

Graduate & Professional Student Council

General Assembly Agenda

October 3rd 2017 5:30pm

Koldus Room 144

I. Call to Order

Quote of the meeting: 'Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it'
-Charles R. Swindoll

II. Procedure and Governance

III. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from 09/19/2017 were approved.

IV. Speaker's Podium

Tuition and Fees – Jerry Strawser

Moved Dr. Jerry Strawser's presentation to later in the meeting.

Jumped ahead to DACA resolution and presentation

V. Pending Business

VI. New Business

Daca Resolution and presentation –

Brenna Lin and Monica Barbary presented about the DREAM Act:

Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act Presentation

What is the DREAM Act?

-First introduced August 2001

-Reintroduced in August 2017

It directs the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to cancel removal of and grant lawful permanent residence on a conditional basis to DACA beneficiaries

Topics covered:

- Requirements for beneficiaries of DREAM Act

- Economic impact of DREAM Act

- Bi-partisan support

 - Applies only to those already in country

 - Not an amnesty program – requires lengthy background check, medical exam

 - Expanded pool for military

Summary: this would be a legal pathway to citizenship for immigrant youths put at risk by end of DACA

Some statistics presented:

- 124,000 Texans
- 90,000 pursuing higher education (10-15 % graduate students)
- 580,000 nationwide
- 900 service members

Q: Would this have to pass to be enacted?

Q: What is overlap or difference between DACA and DREAM Act?

Dr. Jerry Strawser arrived, we returned to the DACA and DREAM Act discussion later in the meeting

Dr. Jerry Strawser presented tuition and fees updates to the GA:

Who is affected by tuition and fees changes?

- Entering freshmen
- Currently enrolled undergraduates who have selected variable plans
- All currently enrolled students beyond normal program length
- ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS (grad students are not eligible for fixed tuition rates)

Revenue summary:

- State revenue decreasing, putting fewer resources into higher education
- Tuition and fees are playing a larger role

Funding per student (AAU/V2020)

- Compared to other large schools like Texas A&M (with significant research programs): lowest funding per student of comparable institutions (when combining both state fees and tuition+fees).
- Summary: Texas A&M has fewer resources

Compared to higher education price index (HEPI)

- Texas A&M is not keeping up with inflation
- HEPI increase = 3.7 %
- Graduate student tuition will go up 3.7 % in Fall 2018 for ALL Graduate Students
- Student Health Services Fee increase (\$2.50 per semester)
- Increase in program specific fees (only for new students starting in Fall 2018, not for currently enrolled students)

Q&A

Questions:

Q: Going back to competitiveness. Balance between fees and tuition. Graduate students often have to cover fees and not tuition. Compared to peer institutions, our fee to tuition ratio is often much higher.

A: It is up to the Colleges or Departments whether tuition and fees or just tuition are covered. Departments/Colleges should cover what is appropriate to maintain competitiveness with other departments/universities.

Q: Increases in fees for College of Engineering clarification.

A: New fee is being phased in over two years

Q: Raising tuition rates vs diversity of university

A: Things need to be balanced. Hopefully money will be reinvested to recruit diversity.

Q: How will increased fees/tuition benefit graduate students?

A: Tuition goes back to program/departments, some fees are specific for program and departments go directly back to the unit.

Q: Moving some of the fee costs into tuition costs?

A: Decision to cover tuition vs fee is one that the unit can make.

Problem with calling something tuition is that 15 % of tuition has to be set aside for financial aid (by state law)

Fees – nothing has to be set aside for financial aid, not state regulated. (although can be set aside for financial aid)

Q: Are GA ships considered financial aid?

A: Not sure

Q: Fixed option for undergrads, would fees and tuition ever increase?

A: Costs cannot be increased (tuition or fees) by state law if student signs up for fixed rate plan

Q: When was last increase in student health services fee?

A: Early 2000s

Q: longer than 5 years?

A: yes, definitely

Q: Why not increase more than inflation?

A: It's a balancing act. Right now, Texas A&M is a bargain

There is political pressure about increasing tuition costs, Board of Regents is concerned about tuition
Don't want to lose students

Tuition hearings: to get feedback

Best place to provide feedback for graduate programs with increase in fees is with the Dean of the colleges that are increasing fees.

Matthew: Tuition hearing open to all students (only ~20 students there). Only 2 graduate students were there.

2nd tuition and fee hearing on October 10th

- Texas A&M administrative cost percentage is 4 % (very administratively lean)

- Public SEC school administrative cost ratio is under 20 %

- Meeting on Oct. 10th: Tuition hearing

- Any other questions for Dr. Strawser: email Chris or Matthew

- Chris will send out email to delegates

Jasmine Wang: Speaker of the student senate visited the GA

- Improving communication between student senate and graduate students

- Undergraduate issues different than graduate issues

- Goal: incoming year to start addressing issues pertaining to undergraduate and graduate students

Q&A:

Q: Non-traditional students?

