



## ESF Graduate Student Association Survey: Fees Paid for GSO-Provided Services (April/May 2013)

### Introduction

The following results stem from a survey administered to ESF graduate students in late April and early May via email about the proposed annual fee increase paid for access to Syracuse University Graduate Student Organization (GSO) provided services. In total, 67 graduate students participated in the survey. More detail on the GSO fee issue can be found in the *GSO Student Fee* pdf, available from the documents section of the GSA website at [www.esfgsa.com](http://www.esfgsa.com).

Simply stated, ESF grads are currently assessed a fee of \$15 once at the outset of the fall semester, which is transferred to GSO funds and supports ESF access to:

**GSO Programming:** Funds for large scale GSO sponsored programming like the opening and closing picnics, dome partnership, and various events like wine and beer tastings at the Inn Complete.

**Service Provider Payments:** Student Legal Services, SU Daycare, Graduate School programs, Career Services, Bernice Wright Child Care, Inn Complete, Drumlins.

**New Services Beginning Academic Year 2013-14:** New York State Parks 'Empire Pass' available for \$10 (normally \$65); Golf membership at The Links at Erie Village for approximately \$20 (normally \$499); Discounted indoor golf at Destiny USA (still under negotiation); Increased money to subsidize and expand Rec. Services and SUOC for graduate students

This survey, in addition to the informational session held on April 26<sup>th</sup> in Moon 110, were intended to be open, anonymous opportunities for graduate students to learn more details about the issue, how the GSA has approached and handled it, the GSA position for moving forward, and as an opportunity to provide comments, concerns, and feedback regarding the proposed fee change. Finally, results from the survey were generally supportive of the fee change and were used in finalizing the official GSA position in support of the fee increase stated below.

### Survey Highlights

Note: The following results are based on responses from 67 total survey participants.

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Q1. Do you support the annual fee increase from \$15 to \$30?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	70.1%	47
No	29.9%	20
	answered question	67
	skipped question	0

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**Q4. Would you rather have the fee assessed once each academic year in the Fall (\$30) or once each semester (2 payments of \$15)?**

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Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I prefer one payment of \$30 each Fall	10.5%	6
I prefer two payments of \$15 each semester	64.9%	37
No preference	24.6%	14
	answered question	57
	skipped question	10

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**Q5. Have you ever used any of the GSO-provided services?**

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Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	77.6%	45
No	22.4%	13
	answered question	58
	skipped question	9

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**Q6. Which of the following services have you used? (Select all that apply)**

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Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
SU Career Services	27.3%	12
The Inn Complete	97.7%	43
Student Legal Services	22.7%	10
SU Early Education and Childcare Center	0.0%	0
Bernice M. Wright Nursery School	0.0%	0
Drumlins Country Club	13.6%	6
SU Alumni Relations	4.5%	2
	answered question	44
	skipped question	23

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**Q8. Are you interested in the new services to be offered to ESF students through GSO?**

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Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	67.3%	37
No	32.7%	18
	answered question	55
	skipped question	12

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**Q9. Which of these new services are you interested in? (Select all that apply)**

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Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Discounted New York State Empire Pass for \$10	81.1%	30
Golf membership to the Links at Erie Village	16.2%	6
Expanding SU Recreational Services and SUOC	78.4%	29
Discounted indoor golf at Destiny USA (Still under negotiation)	13.5%	5
	answered question	37
	skipped question	30

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**Q10. Were you aware of these services and your ability to use them?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	49.1%	27
No	50.9%	28
	answered question	55
	skipped question	12

**Q11. Was the informational packet provided by GSA helpful in presenting this issue?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	75.5%	37
No	24.5%	12
	answered question	49
	skipped question	18

**Q12. Do you approve of how GSA has negotiated and handled this issue?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	84.6%	44
No	15.4%	8
	answered question	52
	skipped question	15

*Written Responses, Concerns, and Feedback*

**2. If you do support the fee increase, why?**

Answer Options	Response Count
	32
<i>answered question</i>	32
<i>skipped question</i>	35

