

**Feb 1, 2023**

**Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Executive Summary**

**Author: Abiodun Adeoye, GSO Recording Secretary 2022-2023**

**Introduction**

On Wednesday, February 1, 2023, the Graduate Student Organization held its fourth senate meeting for the 2022-2023 academic year in Lyman Hall, room 132. At the meeting, two new university senators, Rashida Thomas and Cassidy Thomas, and a new senator-at-large, Alex Scrivner, were elected by the Senate through a vote of acclamation. The senate also extensively deliberated on Senate Resolution 23.06, *A Resolution Establishing the GSO’s Recognition and Support of Syracuse University’s Graduate Student Employee Unionization Campaign* and passed it with super-majority support (49 Yes; 2 No; 2 Abstentions). The President gave her report and, upon the directive of the Senate, a section of the report was struck by simple majority (21 Yes; 14 No; 5 Abstentions)(see page 12).

**Resolutions**

The senate voted to pass Senate Resolution 23.06 by a vote of 49 Yes, 2 No, and 2 Abstentions. Discussion commenced at 6:37 PM and concluded at 8:40 PM (pages 4-10). Alex Scrivner, Roger Rosena, and Carlos Ramirez-Arenas began the discussion by speaking in support of the resolution. Many Senators gave varying degrees of remarks in support of, in opposition to, and on points of clarification to the resolution. The Senate also voted to pass Senate Resolution 23.05, *A Resolution to Amend the GSO Constitution (Establishing the Rules and Administration Special Committee)* with a vote of 40 Yes, 1 No, 3 Abstentions. The Senate voted to postpone Resolution 23.04, *“A Resolution to Amend the GSO Constitution (Creating the Executive Board Advisory Council and Ensuring Executive Continuing and Accountability)”* until the next regular meeting on March 1st, 2023.

**Special Funding Requests**

The [Mathematics Graduate Student Organization](https://mgo.syr.edu) requested $6,787.23 for the 48th Annual New York State Regional Mathematics Conference. It was approved by the Senate with a vote of 39 Yes, 0 No, and 1 Abstention.

**Appendices**

There are five appendices in these Regular Meeting Minutes. They have been included in order to capture the full statements of Senators, as well as struck sections of the President’s report. The Senators’ statements were related to SR 23.06. Appendix A includes the full written statement of the Indigenous Graduate Students Organization. Appendix B includes the full written statements of five senators: Alex Scrivner, Carlos Ramirez-Arenas, Gabriela Wemple, Mike Goodman, and Emma Culver. Appendix C includes the full vote count of the Vote by Roll on SR 23.06. Appendix D includes the section of the President’s report that was struck from the record by the Senate. Appendix E includes the remainder of the President’s report (without the stricken section).

**Votes and motions**

During the discussion on SR 23.06 from 6:37 PM to 8:40 PM, senators called for votes at various times. The full vote counts can be found on the page in parentheses next to each vote. The votes are as follows:

1. Vote to end debate on amendment – 7:10 PM (page 7)
2. Motion to call to question – 7:17 PM (page 8)
3. Motion to a vote on calling to question – 7:23 PM (page 8)
4. Motion to record vote by roll – 7:25 PM (page 9)
5. Vote to vote by roll – 7:31 PM (page 9)
6. Vote (in favor of calling debate on amendment) – 7:41 PM (page 9)
7. Vote on amendment (to add the “sometimes” clause or keep it the same) – 7:43 PM (page 9)
8. Vote on motion to add “excluding financial support” to the resolution – 7:52 PM (page 10)
9. Vote on SR 23.06 – 8:40 PM (page 13)

**The meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM. The next meeting will be on March 1, 2023, in Lyman 132 at 5:30 PM.**

