



**Graduate and Professional Student Association
Associated Students of Arizona State University**

2009-2010 POLICY DIRECTIVE

Background and Purpose

This document is designed to present the views and beliefs of the Graduate and Professional Student Association of Arizona State University. The GPSA acknowledges the importance of graduate work within our university community and thus promotes increased financial and social support for graduate students. Topics in this document call for University action that the GPSA believes will improve the quality of an educational experience for graduate and professional students. The Executive and Assembly committees will facilitate efforts on these issues throughout each academic year. *The GPSA Policy Directive* will be regularly addressed through Committee work and disseminated through the Assembly. This is a working document and reflects salient and current GPSA directives.

Mission of GPSA

The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) exists to advocate for and provide support and services for the graduate and professional student community of Arizona State University. We are mandated to advocate on behalf of graduate and professional students at local, state, and national levels, provide a forum for open dialogue between the graduate and professional student body and the university, aid in student organization and involvement, and to administer services, resources, and benefits for the larger graduate body.

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GPSA 2009 – 2010 Policy Directive Section I: Financial Costs & Support

Overview

Graduate students recognize the costs to the university associated with graduate programs. To that end, the GPSA wishes to underscore the following important aspects of financial support provided to graduate students from the State of Arizona, Arizona State University, and individual colleges and departments.

Cost of Attendance

- A. We strongly supports keeping graduate costs as low as possible.
- B. We recognize tuition and fee increases will occur to maintain high educational standards at ASU. We insist that a percentage of tuition increases be used specifically for services and benefits for graduate student programming, resources, and facilities.
- C. We contend that any long-term tuition and fee increases shall be implemented at a predictable and steady rate so graduate students can plan for their educational costs accordingly.
- D. We request that administration decisions related to tuition and fees be done so in a transparent manner.
- E. We request that graduate students are involved throughout fee and tuition policy decisions preferably year-round, but at least 6 months prior to the Arizona Board of Regents' tuition and fee setting meetings.
- F. We will monitor differential tuition and fees for each graduate program and college to hold the administration accountable.
- G. We believe that university, college, and department fees are *de facto* tuition.
- H. We believe that any and all fees must be reasonable, justifiable, and designated for a specific purpose with identifiable ends.
- I. We do not support omnibus student fees and contend that all fees must be clearly identifiable with specific names on tuition statements.
- J. We believe that graduate students must have oversight in fee setting and control of fund distributions.

Fees for Student Services

- A. We believe that any fee supplanting or augmenting a service provided by the university must have student oversight including, but not limited to, direct control of the allocation decisions of that fee.
- B. The GPSA President and Vice President of External Affairs are mandated to work closely with the Arizona Board of Regents, especially the voting student regent, to ensure that any student fee has student oversight.

Fees for Student Services (Cont'd)

- C. We believe that the student programming and facilities fee money should be devoted to supporting and improving student initiatives, including Graduate Student Organization events funding, support of graduate travel, graduate issues advocacy, recognition of excellence in graduate teaching, and other student priorities.
- D. We believe that student fee monies should not be used to replace administrative, operational, or salary expenses currently funded by the Vice President of University Student Initiatives.
- E. The GPSA President is mandated to work closely with the other elected student leaders to ensure that all fee money is distributed in an equitable manner.

Graduate Student Stipends & Tuition Waivers

- A. Stipends should be comparable to those available at ASU's peer educational institutions.
- B. Stipends must be increased at regular intervals relevant to the costs of education and comparable to those at ASU's peer institutions.
- C. We believe that the University shall mandate standards for pay across departments, including minimum stipend amounts.
- D. We believe that all Graduate Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants should receive a tuition waiver, regardless of the amount of time devoted to their assistantship.
- E. We will continue to advocate for additional financial support for all TAs and RAs in the form of improved health care and additional tuition & fee remission programs.

