Vision Statement:

Imagine three different seeds: corn, beans, and squash, also known as the Three Sisters; a term coined by the Haudenosaune (Iroquois). The corn seeds germinate and grow tall and strong towards the sky, serving as a pole which the beans utilize as a pole to climb towards sunlight. The beans reciprocate in this mutualistic relationship, fixing unusable forms of nutrients from the air into the soil and transforming them into forms usable by the corn and squash. Below, on the ground, the broad-leaf squash shades the soil creating the perfect microclimate for the three sisters to exchange nutrients, and ultimately, to live, grow, and reproduce.

We can take the growth pattern of the Three Sisters as a lesson in cooperation. Each sister has its own function in the system and helps foster the growth and fertility of the other two. This idea of companion planting is based on the principle of using space in the most efficient manner by fitting together guilds of plants that cooperate well together. This can be applied to farming and agriculture, but also to groups and networks of people. This is called Social Permaculture and operates on a wide number of principles that promote systems-thinking and the ability for organizations and communities to remain diverse, just, and functional while expanding and growing. This allows groups to adapt to change and remain sustainable for the long term.

Our goal is to create an organization that is not only effective but regenerative and sustainable. The unfortunate reality is that despite our effectiveness now, the GSA lacks both regenerative and sustainable qualities. That regardless of how effective we’ve ever been as an organization, the GSA is largely a cyclical organization. There are a combination of factors that explain this. On one hand, graduate student groups tend to routinely deal with incredible turnover. The lack of institutional structures obstructs the progress of new administrations as the day-to-day operations have to constantly be re-invented as these cycles play out. And finally, the time required to run an effective organization is simply something that graduate students do not have. What is more, these factors will likely not change in the short or long run. Solutions then must consider these factors and work around them. For this year, while much of what we do will simply be a continuation of what we’ve done in the recent past, we are making a conscious effort to find solutions to the cyclical nature of graduate student organizations. This requires addressing both the regenerative and sustainable qualities of our organization. We will use the strategies of social permaculture to guide our plans and agendas. For those not familiar, these strategies include:

EDGE EFFECT: Also known as ecotones, the principle governing the region where two ecosystems come together to form a third, which has greater fertility, productivity and diversity than either of the other two alone.

REDUNDANCY: Known as functional redundancy in ecology, in which every critical function in a system should be satisfied in more than one way.

DIVERSITY: Known as biodiversity in ecosystem studies, indicates that you cannot have a diversity of functions and services without a diversity in the landscape and conditions. This leads to biodiversity (or diversity of biological life) as individuals occupy the diverse niches.
The Strategic Goals

To foster a true spirit of teamwork and cooperation with an emphasis on shared goals, the GSA will apply the social permaculture concept of redundancy to structure our plan.

While each officer, committee, and student group have their own interests and are more than capable of doing their own work, we believe that important overlapping and integration of various elements across the organization is the most effective strategy. Each of our goals is slightly different in this respect, but together the plan creates an organization that addresses our most critical functions in multiple ways.

Much of this strategy involves efforts to expand our constituency, influence, and reach. This growth starts with the assembly. Structurally, the assembly is the central representative body, and the most important body in the GSA. Each officer has specific plans tied to growing the assembly through the expansion and integration of our standing committees. New initiatives in Equity and Inclusion and the RGSO committee to expand the capacity of its chair who is an Executive Board member, as well as the appointment of vice-chairs has the effect of multiplying our focus on any one goal. The E-Board member starts the conversation, the vice chair focuses the committee on the task, the committee works on the task, and the task is ratified by the larger assembly. The creation of the finance committee and the 5-Year master plan committee, as well as new initiatives in grants and with the Senate team extends this model to these groups as well.

But it doesn’t stop there, additional layers of redundancy will integrate our involvement with our external networks like SUNY SA and the NAGPS, but also with on campus entities like the Senate, support services, and administration. These important initiatives have been undertaken largely in isolation in the past. For the GSA to continue growing, we need to make sure, through new reporting requirements and procedures, that the information gathered with these groups is shared in committees, the assembly, and with the Executive Board. This opens lines of communication and creates an investment in GSA involvement with these initiatives, even if members don’t attend events.

All of the above initiatives with be further integrated through our programming and public relations so that we can share information with other students and get their feedback. By bringing our message to them, we create investment among graduate students not directly involved in the GSA, adding yet another layer of redundancy.