Number	Response Date	Response Text
1	May 2, 2013 6:15 PM	It makes sense that we should at least pay the same as the SU Law graduate students to get the same benefits, and also it helps that we get more benefits as a result.
2	May 2, 2013 4:39 PM	Considering the benefits we get by our cooperation with the GSO, I think an increase of a little over \$1 per month is a bargain.
3	Apr 30, 2013 10:51 PM	I think it's worth it.
4	Apr 30, 2013 9:09 PM	kahsdiuferiu
5	Apr 30, 2013 6:25 PM	Use SU services exyensively and cannot imagine my life without them
6	Apr 30, 2013 4:44 PM	Seems fair.



- 7 Apr 30, 2013 4:03 PM Given the situation, it only seems fair...I'd rather pay a little more than then regret having less services which I may want in future...!!
- 8 Apr 30, 2013 2:58 PM I enjoy the GSA events, services etc. and I want to ensure that these things continue.
- 9 Apr 30, 2013 2:47 PM It's fair
- 10 Apr 30, 2013 2:40 PM I believe it is important to maintain our relationship with SU, and an additional \$15 per student is not overly expensive.
- 11 Apr 30, 2013 1:50 PM I take advantage of SU events, and feel this is a pretty fair price for what they offer
- 12 Apr 30, 2013 1:36 PM Access to services and benefits
- 13 Apr 30, 2013 1:33 PM It's only fair to increase our fee as the other schools have had to, however we need guaranteed access to all of the SU offered services if we are accepting the increase.
- 14 Apr 30, 2013 1:14 PM It's not that much money so it's fine.
- 15 Apr 30, 2013 1:13 PM I believe we use more than 15 dollars but not as much as other SU students
- 16 Apr 30, 2013 1:08 PM it is a fair increase for the value of services offered through SU
- 17 Apr 30, 2013 1:07 PM tuition is already so low that I feel receptive to the idea of a fee increase  
It seems like a pretty clear case was made that we aren't paying a fair proportion, and \$30 really isn't that much money even if its twice what we pay now. Also, there should be gluten free and vegan options at TGs.
- 18 Apr 30, 2013 1:02 PM
- 19 Apr 30, 2013 12:52 PM It's not too expensive, and the services are worthwhile
- 20 Apr 30, 2013 12:48 PM I like access to various SU things that come with the fee.  
I support the fee increase but only barely. I think that GSO's budget, as broken down in a previous email from Whitney, is a disgrace. That something like 43% or whatever it was of their total budget goes toward programming is just pathetic. I think that any fee increase should be coupled with a very strongly criticism of their current structure of paying positions in their government. I've never in my life heard of a student organization with paid members until them, and I think it's extremely narcissistic and should be condemned by us.  
All that being said, I bet there are some grads who rely on their more important services, and I wouldn't want to deprive them. So I'm in favor of it, but kind of like I'd be in favor of Satan giving me a glass of water after I crossed the desert.
- 21 Apr 30, 2013 12:46 PM
- 22 Apr 30, 2013 12:39 PM ESF grads get great services from SU!! This is well worth it.
- 23 Apr 30, 2013 12:39 PM It goes to fund GREAT programs, the fee is minimal, and there has not been an increase in a while.
- 24 Apr 30, 2013 12:27 PM GSO has a lot to offer. The NYS Park pass is exciting!
- 25 Apr 30, 2013 12:23 PM I certainly use the services provided enough to justify the additional \$15, especially the Inn Complete. It's also nice to know that the legal services options is there for us should I have an issue. After reading the email that was sent, it seems like a reasonable increase for the GSO services that ESF students can use, i.e. the percentage of total students that ESF students make up is still more than the percentage of total fees that ESF students pay.
- 26 Apr 30, 2013 12:17 PM Although, I personally I don't use much of the services that SU GSO gives us access to, there are other grad students in ESF that might use them. Furthermore, I don't personally agree on the fee increase because I have a vvvvvveeeeeerrrrryyyyy tight budget. However, in this situation, I have to think about the collective and not be selfish and put my interest first. It is a 100% raise, but the total value of the potential service that ESF grad can access is greater than 30 dollars. It is a sweet and sour decision
- 27 Apr 30, 2013 12:17 PM
- 28 Apr 30, 2013 12:11 PM the argument presented for increase in fees seems logical
- 29 Apr 30, 2013 12:11 PM The services provided by the GSO are largely more costly than the increase in fees.
- 30 Apr 30, 2013 12:10 PM Seems fair
- 31 Apr 30, 2013 12:07 PM It allows us to get more done.
- 32 Apr 30, 2013 12:04 PM I regularly use these services, and would like to get more involved with Outdoor education programs and use the newly offered Empire Pass next year!



