

GSC Meeting, 26th Jan, 2011

1. Opening:

- a. **Roll Call** - Core GSC members and representatives from an array of graduate departments participated in the roll call.
- b. **MOM Review** - La Desta (Didi) elicited from the reps if they had any queries/concerns with the minutes of meeting for the previous GSC meeting that had been posted on the GSC website. GSC Reps were recommended to periodically visit the GSC website for getting the MOMs of all upcoming GSC meetings.
- c. **Treasury Report** – No active budget at this time.
- d. **Shared Governance Committee Report** – The GSC internal VP, Tom Henry who is nominated on the University Planning Committee, shared the details of the committee report. (See attached committee report by Tom – Appendix # 1)

2. Old Business:

- a. **Amendment to GSC Constitution and By Laws** – Brainstorming is in process on whether non-GSC members could be given an opportunity to participate in GSC meetings to put forth any issue faced by the graduate students. Once a decision is made, the GSC constitution will be amended as per the standard protocol for making the amendments.
- b. **Frequency of GSC Meetings** – Paige Hannahs from the Teacher Education graduate department pointed out to change the default frequency of GSC meetings mentioned in the GSC Constitution to the current adopted schedule.
- c. **Executive board appointments** – Core GSC reps were asked if they had any issues/recommendations on the appointment of members on GSC executive board. GSC reps are fine with the current appointments to the GSC exec board.
- d. **NAGPS** – Didi is working with Dr. Sustich (Dean of Graduate School) on the logistics for attending the next NAGPS meeting in TX. Interested reps should sync with Didi so that necessary logistics arrangement can be made.
- e. **Office Space and permanent meeting room** – Didi will work towards making the board room on 8th floor of the library as the permanent venue for GSC meetings. All GSC reps are fine with this new meeting site.
- f. **International Students Insurance** - Krishna Bista from Education Leadership graduate department, along with his committee will participate in the upcoming GSC executive meeting and provide the details on the findings of their committee. Salient points from their findings will be shared with the GSC reps in the subsequent general GSC meeting.
- g. **Graduate Student Orientation** – This project is still in design phase. More on this will be discussed at a later date.

3. New Business

- a. **Business Department Concern** – Some core courses that are supposed to be offered are not being offered to the business students. The (affected) students are not able to plan their graduation dates unless they have a comprehensive information on when (which semester) will the core courses be made available. In the worst case, students nearing their graduation will have to defer their graduation schedule by at least one semester just because the core courses were not offered in a timely fashion. A committee comprising of Mark Randall from History department and Venkatesh Patil (GSC Secretary) will be working towards alleviating this issue.
- b. **GA Tuition Waiver** – Tom Henry has suggested all the reps to read the proposal on GA tuition waiver which is available online on the GSC website. This will help the reps to get the overall context and they can then join in the effort initiated by Dr. Sustich to iron out this issue with the top management.
- c. **+/- grading system proposal** – Mark Randall to look into this. More updates on this will be available at a later time.
- d. **Structure and Funding Review** – Didi reinstated the need to make GSC an autonomous institution so that it can effectively and efficiently act on behalf of the graduate students. On-campus graduate students now represent 25% of the student body and having an organization like GSC to solely work towards betterment of graduate students is the need of the hour. Effort is in process to seek funds for GSC so that GSC can act effectively. Tom spoke for about thirty minutes giving the GSC a condensed history of the GSC and the former “Structure and Funding Proposal”. (See attached report by Tom – Appendix # 2)

4. Other updates

- a. GSC to get at least one SGA senator (who is a graduate level student) to attend GSC meetings
- b. GSC External VP, Amy Hitt, to represent GSC in SGA
- c. To improve the GSC footprint, Miranda Emery from Journalism has created a GSC group on Facebook.
- d. Didi has created a logo for GSC. It has been approved by all GSC reps and it is submitted to Dr. Sustich for a final review before officially adopting it.