Finally we have to think about our institutional future. Growing the organization must be accompanied with a deliberate effort to institutionalize our growth. Many of the above initiatives involved the human elements of our organization. We cannot continue without recognizing that we are collection of human beings. Part of this recognition is to recognize the limits of interactional redundancy. We have to build and strengthen our foundation with tangible policies and procedures, which provide a functional redundancy that will assist with in-year turnover and with transitions from year-to-year.
To create a more productive and innovative organization, especially in the core areas of advocacy and professional development, the GSA will use the social permaculture principle of eco-tones or edge effect to foster better outcomes from our efforts.

Creating redundancy merely makes the GSA more efficient and effective. But similar strategies can also promote unique synergies among the various moving parts of the organization. To be sure, our officers, committee members, and student groups do great work. While lack of redundancy minimized our efficiency in tackling issues, the lack of edge effect minimizes our dynamism. Through deliberate efforts to foster cooperation between groups in our organization, we can create unique, new, interdisciplinary loci for furthering the overall mission of advocacy and professional development.

In many ways, this process begins and ends with programming. The three largest programming-related entities, the Equity and Inclusion committee, RGSO committee, and of course, the Programming community. Programming has several strategies that will foster this sort of cooperation and networking across our various student groups. Both the Equity and Inclusion and RGSO committees are actively encouraging and seeking joint events.

All of these efforts are buoyed by our new dedication to data analysis. We are going to be gathering information on events for several purposes, but one of the main reasons is to identify programming areas where natural relationships exist for co-sponsorships. And based on the social permaculture principle of edge effect, these interdisciplinary collaborations do much more than layer responsibilities, but they create entirely new social ecosystems that tend to be richer, more productive, and more in line with our goals as a graduate student organization.

Beyond programming, this principle is also being applied to our expansion efforts. Specifically in the assembly, we have encouraged committee members to serve on multiple committees. Again, this does much more than just layer responsibility through redundancy. It brings more interests to bear in these committees which will create something unique and new. For example, the RGSO committee has traditionally been comprised of the Vice President (chair), the President (ex officio) and members of the RGSOs themselves. This is a group very much interested in promoting the interests of RGSOs. But including members of the EI committee will assure that the RGSO committee is also considering issues of equity and inclusion. Including members of the finance committee with assure that the RGSO committee is also considering larger budgetary issues. What this does is transform our committees into more productive and fertile entities.

To create a more inclusive and representative organization, the GSA will use the social permaculture concept of diversity to reconceptualize what we are as an organization, and where we are going as an advocate for graduate students.

Many of the strategies described above contribute to the diversity of the GSA. By growing the assembly and its representation, by promoting interdisciplinary collaboration between groups, what we
are really doing is completely remaking our organization. Bringing in new students and new interests makes us better able to confront the many challenges that we now face and better able to anticipate and react to new challenges that arise in the future.

The GSA is well positioned to promote the diversity of the GSA and its officers are cognizant of this important need. Obviously, our Equity and Inclusion committee is the headquarters for promoting equity and inclusion in the GSA and by extension its diversity. But our other committees, from programming to RGSOs, from grants to finance are all expanding their purviews to tackle new problems. And by taking these issues out of the hands of the Executive Board and putting them into committees chaired by the Executive Board, we increase the range of ideas and experiences brought to bear on these issues.

The GSA also recognizes that it is part of a much larger University, SUNY, and national university system. Reaching out to and fostering relationships with these larger bodies (University departments, the University Senate, SUNY SA and NAGPS) and through our advocacy team which will work on the national, state, and local level in the legislature can expand our reach and influence, but can also foster diverse relationships with people that can help us achieve our goals.

But the biggest way that the GSA can encourage diversity is through our advocacy efforts on social justice issues. Academia is still, in 2015, largely a white, middle class, male arena. Opportunities for higher education, and especially careers in higher education are extremely limited, especially for members of minority groups. Significant gaps, in compensation and in the process of advancement further depletes the diversity of faculty and students that we represent and interact with on a daily basis. Our Equity and Inclusion chair, but also the Programming and RGSO chairs have plans in place to foster an environment of inclusion and diversity with the understanding that increasing diversity is not merely a just position, but it is one that if brought to fruition will enhance our University community, the graduate community, and the GSA.