**Meeting minutes**

1. **Call to order by the Vice President of Internal Affairs – 5:44 PM**
2. **Motion to allow undergraduate students in attendance – 5:45 PM**
   1. Unanimous vote: Yes – 49 members
3. **Approval of previous meeting minutes – 5:46 PM**
4. **Syracuse University land acknowledgement and opening remarks – 5:47 PM**
   1. Rules of the Senate
   2. Motion from the Chair to adopt the temporary rules of debate on the Resolution for the Feb 1, 2023 meeting
   3. Vito Iaia, President Pro Tempore of the Senate (5:55 PM)
      1. Motion to amend point two to allow for a member of the deliberative assembly to speak three times
   4. Benjamin Tetteh, University Senator – 5:55 PM
      1. Why three times?
      2. IVP – Three times would give everyone 9 minutes each to discuss the topic; if every member of the assembly used their full allotment, the debate would total over 7 hours
   5. President – point of clarification
      1. Would this be three times on resolution and three times on amendment?
      2. IVP (Chair) – Yes
   6. Ceding time means giving remaining time to others
   7. Parliamentarian Zafar Ali will keep track of time and track of who is speaking
   8. Vote on the amendment to change it from two to three times – 5:56 PM
      1. Amendment fails
   9. Vote to pass amendment – 5:59 PM
      1. 46 Yes, 2 No, 1 Abstain
5. **Elections – 6:00 PM**
   1. Can elect up to three university senators and one at large senator
   2. Nominations: Cassidy Thomas, Rashida Thomas (nominated by CJ Arnell)
   3. Introductions: 6:04 PM
   4. Questions: 6:06 PM
      1. Kellin Tasber, University Senator
         1. What committee would you be interested in serving?
         2. Cassidy: Travel Grant and Finance
         3. Rashida: Outreach and DEIA
      2. Vito Iaia
         1. Which university senate committee?
            1. Cassidy – would be happy to go wherever needed; needs to familiarize themself with the committees
            2. Rashida – does not have expertise but would love to engage
   5. Vote (of acclamation because there are only two senator candidates)
      1. Cassidy Thomas (unanimous)
      2. Rashida Thomas
   6. At large Senator – 6:13 PM
      1. Alex Scrivner
      2. Questions:
         1. Nicholas Pelletier, APS Data Science
         2. Why do you want to give up being an academic senator?
            1. To get other people in program to have a chance to experience the Senate
      3. Vote of acclamation
         1. Unanimous
6. **Elections closed at 6:17 PM**
7. **Motion to suspend the rules of order and move to new business –6:18 PM; Aditya Hartalkar, APS Electrical Engineering** 
   1. Motion seconded
   2. Old business
      1. Two constitutional amendments
   3. Point of information – CJ Arnell
      1. How will we vote if we run out of clickers?
         1. Vote by clicker and by hand
         2. Five members without a clicker as of 6:21 PM
8. **Vote for suspending the rules of order – 6:21 PM**
   1. 43 Yes, 4 No, 0 Absentions
9. **Reading of Senate Resolution 23.06: *Resolution Establishing the GSO’s Recognition and Support of Syracuse University’s Graduate Student Employee Unionization* – 6:24 PM**
10. **Presentation by Alex Scrivner, Roger Rosena, and Carlos Ramirez-Arenas – 6:31 PM**
    1. Alex – Talked about the relevance and popularity on campus. See Appendix B for full statement
    2. Roger – Reiterate that the GSO is formed to advocate the needs of graduate students. The Constitution states that senators are empowered to speak on behalf of graduate students. Should be passed because as part of his speech at his election, he spoke about representing all graduate students. Last he checked, it had 150 sponsors, 132 of which are graduate student employees. Many graduate students have voiced support. Would be a major misrepresentation and misuse of his power if he ignores it.
    3. Carlos – Explained that it was the GSO that allowed him to meet other graduate students from different departments, many of whom he is now working with. He has seen many of them struggle in many ways including health troubles, inability to see family, etc. graduate students say that unionization is the best way to solve many of the problems that graduate students face. See appendix B for the senator’s other written remarks.
11. **Discussion – 6:37 PM**
    1. Vito Iaia
       1. People who have been involved, what would they like to approach first?
       2. JT Paustian
          1. Healthcare and minimum stipend that matches the living wage
    2. Benjamin Tetteh, University Senator
       1. How much engagement have you had with the graduate student body up to this stage?
       2. Alex Scrivner
          1. The people who helped write it had hundreds of conversations with students around campus
       3. Read a brief statement and asked a few questions
          1. Why this specific type of union?
          2. Concerns about international students; how does a collective bargaining agreement impact contracts?
          3. We all have different programs; how have we as a union spoken with various colleagues? Newhouse colleagues feel it is too early to take a position. They believe it is better to go back to the drawing board and have deeper and longer conversations.
    3. Motion to remove the sentence from “we raise our voice….” to “...strong contract” – President; 6:47 PM
    4. Cassidy Thomas, University Senator – 6:49 PM
       1. Ventures to say that the debate has been ongoing and has been happening for many years inside and outside of the GSO Senate
    5. Austin Lewter – 6:50 PM
       1. If senators have not spoken to their constituents, it is a bit of a concern.
    6. Sweta Roy – 6:51 PM
       1. Agrees with the amendment because she would rather have Syracuse be compared to other upstate NY universities. Went through the appendix and found that other schools do not have the full guarantees that the Resolution state.
    7. Kirin Taylor – 6:52
