



## Affordability

- Advocate for the state budget surplus to go to back-filling the cuts that have been made to higher education.
  - The Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) has reported that there will be about \$300 million in surplus in fiscal year 2012. The State University System has seen its budget cut from \$1.2 billion in fiscal 2008 to \$682 million this year. The Universities have experienced the most severe cuts they can reasonably handle; with health care mandates going into effect and Proposition 100 revenue running out in 2014, it is important to ensure *now* that higher education receives adequate funding, particularly since there are no Constitutional or statutory protections for higher education funding.
- Lobby State Legislators to send Proposition 100 back to the voters in 2012.
  - GPSA took a stance to support Proposition 100 when it went to the ballot in May 2010 (GPSA Assembly Bill 46, April 2010).
  - Proposition 100 temporarily added one cent to the transaction privilege (sales) and use tax that began on July 1, 2010 and ends May 31, 2013 for the purpose of funding primary and secondary education, health and human services, and public safety.
  - Arizona universities could have lost another 10 percent of state funding if Proposition 100 was not approved by voters. ASU and ASU Friends of Education—a non-profit organization—supported and advocated for the passage of Proposition 100.
  - The end of the Proposition 100 revenue stream is part of what is referred to as the “2014 cliff.”
- Work with University administrators and Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) to encourage zero tuition hikes, pending no further cuts to education from the state.
- Support continued existence of ABOR and unified governance of Arizona universities.
  - Past GPSA stances on this issue have included No on SB1115 and SCR1014 Bill (GPSA Assembly Bill 45, March 2011). These bills proposed to eliminate ABOR, suggested the instantiation of a voucher system, and were generally contrary to the mission of ASASU.
  - The system of shared governance of the University System by ABOR ensures that there is a review system for ensuring comparable prices, funding, and services between the three Universities.
- Support continued existence of Arizona Students' Association (ASA) as the statewide advocacy group for students. Work to increase the effectiveness of ASA for graduate students, and to extend its mission to include quality of education in addition to access and affordability.

- Lobby State Legislature to address the inequalities in per-student funding by the state.
  - Support and advocate for the method proposed by ABOR to address parity in per FTE funding. ABOR is currently recommending a multi-year process that gives additional funds to ASU and NAU to bring the baseline funding of the Universities to an equal amount per student (exempting the funds given to UA for the medical and agricultural schools). For more information, see Item 2A [here](#).
- Work with ASA and allies to begin a movement for the implementation of a dedicated stream for financial aid via State-Based Funding Initiative.
- Work with ASU administration and ABOR--particularly the ABOR Financial Aid Reform Task Force --to develop innovative ways to distribute financial aid in the state, with a particular emphasis on increasing access to financial aid for graduate students.
  - Current options being discussed by the ABOR Task Force include changes to the standards to receive and maintain financial aid, a voucher system, a loan forgiveness program, and financial responsibility training.
- Improve methods through which ASU Financial Aid connects students who do not qualify for federal, public, or university-administered sources of funding to alternative or private sources of funding.
- Work with ABOR and ASU Graduate College to determine whether TA/RA stipends are comparable to our peer institutions and advocate for changes where they are not.
- Work with ASU Academic Affairs administrators to implement better ways of incorporating student feedback in early stages of program fee proposals and to improve transparency in these fees. Encourage ABOR to implement an audit process for these fees to ensure that they are being used according to their justification.
- Work with ASU's Financial Aid Office, the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS), and other organizations to encourage federal and private loan reform in a manner that will be beneficial to graduate students (such as reducing the interest rate of Federal loans as a remedy to the removal of the in-school interest subsidy).
- Identify areas within the NAGPS national agenda where we can collaborate on federal policy, particularly on tax and loan reform issues and protecting federal research funding programs such as the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship.
- Collaborate with non-profit organizations, legislators, administrators, and allies to start educating parents and K-12 students about the importance of a strong pipeline of education in Arizona, starting with elementary education and continuing up through the community college and University systems. Stress the value of higher education for the betterment of our local communities, its attainability to students of any background, and the impact that collective financial contributions can have on higher education accessibility.
- Support conversations with the private business sector to encourage investment in public higher education.

## Arizona State University: One University, Many Locations

- Oppose Legislative efforts to split the West and/or Polytechnic locations off into their own Universities.
  - Graduate students under specific circumstances may have access to classes, research projects, and resources at multiple campuses. These campuses receive student fee money that contributes to the continual growth and improvement of facilities in comparison to other ASU locations.
  - The recent GPSA graduate student survey showed that graduate students opposed this legislative effort at a rate of 2:1.
  - 79.6% of graduate students who self-identified as ASU West students opposed this measure.
  - 82.9% of graduate students who self-identified as ASU Polytechnic students opposed this measure.
  - Setting up new state Universities will not be cost-effective to Arizona's economy and will be an additional drain on already tight State funding for public higher education.
  - ASU embraces and includes all students under the same school spirit and identity regardless of the location they attend. We support one identity as opposed to division of the student body. This is why we do not support the division of the West and Polytechnic locations into other universities or printing diplomas that separate locations instead of uniting students under one university. This is part of GPSA's commitment to supporting the broader University mission.
- Lobby ASU to improve the University-wide shuttle system. This would include providing more buses between the West and Tempe locations where students regularly encounter full buses and are forced to stand in the aisles for the duration of the trip (30-60 minutes). Additionally, limited shuttle service between Polytechnic campus and Tempe campus during breaks is needed. The current lack of such service is challenging for students, most particularly graduate students, who are engaged in University jobs and research projects--even during class breaks--at multiple campuses.
- Advocate for equitable shuttle/bus shelters at all ASU locations and for student advice on the location of these shelters. Currently, ASU Polytechnic is at quite a disadvantage in this realm.