### 3. If you do not support the fee increase, why not?

Answer Options	Response Count
	16
<i>answered question</i>	<b>16</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>51</b>

Number	Response Date	Response Text
1	May 2, 2013 2:04 PM	I think they need to better allocate student fees- I.e. more bike racks or student services rather than a losing basketball team. If the student fees went to something useful instead of cheap beer or bad sports teams, I would be fine paying more.
2	May 2, 2013 12:55 PM	Many of the times when I go to an event, even on time, there is no food or drinks left, or even a wait to get in.
3	May 1, 2013 4:35 AM	For the international student, we already be charged so much money.
4	Apr 30, 2013 5:29 PM	I do not support the fee increase.
5	Apr 30, 2013 5:08 PM	I feel that we are paying enough in subsidiary fees currently. All graduate students do not utilize the facilities provided by the student fee. I'd like to see an itemized report of every use of each dollar we currently pay. When proceeding in this survey, Question 3 asks how would we like to pay the increase in student fee. To me, that says that the decision is already made so why even care about our opinions by providing a "do not support" box on Question 2?
6	Apr 30, 2013 5:03 PM	you just doubled it...i gradual increase will make sense...unless all cost doubled
7	Apr 30, 2013 5:00 PM	Being a graduate student, I do not have the time to use many of the services provided. I think the people using the services should pay and those that do not have the option, should not be obligated to pay this increased fee.
8	Apr 30, 2013 4:01 PM	I can't see how the fee is used for us students. Why I have to pay more?
9	Apr 30, 2013 3:54 PM	I no longer participate in GSO events that this would fund. I participated in my first two years, but have not been involved in a gsa event in at least two years
10	Apr 30, 2013 2:45 PM	I would support it if we were all included on the SU listserv and were made aware of what the events were at SU. But as is, I would not support it.
11	Apr 30, 2013 2:33 PM	I don't use most of the services from SU.
12	Apr 30, 2013 1:34 PM	Don't use the services provided. Just want to get a grad degree
13	Apr 30, 2013 1:33 PM	I don't use enough of the services provided to be paying for the fee. I essentially end up subsidizing students who do not have to work and have the time to attend these events.
14	Apr 30, 2013 12:36 PM	Rational people don't willingly pay more for the same services.
15	Apr 30, 2013 12:21 PM	Most of the services are not worth more than \$15. All students do not use all services. The students who dont use the services pay \$15 and that is enough to cover those students that use more than one service.
16	Apr 30, 2013 12:09 PM	Think of a pay per use system for those users who use it.