Financial Aid

- A. We recognize that increasing tuition costs dictate an increase in financial aid specifically tailored for graduate students.
- B. We support equitable access to financial aid resources for funded and non-funded graduate students.
- C. We recognize the needs for availability of multiple types of financial resources for graduate education and will actively work to develop new options for expanding existing sources.
- D. We believe in simplifying the financial aid award process and will regularly provide feedback to the Office of Student Financial Assistance.
- E. We will work to obtain an annual report, provided by the administration, detailing the amount of financial aid awarded specifically to graduate students. That report will be made available on the GPSA website once received by the University.

GPSA 2009 – 2010 Policy Directive
Section II: ASU Resources for Graduate Students

Overview

The Graduate and Professional Student Association have come to expect a set level of services provided to graduate students from the University. This section outlines some of those expectations as well as our overall view of what services the university should provide.

Quality and Access to Health Care

- A. We will work toward increasing quality health care benefits for students to include affordable prescription care, vision, dental care, lower deductibles for medical procedures, and higher lifetime maximums.
- B. Health care must be affordable to funded and non-funded graduate students, including those wishing to add dependent coverage.
- C. We believe that domestic partners should be included for dependent coverage.
- D. We will work to continue to improve university-wide health and wellness services. This includes strong representation on the ASU Student Health Advisory Committee.
- E. We mandate that Graduate Student Employees be granted paid time off for illness.

Graduate and Professional Student Housing

- A. We will advocate for the inclusion of amenities tailored to the specific housing needs of graduate and professional students in the planned construction of student on-campus housing. Priorities include: proximity to campus and services, affordability, internet access, a range of housing styles for singles and couples, and an academic-friendly environment.
- B. We will advocate for rental rates in student housing units that are affordable, based on graduate student stipends and financial aid opportunities.
- C. We will maintain a listserv for graduate students to post message related to open space for roommates and for rental spaces off-campus.

Childcare and Family Services

- A. We strongly support improving access to and quality of child and family support services at all ASU locations.
- B. We will advocate for increased support for graduate students dealing with family issues, including those that may require an academic and/or employment leave of absence for family or medical reasons.

Improving International Student Support

- A. We actively support and will work closely with international student advocacy groups as a means to improve the overall network of support services for international graduate and professional students.
- B. We will work with the international student office and international student coalition of ASU in order to ensure that international graduate students are treated with respect and fairness.
- C. We will work with legislative representatives to address concerns of international students, including provisions of any relevant legislation and potential consequences thereof.

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Section III: GPSA Resources for Graduate Students

Overview

The Graduate and Professional Student Association offers a variety of services and resources for graduate students. This section outlines what resources GPSA offers to ASU Graduate Students and serves as a guideline for those programs and resources.

Graduate Research Support Program

- A. We will continue to work with the Graduate College to expand the annual GPSA Research Grant Competition through both university and non-university funding sources.
- B. We will continue to document and recognize the high quality research conducted by ASU graduate and professional students on all of the ASU campuses through journal articles, press releases, online announcements, public speaking engagements, and discussions with administrators and legislators.
- C. We will continue to demonstrate that this program is the strongest of its kind in the Nation.
- D. We will provide an outlet for award winners to showcase their high-quality research.

Travel & Professional Development Grant Programs

- A. We will continue to provide financial support to graduate and professional students pursuing professional development at national and international conferences.
- B. We will continue to document the funding needs of graduate students for travel to professional development workshops and conferences through these programs.
- C. We firmly believe that academic departments are primarily responsible for funding their graduate student travel and that GPSA travel programs shall not act as a surrogate for departmental funding.
- D. We will continue to seek additional funding and resources for the GPSA Travel Grant programs.

Recognition of Teaching Excellence

- A. We will continue to provide support and recognition of the high quality of instruction provided by graduate student teaching assistants and associates.
- B. We will expand recognition of award winners within their local departments and the University as a whole.
- C. We will seek additional funding sources to award recipients of our annual Teaching Excellence Award with a monetary grant.

Community Building

- A. We will encourage interdisciplinary social and community interaction between graduate students at all ASU locations.
- B. We will provide inclusive graduate student social activities throughout the year including interdisciplinary social events and the graduate student appreciation week.
- C. We will continue to seek additional funding for graduate student programming.
- D. We will advocate for and sponsor professional development events.
- E. The GPSA Assembly will be the primary outlet for graduate students to work together as a community to improve the graduate student community at Arizona State University.

