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## **GSO PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

### **1 November 2023**

#### **Officer Resignation: Vice President of External Affairs**

For personal and professional reasons, the GSO Vice President of External Affairs, Alex Scrivner, submitted a Letter of Resignation on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The resignation became official on October 31<sup>st</sup>. She departs from office on good terms and intends to remain an active member of the GSO Senate and its committees. We thank her for all the work she carried out during her five months in GSO External Affairs.

In preparation for the Vice President of External Affairs' final day in office yesterday, members of the Executive Board interviewed a recommended candidate for appointment to fill the vacancy in an expeditious manner: University Senator Becca Vinciquerra.<sup>1</sup> On October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Executive Board officially appointed Vinciquerra to serve as Interim Vice President of External Affairs by unanimous vote.

The GSO Senate shall have the opportunity to confirm Vinciquerra's executive appointment tonight, November 1<sup>st</sup>, at its third Regular Meeting of the 56<sup>th</sup> Session.

#### **Student Health Advisory Committee**

Last spring, the 55<sup>th</sup> GSO Senate passed a Resolution on prioritizing graduate student health and wellness in coordination with the Barnes Center at the Arch, an initiative spear-headed by last year's Senator of Political Science, Kirin R. Taylor.<sup>2</sup>

Recently, I was informed that the Barnes Center will be forming a Student Health Advisory Committee for the Spring 2024 semester. The committee offers students the opportunity to

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<sup>1</sup> See [GSOC Article II, Section 2 \(d\)](#): "...vacancies in the Executive Board shall be filled by the Executive Board, which must be approved by the Senate at its next Regular Meeting or a Special Meeting called for that purpose. If not approved, or if the Executive Board declines to make an appointment, the Senate shall fill the vacancy at any Regular Meeting or Special Meeting called for that purpose. If in any Regular or Special Meeting called to approve an appointment by the Executive Board, the Senate rejects the appointment, they may immediately hold an election for the vacant position(s)."

<sup>2</sup> [GSO 23.13](#), "A Resolution to Prioritize Graduate Student Wellness Further and to Communicate Graduate Students' Distinct Group Counseling and Fitness Program Requests & Preferences to the Barnes Center."

provide feedback on health and wellness initiatives, programming, and services to help inform The Barnes Center at The Arch.

Serving on the committee would require 2-3 hours per month during the Spring 2024 semester. Each meeting will include dinner and conversation with leadership from various areas of the Barnes Center.

The Graduate School requested that I solicit graduate student nominees for the committee. If interested, please email me and Associate Dean Gabby Chapman a letter of interest and cv/resume. The Barnes Center operations team has a small committee that will review all nominations and encourages everyone interested to apply.

So far, I have nominated Kirin R. Taylor, with her permission, given her central role in the graduate student health and wellness initiative to date.

### **Student Assembly Bill (67-050)**

On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, the Student Association of SU & ESF considered a Bill on the Graduate Representative to the Board of Trustees issue (A.B. 67-050), authored by SA President William Treloar and Executive Vice President Yasmin Nayrouz.

The Assembly Bill, in solidarity with the Graduate Student Organization,<sup>3</sup> calls upon the Board of Trustees to reverse their recent decision to invest the power to appoint the graduate student representative to the Board in the Dean of the Graduate School and thereby to restore SU graduate students their right to elect representation to the Board. The Bill also supports the GSO's call to institute temporary power-sharing measures in the new selection process through the Graduate School while graduates work to attain a satisfactory solution to the matter.

A.B. 67-050 passed with unanimous consent.

### **President's Address to the Board of Trustees' Academic Affairs Committee**

Provost Ritter invited me to address the Board of Trustees' Academic Affairs Committee tomorrow, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, on current graduate student priorities. I will have five minutes to address the committee, followed by up to 5 minutes of questions and answers.

For those interested, I have provided a full transcript of my planned remarks at the end of this Report.

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<sup>3</sup> See [GSO SR 24.01](#), "A Resolution Opposing the Disenfranchisement of SU Graduate Students & Calling for Elected Representation and Voting Rights on SU's Board of Trustees," passed by supermajority vote on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023.



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## **President's Address to the Board of Trustees' Academic Affairs Committee 2 November 2023**

Good afternoon, everyone—

It is a pleasure to meet all of you.

Thank you, Provost Ritter, for the invitation to present on current graduate student priorities to this committee. It is an invitation I appreciate as the elected representative of graduates at Syracuse University.

In these remarks, I will relay three “big picture” graduate priorities for the year though, likely, they exceed the bounds of a single year in hope and vision. I will organize them under the following ultimately related headings: one university, shared governance, and building transparency and trust.

**One University:** This is an expression not rarely heard in various spaces on campus. It is a celebrated ideal that we, as a university community, strive toward. At its best, it animates efforts to bridge divides, to promote inclusion, and to build community while raising every member as one.

Graduate students make up one-third of Syracuse University's student population. They add enormous value to the University in research, teaching, and service. Yet, outside of the Graduate School, graduate students often feel like an afterthought in university programming, services, and decision-making processes—like the last constituency considered among a long list of higher-ranking priorities. Graduate students want to, I think, be inspired and uplifted by the ideal of “one university” as much as anyone. But it is admittedly difficult for them to do so when they so often feel seated at the margins of institutional resources and attention.

There is promising work to be done here, I think. Graduates are prepared, as always, to do that work. But we need other members of the university community, like you, to join us in the work of more fully integrating graduates into the university community and all it has to offer. In that vein, we look forward to working with the Graduate School, with Dawn

Singleton in Student Affairs, with Provost Ritter, and with you to realize “one university” for graduates.

**Shared Governance:** This is another Syracuse community ideal not unrelated to the first. In the inaugural University Senate meeting of this year, Chancellor Syverud identified Syracuse’s commitment to a strong system of shared governance, and to active listening, as unique qualities that would enable SU to lead among its peers despite the broad challenges currently facing higher education.

Graduate students generally affirm this sentiment and cherish shared governance and, to be sure, graduate students are an important part of the struggle to face and overcome the present challenges facing the Academy—they are the future of the Academy. However, graduates have also come to doubt the degree and reality of graduate inclusion in shared governance on campus. Graduates often feel that their voice is merely tolerated and symbolic—again, an afterthought. Often, they feel excluded from institutional decision-making processes that affect them.

For transparency, the recent decision to change how the graduate representative to the Board gets selected has only exacerbated this sense of exclusion. The right for graduates to elect their representative directly was established on this campus in 1974 and practiced for half a century since. Now, it’s simply gone.

I offer this information in good faith, not ill intent. We view it as an opportunity to engage in a compassionate dialogue with you about what shared governance means and how graduates materially fit into its actualization. We look forward to collaborating on the integration of graduates more fully into decision/policy-making bodies across campus—and to more fully ensuring that integration for posterity.

**Building Transparency and Trust:** Ultimately, these priorities culminate in a desire to build a relationship of transparency and trust between graduate students and the University’s various branches. Graduates don’t want nice words alone: that their voice “matters,” that their input is “valuable,” that their work is “appreciated.” To be sure, they want to believe it—but they need to be *shown* with real, material actions.

At our secretary elections meeting in September, one nominee shared a proverb with the Senate during their candidacy speech: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

Graduates are asking you to go together—*really together*—with them in the work of realizing one university and shared governance for graduate students at SU, and of building a relationship of transparent decision-making and trust between us.

Thank you for your time and consideration.