       1. In favor of keeping the sentence because the limitation being referred to concerns legal support and guarantees as graduate students. Being in the bargaining process is important, and it is not too early.
    8. Mike Goodman – 6:54 PM (see Appendix B for full written statement)
    9. President – 6:55 PM
       1. Nothing is secured; it is a bargaining union. The school does not oblige. Some of the facts speak against the idea that is the only way to secure raises and other things (considering the recent raises).
    10. Raiana Carvalho, APS Mass communications – 6:57 PM
        1. We can achieve changes and appreciate them thus far; thinks that the recent ones are because of union efforts. Thinks that the suggestions are that more transformative change can occur through a union.
    11. JT Paustian, APS Physics – 6:58 PM
        1. Believes in the power of transformative change as part of experience with the GEIC. Committee has been repeatedly ignored and disregarded by university administrators; extended waiting times and continued requests from graduate students.
    12. Political Science APS – 6:59 PM
        1. Department is largely in support of it. If we saw anything close to transformative change lately it is because the administration knows it.
    13. Audience member – 7:01 PM
        1. It is okay if not everyone is not in agreement
    14. \*Sweta Roy ceded time to President\*
    15. President – 7:03 PM
        1. University is not obliged to do anything. The conversations started in September. Board of Trustees affirmed that there would be raises to the stipend. The movement is there but there is no collective bargaining agreement. SEIU is not the best way to transformative change. Does not see the collaborative action to secure the change.
    16. Austin Lewter, APS Pan African Studies – 7:06 PM
        1. Would like to know what makes Syracuse University unique in light of efforts at peer institutions; what makes the university unique to the unionization effort. Believes that the statement about collaborative effort not being collaborative is misrepresented.
    17. Sam Paul, Political science department – 7:07 PM
        1. It has been going on for a long time; not in tandem and not parallel to each other. They are not advocating for a set contract at the moment. Looking for solidarity among peers. Back and forth about misinformation is going off-topic.
    18. Vote to end debate on amendment – 7:10 PM
        1. Majority vote
        2. Vote yes means in favor of striking clause, and no means keeping
        3. Amendment fails and statement stays as is
    19. JT Paustian requests Benjamin Tetteh to repeat questions – 7:11 PM
        1. Carlos Ramirez-Arenas
           1. Resolution does not create union; instead encourages the creation. Does not state an agenda; identifies certain aspects and opportunities that the union can contribute in its creation
        2. Caitlin Smith, APS Human Development
           1. Website shows representation from students from over 80 different colleges. Everyone is welcome to have different conversations. One of the goals is not to set ceilings but to set a floor.
12. **Motion to call question – 7:17 PM**
13. **Discussion on calling the question – 7:19 PM**
    1. President
       1. Believes it is unfair to call the question when the resolution has not been discussed in great detail, according to Robert’s Rules
       2. Things said in the Resolution are on the record, so it is democratic to allow people to voice their opinions on the resolution.
    2. Benjamin Tetteh, University Senator
       1. Believes it is important to exhaust the discussion before voting.
14. **Move to a vote on calling to question on Senate Resolution 23.06 – 7:23 PM**
    1. 28 Yes, 19 No, 4 Abstain
       1. Does not pass, and go back to further debate
15. **Continued discussion – 7:25 PM**
    1. Alex Scrivner – senators can contact them anytime
    2. Hayley Bowen, APS English
       1. Speaks in favor of the resolution on behalf of the English and Creative Writing Programs. More than 90% of graduate students in both departments have signed union cards
    3. Dominic Wilkins, Senator-at-Large
       1. Moves to record the vote by roll.
16. **\*Seconded and moved to immediate vote, per Senate rules\***
17. **Interruptions – 7:29 PM**
    1. Benjamin Tetteh, University Senator
       1. Not fair to go straight to vote instead of further discussion
18. **Vote to vote by roll - 7:31 PM**
    1. 32 Yes, 18 No, 2 Abstentions
       1. Motion to vote by roll has been adopted and back to debate on the resolution
19. **Further discussion – 7:32 PM**
    1. \*Sweta Roy cedes time to President\*
    2. President
       1. Does not make sense to task internal affairs vp with external affairs
       2. Moves to amend sentence: “....which has been shown to reliably provide the following” to “has been shown to sometimes reliably provide some of the following”
    3. Benjamin Tetteh
       1. Wants decorum to remain in Senate
    4. Emma Dickman, former APS
       1. Does not believe that it is disingenuous to include information on collective bargaining. Reason for organizing SEIU is because they have won victories in other places
    5. Austin Lewter
       1. Motion to move question on amendment
20. **Vote – 7:41 PM**
    1. All in favor of calling debate on amendment
       1. 38 Yes, 14 No, 4 Abstain
       2. Passes and goes right to vote on amendment
21. **Vote on amendment – 7:43 PM**
    1. Vote Yes means to add the “sometimes” clause; “No” means to keep it the same
       1. 36 No, 10 Yes, 3 Abstentions
22. **Back to debate on Resolution as a whole – 7:45 PM**
    1. Statement on behalf of the Indigenous Graduate Student Association (see Appendix A)
    2. Michael Ammoury
       1. Question regarding the clause dealing with the EVP. Does support include financial support?
       2. Alex Scrivner
          1. No intention of financial support; intention is for communication, to make sure that graduate students have access to information more broadly.
