

GPSA
Vice President of External Affairs
August and Summer Report

ASU VOTES 2012

- The office of External Affairs is spearheading a voter education project named ASU VOTES 2012 that aims to educate a large number of students about the upcoming elections.
- The project has gained support from the Undergraduate Student Governments (USGs) and a coalition has been formed to meet the goal of educating thousands of students.
- The heart of the project is a website that will feature comparisons between ALL candidates running in ALL races in these upcoming elections.
- The comparisons will be based on their stances on student issues (access to higher education, financial aid, student loan interest rates, parity funding, state based funding, diversity, guns on campus, DREAM Act, textbooks, research and academic freedom, and economic development).
- The website targets ASU students and is designed to feature ASU pride and tradition.
- Political party affiliation and campaign website of each candidate are also provided on the website.
- The website also features important dates to vote, how to register to vote, polling locations, among other useful information.
- Over 100 campaign signs are to be placed on high traffic areas of each ASU campus in order to promote the website.
- The USGs, with the support of GPSA, will lead several promotional events at each campus leading up to the elections.
- The website will also be promoted through social media, news outlets, student government listservs, and word of mouth.
- This project will be the main focus of the External Affairs office until November 6.

Arizona Students' Association (ASA)

- I was sworn as a board member of ASA for the 2012-2013 academic year at the board meeting in June 2012.
- I attended the ASA board retreat June 15-17 where I met the Presidents and Vice Presidents of Policy of the undergraduate and graduate student governments at NAU and U of A.
- I participated in the interviewing and hiring of ASA's new Executive Director (Casey Dreher) as well as the ASA Tempe Organizer and Field Organizers.
- Prop 204: The Quality Education and Jobs Act campaign, supported by ASA and GPSA, submitted over 270,000 signatures to the Secretary of State's office. The signatures were not accepted as there was a minor discrepancy in the files submitted. After a lawsuit, the judge ruled in favor of the campaign, requiring Secretary of State to accept the signatures. The signatures have been received and validated and the proposition will be on the ballot in November. GPSA has attended meetings and hearings in support of Prop 204. The proposition

continues to be challenged and suppressed by the Secretary of State, the State legislature and others. Forms that this initiative is being suppressed include language (adopted by the State legislature) that depict the proposition as an increase of the one cent tax increase as opposed to a continuation of the prop 100 one cent tax, and negative online videos. GPSA submitted a statement of support for this proposition.

- Voter registration: GPSA continues to partner with ASA for voter registration. ASA was invited to all Graduate Student Welcomes and departmental orientations to register students to vote. ASA will be invited to all or most GPSA events for the same purpose.
- At the ASA board meeting in August, President Rhian Stotts and I advocated alongside Zachary Brooks (President of the Graduate and Professional Student Council at U of A) in order to increase graduate student representation with ASA. The extra graduate seat was obtained.
- I have collaborated with ASA's board and staff in the creation of candidate surveys that will guide our voter education initiatives.
- The Graduate Committee at ASA, the committee where graduate students are addressed with ASA, is now functional and GPSA executives are part of it. Assembly members and any graduate and professional student at ASU are welcome to join this committee.

National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS)

- Director of Legislative Affairs Jessica Gonzalez will be attending NAGPS' Advocacy Summit and DC Sept 7-11 and will also be participating in legislative visits on behalf of GPSA.

AZ Board of Regents

- I met the two new Student Regents at the ASA board meeting in June and will be contacting them to work on financial aid for graduate students.
- I attended the Board of Regents meeting in June. I represented GPSA during the Financial Aid Taskforce.

Loan Interest Rates

- EA supported the efforts to keep federally subsidized Stafford loans interest rates low. This was accomplished through student mobilization via action alerts.
- Congress decided in June that graduate students will no longer be eligible for subsidized loans.

Primaries

- EA has been promoting the primary elections through the GPSA listservs. Other voter information (candidate information, polling locations, etc.) have also been promoted.

Advocacy Updates

- Advocacy updates continued to function for the majority of the summer as the office of EA continued to work and find opportunities for graduate students to become involved.

Community Relations

- EA attended meetings for the O'Connor House Voter Engagement Project, which is a coalition of dozens of non-profit organizations that collaborate in voter engagement.
- EA also served as a liaison between the O'Connor House Voter Engagement project and ASU students. We promoted their volunteer positions and as a result several graduate students were chosen to work on their project.
- EA maintains a relationship with the O'Connor House.

GPSA Retreat

- I attended the GPSA retreat over in May where we discussed goals and direction for EA during the 2012-2013 academic year.
- I also contributed to the editing of the GPSA Survey and created new questions that reflect the work of EA.

Staffing

- Shannon Skarphol was hired in June as Director of Student Advocacy.
- Dusty Garner was hired as Director of Legislative Affairs during the month of July and part of August.
- Jessica Gonzalez returned to her position as Director of Legislative Affairs on Aug 27.

Board and Commission

- I will be representing GPSA in the University's Facilities and Fees Board.

Media

- I was quoted in the media twice during the summer regarding student issues:
<http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/2012/06/22/20120622student-loan-relief-deal-no-help-grad-students.html>
<http://www.statepress.com/2012/06/24/immigration-resolution-receives-support-from-university-administration-students/>