Dear fellow graduate students,

If you are reading this newsletter you may have intimate knowledge of the transformations the Graduate Students Association has been undergoing this year or this may be the first time you have ever heard of us. Regardless of where your knowledge of the GSA falls on this spectrum, an important moment is approaching in which we as graduate students will have a chance to have a voice. As an ex-officio member of the Governance Council of the University Senate, I have observed the development of a shared governance survey which will appear in your Albany inbox in the within the next few weeks. I fought hard to make sure this likely annoying and confusing survey would be sent to you because I know that the results of this survey, particularly student’s answers, will be taken seriously by those conducting it. This is not to say that other surveys you may fill out are not taken seriously by the faculty or administration. Let me be clearer, I will personally ensure as part of the committee that reviews the results that the graduate student response is critically considered and equally valued. I highlight this survey among many because it could serve as a springboard to critically improve the effectiveness of and communication between student and faculty governance structures. The trouble is... We as graduate students have to sit down and complete the survey. I do understand how easy it is to ignore the many surveys that pour into our inboxes so I am making a special request. Please complete this “shared governance” survey conducted by the University Senate Governance Council, even if (especially if!) your answers indicate that you know nothing about our University governance structures. I would not dare ask for your time if I did not think it was worth the effort.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Janiszewski
1098-T tax Forms

We want to bring attention to a critical issue that some of our ABD Graduate Students have encountered this year: Check your 1098-T tax forms from the University. The box for “at least half-time” (Box 8) should be checked, even if you are only registered for a dissertation load.

The Student Financial Center can correct this and reissue it. If this affects you, call them and ask to have it changed. It has a direct impact on your income tax return eligibility for credits and deductions.

Health Benefits Negotiations

This year begins the GSEU negotiations with the Governor's Office and SUNY and we are expecting a long and difficult fight where our health benefits and raises will be on the chopping block.

As a union, we plan to fight for what our members deserve: living wages, proper benefits and years of funding that make it possible to finish our degrees.

In order to make that happen, we need a strong, active membership. This means you'll need to help sign your colleagues union membership cards, help get them to actions and educational events, and talk to your students, family, friends and colleagues about this struggle for a fair contract.

Your negotiating team can only be strong at the bargaining table with the membership behind them!

Sustainability Upcoming Events

The office of Environmental Sustainability has numerous events planned for this Spring! If you would like to nominate someone for a Terra Award (student, faculty or staff member that has contributed to the Sustainability Movement), nominations are due on Monday, April 7. Please fill out the nomination form at www.albany.edu/gogreen and email it to gogreen@albany.edu. Also, on Monday April 7th Brian Bennett will be presenting at the Sustainability Roundtable Series (3PM Campus Center 375). Brian is the Northeast Organic farmer of the Year. On Thursday, April 10th, Hunter Lovins will be lecturing aboutm "Green Capitalism" in the New Business Building Room 10 at 7:30 PM. Earth Week is being celebrated from Monday, April 21st to Sunday April 27th. On Tuesday, April 22nd, there will be a Bike Parade Downtown starting at noon. The Iron Chef competition will take place in the dining halls. The "Top Chef" from each dining hall will compete to cook the best local foods dish! Earth and Wellness Day is on Wednesday, April 23rd. Come visit local vendors and UAlbany student organizations at the small fountain and the Ballroom. There will be a Clothing Exchange in the Assembly Hall. Turn your trash into fashion at the Trashion Fashion competition on Thursday, April 24th! Submit your outfit proposal on MyInvolvement (UA Green Scene) by 4/20! Campus Cleanup is also on 4/24. You must sign up at http://www.albany.edu/cleanup/! Saturday, 4/26 is Food and Art Festival on Liberty Terrace at 1pm. Sunday 4/27 is Family Science Day at University Hall (1-4PM). On Monday, 4/28, Scott Kellogg from the Radix Ecological Center will be presenting on permiculture and urban farming for the last Sustainability Roundtable of the semester. It starts at 3PM in the New Business Building Room 213. For more information about any of these events please visit www.albany.edu/gogreen or email gogreen@albany.edu!
Community Engagement

School of Public Health GSO Stays Active in the Albany Community

UAlbany’s graduate students re also active in the local community. Even before students arrived back to campus from the winter recess, the School of Public Health Graduate Student Organization (SPH GSO) had already organized two community service projects.

The SPH GSO Executive Board joined the staff and volunteers at the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York to assist in organizing, packing, and weighing donations to be distributed to the Food Bank’s many community partners. They plan to return with an even larger group of students at the end of February. Additionally, the SPH GSO purchased and prepared breakfast for families living at Ronald McDonald House of the Capital Region.

Still to come is the School of Public Health’s biggest volunteer event of the semester. This April, SPH students will host the annual International Night—a night of food, cultural performances, and a charitable raffle. Last year’s International Night event attracted over 150 students, faculty, and community members and raised over $800 for the Engeye Clinic in Uganda.

UAlbany Students Making an Impact

Despite hectic schedules and heavy course loads, many UAlbany students make community engagement and outreach a priority, volunteering at and developing partnerships with community organizations throughout the Capital Region. UAlbany is proud of the work that these thoughtful and committed students do to address local needs.

Presidential Forum!!

ALL students are welcome to join this Spring 2014’s Presidential Forum.

At the forum, student representatives will be given a chance to ask UAlbany President Jones questions that may directly affect YOUR experience at UAlbany. There will be a Question and Answer session following the discussion.

The event is FREE and open to ALL students.

The event will be held WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23 from 4:00PM to 5:30PM in the D’Ambra Auditorium in the Life Sciences Research Building. The auditorium is located in the center of the building on the second floor.
The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research known as ICPSR has 735 members world-wide, and seeks to collect data from researchers that can be re-used when original research is complete. The repository was started 50 years ago at the University of Michigan, and is one of the oldest such repositories.

http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/

Data Sources for the ICPSR repository include: government (census, government organizations); large data collection efforts (National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Panel Study of Income Dynamics); polls (ABC and CBS news polls, voter polls); principle investigators (Chitwan Valley Family Study, Marital Instability Over the Life Course); data repurposed (Integrated Fertility Survey Series, Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods); and other organizations (NCAA).

ICPRS also provides open data storage for researchers who must store data according to funding agency requirements. Drafts of data management plans are available on the web site along with explanations of ICPSR data storage services and capabilities.

The University at Albany membership in ICPSR provides not only repository services, but also teaching aids for teaching quantitative methods in social sciences research, and a summer program for advanced topics in social sciences quantitative methods. Go to the ICPSR website today and see what is on offer.

Several introductory classes that take students through the ICPSR website content and services are available each semester. Contact Lorre Smith lsmith@albany.edu for more details regarding the times and locations.