

Report to University Council for 4/21/21

Despite all the challenges that we have faced this school year, graduate and professional students have remained diligent, determined, and thoughtful. As this academic year comes to an end there are still many issues facing graduate students that GSA will continue to advocate for. I would like to spend this moment raising awareness on the Special Institutional Fee that all students pay, but graduate and professional students receive no in-kind service for. SIF-funded programs largely benefit the undergraduate population such as “First-Year Odyssey,” enhancing academic advising via the “Exploratory Center,” and experiential learning. Also, the SIF funds graduate teaching assistantships, effectively making graduate students pay to work for the university. Last school year, GSA passed a resolution calling for the elimination of the SIF. Since then, several faculty colleges and senates have expressed support for the elimination of such fee including the Franklin Faculty Senate. We have been told that the fee cannot be eliminated or lowered due to it being decided upon by the Board of Regents, but Georgia Tech has been able to at least get their SIF lowered for graduate students the last several years and now theirs is at [\\$344](#) for graduate students, while we pay \$450 at UGA. The fee has already been renewed for the next academic year, but we believe this fee places an unjust burden on students and thus will continue to raise awareness and advocate against. Thank you for your time.