A: Representation has been an issue. Possibly due to organizational history. Trying to work toward having more diversity in the senate. Outreach to non-traditional students.

Q: Major initiatives for this year?

A: Good Samaritan bill (emergency services for drug offenses)

A: Online sexual assault reporting

A: Cap and gown drive (like career closet), also want to do it for caps and gowns for graduation

A: First time parking ticket forgiveness

A: Childcare initiatives

Q: Availability of lactation rooms? Website is hard to navigate.

A: Women's resource center. Will look into it.

Q: Brenna: Number of undergraduates expecting? Data available?

A: Department of student life surveys

Returned to the DREAM Act presentation (Brenna and Monica)

Motion to move to resolution: passed

-Friendly amendment (Brenna): Change titles to Dr. for those recipients holding a doctorate

-Brenna read the resolution out to the GA

-Discussion period

Q: Are we looking to vote on this resolution today? When is the vote in Congress?

A: Yes. No date has been set yet for DREAM Act vote

Q: Has DACA actually been discontinued?

A: Yes. Trump has nullified it by executive order.

A: We are almost 2 months into the 6 month period

A: Congress has 4 months to find an alternative. (to protect DACA)

A: Chose DREAM Act because it is the only one with bipartisan support

Q: What are other universities doing about this?

A: Other institutions are also writing and passing resolutions (through SAGE)

Q: When will this be sent?

A: ASAP as soon as it is signed and emails are gathered

Friendly amendment: add “we support it as it stands now”, noting that the bill may be changed before final version.

Accept friendly amendment: added “in its current form”

Movement to vote: passed

2 minutes were given to discuss with delegates

Motion to table, seconded

Discussion.

Q: Will it impact our influence contacting legislators?

A: Brenna: doesn’t seem like it will (moving slow)

Vote to table (voice vote): passed

Resolution was tabled to next meeting (October 17th)

VII. Voice Reports

a. University Committees

Monica: Quality of Life Committee will be sending out a survey with next agenda, about stipends (can use numbers to support future numbers)

University sustainability update (presented by Matthew Etchells)

-Aggie Green Fund: \$10,000 every year (\$6,000 wasn't used)

-Currently Texas A&M has a silver (moving to gold) ranking for sustainability. Surpassing competitors currently.

-Sustainability: looking for initiatives

-Going through program evaluation

Voice reports:

Wilmarie:

Hearings for new diversity provost tomorrow; one from LSU and one from Michigan Rudder 401 (10am?)

Breanna:

Talked to Dr. Weber about sexual assault training: feedback is that it is way too long

Q: Why is the survey separated? Why so long?

A: (Matthew) Pre and post-test data. Have your opinions or ideas changed based on the training?

Q: Would have to take it again if undergrad here?

A: Probably

Q: What about traintraq? Exemption?

A: We will bring it up

b. Department, Program, or Organization Announcements
University Sustainability Update

VIII. Standing Committee Reports

a. Awards

Winter Travel awards update

Pritishma presented Travel Award information:

-Application is up on the website

-Will be sent out to the graduate advisors

-Deadline October 31 at 11:59 pm

-Travel between Dec. 1 and Feb 28th.

-Giving out 7-8 awards

-3 different types (\$500, \$300, and \$100)

b. External Legislative Affairs

c. Internal Legislative Affairs

- d. Marketing and Communications
- e. Recruitment
- f. Diversity and Inclusion
- g. Programming
- Brewery Night

Brewery night on Wednesday Oct. 4th

7:00-11 pm

New Republic Brewing Co.

There will be a band and a food truck (BBQ food truck for 75 people)

Please pass on information to the departments

Q: Carpooling? Far away.

A: Can't organize rides (liability issues)

- h. Quality of Life
- i. Research
- j. International Student Affairs

X. Special Committee Reports

- a. Student Research Week
- b. Grad Camp

XI. Officer Reports

- a. Vice President of University Affairs
- b. Vice President of Information
- c. Vice President of Finance
- d. Executive Vice President
- e. President

G.R.A.D. Aggies Advanced certification for GPSC GA

G.R.A.D. Aggies:

Sarah is working on a couple of initiatives

Incentives (other than travel awards)

- Advanced certificate for leadership (2 PDUs will be waived), by being delegate in GPSC: get advanced certificate
- participation requirements for GPSC: attendance for the year
- Don't have to do certificates in order

XII. Advisor Comments

Student research week committee applications are open, please pass on to department

Due tomorrow at midnight

XIII. Administrative Comments

3MT – 3 minute thesis

Research communication competition, present research in 3 minutes

XIV. Announcements

XV. Adjournment

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Advocacy | Community Building | Research