

# GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The administration still has not released the majority of the graduate student activity fees paid into ASU for the use of graduate student activities. This money is still subsidizing the undergraduate activities: Student Activities Board that provides activities as homecoming (no graduate student representation), spring fest, Mardi Gras, welcome week (not for graduate students), Student Government Association that provides little support of graduate student concerns, Leadership Center Programming which is solely an undergraduate student benefit.

There are two main issues that the executive board of the Graduate Student Council must remember to keep in the forefront of the yearly agenda's until the issues are rectified: (1) obtaining nothing less than 75% of the graduate student activity fees for operational and graduate student activities funding, (2) the lack of recognition of the GSC in the faculty handbook still needs to be addressed or the original purpose of the GSC, the voice of the graduate student body, will be lost.

The following outline sets the course for the GSC for the next few years. This plan should be updated and revised yearly by the executive board of the council. This list encompasses strategic ideas and goals that will keep the foundation of the GSC at ASU moving forward and allow it to grow into the governmental process it was designed to be.

The main points in bold black were proposed as strategic goals. They should be the driving goals of the GSC and should not change over the next few years. The sub-points with open circles are specific objectives that will change slowly; points with filled circles are action steps that should change as we accomplish the objective or circumstance obviates their need. The order they appear indicates some importance but is not intended to place priorities oriented to graduate students over the other.

## **Serve as the principal support organization for graduate students**

- Establish, promote, facilitate, and preserve departmental Graduate Student Associations (GSAs)
  - Host a yearly workshop and create a manual to promote the creation of new GSAs.
  - Continue to have department representatives talk about their respective GSA's at GSC meetings
  - Maintain GSA information, contacts, and calendar of events on the GSC's website.
- Facilitate and develop graduate efforts to acquire grant funding
  - Locate and publicize grant writing resources (courses, workshops) for developing grant writing skills

- Advocate for ORTT to create and send out calendar of funding opportunities, deadlines and have link on website
- Organize grant review workshops
- Advocate for ORTT to improve and increase information, publicity and resources for grants and grant writing
- Provide website link to grant resources
- Strengthen and foster community among graduate/professional students
  - Establish a new committee to schedule and coordinate programs/workshops and social events
- Orient new graduate students and applicants to ASU and connect them to the GSC.
  - Work with Graduate School to sponsor and improve Fall orientation for graduate students
  - Identify and attend department level orientations
  - Work with Graduate School to create and distribute a student orientation packet
  - Create and distribute a GSC Guide to ASU.
  - Use the all-graduate student distribution list to welcome and provide official announcements to all graduate students

### **Increase advocacy of graduate/professional issues at state and national levels**

- Become an organization that graduate or professional students in other institutions in Arkansas can model
  - Promote the inception of graduate organizations at all institutions in Arkansas
  - Create a federation of graduate student organizations in Arkansas
  - Provide assistance and leadership to Arkansas graduate organizations
- Actively participate in the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS)
  - Pay for institutional membership in NAGPS and subsidize the attendance of representative(s) at annual national and regional meetings
  - Provide information of NAGPS activities and benefits to our community via the list serve and website
- Strengthen lobby efforts on behalf of graduate students to the Arkansas legislature
  - Encourage continuity within GSC lobby team.
  - Promote organized statewide graduate/professional lobby efforts.
  - Lobby for GRD funding to continue (currently \$90,000/year)

### **Provide for the future viability of GSC**

- Evaluate and update positions and descriptions of GSC executive board members and employees
  - Create a job description for our GA positions
- Evaluate and consider revision of Standing Committee Chairs
  - Examine and reorganize (if necessary) current committees.
  - Create a committee to handle social programming
  - Consider creation of computer resource allocation, and alternative mediation committees
- Provide for continuity of leadership
  - Create a training manual for each committee chair and committee
  - Create a training manual for each employee

- Provide transitional training for new officers and committee chairs
- Yearly train new Council representatives
- Create an ad-hoc committee to review the GSC Constitution and By-Laws.
  - Focus on GSC standing committees, officers and budgetary decisions and flexibility
- Update the history of GSC and have it available on the website

### **Proactively identify and address individual and systemic student challenges and seek solutions**

- Open and maintain official channels of communication with ASU's administration.
  - Designate a liaison person to bring graduate concerns to the attention of members of the Graduate School and Administration.
  - Advocate for a university level graduate ombudsperson, funded with an assistantship, to work under the Provost. Some functions would be to conduct surveys and identify, receive, and disseminate student communications and concerns.
  - Hold public forums to assess and identify student concerns in childcare, family and graduate housing, health care, etc.
- Establish, publicize, and ensure continuity for the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process

### **Advocate for clarification of graduate student employment system (GATA/RA) and protect rights of students**

- Consider and review impact of graduate TA's on undergraduate education with provost
- Ask Graduate School to provide a semesterly or yearly report outlining departmental distributions, salaries and titles of graduate and professional assistants and instructors.
- Advocate for a campus-wide forum to discuss assistantships across campus
- Push for standardization of assistant workload and procedures
- Encourage university and department level teaching assistant training.
- Create assistant employment listings similar to those available for student employment.