

SIU SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CARBONDALE **GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL
STUDENT COUNCIL**

To: SIU Alumni Association Board
From: Matt Ryg, President of the Graduate and Professional Student Council
Date: 4/8/2015
Re: Report

This report is a synopsis of the activities of the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) at Southern Illinois University Carbondale for the dates of October 1, 2014 – April 3, 2015.

This has been an exciting and invigorating year for GPSC, despite the tragic loss of our friend and former Chancellor, Dr. Paul Sarvela. With a new administration at the SIU-System, there has been a highly visible culture shift and change of tone on the SIUC campus: President Dunn has been a thoughtful, engaged, cooperative, and visionary leader as we navigate a painful year with the state budget. GPSC has been active in advocating for new revenue at the state level to fund higher education. We have been vocal in our opposition to Governor Rauner's debilitating state budget proposal.

Despite an overall cut to the GPSC budget of 5%, we began the 2014-2015 academic year on a strong note. We have been central to the development of the *Student Health Initiative*, which is a group of student organizations working to bring a new health insurance plan to the students at SIUC. Graduate and undergraduate students are unified in our willingness to pay more for better health insurance. SIUC students want an insurance plan that is in full compliance with the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Visit gpsc.rso.siu.edu/?p=500 for more on the *Student Health Initiative*.

GPSC has taken positions on a number of important campus issues. Most recently, we passed a resolution asking the administration to clarify some campus safety issues with respect to parking policy. In February, GPSC passed a resolution that calls on the university to divest from fossil fuels. Also in February, we heard from representatives of three campus offices about their proposals to increase student fees: Student Health Insurance, University Housing, and Facilities Maintenance. GPSC passed a resolution in favor of the proposals we heard. If you'd like to read any of the resolutions passed by GPSC this year, visit: gpsc.rso.siu.edu/?page_id=659.

To conclude, GPSC has witnessed and contributed to a newfound energy for civic engagement and excitement for student activism on campus. We are a strong organization despite pending budget cuts from Governor Rauner. GPSC has 18 students serving on over 20 university committees that contribute to the high quality university experience we all enjoy. Several GPSC members attended SIU Day on the Hill in Springfield to support the university's legislative agenda and to tell legislators how proud we are to be Salukis. GPSC humbly offers its thanks to the civically-minded volunteers and staff at the Alumni Association for their dedication to SIU. You are the stewards of a vibrant and proud legacy. Thank you for your time, financial contributions, and for being Salukis.

For more information on the Graduate and Professional Student Council, visit our website: gpsc.rso.siu.edu. If you have questions about the contents of this Annual Report, please contact mattryg@siu.edu.