       3. \*Ammoury motions to add to the clause “excluding financial support”\*
23. **Vote on the motion – 7:52 PM**
    1. 39 Yes, 9 No, 2 Abstention
       1. Amendment passes, and “excluding financial support” is added to the resolution
24. **Discussion on resolution – 7:55 PM**
    1. Yuri Pavlov, Instructional Design APS
       1. Wants to vote no on the resolution
          1. Syracuse does fantastic job to support students
          2. Way the document is written suggests it needs more time
          3. Unions do not produce wealth and instead sucks out wealth
    2. Sergio Saravia
       1. Syracuse does not do a good job; students are being underpaid. Thinks it is misleading to say that unions do not work; unionized workers earn at least 10% more than peers who are not unionized. At least 48% of workers in the US want to unionize
    3. Abiodun Adeoye – 8:01 PM
       1. Said that he does not believe that the current wages for graduate students is enough to live on and make ends meet; spoke on how he could not have survived off of his current on-campus job without an external source of income which comes in form of his stipend through his fellowship which is not based out of Syracuse University
    4. Sara Joe
       1. 70% of students in their program are disabled and hopes that Senators are speaking to their constituents
    5. Taylor Harmon
       1. Supports it wholeheartedly
    6. Gabrielle Wemple (see Appendix B for full statement)
    7. Ben Valen, APS Psychology
       1. Had conversations with people about the union and across cohorts in the different areas, students are in support of it. TAs are overworked and understaffed and underpaid. Strongly suggests that people support the resolution because it would help students get one step closer to what they deserve.
    8. Caitlin Smith
       1. Would like students to show support for Resolution
    9. APS Engineering
       1. Knows engineers who took second jobs to pay for expenses
    10. Benjamin Tetteh
        1. The point being raised is not a matter of who shouts the loudest or any naysayers. Not against the motion but has reservations brought from reservations
    11. Audience member
        1. Would it include all students who have on campus per hour jobs?
           1. Answer: it is in process
    12. President
        1. Supports the resolution, not the way it is written. We have not sat down in a Senate meeting to discuss it in great detail. Does not believe there has been fair debate in the GSO senate based on it.
    13. International student
        1. International students do not have benefits.
    14. Emma Culver, APS MPA
        1. Did a poll – students totaling more than the MPA cohort agreed unanimously in favor of resolution.
    15. Student from Chemistry department
        1. Speaking in favor of it. Thinks that the resounding support represents that graduate students are collectively asking for the opportunity to fight for themselves.
    16. Daniela Puente, GSO Communications Secretary
        1. Speaking in support and calling for a vote on the resolution
25. **Vote on Graduate Student Union Resolution – 8:40 PM**
    1. 49 Yes, 2 No, Abstain 2 (see Appendix C for full vote count)
26. **Motion to recess – 8:53 PM**
    1. Back at 9:02 PM
27. **Resolution 23.04 – 9:05 PM**
28. **Motion to table resolution until next meeting – 9:07 PM**
    1. Majority to table passes
29. **Resolution 23.05 – 9:08 PM**
30. **Motion to vote on Resolution 23.05 – 9:08 PM**
    1. 40 Yes, 1 No, 3 Abstentions
31. **Motion to move the special funding request up – 9:11 PM**
    1. **Majority Yes, 0 No, 1 abstention**
32. **Special Funding Request – 9:12 PM**
    1. Mathematics Graduate Organization requesting $6,787.23 for the 48th Annual New York State Regional Mathematics Conference
    2. Questions – 9:19 PM
       1. Vito Iaia
          1. What do you plan to use the rest of the $500 in the department bank account for?
          2. Hold an end-of-year event for the department
       2. Rashida Thomas
          1. How much is left in the GSO budget?
             1. About $8,000 left
       3. Further rounds of discussion
33. **Vote – 9:31 PM**
    1. 39 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstention
34. **President’s report – 9:32 PM**
    1. Questions – 9:40 PM
       1. Sergio Saravia
          1. Misleading to say international students would be affected by unionization efforts because of protections under international labor rights
35. **Kellin Tasber, University Senator – Motion to strike from the GSO President’s Report addressing unionization, in light of passing Resolution 23.06 – 9:42 PM**
    1. Seconded (see Appendix D for excised section)
    2. See Appendix E for the president’s report post-excised section
36. **Discussion – 9:43 PM**
37. **Motion to call question to end debate – 9:53 PM**
38. **Voting – 9:55 PM**
    1. 21 Yes, 14 No, 5 Abstentions
39. **Continued discussion of the struck section – 9:56 PM**
40. **Conclusion after call on the time limit by Parliamentarian – 10:11 PM**
41. **Internal Vice President’s Report – 10:11 PM**
    1. Approval of executive absence (GSOC 2.2k & 2.3c.vi): Comptroller
    2. Motion by Chair (IVP)
       1. Seconded
    3. Vote by hand – 10:14 PM
       1. Motion passes by a majority vote
42. **CART Services – 10:17 PM**
43. **External Vice President Report – 10:18 PM**
    1. Ask for written remarks
    2. Questions about tickets – 10:20 PM
    3. Idea for waitlist by Kellin Tasber
    4. Concluded at 10:25 PM
44. **Announcements and remarks for the record – 10:27 PM**
    1. Kellin Tasber
       1. Invite LGBTQ+ people and friends for Resource Center stuff
    2. Rashida Thomas
       1. Multicultural center is having black history month events
    3. Communications Secretary
       1. Google form for sending events; it will be on GSO website
45. **Next meeting will be on Wednesday Mar 1, 2023 at 5:30 PM**
46. **Motion to adjourn – 10:30 PM**
    1. Seconded
47. **Meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM**