UPC Committee Report by Tom Henry

University Planning Committee

met on Thursday, January 13, at 3:00 p.m. in the Library Board Room

1. ASU-J is knocking on 14,000 total enrollment. *Record
2. 10,400 students from Arkansas. *Record
3. 68 countries are represented. *Record
4. Over 3,000 graduate students. *Record
5. ASU-J has moved from 4th to 2nd largest university in Arkansas only behind U of A in Fayetteville.
6. U.S. News & World Report has raised ASU-J from a tier 3 to a tier 1 ranking.
7. ASU-J is in the top ten of all 'veteran friendly' universities in the U.S.
8. More Masters Degree programs are now offered than ever before. *Record
9. Only 3 short of the record of PhD. programs.
10. Highest residential enrollment in ASU-J history; which positions ASU as a research rather than a 'suitcase' university. Just less than 3,000 students live on campus.
11. More than \$10 million in philanthropic donations. *Record
12. Phase II of the overpass should be completed by February.
13. Faculty raise, which was held in escrow until the financial crisis was navigated, was finally given in the 4th QTR of 2010. This included a 2% across the board, 100% health care increase. This was made possible since Arkansas was only one of five states not in red.
14. Waiting on Legislative session to end, but Gov and Legislators have already stated that tuition will not be allowed to increase very much at all, if any for the next year.
15. Only 50% of ASU-J budget is supplied by the State budgetary process.
16. Higher Education Institutions are expected to get about a 1% increase.
17. April 4th is the estimated end of the legislative session.
18. Also mentioned extensive safety modifications on campus (i.e. lights, trees, gates, additional call boxes, etc.) including the hiring of one additional ASU PD and he will ask the UPC for one more each year for the next two years. Increased enrollment has put the department "woefully understaffed".

Structure and Funding Review

By Tom Henry presented to GSC
Thursday, January 26, at 11:30 a.m. in the Library Board Room

Background

- Historically, the Graduate Student Council (GSC) at Arkansas State University has functioned sporadically and with little impact on campus life. That of course is changing with increased organization and more dedication from the organization.
- However, in 2004 the GSC successfully petitioned administration to grant tuition waivers to Doctoral Students and Candidates.
- In 2006, the GSC was identified as a constituency group in the Shared Governance of ASU-Jonesboro along with the Student Government Association, Staff Senate, Faculty Senate, Dean's Council and Chairs Council. We now have at least one permanent seat on all Shared Governance Committees on campus with the notable exception of: Student Discipline, Parking, and Athletics.
- Two years ago, the GSC petitioned for tuition waivers associated with Graduate Assistant Positions at the Master's level, pending funding levels.
- The GSC orchestrated "Graduate Student Scholars Day".
- Successfully disputed a disproportionate tuition increase (7.5% for graduate students with only a 6.0% for undergraduates) (Since that time however, we have seen attempts to revert back)
- Graduate School enrollment, at the time of the initial proposal had increased from 10% to 15% of the total enrollment at ASU-Jonesboro. Now it has risen to 25%.
- The Graduate Student Council has been functioning as both an effective voice for the underrepresented graduate student concerns, despite the fact that the Faculty Handbook still recognizes the SGA as the ONLY voice of the entire student population (both grad and undergrad).

The ASU Graduate Student

- The graduate student at ASU is mired in both personal and institutional growth and transition unlike any other constituency group on campus.
- Many graduate students assume one of a variety of competitive graduate assistantship positions while pursuing their academic goals.
- For some this takes the form of a teaching assistant, research assistance or an administrative assistant position, including those related to obtaining grants for ASU-

Jonesboro.

- In sum, the graduate student at ASU exists in dual roles: assuming both student and teacher/professional responsibilities in tandem.
- However, the continued success of the GSC and graduate student body we represent is nearly impossible under the current student government structure.

