



My name is Zachary Arms, and I am seeking the position of External Affairs officer in the Lehigh Graduate Student Senate. I am a 3rd year PhD student in the History program here at Lehigh, focusing on modern US cultural, intellectual, and gender history. This is my 5th year in graduate school—prior to Lehigh, I received my masters at Indiana State University in Terra Haute, Indiana. I believe that this background allows me a perspective on the needs of graduate students in both public and private universities, which is valuable when discussing pending legislation that would affect the student population in the United States.

Much like many of you, I was only somewhat interested in politics until the 2016 presidential election, which galvanized my interest and served as a sobering reminder of the problems of a lack of political consciousness. In addition, the near-inclusion of the “grad tax” in the 2017 tax bill illustrated how many within the federal government do not consider the needs of graduate students while drafting legislation. Since then, I have made an effort to keep up with the news from both Washington and Harrisburg that could potentially affect our lives, our livelihood, and our scholarship.

If elected, I would do my best to shape this new office into one that best represents the needs of Lehigh graduate students to our leaders in Bethlehem, Harrisburg, and Washington. The GSS already has some of these lines of communication open, particularly with our lobbyist in Washington, and I will work to keep those lines open. In addition, I will remain in contact with our fellow schools that are part of the National Association of Graduate-Professional students, which will help to keep on top of what legislation could affect us and will help create bonds of solidarity among those of us that share the experience of being a graduate student, be that at a public or private university. I will also work to keep the graduate student population up to date on what is occurring in the halls of government that could affect us, so that you will be informed.

This is a new office, and it will be shaped by those of us in the GSS and the broader Lehigh community into what would be the most effective, useful role for our needs. If you decide to elect me for this position, I look forward to working with you all in representing our interests to the outside world.