**Appendix A**

**Statement of Solidarity of Indigenous Graduate Student Association (IGSA) with the Syracuse Graduate Employees United (SGEU)**

We, the membership of the Indigenous Graduate Student Association (IGSA), stand in solidarity with the efforts of the Syracuse Graduate Employees United (SGEU) to organize a labor union representing the graduate student employees who do so much to contribute to the material success and financial profitability of the Syracuse University community.

Although we make up a small percentage of the graduate students at Syracuse, the IGSA contains students from numerous nations who speak many distinct languages. We hail from diverse territories across Turtle-Island, as well as embracing our Indigenous relations beyond the waters in the multitude of lands settled and colonized in the past and present. Although we may seem few in number within the Syracuse community, we are legion! Our voices and concerns come from many places, some near and some far, but we speak with one voice to call for proper respect to be shown to all of our allies and relations.

While the Syracuse administration has been agreeable in listening to our questions, opinions and complaints, the imbalance of power could not be more apparent and we feel the need to stand in solidarity with the SGEU based on what we feel is unjust and inequitable treatment of our Indigenous staff and faculty members. Syracuse University pays top-administrators generous salaries totaling into the hundreds-of-thousands of dollars, while graduate students and student faculty often struggle to make ends meet and pay necessary bills like rent, utilities, and healthcare co-pays. Those of use who work as faculty and staff here at Syracuse University often experience burn-out. We feel that everyone who works here would benefit from the democratization of the workplace brought on by organizing an employee union. We want more of a voice when it comes to decision-making and negotiating for a safe, healthy, productive work environment for our graduate student employees.