Current ASU Student Government Structure and Funding: A Design for Future Failure

- The current student government structure fails to provide an adequate forum to address issues faced by graduate students.
- For example, the current student government structure recognizes the GSC as a “registered student organization (RSO),” and as such the GSC must compete for resources as any other student organization, with the exception of SGA.
- These resources are only available by petitioning SGA and Action Fund, both of which are run largely, if not exclusively, by undergraduates.
- For one thing, it is blatantly unethical for graduate assistants to be forced to ask some of their undergraduate students for funding.
- It further undermines the graduate student in the classrooms they teach in.
- Next, the SGA (being dominated by undergraduates) focus their time, energy and funds toward undergraduate issues such as ‘Rush week’, tailgate parties, and the student sections at the baseball stadium; rather than for graduate student concerns such as core curriculum being offered, GA/TA positions to offset the lack of Pell Grants by graduate students, Student insurance for international students, etc.
- When the GSC has petitioned the SGA for funding, they find themselves having to not only beg for funds, but also having to educate the SGA to the issues, (both their importance and significance) and persuade them to allocate the funds – often at the handicap of either not being allowed on the agenda, or being only given five to ten minutes to elucidate them.
- When a graduate student approaches the GSC about a legitimate concern, oftentimes the GSC is unable to address these concerns because they don’t have the financial and/or technical resources necessary to take direct action.
- Graduate students should be able to speak directly to their representative body, the GSC, and should have confidence that their issues can be addressed with the same resources and attention as undergraduate concerns are addressed by the SGA.
- As mentioned earlier the Shared Governance Process of ASU clearly identifies SGA and GSC as two entirely separate entities, which has given the GSC nearly equitable

representation on important policy and issues on campus. However, the current student government organization structure is not viable for either the current, and especially for the future student demographic and therefore requires significant overhaul in order to truly incorporate the graduate student 'voice', while reducing inefficiencies, miscommunication, frustration and perceived animosities – not to mention underrepresentation. (give example of past communications between SGA and GSC)

- The current student government funding structure also fails to support the needs of graduate students.
- Currently there is NO funding given to the GSC other than the limited (in what it can be used for) and sporadic Action Fund. As far as records indicate, over the last four years, the GSC has asked for funding for two events. The grand total of these requests were about \$1,000 of which the GSC received about \$600. Now this might not seem too bad, until one realizes that at the time graduate students were contributing an estimated \$69,000 PER YEAR to the 'kitty' by way of their Student Activity Fees. That amount has grown significantly over the last two years.
- The GSC receives no direct, reliable, lump sum allocation from this fund; nor any other fund for that matter. However, despite representing 25% of the entire student population at ASU-Jonesboro, the GSC has received no budgeted funds and only the above mentioned dollars despite paying a very large portion of the 'kitty'. However, the SGA, representing the other 75% of the campus has received the entire amount and maintains the following budget (not to mention Student Activity funds):

FIGURE 1:

SGA 2009 – 2010 Budget

Salaries	\$27,625.50
Supplies	\$3,750.00
Operations	\$5,000.00
Senate Appointed Positions	\$1,850.00
Public Relations	\$7,000.00
Activities	\$16,250.00
Scholarships	\$1,500.00
Elections	\$1,500.00
Executive Fund	\$8,624.50
Special Assistance	\$7,100.00
Total	\$80,200.00

Itemized

Salaries

President	\$6,752.90
Vice President	\$5,525.10
Chief of Staff	\$4,297.30
Public Relations	\$4,297.30
Secretary	\$3,069.50
Cultural Diversity	\$2,455.60
Parliamentarian	\$1,227.80
Subtotal	\$27,625.50

Supplies

Office Supplies	\$3,500.00
Miscellaneous	\$250.00
Subtotal	\$3,750.00

Operations

Phone	
Postage	
Travel	
Miscellaneous	
Subtotal	\$5,000.00

Senate Appointed Positions

Action Fund Commissioner	\$1,500.00
President Pro – Temp	\$ 350.00
Subtotal	\$1,850.00

(cont.)