Comment [SE2]: Isn't this more ecotones than diversity? Either way, I think the ecotones portion needs to include our relationships and working with NAGPS and SUNY SA to accomplish goals.
The President’s Strategic Plan

GOALS

Build the GSA constituency – The GSA needs to represent ALL graduate students at the University at Albany. Each officer has a portion of their plan dedicated to this goal. By increasing the number of students we reach, the GSA will become a more receptive organization that can address a diverse range of issues.

STRATEGIES

- Work with entire executive board (through committees) to reach out to more students and to identify and address their needs, regardless of their involvement in the organization. Recruitment and retention is supported by giving students the ability to be invested in the organization’s goals. (Redundancy, Diversity)
- In part, we should guide recruiting efforts toward filling future positions. Give students (as vice chairs on committees or co-organizers of GSA events) familiarity with the organization and build that institutional memory. (Redundancy)
- Recognize that “institutional memory” is never enough to assure smooth transitions. Recognize too that the biggest obstacle working against the above two strategies and its attached goal is the need to reinvent the day-to-day administrative tasks from year to year. To free up new administrations to connect to graduate students from day one, by developing tangible policies (job descriptions, paper trails, bylaws flowcharts, archiving event plans and budgets). (Redundancy)
- Creation of a Public Relations Coordinator – the goal is to have a person dedicated to public relations. Will work primarily with Programming but will work with all GSA folks to create and maintain connections with on and off-campus entities. (Redundancy, Edge Effect)

Build a strong and effective GSA assembly – By becoming a true deliberative assembly, the monthly meeting will become a powerful tool for graduate student voice on campus.

- Create information to share with new assembly members and develop orientation and training procedures to smooth the transition to new assembly representatives. (Redundancy)
- Continue to share information in advance of each meeting with the assembly through the website and through the work of the Assembly Speaker (as a liaison between the assembly and executive board). (Redundancy, Edge Effect)
- Hire a parliamentarian, solidify the role of the assembly speaker and secretary. These will go a long way toward streamlining the meeting by embracing time-tested procedural frameworks and we will stop wasting time in assembly and use our time more efficiently. (Redundancy)
• Enhance the GSA committee structure, encourage more important items be handled in committee and not during the meeting. Far too much of our time in meetings is wasted on inefficient debate over minor points, committees are designed to smooth out finer points so that major issues can be debated in assembly meetings. (Edge Effect, Diversity)
• Work with the Vice President to incentivize additional service by re-thinking our RGSO committee requirements and develop ways to appeal to broader student involvement (Redundancy, Diversity)
• Identify GSA committee chairs and create vice chair positions. Develop future leaders from vice chair positions (Redundancy)
• Facilitate the creation of new, and the resurrection of moribund RGSOs
• Encourage logical meeting practices (Email chains, Discussion Boards etc) –
• Integrate committee charges into the meeting through regular committee reports, refering pending motions to relevant committees, and utilizing the ad hoc committee system to deal with unique issues (Edge Effect, Redundancy, Diversity)
• Use the meeting to respond to grad student concerns – for too long, the assembly meeting has been an information session, a true deliberative assembly creates action. Assembly members should guide the advocacy of the GSA, not merely rubber stamp initiatives developed by E-Board members. (Edge Effect, Redundancy, Diversity)
• Create the 5-Year GSA plan – with a committee in the GSA, chaired by an assembly member, and involving key constituencies within our structure to further legitimize the GSA Assembly as a permanent fixture in University culture. (Redundancy, Diversity)

Continue the work of the previous administration – By building a strong foundation with plank one and two, the GSA can be in a much better position to accomplish its goals, and see the great work of the previous GSA administration through to its conclusion. It will take more than one or two terms.

• Work with the Public Relations Director and Senate team to build coalitions with other campus entities – GSA work does not end with the monthly meeting, graduate students face uncertainty and crisis, we can only accomplish our goals by working with, not against, other campus groups. (Redundancy, Edge Effect, Diversity)
• Work with the Lead Senator and other GSA advocates to create a Legislative Action RGSO to lead our state-level advocacy efforts and provide support for additional legislative action. (Edge Effect, Diversity)
• Work with the Senate team and other GSA representatives to streamline our reporting procedures. These reports should be used to guide Senate work, but also must be shared with the assembly so they are informed and can guide our advocacy efforts. (Redundancy)

Other pending business- These are not necessarily “strategic plan” elements. But these are issues that require some sort of action during this current term.