Prioritization of certain departments and professional fields is made obvious by the differences in salary, summer-funding, and teaching-loads between graduate students expected to perform similar or identical functions for the university. We believe that all graduate students deserve to be paid a living-wage that provides for their physical, mental, and emotional well-being, as well as providing more robust relocation services for graduate students arriving from regions outside the national boundaries of the United States.

The IGSA believes that forming an employee labor-union would be a momentous shift towards better wages and working conditions for the graduate students whose concomitantly work and research allows Syracuse to continue to flourish as a [multi-billion](https://bfas.syr.edu/treasurer/investment-management/) dollar corporation.

The IGSA does not feel that the growing Syracuse’s endowments should be granted higher priority than the physical and mental health and well-being of the graduate student who work hard to teach and mentor the next generation of researchers simultaneously to our own research, studies, professional, and career-building activities.

The IGSA bears witness to the successes that other graduate students across the country have had in forming their own employee labor-unions. Those of us who have attended other universities recall well the superior treatment, salary, and working conditions our already-unionized graduate student Teaching Assistants elsewhere received compared to what Syracuse University provides to non-prioritized departments and programs.

We the IGSA stand in solidarity with the Syracuse Graduate Employees United (SGEU) and call on all graduate students of Syracuse to employ and (to employ the words of Minister Huey P. Newton) [exhaust](https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/huey-newton-twenty-five-floors-from-the-street-176820/10/) our legally-protected right to democratic assembly, labor-organizing, and our right to publicly petition for redress of grievances.

IGSA President \_\_\_\_\_Autumn Lancette\_\_\_

IGSA Vice-President \_\_\_\_\_Ma’ii Villa\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

IGSA Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_Chelsea Dockstader\_\_

IGSA Council Member \_\_\_\_\_Red Burkett\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B – Senator statements**

**Statement from Alex Scrivner**

“Resolution 23.06 was in recognition of a growing super majority of graduate employees on SU campus who have signed union authorization cards. It was written under the understanding that the GSO body has an obligation to support our graduate students in ways they cannot do individually or even within their own departments, to whichever means are available to it. The resolution charges the Eboard and GSO senators to publicize on their available channels of communication a public statement of support for graduate student employees to have the right to collectively organize and vote for a union and henceforth a collective bargaining unit to negotiate a working contract between themselves and administration which sees to their needs. The statement also clarifies, in unanimity with previous statements made by other graduate student organizations at other universities that the GSO's current channels of advocacy cannot do what a legal bargaining unit can for the types of changes graduate student employees want to see at Syracuse University. The resolution appendixes and account for the growing support on campus for a graduate employee union and the different victories made by graduate unions across other private university institutions.”

**Statement from Carlos Ramirez-Arenas**

“This resolution was presented to the Senate for the GSO to take an official stance regarding the current unionization campaign on campus. Besides making a symbolic and public endorsement of the campaign, the resolution made available the GSO's non-monetary resources (like listservs and social media) to help spread out information related to the unionization campaign.”

**Statement from Gabriela Wemple, SUNY ESF Senator**

“I heard a concern that graduate student work union dues will be expensive. During my experience in the ESF Graduate Student Union (CWA 1104 GSEU), I paid about $8 per paycheck to receive all union benefits. In just one year, the union was able to save me $1,025. This came in the form of a reimbursement for fees that workers should not have had to pay at their workplace and from the bargaining unit standing up to administration to not have a $525 Excellence and Success Fee added to our student bill. While there are still issues that remain to be solved on campus, I am thankful for all that the union has provided. These are the reasons that I strongly support the resolution to protect Syracuse’s (university) graduate workers.”

**Statement from Mike Goodman, SUNY ESF Senator**

“I have the privilege to serve as the ESF Graduate Student Association Vice President of External Affairs which places me in the role of Student Trustees on the ESF Board of Trustees. This is the same position the GSO President sits in. I understand that as an individual even on the Board of Trustees my advocacy limits, any individual’s does, recognizing your limits is vital for effective leadership. At ESF, the union effort has successfully negotiated better working conditions for graduate student workers. No one person made this happen. It was a collective effort. I firmly believe a unionization effort will have a similar result here at SU. I am proud to support this resolution in its entirety.”

