

Graduate Student Representative's Report for the Board of Trustees

Executive Committee Meeting, February 10, 2012

Melissa Welshans, President of the Graduate Student Organization

In the first weeks of the semester, the GSO accomplished some exciting goals and is pleased to report them here.

As of January 18th, the GSO was given access to a university wide graduate student listserv. With this listserv, we will be able to directly inform our student body regarding GSO events, programming and services. Previously, graduate students could only access such information directly through our website, Facebook page, or through representation in our monthly senate meetings. Although these mediums remain essential ways of disseminating information, this listserv will greatly increase student participation in campus events and awareness of the resources available to them through the Graduate Student Organization.

With the advent of this listserv, we were able to promote our first ever "Grad Night @ the Dome" where the GSO, in partnership with the Carrier Dome, gave away 200 tickets to graduate students for the SU-Georgetown game on February 8th. The entire student body was notified of this event and tickets sold out in two hours. Given the success of this program, we hope to make it an annual event.

In addition to the creation of the above listserv, the GSO also influenced the decision to increase flexibility in employment options for students holding a Teaching, Research, or Graduate Assistant position at SU. Currently, students awarded such positions are notified in their award letters and our student handbook that "the combination of service, study and research is a full-time arrangement and as an assistant it is expected that you will accept no other work for pay and accept no other award except possibly a tuition scholarship." While this will largely remain the same, the letter will now include a following statement letting students know that exceptions can be made in consultation with one's department chair or academic advisor. This is an important addition, in that some students rely on positions outside of the university to financially support themselves, their families, and their ability to continue study at SU. The GSO hopes this increased flexibility will create a culture of openness and honesty between students and their advisors / departments, and ultimately increase a student's ability to remain in his/her degree program and complete in a timely manner.

Finally, at the GSO's fifth regular business meeting on January 25th, the GSO senate approved a constitutional amendment adding a new position to the Executive Board as well as a new appointed position. In addition to a President, Vice President, Comptroller, Secretary and Webmaster, the GSO will now have a separate Vice President primarily involved in external relations,(outreach and event planning), as well as a Bookkeeper. These new positions align our GSO with those of other universities, and will help us provide services such as increased programming and timely processed reimbursements. This new structure will be implemented as of July 1st, 2012.

Thank you very much and I look forward to our meeting on February 10th.