1. Renegotiate our relationship with UAS – Our contract is up this year.
2. Locking up new office space during the campus center expansion – We’ll hopefully be moving to a new office space in 2017. We want to be in the best position for prime office space when that happens.

3. Acquire a new printer and negotiate a new printing contract – Our current contract will expire in November 2016

4. Possibly restructuring the GSA (incorporation) – Currently we are in a fairly ephemeral position within the University structure. We simply want to consider our options in changing our position and what benefits it might confer.
The Vice President's Strategic Plan

  a. Goals
    i. Improve the RGSO Experience and Encourage Collaboration by providing opportunities for groups to work together, facilitating transition, and elicit feedback from officers on how to improve training (Edge Effect, Diversity, & Redundancy)
    ii. Increase the GSA Reach, Engagement, & Effectiveness by engaging with graduate students, active GSA members, and University Resources with the President, Programming Chair, and Grants Chair (Edge Effect, Redundancy, & Diversity)
      ▪ Develop a strategic affiliation with the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) aside from simply membership, which will raise the profile and increase the power of the GSA's voice (Edge Effect)
    o Improve the RGSO Experience and Encourage Collaboration by providing opportunities for groups to work together, facilitating transition, and elicit feedback from officers on how to improve training (Edge Effect, Diversity, & Redundancy)
      ▪ Develop RGSO Transition documents to assist in turnover and officer change (edge effect & redundancy)
        • Help RGSOs be sustainable organizations and help them understand the concept of Sustainable Leadership
        • Hold focus groups to find out what would help them and have groups that have had easier transitions offer advice
        • RGSO Committee does research into transition tips and tools
        • Use research from RGSO Committee research and focus groups to create a Transition Document for RGSOS/GSA
      ▪ Continue to improve and refine RGSO Training (edge effect & diversity)
        • Make it more effective - focus on what the officers really need to know (processes, application, committee service)
        • Give the officers a copy of the RGSO Guidelines and a Welcome Packet of information they need as officers (rights and responsibilities, etc)
        • Try to establish a mid-year alternative training for groups that have the same officers to ensure the training they receive is beneficial and not unnecessarily redundant (not covering the same processes and rules they already have been using and operating under)
        • Elicit feedback from the fall training in order to make meaningful changes
      ▪ Facilitate opportunities for RGSO knowledge sharing, growth, and collaborative planning with the Programming Chair (redundancy & edge effect)
        • Speed Programming Event(s)
        • Knowledge sharing Networking Events/Workshops
      ▪ RGSO Data Collection & Rewards with Public Relations Director and Programming Chair (redundancy & edge effect)
Create cards for RGSOs to give out at events for people to fill out
Data will be compiled and tracked for two purposes
RGSO competition - most cards returned over the course of the year, RGSO wins a prize
- Encourage healthy competition between the RGSOs
- Reward RGSOs whose events are well attended
Track what events draw grad students in, what portion of the graduate population we are reaching (and what parts we need to reach out to more), what communication mechanisms work, and feedback on events

Increase the GSA Reach, Engagement, & Effectiveness by engaging with graduate students, active GSA members, and University Resources with the President, Programming Chair, and Grants Chair (Edge Effect, Redundancy, & Diversity)
- Get more Graduate Students Involved & Increase RGSOs/RGSO Membership (diversity)
  - Talk to Graduate Students at Department Orientations so we can ensure they know about us and learn about what they want/need
  - Work with the Webmaster and Public Relations Officer on developing a GSA Mobil Application in order to communicate better and more effectively with constituency
  - Disseminate information about the GSA to Departments for Listservs to gain new interest and ensure graduate students are aware of what the GSA and other graduate student groups on campus are doing (edge effect)
  - Host graduate student mixers/networking events with the Programming Chair
  - Work with the Programming Chair to improve our advocacy initiatives (edge effect, redundancy, & diversity)
  - Empower Committee Members (edge effect)
    - Give the GSA Committee Vice Chairs have a role in coordinating the Committee and its activities (RGSO – have Vice Chair coordinate the creation of NAGPS internal mechanisms for choosing who attends the events)
    - Delegate tasks to committee members for them to complete then report back to the full committee
  - Develop an Inclusive Consolidated Resources page with the Programming Chair and Grants Chair (redundancy & edge effect)
    - Consolidate University and Community resources that can aid graduate students in school or in their move to Albany (i.e. library resources, campus services, numbers people new to the area will need such as National Grid, etc)
    - Gather and present information for students about internal and external grant opportunities (with the help of the Grants Chair)
    - Link to information about visas in the US and when traveling abroad
- Ask RGSO Committee, GSA Assembly, and Graduate students (via listserv, e-mail, and face-to-face conversations) about what information would have been helpful for them or would be helpful now in an attempt to engage students in the process and make the site work for their needs

