



Vice President of External Affairs December Report

State Updates

- **ASU Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request**

- Since its inception as a university in 1958, Arizona State University has grown into one of the largest public universities in the nation and the largest in Arizona, with more than half of the students within the Arizona University System. Despite this growth, which includes great improvement in the quality of education and research, per student funding has not grown at the same rate as enrollment growth creating increased disparity in funding between the three universities. In a historical turn of events, the three University Presidents, elected student leaders, and the Arizona Board of Regents have all come together to recognize and address this disparity issue. The plan agreed upon involves a five-year phasing in of additional funding to ASU and NAU (but not at the cost of cuts to UA). ASU, in its FY 2013 State Appropriation Request, is requesting an additional \$12 million to begin this process. This plan is critical to allow ASU to increase student support and continue to increase the quality of our education.

- We have been outreaching to students to ask them to contact Governor Brewer's office to show them that there is strong student support for this. If you support this plan, GPSA asks that you contact Governor Brewer's Office (<http://www.governor.state.az.us/Contact.asp>) and respectfully request that she include ASU's FY 2013 disparity funding request of \$12 million in her budget proposal.
- Additionally, we hope to keep track of the number of people who contact Gov. Brewer so if you choose to do so, please fill out this form: <http://tinyurl.com/ASUdisparity>
- Please help spread the word on this.

- **State of our State Conference**

- Hosted by ASU's Morrison Institute for Public Policy on Nov. 30 in downtown Phoenix. EA Directors Boris Lezaic and German Cadenas were in attendance.
- Issues discussed in the meeting included: Fiscal Framework for Arizona, Arizona Directions, How Cities Can Lead the Way Forward, and Arizona's future
- Most importantly, we have heard a number of leaders stress the value of education for the future of Arizonan prosperity, especially higher education as the vast majority of jobs created until 2018 will require education beyond high school.
- Leaders expressed the need to fund Arizona's universities and invest in innovative research, in addition to supporting K-12.

- A need to avoid issues such as immigration and guns to focus on truly foundation concerns such as economic development and education.
- Need to create jobs that aren't 'growth based' such as construction jobs but rather 'tradable' jobs such as high tech.
- Need to create a better a better funding method to avoid large swings in funding, such as use one-time tax income for one-time expenditures and not use it to fund ongoing costs, such as education.
- There was a strong emphasis on regionalism and cooperation between cities. Mayors of Phoenix and Mesa described how they attempt to work together to create a better atmosphere for businesses and residents in the entire Valley.

Federal Updates

- **Financial Aid**

- With the failure of the Supercommittee to come to an agreement, Pell Grants were not immediately cut but there is still danger in the budget and appropriations process. Things will be difficult for student aid and Pell grants because they live within the Labor Health and Human Services appropriations bill - a shared space with health care funding. We suspect there will continue to be a target on health care funding in the coming months making it harder to do much more than extend current education spending into next year. An extension of current funding would leave many student aid programs short changed. Currently the Pell grant is facing a \$1.3 billion shortfall which must be filled by next year. Proposals to fill the current hole largely involve taking funding away from other student aid programs, or eliminating the number of students who receive Pell each year. The House proposal would significantly restrict Pell eligibility to not only save the \$1.3 billion, but go further and eliminate \$4.4 billion for Pell just next year because House (and Senate) Republicans believe Pell costs must be reduced.
- Congress must vote to approve a funding bill by December 16th when funding is scheduled to run out. You can contact your elected Federal Representatives to ask them to vote against any Labor, Health, Human Services and Education appropriations bill (or shorten to just appropriations bill) that reduces the Pell Grant maximum award, or reduces current eligibility of students in the program.

University Updates

- **Program Fees and Disestablishments**

- Based on conversations with ASU administration, GPSA has outlined some better ways to work on these issues. One of the major needs is for GPSA Assembly Members to begin meeting with their Deans regularly. Our goal here is to ensure that GPSA provides the support

needed for students to make sure that they are actively involved in these discussions.

- **Childcare**
 - EA Committee member Lacey Peters and German Cadenas are spearheading our efforts on researching childcare options at or near each of the campuses, putting together information packets, and identifying where we need to focus our efforts and whether we should advocate for more child care facilities on campus.
- **Faculty Senate**
 - EA Committee member Kimberly Eversman is doing research on student voting seats on Faculty Senates amongst our peer institutions and the pros and cons of this.
- **Universal Constitution**
 - EA Committee members Hannah Reitzel Rivera and Christian Vasquez have been working with our broader efforts on improving relations and communication with the legislative branches of the Undergraduate Student Governments.
 - While the USG Senates at West, Poly, and Downtown have approved new Constitutions, we still need to come together to agree on a document that can also govern Tempe, and perhaps GPSA as well (we could continue to have a Constitution tied to the USGs as we currently have with Tempe or initiate a separate Constitution).
 - A draft of a new Constitution must be finished by 2/15/12 with a final version ready to be approved by 2/28/2012.

Arizona Board of Regents

- **Financial Aid**
 - The Financial Aid Report was approved and is available as part of the Board Book from the November meeting:
<http://azregents.asu.edu/boardbook/Board%20Agenda%20Books/2011-12%20Meeting/2011-12%20amended%20board%20book.pdf>
 - I represented ASU on the Financial Aid Reform Task Force. We discussed the Financial Aid Report and how financial aid packages are calculated and dispersed to students. Contact me if you want materials from this meeting.
 - I spoke with ASU Administration, UA Administration, and ABOR staff to being implementation of reporting of more statistics regarding graduate student financial aid.
- **Technology and Research Initiative Fund (TRIF)**
 - Proposition 301, passed by Arizona voters in November 2000, added .6% to the state sales tax for the purpose of providing funds to K-12, community colleges and state universities. In response to Prop 301, the Technology and Research Initiative Fund (TRIF) was established by the

Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) to manage these funds intended for the three Arizona state universities.

- At the November Board meeting, ABOR approved a \$500,000 for a one year pilot program to facilitate a competitive grant program for graduate students at the three state universities. This will provide \$5000 to 100 students (40 at ASU, 40 at UA, and 20 at NAU) to help improve their dissertations.

Arizona Students' Association (ASA)

- **Federal Policy Priorities**

- The Board approved the Federal Policy Priorities. This is a document focused on current legislation. The Legislative Affairs committee has decided to also draft a broader document that outlines our position on issues that do not currently have active legislation.

- **Winter Retreat**

- We will be having a winter retreat where we will be prioritizing work on several proposals to reorganize the organization. The goal is to increase transparency and efficiency in ASA.

Respectfully,

Rhian Stotts
Vice President of External Affairs
Graduate and Professional Student Association
Arizona State University