### 7. If you have not used any of these services, is there a particular reason why?

Answer Options	Response Count
	13
<i>answered question</i>	<b>13</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>54</b>



Number	Response Date	Response Text
1	May 1, 2013 4:36 AM	Have little information about this service
2	Apr 30, 2013 5:29 PM	I am a graduate student, I'm not on vacation with my fucking baby.
3	Apr 30, 2013 5:09 PM	I don't have children. Nor, do I feel that paying for Country Club services is a reasonable use for our student fees.
4	Apr 30, 2013 5:04 PM	no time
5	Apr 30, 2013 5:01 PM	I am too busy working off campus to fund myself because I was not given a GA position.
6	Apr 30, 2013 4:03 PM	No necessary, but I may use the career service latter when I am approaching graduation.
7	Apr 30, 2013 2:40 PM	Have not had the time to use the services.
8	Apr 30, 2013 1:35 PM	Too busy
9	Apr 30, 2013 1:33 PM	I generally don't have the time to take advantage of these services.
10	Apr 30, 2013 1:02 PM	Haven't needed them yet.
11	Apr 30, 2013 12:21 PM	No need to.
12	Apr 30, 2013 12:09 PM	No particular reason
13	Apr 30, 2013 12:07 PM	Too damn busy!

13. If yes, why?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	27
<i>answered question</i>	27
<i>skipped question</i>	40

Number	Response Date	Response Text
1	May 2, 2013 4:42 PM	I'm glad the GSA is keeping us in the loop. I usually expect increases in fees to just show up on the semester bill with no explanation.
2	May 2, 2013 2:05 PM	It seems appropriate
3	Apr 30, 2013 6:27 PM	Why what?
4	Apr 30, 2013 4:05 PM	Because you have been informative, kept it simple to understand and have turned to everyone for feedback, opinions, etc.
5	Apr 30, 2013 4:05 PM	I have no time to do it personally.
6	Apr 30, 2013 3:54 PM	N/A for the last two. Missed the info packet
7	Apr 30, 2013 2:59 PM	Professional and reasonable, as usual.
8	Apr 30, 2013 2:41 PM	Information was communicated to the graduate students in a timely manner, and with complete information regarding the issue.
9	Apr 30, 2013 2:35 PM	There should be a "I don't know" option for the previous questions that I didn't answer. I don't have enough information to make a yes/no decision.
10	Apr 30, 2013 1:37 PM	Very informative
11	Apr 30, 2013 1:35 PM	not sure which question this is in reference to?
12	Apr 30, 2013 1:16 PM	I trust the GSA to take care of the ESF grad student community! You know what you're doing.
13	Apr 30, 2013 1:14 PM	very professional and prepared
14	Apr 30, 2013 1:11 PM	GSA is the only campus entity that advocates solely for graduate students, they are therefore in the best role to address this issue.
15	Apr 30, 2013 1:03 PM	Clearly we aren't paying our fair share. Seems pretty cut and dry.
16	Apr 30, 2013 12:54 PM	I'm not too familiar with negotiations, but at least you are trying.
17	Apr 30, 2013 12:47 PM	Ya'll rock, doin a good job, etc.
18	Apr 30, 2013 12:41 PM	Seems like a great deal.



19	Apr 30, 2013 12:40 PM	Hard to answer. I never received a packet, unless the email discussing the fee increase was it. I approve because it seems like GREAT programs!
20	Apr 30, 2013 12:38 PM	gsa has been open enough and transparent... though this issue, if possible, should have been presented to the graduate community earlier in the semester
21	Apr 30, 2013 12:28 PM	Everything has been very clear. You've communicated in multiple ways--very important! They have clearly done a lot of work investigating the fee and how it is handled. They have put forth a good effort to inform grad students, and have given every opportunity for feedback.
22	Apr 30, 2013 12:25 PM	It seems reasonable. I think being able to use GSO services is an asset to ESF grads and it was in our best interests to meet this reasonable request from GSO.
23	Apr 30, 2013 12:20 PM	Information and opportunities to get our opinions have been provided promptly.
24	Apr 30, 2013 12:15 PM	Shared the info, asked for feed backs...
25	Apr 30, 2013 12:13 PM	Being made aware of prior to the voting.
26	Apr 30, 2013 12:08 PM	The informational packet was extremely detailed and informative. Clearly they investigated this issue thoroughly.
27	Apr 30, 2013 12:06 PM	