- Develop a strategic affiliation with the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) aside from simply membership, which will raise the profile and increase the power of the GSA’s voice. (Edge Effect & Diversity)
  - Ensure we have a diverse set of graduate students attend the NAGPS LADs to gain lobbying skills to bring back and use to make the UAlbany GSA the focal point of graduate student advocacy in New York State
  - Ensure we have a diverse set of graduate student attend the National and Regional conferences to influence the legislative and advocacy platforms through participation in the business meetings to influence the ratification of NAGPS strategic plan, the re-structuring of their advocacy board, the content of the NAGPS Institute, and the future of the organization through the election of officers
  - Establish internal mechanisms to determine who will attend these conferences and LADs and how the allocated money will be spent on those attendees
    - Create a form for application to attend events
    - Decide who makes the final decision and what metrics are used
    - Expand the budget for these events?
    - Decide how budget will be utilized specifically – fully cover students who go or offer partial funding so more students can go
  - Ensure information gathered and skills/tools learned at conferences and LADs are communicated to and shared with the GSA at large
    - Help orchestrate presentations or white papers by attendees
    - Disseminate information to the GSA membership
  - Reach out to the Director of Relations of the NAGPS to come design and execute a plan to get as many GSA members as possible access to member benefits of the NAGPS (Hertz, Geico, etc. discounts)
  - Work with the Northeast Regional Chair and SUNY SA to get more SUNY schools to join the NAGPS to solidify our own state network
    - Orchestrate letter writing by UAlbany GSA members to other SUNY Schools
    - Presentation at SUNY SA meetings by UAlbany GSA & NAGPS
  - Support GSA members to participate on NAGPS committees such as the Legislative Concerns Committee calls and the Advocacy Board Calls (Employment, International, Social Justice) so they can gain insights and offer input into national advocacy efforts
The Treasurer's Strategic Plan

1. Create Finance Committee
   
   To give opportunities to students from different department to give their feedbacks and suggestion in GSAFinance matters such as: (Edge Effect & Diversity)

   - Analysis of the GSA monthly budget
   - Periodic evaluation of the organization’s annual budget
   - Ensure the organizational funds are spent according to GSA policies
   - Analyze long term assets purchased decisions
   - Create an updated version of our financial guidelines to be approved by the assembly

2. To work with the e-board members to improve the financial process such as: (Redundancy, & Diversity)

   - Reduce the chance of late payment and over payment
   - Reduce the approval period of the Purchase Request
   - Ensure that internal controls are working properly
   - Adjust the internal controls if needed to get better results
Equity and Inclusion's Strategic Plan

Goal 1. Increase advocacy

1. Focus on the GSA and EI objectives for advocacy
   a. Reach out to departments, students, groups, etc. and educate and collaborate
2. Talk with more departments and students and educate them about the GSA. If they are already aware of the GSA, encourage these groups/students to become involved.
3. Utilize the guerilla list-serv to engage a wider audience when a larger amount of support is needed
4. Address the issues in the President’s Diversity Council with the wider graduate student body
   a. Get graduate student input
   b. Be more proactive in the council

Goal 2. Work with more departments and students to get them involved in the GSA

1. Work on equity and inclusion issues in all departments
2. Include active and non-active GSA departments

Goal 3. Serve as a liaison and advocate for all students in matters involving equity and inclusion

1. Let students, faculty, and staff know that I am a Diversity and Inclusion resource
2. Attend more departmental events and seminars

Goal 4. Generate programs designed to not only reflect the mission of the Equity and Inclusion Committee and the GSA, but to explore issues revolving diversity

1. Use the Equity and Inclusion budget to generate more programming for and with students
   a. Create a list of possible programming ideas and coordinate with the programming chair and any RGSO’s
   b. Provide funding (where applicable) to RGSO’s holding Equity and Inclusion events. These events, by nature of their approval, abide by the EI committee guidelines.
   c. Do not just focus on one day events, but talks, series, and professional development opportunities for students
   d. Create intersections between the Programming committee and other committees to work towards more than one goal with each program and initiative
2. Work on a SUNY Albany Diversity and Inclusion conference
   a. The details of this are still being worked out
Programming's Strategic Plan

Goals:

1. Provide programs designed to encourage academic and professional achievements of our constituents (Diversity).

2. Integrate the programming agenda with our advocacy objectives to engage both the GSA representatives and general constituency with the GSA mission (Edge Effect, Diversity).