Public Relations

Jonesboro Suns	\$1,000.00
Promotional Materials	\$2,000.00
Brochures	\$500.00
Meet Your Senator	\$1,000.00
Advertising	\$1,500.00
Special Events	\$500.00
Subtotal	\$7,500.00

Activities

MLK Week	\$1,000.00
Conferences	\$10,000.00
Leadership Retreat	\$4,000.00
Banquet	\$1,000.00
Spring Semester Leader. Dev.	\$500.00
Subtotal	\$16,500.00

Scholarship

Mary Lynn Williamson Leadership Scholarship	\$500.00
William R. Stripling Leadership Scholarship	\$500.00
International Student Scholarship	\$500.00
Subtotal	\$1,500.00

Elections

\$1,500.00

Executive Fund

Special Events	\$8,624.50
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Special Assistance

Special Projects	\$7,100.00
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- Because GSC does not receive any dedicated funding, we are unable to host graduate student orientation sessions at the beginning of each semester or print of orientation materials.
- Therefore the GSC is neither able to pass along necessary information to ensure that new graduate student succeed, nor are we able to highlight research and teaching ethics and responsibilities, nor introduce the existence and purpose of the Graduate School and the GSC.
- The lack of funding also means that opportunities are not available for successful students to present professional work or research results to a local audience through a science café, public seminar series, or research symposia.
- Finally, the lack of funding significantly reduces the professional development of graduate students as funds to support attendance of professional workshops or meetings are limited, lacking, or allotted to other registered student organizations through Action Fund for functions such as tailgating.
- GSC membership in regional and/or national organizations that benefit the entire university such as the NGPS is not funded.
- WE have no permanent office space, nor funds for copies, staples, phone, communication, staff or officers. (By the way, office supplies such as these are not allowable under the Action Fund either. Neither are fundraisers to raise office supply monies.)

University Comparison Survey Efforts: Results

- Of the 28 schools evaluated in this survey effort, the average total enrollment was 15,537 students with 16.84% of the population being listed as graduate students. We have just less than 14,000 students and a 25% grad student proportion.
- Of these 28 schools, five were in the Sun Belt Conference and included FIU, University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM), University of Louisiana at Lafayette, University of North Texas, and Arkansas State University.
- The current status of the Arkansas State University is that a graduate student organization exists but lacks funding. The results of this survey show that 19 of 28 schools evaluated have active graduate student organizations, and 18 of the 19 graduate student organizations receive funding. The lone institution which does not fund its graduate organization is ASU. Within the Sun Belt Conference, 4 of 5 institutions have a graduate student organization; ULM does not have an organization. Of the 5 Sunbelt Conference institutions evaluated, Arkansas State University is the only one which does not fund an existing graduate student organization.

- For the rest of the results I refer you to the proposal which was submitted 2 years ago and is still located on the GSC website.

So, what does the proposal ask for?

Proposed Alternatives: Student Government Structure

- Our goal is to be recognized by the entire campus, particularly the Faculty Handbook as the sole voice of Graduate Students on campus.

Proposed Alternatives: GSC Funding

Based on ASU's most recent enrollment statistics, there are 11,490 total students. At 1,729, graduate students comprised approximately 15% of the total student body. The Student Activity Fee was \$20 per Fall and Spring semester for any student, undergraduate or graduate, enrolled in 3 or more credit hours. This fund was expected to yield nearly \$460,000 for AY 2008-2009 and included the contribution by graduate students of approximately \$69,000.

The Graduate Student Council proposed the following stepwise funding solution to establish a proper operation budget in three years after implementation. While the actual dollar amounts in this proposal was designed to change over time with enrollment, the overall percentages was to remain the same. The GSC acknowledged there are events and services of common interest to both undergraduate and graduate students and recognize this commonality in the following funding proposal (Table 1).

In Year 1, the GSC requested 20% of the total graduate student contribution of the Student Activity Fee, to fund an annual Graduate Student Scholars Day, a fall graduate student orientation, general infrastructure and supplies (campus office space, computer, printing costs, communications, etc.) and membership dues to NAGPS.

