementation of the new student health insurance requirement, many graduate students continue to express the financial impact of the significant cost increase (\$1,890) this year, with a number of students appreciating the assistance from the Bursar's Office on creating payment plans or offering payment options. Graduate student employees remain to be concerned about the initial decision to move student employees off of the University-sponsored employee health insurance plan, which was first made and then reversed last year, with a written promise to not move forward with a similar decision without reaching an agreement with the GSO. Although this had alleviated some of the concerns, graduate student employees continue to convey their concerns to the GSO.

Although the GSO, in general, supports the decision to require all Syracuse University students to have adequate health insurance based on experience and information showing the impact of not having one, we believe that the financial burden on graduate students (many over the age of 26 years and hence cannot stay on their parents' health insurance policies according to the Affordable Care Act) should be taken into account moving forward. We look forward to continue working with the staff and administrators on Student Health Insurance Committees in open communication and collaboration.

### **GSO Budget Rollover**

Due to an unintended accumulation of budget surplus over the past few years, the GSO Executive Board, in accordance with the GSO Fiscal Policy, found it necessary to spend \$100,000 in deficit. We are currently in the process of gathering input from the GSO Senate on how the surplus can be used to benefit graduate students in both short and long term. Some ideas include increased funding for the GSO Travel Grant Program, increased funding for Career Services for graduate students, increased funding or initiation of better childcare subsidy and/or support programs, and re-initiation of the Research Grant Program.

### **SU and SUNY ESF Governing Council**

A SU and SUNY ESF Governing Council was formed to bring together the student governments of SU and ESF. This is also in line with other institutions with similar student governance structures as observed by

the GSO delegate at the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS) National Conference earlier this semester. The SU and SUNY ESF Governing Council currently includes SU Student Association (SA), SU Graduate Student Organization (GSO), SU Student Bar Association (SBA), SUNY ESF Undergraduate Student Association (USA), and SUNY ESF Graduate Student Association (GSA), with plans to include SUNY Upstate Medical University student government(s). Members of the Governing Council believe that initiating and improving collaboration between student governments will better serve the student populations of these institutions who share campus space and resources.