## Access

- Outreach to ASU Academic Affairs administrators and ABOR to improve transparency and the student voice in the academic program disestablishment process.
- Improve student representation and agency within the University community by gaining voting membership within the University Senate.
- Collaborate with ASU administration to create an environment of inclusion and tolerance for diversity. Advocate for our international graduate student body to continue increasing the diversity of Arizona State University through higher international enrollment and a better quality of life for diverse students.
  - Work with ISSO on these issues--see Student Support Initiatives section.

- Uphold ASU Administration’s support for the passage of a local and/or federal DREAM Act that would allow academically qualified undocumented students to access higher education and thus a pathway to employment.
- Support diversity with a culturally rich academic environment that embraces and respects all students regardless of: appearance, age, sex, gender, ability, nationality, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, spiritual beliefs, legal status, and political views. Oppose legislation that would result in specific groups of students being discriminated against or prevented from accessing higher education.
  - In 2010-2011, GPSA took a ‘No’ stance on Proposition 107 (GPSA Assembly Bill 14, October 2010), a proposed AZ constitutional amendment to prevent federal funding from going to “discriminatory” organizations like Women in Science and Engineering. GPSA views these organizations as actively working against discrimination, and finding the language of the Proposition misleading and incorrect, took a stance against its passage.

### **Voter Access and Engagement**

- Examine the feasibility of and encourage efforts to establish early polling locations at ASU West and Polytechnic campuses, as well as a county polling center at ASU Tempe campus.
- Continue ongoing efforts to register students to vote. Provide voter registration forms and other voter information at the ASU Graduate Student Centers on each campus.
- Work with the Sandra Day O’Connor House Project to develop innovative ways to engage young voters in our state.

### **Academic Freedom**

- Prevent legislative efforts that would limit freedom of speech and the free exchange of ideas within the University system. Work to protect free scientific inquiry and academic integrity.
- Reject initiatives that limit academic freedom and/or introduce prejudice (e.g., Resolution Against Proposition 107, passed as GPSA Assembly Bill 14, October 2010).

### **Student Support Initiatives**

- Based on results of GPSA survey, advocate for particular coverages to be included in the new Student Health Insurance plan.
  - The highest priority is dental coverage (49% of graduate students listed this as their highest priority for healthcare changes in the GPSA survey)
  - Improving vision coverage
  - No, or significantly reduced, co-pays for preventative health visits
  - Increase number of options for discounted prescriptions available through ASU Pharmacy--30% of respondents to the GPSA graduate student survey requested prescription coverage; increased discount options are a fair compromise solution that will be less costly to ASU.

- Advocate for an equitable supply of medications at the Polytechnic, West, and Downtown campuses as are currently available on the Tempe campus
  - Continued coverage for off-campus counseling and psychiatric services
  - More specialists in-network and reduced co-pays for specialists
- Address issues that relate to graduate and professional students' access to affordable and quality child care. Provide resources for students to direct them to child care services and programs that are conveniently located around all university campuses.
- Increase options for affordable on-campus and near-campus housing for graduate students with and without families. 16% of respondents to the GPSA survey said they would definitely take advantage of graduate student housing if it existed.
- Support legislative and University efforts that would support student veterans and would reduce or minimize any barriers and/or expand access to higher education for student veterans.
- Support increased campus-based employment opportunities for international students who are restricted to on-campus jobs due to Visa status.
- Collaborate with the International Students Committee in their work with ISSO and the Graduate College to:
  - Improve international graduate student orientation
  - Mitigate international work and student visa issues by offering better country-specific information as well as graduate student family services
  - Include an international-student-specific section in the SHADES Graduate Mentoring Program
  - Create an international-student-specific portion of the Teaching Assistant Development (TAD) program
- Student Recreation Centers
  - Advocate for a removal of the summer usage fee for the Student Recreation Centers.
  - Work with Social Work Tucson Component students to remove the Recreation Fee from their required University Fees.
  - Ensure that students who are paying the newly-implemented Facilities Fee, but who will graduate before access to these facilities is possible, will receive one year of access after graduation.
  - Ensure that policies governing Student Recreation Centers are equitable across the ASU locations.

### **Campus Safety**

- Prevent legislative efforts that would allow firearms on University campuses.
  - Previous GPSA Position in Assembly Bill 20, January 2010
- Promote USG Tempe's Walk Your Wheels initiative.
- Advocate for more bike racks around Tempe campus.
- Encourage increased lighting in parking zones at all locations.
- Support creation of safety escort programs at each ASU location.

## Outreach

- Build relationships with students and faculty to establish a core advocacy group (Gradvocacy Student Unity Network or SUN) and continue to develop this organization as a lobbying group comprised of and on behalf of ASU graduate students.
- Continue to build awareness within the graduate student community on the impact of state budget cuts to higher education and the total cost of attendance for individual students.
- Develop strong working relationships with state representatives and senators to discuss issues related to the challenges students face in regards to cost and affordability
- Encourage ASU Alumni Association and Graduate College to start collecting systematic statistics on graduate student alumni. These statistics are beneficial to current graduate students and to University administration. Request information including but not limited to:
  - Time to employment
  - Position (and whether tenure-track if academic)
  - Location (one University, many locations--even after graduation)