For Year 2, the GSC requested 40% of the total graduate student contribution to the Student Activity Fee to fund a spring graduate student orientation and attendance expenses for GSC members to attend the Annual Conference of the NAGPS, in addition to Year 1 expenditures.

In Year 3, the funding process of the Graduate Student Council would have been complete, as presented in the former proposal, with the GSC requesting 60% of the total graduate student contribution to the Student Activity Fee. This money would have established a Graduate Student Action Fund in addition to all events and programs in Year 1 and Year 2. This GSC Action Fund would have provided dedicated resources to graduate students for professional development purposes such as attending conferences, professional meetings and workshops, purchasing research or productivity equipment, and provide resources for manuscript or thesis

publication. Through the 40% of graduate student fees which would have remained in the Student Activity Fund, the GSC would have been able to cosponsor events common to both student levels to with SGA and the SAB.

Year of Implementation	Value of Student Activity Fund*	Graduate Student Contribution*	GSC Operating Budget*	% of Grad Activity Fees	Value of Remaining Student Activity Fund*	Remaining Grad Student Contribution to Activity Fund*
1	\$460,000.00	\$69,000.00	\$13,800.00	20%	\$446,200.000	\$55,200.00
2	\$460,000.00	\$69,000.00	\$27,600.00	40%	\$432,400.000	\$41,400.00
3	\$460,000.00	\$69,000.00	\$41,400.00	60%	\$418,600.000	\$27,600.00

* Subject to change based on total and graduate student enrollment.

What else?

- When we began looking into this, we were told (and later given verifying documentation) that our past Chancellor Dr. Potts had (and now these are in my words), been made to feel like a father sitting down with two rebellious children.
- Once the GSC submitted this proposal to the Shared Governance Process, Chancellor Potts requested that the process be stopped to give him time to attempt a negotiated settlement between the two organizations – the GSC and the SGA. Clearly the SGA did not want to lose the funds, nor the control and resisted.
- The offer that was given from Chancellor Potts and the SGA was that the GSC, despite paying in on average \$69,000 in student activity fees, would be given from an undisclosed source, \$10,000 for a small budget. The GSC Executive Board presented that to the entire GSC and it was voted upon. The GSC decision was to reject the payoff and continue with the Shared Governance Process.
- Upon completion of the process all committees were in agreement with the GSC and voted for its implementation except for the Staff Senate and the SGA.
- Upon reaching Chancellor Pott’s desk he rejected it outright and in a memorandum gave these reasons:
 1. “It is neither desirable nor appropriate for one participant in a carefully negotiated shared governance process to seek to splinter the authority and organization of another participant, especially when other avenues exist to address the concerns of the group proposing the change.”
 - a. He attempted to give an analogy of the Deans Council trying to weaken the Faculty Senate – this ignored natural constituencies and is frankly insulting.
 - b. He insisted that the Graduate School, at that time comprised of 15% of the student body, should/could vote as a block to gain more spots on the SGA. Again, this is insulting in that SGA elections are mostly popularity contests like Homecoming Queen and the graduate students are more scattered across NE Arkansas, not just four or five residence halls (of course for the most part).
 2. “The GSC currently has an equal voice with the SGA in the shared governance process where policy decisions concerning the university are considered.”
 - a. This is also false. . almost true, but as we have mentioned there are currently

three or four committees where the GSC still does not have a seat, despite the SGA having one or more.

3. “The GSC’s primary complain sought to be addressed by its shared governance proposal appears to be hat of funding because it must petition the SGA for funds.”
 - a. I won’t even rehash the error of this one. But for two short bullets – we paid at that time \$69,000 each year into the fund and were given mere hundreds, despite the SGA having a budget of over \$80,000.
4. “Survey results from other Universities do not support any one student Government structure and therefore ASU should craft the solution that best address the issues on this campus.”
 - a. The survey did indeed show that school of comparable size, though not within the state of Arkansas, did overwhelmingly embrace and fund the structure and funding plan as submitted. This was especially apparent in universities that ASU naturally competes against (i.e. Sun Belt Schools)