



**Graduate and Professional Student Council**  
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To: SIU Alumni Association Board  
From: Brandon Woudenberg, President of the Graduate and Professional Student Council  
Date: 4/30/2016  
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, 2015 – April 30, 2016.

This has been an exciting and invigorating year for GPSC, despite the difficulties of not having a budget the entire school year. The visible culture shift and change of tone on the SIUC campus mentioned by my predecessor Matt Ryg has become only more thoughtful, engaging, and cooperative, with the addition of Interim Chancellor Brad Colwell in the fall semester.



GPSC has been active in advocating for new revenue at the state level to fund higher education throughout the entire year. We have been vocal in our opposition to Governor Rauner's debilitating state budget ideology. Starting in the Fall GPSC Organized the first ever Town Hall meeting where IL Senate Assistant Minority Leader, David Luechtefeld, State Senator Andy Manor, and Illinois State Senator Gary Forby traveled to campus to hear from student leaders about their concerns on the budget crises. Furthermore, just last week I had the honor to help lead a great group of students to the Capital for an impromptu SIUC Lobby Day. On April 20, this group of students along with other higher education supporters around the state made clear to the legislature the negative effects the lack of a budget is having on higher education. While GPSC is as happy as everyone else on campus about the stop gap measure passed last week, Student Government has started, and will continue, to cooperatively organize a state wide walkout campaign at the beginning of next semester if we still find ourselves without a budget.

GPSC began the 2015-2016 academic year on a strong note. We have been central to the development of support for students on campus. For example, in response to the bursar cap change reverting back to a \$200 limit starting in the spring of this year GPSC independently created a program of support, *the GPSC Cares Initiative*, through a reorganization of our charitable giving funds within our budget we organized, promoted, and gave out \$3000 to enable as many Graduate and Professional Students as

possible the ability to register for their spring classes. All told the program gave fourteen students the ability to register for classes, most of which were in their last semester before graduation.

GPSC has taken positions on a number of important campus issues. Most recently, we published a public opinion letter in response to the climate on campus. Along with our counterpart USG we have organized and hosted town hall meetings for students to directly voice their concerns to their student leaders, one in March and one in April, a practice that we will continue to do going forward. Also in December we passed a resolution supporting the establishment of a 24 hour study lounge on campus. February, GPSC passed a resolution that calls on the university to divest from fossil fuels. If you'd like to read any of the resolutions passed, or statements made by GPSC this year, visit: [gpsc.rso.siu.edu/?page\\_id=659](http://gpsc.rso.siu.edu/?page_id=659).

To conclude, GPSC has witnessed and contributed to the civic engagement and excitement for student activism on campus. We are a strong organization despite not having a budget through the entire school year. GPSC has 15 students serving on over 20 university committees that contribute to the high quality university experience we all enjoy. 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](http://gpsc.rso.siu.edu). If you have questions about the contents of this Annual Report, please contact [brandonpeter@siu.edu](mailto:brandonpeter@siu.edu).