

Executive Report

From the Office of *External Affairs*

Date: 2/20/2015



Upcoming Events & Deadlines

1. Arijit Guha Graduate Student Advocacy Awards: Applications now open!
Deadline to submit a nomination is March 31st!

Action Required

External Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

Date & Time of Last Committee Meeting: N/A

Members present:

Members absent:

To Do:

- Review and score advocacy awards applications

Date & Time of Next Committee Meeting: TBD

Executive Report

The following is a list of upcoming efforts for our office:

- GPSA student leaders are in DC for Legislative Action Days: March 20-24
 - Andy Waldorn, Jordan Hibbs, Carlo Altamirano, Kimberly Roland, Jesus Cisneros, Hilary Charles
- GPSA leaders went to the state capital on Thursday, March 5, 2015 to protest the proposed budget cuts.
 - Despite our best efforts, higher education took a \$99 million cut.
- German Cadenas attended the March 11 ABOR meeting in Flagstaff and spoke against budget cuts to the universities and about tuition equity for DACAmented DREAMers.
- GRADSTU announcement went out last week to send a message to your representatives, speaking on behalf of higher education and against the budget cuts. It's not too late! See draft letter attached:

March 4, 2015

Dear Representative _____,

As one of the over 15,000 graduate and professional students at Arizona State University, I am writing to express concern over the higher education budget cuts recently proposed by Governor Ducey. I urge you and other state representatives to seek bipartisan solutions that help make education a priority for the state.

The Governor's recommendation for state investment in higher education signals to the state and the nation that higher education is a low priority in Arizona. Arizona has already had the deepest funding cuts to higher education in the nation, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Per-student spending in Arizona is down by more than 40 percent, and published tuition at four-year schools is up more than 80 percent since 2007-2008. At a time when a highly educated workforce is more crucial than ever to Arizona's economic future, these patterns have led to both steep tuition increases and spending cuts that diminish the quality of education available to students. Since 2007-2008, for example, ABOR has had to cut more than 2,100 positions; consolidated or eliminated 182 colleges, schools, programs, and departments; and closed eight extension campuses (local campuses that facilitate distance learning).

Investment in higher education is one of the most important ways of helping advance our families, our businesses and our state economy. Research suggests that states with higher rates of educated residents report healthier and more productive state economies. Highly educated residents tend to attract strong employers who pay their employees competitive wages. Those employees, in turn, buy goods and services from others in the community, broadly benefitting the area's economy. Hence, sufficient funding for higher education to keep tuition affordable and quality high at public colleges and universities would help Arizona attract strong employers and develop the skilled and diverse workforce it will need to compete for these jobs.

Cutting the state investment in higher education does not constitute a state strategy or vision for higher education in Arizona. It is merely a convenient but temporary "fix" for the larger problems not being addressed by the state. As stated by President Crow, it is time for the State of Arizona to recognize higher education as a priority investment that should be made in human capital to help Arizona, its economy and its people move forward.

Strengthening state investment in higher education will require state policymakers to make the right tax and budget choices. I urge you to consider students' input and draft/support bipartisan solutions that protect students and prioritize schools over prisons.

Sincerely,

Student Name
Arizona State University