#### 14. If you have not approved of any part of this process, please explain why

Answer Options	Response Count
	9
<i>answered question</i>	9
<i>skipped question</i>	58

Number	Response Date	Response Text
1	Apr 30, 2013 5:02 PM	I was never made aware of any of these things until I received emails about a fee.
2	Apr 30, 2013 3:55 PM	N/A or no opinion
3	Apr 30, 2013 2:47 PM	I have no information about how GSA negotiated it (so i can't say if i support it or not). Scheduling the meetings on a Friday afternoon makes it difficult for students who have other commitments(like jobs) or live further away from campus. Students who don't fit the very traditional model are being excluded.
4	Apr 30, 2013 1:34 PM	
5	Apr 30, 2013 1:12 PM	I approve! Just that they get paid out of student fees. I'm running out of adjectives to describe how much that pisses me off, but I would love to see GSA just politely tell them 'We are okay with the fee increase because our grads really enjoy these services; however, we strongly disapprove of your officers getting paid, and we would very much like to see more of the money provided by relatively poor grad students actually go back to them in the form of programming or grants, rather than into your slimy pockets. The GSA puts 100% of its funding back into the students - why can't the GSO?'
6	Apr 30, 2013 12:50 PM	
7	Apr 30, 2013 12:41 PM	I would like more details on what services are available. I dont think many people know.
8	Apr 30, 2013 12:39 PM	N/A
9	Apr 30, 2013 12:08 PM	It could have been advertised more.



**15. Please use the following space to share any other comments, concerns, suggestions and/or feedback. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!**

Answer Options	Response Count
	9
<i>answered question</i>	9
<i>skipped question</i>	58

Number	Response Date	Response Text
1	Apr 30, 2013 6:27 PM	Post online about the services available for all ESF students to use
2	Apr 30, 2013 2:42 PM	Thank you all for all your hard work! Please contact all of the vendors and ensure that they will honor this for ESF students, I have heard of several ESF students being denied discounted rates at Drumlins - I wouldn't want to pay this fee and not receive services.
3	Apr 30, 2013 1:37 PM	I also think it is very important that this is charged each semester and not one time in the Fall, if a student is finishing in the Fall they shouldn't have to pay for services they wouldn't be able to use in the Spring!
4	Apr 30, 2013 1:12 PM	:)
5	Apr 30, 2013 12:50 PM	Once again, ya'll rock
6	Apr 30, 2013 12:42 PM	I'm surprised that there is even a question whether this is a good deal!! Sign off on it!
7	Apr 30, 2013 12:39 PM	No, Thank You
8	Apr 30, 2013 12:21 PM	I really think the fee should be charged \$15 per semester. That way people who graduate half-way through the year won't have to pay for the whole year.
9	Apr 30, 2013 12:16 PM	I am glad the negotiation went well and I am thankful of the GSA for the work they've done.

*GSA Concluding Actions on GSO Fee Increase*

The high proportion of graduate students in favor of the fee increase (70.1%) is consistent with opinions expressed and developed by GSA Senate members on the issue following internal discussion; meetings with GSO representatives; conversations with ESF administrators, particularly David Dzwonkowski, Director of Business Affairs; as well as other feedback gained from this survey. More detailed explanation of the specific reasons GSA supports this fee increase can be found in the companion documents, *GSO Student Fee* pdf and *Graduate Student Fee Change Info Session Slides* pdf, available from the documents section of the GSA website at [www.esfgsa.com](http://www.esfgsa.com).

Moreover, the GSA feels assessing the fee in two \$15 installments, once each semester, is in the best interests of ESF graduate students and is consistent with the overwhelming majority of survey respondents that expressed an opinion on the matter (86%, n=37 of 43). Therefore, the GSA will be working with David Dzwonkowski to implement the fee increase, assessed once per semester, beginning in the 2013/2014 academic year.

Contingent on administering the fee change, The Graduate Student Association now considers this matter resolved.