



## Coalition of Graduate Employees ASOSU Winter 2017 Candidate Questionnaire

The Coalition of Graduate Employees is the labor union representing approximately 2000 Graduate Teaching and Research Assistants at Oregon State University. We ask that you complete the following questionnaire to help us understand how your campaign will serve graduate students and graduate employees at OSU. In advance of the election, we will circulate among our membership a summary of all responses. Please limit your responses to 100 words per answer. Please respond via email by 5:00pm Tuesday, March 7.

### Candidate Answers: Simon Brundage (President), Radhika Shah (Vice President)

(1) **Graduate Students and ASOSU**—*Many of ASOSU's functions are targeted at undergraduates, and most graduate students are unaware of ASOSU services that could benefit them. What would you like to see ASOSU do to benefit the graduate student population on campus? How would you propose increasing the awareness of ASOSU's work to graduate students?*

As President and Vice President, we must promulgate that all students are our constituents. Our administration will focus on increasing transparency between ASOSU and graduate students. Monthly, we will reach out to graduate organizations by requesting agenda space to present ASOSU updates.

The Constitution of ASOSU requires archives be kept of specific items, and that ASOSU provide documents to any student of OSU upon request. However, ASOSU has failed to provide students with pertinent information in an accessible manner. We will appoint an Executive Director of Public Relations focused on updating the website and ensuring records are available for viewing.

(2) **Contract Negotiations**—*Many graduate students at OSU are both employees of the University and students. As employees, we bargain with the University over our wages, benefits, and working conditions. We will renegotiate our contract during the next academic year. Please describe how you think ASOSU can support graduate employees in this process.*

In Oregon, both undergraduate and graduate students are covered by state collective bargaining laws. This is the best way for ASOSU to support graduate students: we must advocate for graduate student employee unionization and collective bargaining rights. Your chapter, AFT Local 6069, specifies the importance of membership in increasing bargaining power. To assist in this effort, our administration will create a space on the ASOSU website to advocate for graduate student employee union membership. In particular, we hope to increase the number of union members, and decrease the number of fair-share payers—ultimately increasing union power in fighting for graduate employees.

**(3) Graduate Employee Representation on the Board of Trustees**—*While one position on the Board of Trustees is reserved for a student, this seat has historically been occupied by an undergraduate student. Graduate students—especially graduate employees—have a different relationship to the University and separate needs. How would you help graduate employees gain representation on the University Board of Trustees?*

In the United States, there are many schools where graduate students hold seats on their University Board of Trustees. While ASOSU has no direct authority over the number of positions on the Board, our campaign recognizes the importance of equally representing undergraduate and graduate students. If elected, our administration will draft a resolution to be presented to the ASOSU Congress, specifying that ASOSU endorses the placement of a graduate student on the Board of Trustees. Graduate students have representation within the ASOSU Congress; it is only sensible they are given equal representation with a Trustee, as well.

**(4) Child Care**—*Like all OSU community members, graduate students struggle to find and afford quality child care. How would you work to expand affordable child care options for all campus constituents?*

First, we would direct the ASOSU Congress to draft a resolution to the Board of Trustees asking for OSU to join many universities in offering need-based stipends to graduate student parents. While we wouldn't be able to promise the success of this resolution, we promise to push it forward. Our administration would also advocate for the expansion of existing childcare options on campus. We must guarantee to student parents that, upon admission, new slots will become available for their children. Childcare is within the Student Incidental Fee budget—we will seek to maintain funding, and fight attempts to decrease funding.