Support for Graduate Student Organizations (GSOs)

- A. One of the primary goals of the GPSA is to foster greater communication, interaction, and collaboration among the diverse graduate student organizations across the University.
- B. GSOs are often unaware of the opportunity to combine their efforts with other GSOs to support similar activities and agendas. Collaboration and communication among GSOs increases the utility of limited resources while enhancing the quality of sponsored activities by providing multiple perspectives. We will actively encourage such communication, interaction, and collaboration among and between GSOs in order to benefit the largest possible number of graduate and professional students at ASU.
- C. We will sponsor an event for all GSO presidents (or their designees) at least once per semester in order to foster a sense of collaboration among the organizations.

Graduate Student Centers (GSCs)

- A. We will continue to maintain a space specifically designated for all graduate students at the Tempe, Poly, West, and Downtown ASU campuses.
- B. The Tempe GSC will serve as the administrative office space for GPSA officers and staff.
- C. We will work closely with ASU administration in building, improving, and supporting the GSCs on every campus.

GPSA 2009 – 2010 Policy Directive Section IV: Graduate Student Advocacy

Overview

The Graduate and Professional Student Association understands that many of the decisions made at the University level are a direct result of downward political or financial pressure from the Arizona Board of Regents or the State of Arizona. To that end, we have set forth some objectives to keep graduate students engaged in the legislative process at the local, state, and national levels.

Awareness and Engagement in the Legislative Process

- A. We will continue to educate graduate students about the actual and potential impacts of the local, state, and national legislative processes.
- B. We will hold the Arizona Students' Association (ASA) accountable to graduate students in the State of Arizona and will work with ASA to ensure that graduate student needs are kept in the forefront of their legislative agenda and issue campaigns.
- C. We believe that ASA is not the state-wide student government and will continue to work with ASA so that they may strengthen their representation of graduate student issues.
- D. We will provide opportunities for graduate students to engage in the legislative process including additional involvement with the ASA lobby corps.

Awareness and Engagement in the University and ABOR Governance Process

- A. We will actively collaborate with students, the university administration, the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR), and the State Government.
- B. We will continue to advocate for the inclusion of graduate students in university committees, boards, tasks forces, and workgroups that make recommendations about changes to ASU's education/administration system.
- C. We will work closely with the Undergraduate Student Government to coordinate our message, when applicable, in order to form a strong and collaborative coalition.

GPSA 2009 – 2010 Policy Directive Section V: ASU Administrative Collaboration

Overview

As graduate students, we understand that the University Administration is our strongest ally. Despite that, the items below set out expectations for GPSA Executives in collaborating with university administrators. In order to develop a stronger relationship with the University Administration, GPSA will communicate regularly with administrators and ensure that graduate student needs and priorities are kept at the forefront of all discussions.

Collaboration with the University

- A. We believe in the *One University, Many Places* model.
- B. We firmly believe that the ASU Administration is our strongest ally.
- C. We will participate, through representation, in the ASU University Senate.
- D. GPSA executives will meet regularly with members of the ASU administration to address graduate student needs and concerns.
- E. When necessary, GPSA Executives will assist graduate students with filing grievances with their department or the graduate college.
- F. We will submit proposals to the ASU administration outlining student priorities.
- G. The GPSA Assembly will be charged with ratifying priority lists sent to the administration each year.
- H. We request that the university commission a student priority survey at least every 2 years. The information from that survey shall be used to build graduate student priorities. The questions for the priority survey shall be developed in collaboration with elected student leaders.

Collaboration and Communication with Graduate Students

- A. We request that decisions made by the ASU Administration be well-documented and publicly available for dissemination to graduate students.
- B. We shall participate in constructive discussions and forums between graduate students and the administration to develop creative solutions to graduate student issues at ASU.
- C. We will hold focus groups and interact with graduate students as much as possible to gauge the direct impact of any future or current decisions by the university related to graduate students.
- D. We will monitor ASU administrative decisions and provide feedback, when appropriate.