



## Vice President of External Affairs March Report

### State Legislation

#### • **Disparity Funding**

- On Thursday, March 8, the Senate Finance Committee approved HB2090, a striker bill to address disparity. We continue our advocacy efforts in this realm with weekly updates in GradStu urging people to contact their legislators. Additionally, we have teamed up with the Arizona Students' Association to run a campaign on campus called "What does \$8XX mean to you?" ASA tabled on this on Wednesday, March 14 and received almost 70 statements of support. We will be focusing on this campaign for grad students at the Picnic. We could definitely use assistance if you are interested in getting involved.
  - Please consider sending an email to legislator's through ASA's voter voice system:  
<http://www.voterveice.net/Core/core.aspx?aid=174&issueid=27897&atid=21081&siteid=0&app=GAC&isvisited=false>

#### • **Guns on campus**

- Sen. Gould's SB1474 has stalled in the Senate. NRA lobbyists were here a few weeks ago to try to round up the votes. They announced that they had the votes but this seems to have been a tactic to get other hesitant legislators to sign on. We are hoping that this tactic backfired and we can count on it not moving forward.
- Sen. Gould had also introduced a striker amendment to SB1087. It was scheduled to be heard in House Judiciary on Thursday, March 8 but was removed from the agenda. This bill would have allowed faculty to carry concealed on campus.

#### • **HB2675 – Minimum Tuition Bill**

- Rep. Kavanagh's bill that would have required that all students, with the exception of student athletes and those on national, merit based, competitive scholarships, grants, or fellowships pay \$2000 in tuition, was pulled by its sponsor because of pressure from students! This is a real victory for us!

### Tempe Mayoral and Council Elections

- GPSA co-hosted a debate amongst the Tempe Mayoral candidates on Monday, March 5 at 6 PM in MU Pima. Director of Graduate Student Advocacy German Cadenas served as a moderator in the debate.
- The elections were held on Tuesday, March 13. Michael Monti is in the lead by just three votes over Mark Mitchell. The two now head into a run-off

election to be held on May 15. Council members Corey Woods and Joel Navarro were elected outright in the primary. Dick Foreman and Kolby Granville advance to the May election for a runoff.

### **National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS)**

- We sent four representatives (Christian Vasquez, James Alling, Mohsin Bashir, and Xuan Zhong) to the NAGPS Legislative Action Days in Washington D.C. They met with Congressmen David Schweikert, Raul M. Grijalva, Ed Pastor and Jeff Flake in person, and talked to the Legal Assistants of Senator Jon Kyl and Congressmen Ben Quayle and Paul Gosar. Issues covered included open access to publicly funded research, NSF and STEM funding, education tax credit extensions and the DREAM Act. Offices were very receptive to graduate student needs and expressed their support for higher education in Arizona.
- The Northern Arizona University Graduate Student Government is hosting the NAGPS Western Regional Conference April 13 & 14. The theme is Emergent Leadership. The cost is \$25 per person. If you are interested in attending, GPSA may be able to help subsidize the cost of travel and lodging as well as the registration cost. Additionally, each student organization attending is invited to facilitate a session so please let us know if you are interested in leading this.

### **Arizona Students' Association**

- **D.C. Summit**

- ASA sent representatives to Washington, D.C. March 10-13 to meet with federal representatives. GPSA Director of Advocacy German Cadenas traveled with this group. Representatives from ASA were able to meet with all Arizona elected officials except Trent Franks. German was able to participate in the meetings with Rep. Grijalva, Rep. Flake, Sen. Kyl, and Sen. McCain. During this trip, ASA representatives also participated in an event organized by US PIRG to stop the impending student loan interest hike. Read news coverage of this event at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/college-students-deliver-letters-to-capitol-hill-to-halt-student-loan-interest-rate-hike/2012/03/13/gIQAJPjp9R\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/college-students-deliver-letters-to-capitol-hill-to-halt-student-loan-interest-rate-hike/2012/03/13/gIQAJPjp9R_story.html)

### **Tuition**

- ASU's tuition proposal calls for a 3% increase for in-state and out-of-state graduate students and a differential tuition increase of \$1,500 to programs at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law. GPSA is opposing the former and is working with the Student Bar Association on the latter issue as well.

- GPSA reps met with Dr. Rund on Tuesday, March 13 to discuss the tuition proposal. Based upon this meeting, I recommend that GPSA continue to work with ASU administration and the Arizona Board of Regents to push for a 0% tuition increase for graduate students.

### **Weekly Advocacy Updates**

- We have been preparing weekly updates for the GradStu announcement that summarize the latest legislative developments, political events, and advocacy opportunities of relevance to graduate students. This appears to be a successful strategy.

### **Director of Legislative Affairs**

- Jessica Gonzalez, a non-profit leadership graduate student at our Downtown campus, has joined the staff of GPSA as our Director of Legislative Affairs. Jessica is helping to monitor legislator, to increase voter registration, and is leading our advocacy efforts that will coincide with the picnic.

### **Voter Registration Drives**

- Thank you to those Assembly Members who have thus far participated in our Voter Registration Drive competition. Remember, the GPSA committee with the most registrations (standardized by the number of committee members) will win a free dinner!

Respectfully,

Rhian Stotts  
Vice President of External Affairs (former Director of Graduate Student Advocacy)  
Graduate and Professional Student Association  
Arizona State University