



## **GSO Senate Resolution 25.01**

### **A Resolution Establishing the GSO's Support of GSEU Bargaining Efforts at SUNY-ESF**

**Author(s):** Daniel J. Kimmel (GSO President & Chief Executive Officer); Roger Rosena (GSO Vice President & Chief of Staff)

**Sponsor(s):** Emme Christie (President of the Graduate Student Association at SUNY-ESF); Amy Owens (ESF-GSO Senator); Maria Loughran (ESF-GSO Senator)

**Date(s):** 6 November 2024

**Action(s):** *Passed* (28 Yes; 0 No; 2 Abstain)

**Chair of the Senate:** Roger Rosena

**President Pro Tempore of the Senate:** Avery A. Welna

**Parliamentarian:** Joseph Beckmann

**President of the Student Body:** Daniel J. Kimmel

**Whereas**, the Graduate Student Organization (GSO) was created to establish greater representation of graduate students' interests and concerns and to establish policies and initiatives that are in the best interests of all graduate students at Syracuse University and has the power to establish a position on any matter of importance to graduate students;<sup>1</sup> and,

**Whereas**, the GSO recognizes graduate students at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF) as members with the rights and responsibilities thereof;<sup>2</sup> and,

**Whereas**, the GSO supports the right to free and open dialogue on any topic of importance to graduate students, including on worker unionization;<sup>3</sup> and,

**Whereas**, the Graduate Student Employees Union (GSEU) of SUNY-ESF has been bargaining with the State of New York for over a year; and,

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<sup>1</sup> See **Preamble to the Constitution of the Graduate Student Organization (GSOC)** and **Article II, Section 13(b)**.

<sup>2</sup> See **GSOC Article I, Section 2; Article II, Section 2, 3(a), and 5; and Article VII, Section 8**.

<sup>3</sup> See **GSO Senate Resolution 23.06**, "A Resolution Establishing the GSO's Recognition and Support of Syracuse University's Graduate Student Employee Unionization Campaign", passed on 1 February 2023 by the 55<sup>th</sup> GSO Senate with supermajority support; and **GSO Senate Resolution 24.07**, "A Resolution Establishing the GSO's Recognition and Support of Syracuse University's Hourly Food Service Worker Union Campaign", passed on 7 February 2024 by the 56<sup>th</sup> GSO Senate with supermajority support.

**Whereas**, the GSEU's contract with the State of New York expired in June 2023 and the State refuses to acknowledge and act on the new articles that GSEU has proposed for the contract, leading to a standstill in the bargaining process; and,

**Whereas**, without a contract in effect, the Graduate Assistants of SUNY-ESF do not have access to their Professional Development Fund and the SEVIS reimbursement fund, which graduate students—in particular, international students—rely upon to offset the exorbitant fees that they must pay to attend the institution and supplement their income to attend conferences; and,

**Whereas**, GSEU is fighting for a better contract and has proposed new protections for international student workers to provide guaranteed paid leave when dealing with visa issues and temporary alternative work assignments if they are not able to return to the US; and,

**Whereas**, graduate student workers play a vital role in keeping SUNY-ESF in a functional state that serves the academic community; and

**Whereas**, the establishment and support of unions has been consistently associated with improved working conditions, equitable wages, and enhanced safety measures for workers, including those in hourly food service positions, as demonstrated by research from the Economic Policy Institute, which highlights the broad benefits of unionization not only for members but also for communities and democratic processes, underscoring the crucial role unions play in advocating for policies that promote economic justice, worker empowerment, and the well-being of workers and their families;<sup>4</sup> and,

**Whereas**, evidence suggests that unionization, especially among service workers, leads to significant advancements in achieving a living wage, comprehensive healthcare benefits, and protections against workplace harassment and discrimination, further advocating for the necessity and efficacy of collective bargaining in addressing and improving labor conditions and rights;<sup>5</sup> and,

**Whereas**, the President of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) at SUNY-ESF, Emme Christie, and the Chief Steward of GSEU at SUNY-ESF, Liz McDaniel, have requested the support of the GSO and graduate students at Syracuse University in signing their [petition](#) to SUNY Chancellor John B. King, Jr.; therefore be it,

**Resolved**, that the GSO formally supports the GSEU's negotiations for a fair contract in the bargaining process with the State of New York; and be it,

**Ordered:**

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<sup>4</sup> See the [EPI Article](#) "Unions are not only good for workers, they're good for communities and for democracy" by Asha Banerjee et al.

<sup>5</sup> Berg, P. & Frost, A. C. (2005). "Dignity at Work for Low Wage, Low Skill Service Workers." *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 60(4), 657–682. <https://doi.org/10.7202/012339ar>.

- That the President of the Student Body & Chief Executive Officer within a week publish this Resolution to the President of the Graduate Student Association and the Chief Steward of the Graduate Student Employees Union at SUNY-ESF and sign the GSEU bargaining petition in support on behalf of the graduate student body & Graduate Student Organization at Syracuse University;
- That the Vice President & Chief of Staff archive this Resolution and sign the GSEU bargaining petition in support on behalf of the Senate of the Graduate Student Organization at Syracuse University;
- That the Director of External Affairs within a week publish this Resolution and the petition link on all GSO social media platforms;
- That the Chair of the GSO Graduate Employment Issues Committee (GEIC) publish this Resolution and the petition link to Syracuse Graduate Employees United (SGEU) in their capacity as union liaison.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> **GSO Senate Resolution 23.06**, "A Resolution Establishing the GSO's Recognition and Support of Syracuse University's Graduate Student Employee Unionization Campaign": "And be it further, Resolved, that the Graduate Employment Issues Committee shall continue acting as a recognized liaison between the graduate student workers union and the GSO Executive Board and Senate in accordance with standing legislation."