**Remarks from Emma Culver, APS Public Administration (summarized)**

I am a fifth-year student at Syracuse University. As an undergrad here at SU, I only qualified for the Forever Orange scholarship when I applied for my master’s program. I was told that I could only apply for a GAship, which I was awarded, but I did not get any of the traditional GA scholarship benefits because I am an “hourly worker.” Speaking on behalf of my cohort, many people in my program are actively engaged in this effort for unionization. I did a poll of the people from my program; more than half of the cohort responded unanimously for me to vote in favor of this resolution.

**Appendix C**

**Vote by Roll – SR 23.06**

**Vote count: Yes – 49; No – 2; Abstain – 23**

Voting Members:

1. Anthropology, Ause Durakoglu – Yes
2. Applied Data Science, Nicholas Pelletier – Yes
3. Architecture (M. Arch), Erin O’Daniel – Yes
4. Art History, Madelaine Thomas – Yes
5. Bioengineering, Sweta Roy – Abstain
6. Biology, CJ Arnell – Yes
7. Business Administration, Gabriel Uy – Yes
8. Chemistry, Andrea Sprague–Getsy – Yes
9. Civil Engineering, Gargi De – Yes
10. Communication & Rhetorical Studies, D. Durk – Yes
11. Composition & Cultural Rhetoric, Karisa Bridgelal – Yes
12. Computer Science, Gowtham Behara – Absent
13. Cybersecurity, Gaurav Sarraf – Absent
14. Earth Science, Tyler Logie – Yes
15. Electrical Engineering, Aditya Hartalkar – Yes
16. Electrical & Computer Engineering, Arick Grootveld – Yes
17. Engineering Management, Apurva Billuri – Absent
18. English & Creative Writing, Hayley Bowen – Yes
19. Executive Master of Public Administration, Loral Wilson – Yes
20. Exercise Science, Andrew Heckel – Yes
21. Food Studies, Michelle Tynan – Yes
22. Geography, Hakki Ozan Karayigit – Yes
23. History, Ian Glazman-Schillinger – Yes
24. Human Development & Family Science, Caitlin Smith – Yes
25. Inclusive Special Education, Sara J. Soldovieri – Yes
26. Information Management, Hrishikesh Telang – Absent
27. Information Science and Technology, Priyanka More – Absent
28. Instructional Design, Development, & Evaluation, Yuri Pavlov – No
29. International Relations, Juliana Shanahan – Yes
30. Management, Ayush Shukla – Absent
31. Marketing, Poonam Sawant – Absent
32. Mass Communications, Raiana Carvalho – Yes
33. Mathematics, Karie Schmitz – Yes
34. Mathematics Education, Paul Makumba – Absent
35. Multimedia, Photography, & Design, James Year – Yes
36. Museum Studies, Samaya Nasr – Yes
37. Pan African Studies, Austin Lewter – Yes
38. Philosophy, Bertram Probyn – Yes
39. Physics, Jadrien Timothy Paustian – Yes
40. Political Science, Kirin Taylor – Yes
41. Public Administration, Emma Culver – Yes
42. Public Health, Michelle Asiedu-Danso – Absent
43. Religion, Diana Brown – Yes
44. Sculpture, Daisy Wiley – Absent
45. Social Psychology, Ben Valen – Yes
46. Social Science, Alex Scrivner – Yes (at large Senator)
47. Sociology, Sergio Saravia – Yes
48. Senator-At-Large and President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Vito Mariano Iaia – Yes
49. Senator-At-Large, Prannay Deshpande – Absent
50. Senator-At-Large, Adeep Kulkarni – Absent
51. Senator-At-Large, Roger Rosena – Yes
52. Senator-At-Large, Dominic Wilkins – Yes
53. Senator-At-Large, Partha Reddy – Absent
54. Senator-At-Large, Komal Sharma – Absent
55. Senator-At-Large, Richard Kaufman IV – Absent
56. University Senator, Carlos Ramirez-Arenas – Yes
57. University Senator, Ameya Mahalaxmikar – Absent
58. University Senator, Kellin Tasber – Yes
59. University Senator, Benjamin Tetteh – Absent
60. University Senator, Naimi Patel – Yes
61. University Senator, Hien Thi Thu Nguyen – Absent
62. University Senator, Cassidy Thomas – Yes
63. University Senator, Rashida Thomas – No
64. SUNY ESF Senator, Mike Goodman – Yes
65. SUNY ESF Senator, Jordan Elliott – Yes
66. SUNY ESF Senator, Gabriela Wemple – Yes
67. Communications Secretary, Daniela Puente – Yes
68. Financial Secretary, Melissa Alvisi – Yes
69. Recording Secretary, Abiodun Adeoye – Yes
70. Comptroller, Ian Ferguson – Absent
71. Vice President of External Affairs, Michael Ammoury – Yes
72. President, Yousr Dhaouadi – Abstain
73. Tiebreaker: Vice President of Internal Affairs, Daniel J. Kimmel
74. Nonvoting: Parliamentarian, Zafar Ali