3. Collaborate with the newly appointed Public Relations Director to more effectively reach out to the graduate student body as well as maintain personal connections to entities within the GSA network (Edge Effect & Diversity).

4. Emphasize the values of Equity and Inclusion through the recruitment and activity of the Programming Committee (Edge Effect, Diversity, Redundancy).

Provide programs designed to encourage academic and professional achievements of our constituents (Diversity).

- Provide professional development opportunities for graduate students (ex: Holding a graduate student conference on careers outside of academia).
- Offer supportive programming on coping with the stresses of graduate school in order to better equip graduate students to succeed in their graduate program (ex: Collaborate with YesPlus to put on programs focused on student wellness).

Integrate the programming agenda with our advocacy objectives to engage both the GSA representatives and general constituency with the GSA mission (Edge Effect, Diversity).

- Hit on every single one of the GSA’s advocacy efforts through programming (ex: open access, graduate student debt, Ban the Box, etc.).
- Utilize the guerilla list-serv to engage a wider audience when a larger amount of support is needed (ex: Call Congress and Legislative action days).
- Involve graduate students in the advocacy campaigns of the National Association of Graduate Professionals (NAGPS) to incorporate the UAlbany GSA into larger, national campaigns working for graduate students.
- Hold a Presidential Forum each semester to continue the open conversation between the administration and the GSA.

Collaborate with the newly appointed Public Relations Director to more effectively reach out to the graduate student body as well as maintain personal connections to entities within the GSA network (Edge Effect & Diversity).

- Enhance RGSO interaction in order to form a more cohesive and therefore effective and efficient organization (ex: holding RGSO networking events, incentivizing higher attendance at RGSO events).
Utilize “ecotones” or points of intersection between the GSA and other entities, both on and off campus, to develop meaningful programs that can satisfy both the GSA’s and our partners’ goals (ex: Work with career services to advocate for a graduate student career fair, collaborate with UUP and Interfaith Center to support the Food Pantry initiative).

Emphasize the values of Equity and Inclusion through the recruitment and activity of the Programming Committee (Edge Effect, Diversity, Redundancy).

- Recruit a programming committee that reflects the diversity of the GSA constituency.
- Recruit Programming committee members that reflect the diversity of the GSA constituency.
- Create intersections between the Programming committee and other committees to work towards more than one goal with each program and initiative (ex: Collaborate programming between Equity and Inclusion, Wages and Benefits, etc.)
Grants Strategic Plan

Goals

1. Revamp the grants system, expanding types of grants and clearly demarcating the place of the grants program in the GSA and at UAlbany. *(Edge Effect, Diversity)*
2. Improve grant communication and information awareness *(Redundancy)*

Appendix

1. **Revamp the grants system**
   a. **Greater responsibilities from grants committee (Redundancy)**
      1. Face-to-face meetings, so we are not simply reading text off a computer screen, but dialoging and interacting in a less mediated fashion.
      2. Retention of committee members through both semesters (and if possible, Summer.)
      3. Gather feedback from committee as to the current methods and purpose of GSA grants. Ask why the number of applications is a small percentage of GSA members, and ways to improve this number.
   b. **More competitive process or slight modifications to make grants more in line with student expectations (Edge Effect, Diversity)**
      1. Increase number of application periods from the current 3 (Fall, Spring, Summer) to 5 (2x Fall, 2x Spring, Summer).
         1. This would require increased effort from the committee members and quicker turnaround, but as it is the majority of committee work is finished by the middle of each semester.
      2. Redesign evaluation process
      3. Raise the amount of funding allowed for doctoral students over the course of their time at UAlbany.
   b. **Diversify types of grants (Diversity, Edge Effect)**
      1. No longer simply individual grants—*team, project-oriented, or interdisciplinary* grants, if possible.
         1. Funding for design and equipment projects.

2. **Improve grant communication and information awareness (Edge Effect, Diversity, Redundancy)**
   a. **Information for Grants (Redundancy, Edge Effect)**
      1. Work with the office webmaster, the Programming Chair, and the VP/RGSO Committee to ensure that the grants page lists helpful (not just minimal) information.
         1. Alternative grants for grad students—if our process is competitive, we need to give opportunities for those who don’t win GSA grants to go.
      2. Solicit grant opportunities via the listserv
     2. Edit grant letters and current guidelines (in conjunction with committee, perhaps including—if needed—member(s) of the Rules cmte. or the Judicial Board.)
   b. **Advise students in prudential management of grant awards (Edge Effect)**
1. Create list of NYS conferences which are often attended by GSA students.
2. Solicit feedback from prior grant recipients—what worked best for keeping down costs?
   1. Without offering free carpools, suggest various means to stretch the dollar.
   2. List hotels or organizations in major NYS university towns, with contact info.
Legislative Strategic Plan

GOALS

1. Increase the face-recognition of the Advocacy Team and turn it into a more solidified representation of our graduate student body.

2. Increase faculty relationships and awareness.

3. Help facilitate better voting competency for the 2016 local, state, and national elections amongst graduate students.

4. Create better relationships between other GSA representatives and the Advocacy team.

BREAKDOWN

1. Increase the face-recognition of the Advocacy Team and turn it into a more solidified representation of our graduate student body.

STRATEGY 1 • Increase Advocacy Team Assembly attendance.

STRATEGY 2 • Encourage Advocacy Team members to be active participants in their (recurring or newly joined) RGSOs.

a. RGSOs are our most active population, while it’s important we reach our whole contingency this is one of the easiest ways for each and every one of us to reach at least a portion of the people we represent. It also gives networking opportunities to help bridge the gap between the involved section of campus and the section of our constituency that is harder for us to reach via event attendance and mingling with new departments or groups. (Work with VP and RGSO committee to better understand how we can facilitate this.)

STRATEGY 3 • Revamp the bylaws and constitution to better solidify the importance of the Advocacy team within the GSA's structure.

a. This is a long term goal, but something that is necessary not only for the evolution of how Lead Senator has changed over the last year and a half, but also so we can better represent such an important arm of our body that really has more direct university representation than our assembly itself. Solidifying the place of this team within our structure will ensure a more healthy working relationship between all branches of the GSA and is a good move forward for our organization as a whole. (Possibly assign a committee made up of more than just the Advocacy team and previously involved individuals to provide a wider scope of opinion on this.)

2. Increase faculty relationships and awareness.

STRATEGY 1 • Evaluate the faculty leadership

a. A big part of the platform I ran on for Lead Senator was an evaluation of the faculty leadership that make up the University Senate. This is an ongoing goal that is very much still in the works – right now, it
is unsure of how formal or informal this process will be but we’re evaluating the possibilities of how best to approach this in a way that works for all parties.

STRATEGY 2 • Increase relationships with graduate student faculty liaisons. a. Many (if not more) of the departments on campus elect a graduate student to serve as a faculty liaison in their faculty meetings. It’s really important that we utilize the existence of these positions to help us facilitate better relationships with faculty.

3. Help facilitate better voting competency for the 2016 local, state, and national elections amongst graduate students.

STRATEGY 1 • Consult with other NAGPS institutes about how they tackle these issues. a. Other NAGPS institutes (such as Mizzou) have voting competency initiatives on their campuses, this is a good opportunity for us to increase awareness of graduate student issues off-campus, as well as further relationships with other NAGPS institutes. Consult with the NAGPS Legislative Concerns Committee.

STRATEGY 2 • Facilitate a relationship with the new Legislative RGSO. a. While the Advocacy team and the Legislative RGSO are two different entities. It is important to understand that what we fight for on campus for graduate students can be directly influenced by off-campus politics, as well as can help inform legislative action.

4. Create better relationships between other GSA representatives and the Advocacy team.

STRATEGY • Facilitate involvement of Committee Chairs and other graduate student (non-Senate) committee reps across campus with the Advocacy team. a. Many things we advocate for and work through in the Senate are much bigger than the Senate. We need to increase the reach of the team to E-board committees, and other GSA entities so the voice of the constituency is better heard through the Senate.