**Appendix D**

**From the President’s Report section “Addressing Graduate Unions”**

“Graduate students at SU have been pushing for unionization for years. It is the right of every student to unionize without malicious intent from their end or that of the University, and arguments both for and against graduate unions should be equally respected and expressed. Proposed GSO Resolution 23.06 pushes not only for GSO support of unionization but also involvement in the effort, yet it fails to acknowledge any potential drawbacks. Previous GSO efforts (GSO Resolution 15.18) urged we investigate the costs and risks of unionization on top of the benefits to all Syracuse University graduate students.

It is easy to see why so many graduate students feel that a union would help. Many are struggling to make ends meet and feel exploited, and the University would be wise to address their concerns.

Nonetheless, there are matters to address and question for us to understand the impact a union would have on our lives as students as it attempts to provide us with solutions to wages and benefits. One of the main concerns about graduate student unionization is the effect it would have on the ability of students to negotiate their own wages and benefits, as these would now be determined by the union through one collective bargaining agreement (CBA). A CBA is a contract outlining the rights, responsibilities, and compensation of a graduate student employee. This CBA is a legally binding document and must be followed by both the union and the University.

Under a union contract, graduate students have union representatives act as their voice in negotiations with the university rather than negotiating directly with their advisors or departments. It is possible that some special research contracts that some graduate students wish to negotiate may not be covered by the union contract and therefore not possible. Also, certain provisions in the contract can limit the flexibility of students in terms of the projects they are able to work on (currently, students can negotiate research work at government agencies or at neighboring institutions such as Cornell University). This allows the cost of living to be individually negotiated to accommodate for geographical living cost differences.

Additionally, unionized graduate students would be required to pay union dues (~2% per SGEU FAQs [[link]](https://www.syracusegradsunited.org/faq)), which amounts to $400,000/year per 1,000 students (charged of a $20,000 stipend), and may not agree with all the decisions made by the union on their behalf but are legally required to pay them.

For international students, receiving wages as a student vs as an employee is a key difference and could impact receiving treaty benefits between the USA and the home country while studying. A unionized graduate student taxed as an employee has different filing considerations than a student researcher for these benefits [[link]](https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/claiming-tax-treaty-benefits).

In conclusion, while some graduate students see unionization as a way to gain more rights and benefits, there are also downsides to deliberate. At an R1 institution, it’s important to weigh the potential drawbacks against the potential benefits as a collective before deciding on any matter, and it’s particularly important when it comes to the impact on a student's academic career and allows students to take a more strategic approach to their learning & education.”

**Appendix E**

**GSO President’s Report, Yousr Dhaouadi**

**2/1/2023 – Senate Meeting 5**

**GSO Stipend Advocacy**

Early December 2022, Provost Ritter announced that Syracuse University will increase the minimum stipend for masters and PhD students by approximately 18% and 30% respectively beginning in the 2023-24 academic year, as per the latest news release. In addition, SU committed to guarantee four years of funding for incoming PhD students, as well as double the funding awards and increase summer stipends for graduate students by 11%. The provost affirmed GSO’s advocacy and stated it was the beginning of changes we will continue to see for graduate students. We also secured a 5% increase to all stipends.

**GSO Benefits Advocacy**

SU has taken steps to accommodate students who are parents by raising financial support per child under the age of 6 for qualifying graduate students from $500 to $1,000. Currently, the maximum subsidy per family is $2,000. Moreover, the initiative to provide an accommodation period of up to 8 weeks for graduate students who become a parent ensures students maintain their academic status and funding during this time. Students raised issues of lactation room availability and daycare support in an open forum last semester, and solutions to these are currently being worked on.

**GSO GEIC Meeting with Budget Office**

For a copy of the report highlighting takeaways from GSO GEIC’s meeting with the budget office, please email gsointernalvp@syr.edu requesting one.

**Advocacy & Representation**

We filled graduate representative seats in the following area:

Forever Orange in Action committee