

GSA Meeting 1-28-2015

Attendance: Lynley Hardie, Michael Hooker, Hayley Durham, Mitra Shabani, Shahab Karimi, Adam Ray, Leigh Ann Parrish, Sabrina Teeter, Thom West, Krystle Thomas, Sabrina Gretkierewicz, Kristen Kemp, Karen Sheboski, Margie Achee, Sarah Dillow, Annabel Franz, Jason Inman, Josh Anderson, Colby Murphy, Elizabeth Nissly, Brian Kloeppel, Tonya Anderson (online), and our special guests Dr. Mimi Fenton, Elizabeth Frazier, and Roxanne Stiles from the Graduate School here at WCU. Thank you all for attending!

Election Nominations: Nominations for Vice President: Josh Anderson, and Nominations for Treasurer: Thom West. If you have a nomination (including yourself), please contact GSA President Elizabeth Nissly at ejnissly1@catamount.wcu.edu.

Budget Overview: Our budget shows we have funding for: Events \$2336.65, Travel at \$615.40, but Does not include \$500 for Relay for Life. The Service Learning Fair gave Thom a booklet of information about donating to Relay. We were looking at a Bronze sponsorship, and we will discuss this further at the executive meeting. Roxanne said we probably can not sponsor Relay for Life this way. It has to be initiative for ALL students, not just one small group. May work if we are directly sponsoring students, but we'll have to talk more. The travel grants awarded have been plentiful, and we may move \$500 from events to travel grants.

Brief History of Funding from Roxanne: We went from \$8,000-\$10,000 in 2010 collected through student fees. Typically GSA officers in the past have not awarded so much money and funds were left to roll over. GSA participated with Graduate Student Orientation, Travel Awards, Tailgating Events (which have stopped due to non-participation), Graduate Research Symposium participants and catering. These are typically how we spend our funds with GSA.

Question for Roxanne: Do we need to budget for T-shirts for next orientation? Do we need to spend this year's funds for Ts in Fall 2015? We ran out of mediums so we can order now or wait. We need to think about that and discuss at our next exec meeting. Adam may work with Roxanne over the summer if summer purchases are needed. Our funds will open up July 1st. Thank you Roxanne!

Mimi Fenton's presentation:

See handout with questions and info. Thank you for coming Dean Fenton!! She is advocating for all graduate students to try to get us more money and working on allocating funds for assistantships both internally and externally. We have \$220,000 tuition support, \$100,000 Graduate Assistantships, \$43,380 Grad school support specialist (for support), Next, we reviewed our graduate student profile. WCU has 1600 grad students, at an average age of 32, average incoming student debt is about \$28,000 coming into grad school -undergrad debt (not including other debt).

Total budget of about 2 million dollars for student employment assistantships. 207 assistantships were awarded this year, although 250 is more realistic because some departments split them. They were only awarded to full time students registered in residential programs (not online or distance). Tuition grant support is about \$178,000. Each college was given one fellowship, and the 3 doctoral programs each given two. Study grants were also given.

Some students were also given in-state tuition remissions. This year only 13.5 students were given that. The state legislature awards this money, and it has not been increased since 2003. This coming year we will be calling them tuition rewards. Basically all the money will be put in one pot, (except the \$55k for in-state remissions) and given out based on merit for full or part time students (\$2000 for pt, \$4000 for full timers). Distance students will be considered as well in the coming year (\$30,000 being set aside for that).

Enrollment growth and retention allows for supplements from the state. There are historical reasons for allocations, but there is now a strategic allocation plan moving forward so it can explain why the amount each program gets is distributed how it is. \$8000-\$12,500 stipends will be awarded next year. Certain programs need more funds to attract students and keep the programs going strong. Sciences in general are paid more, that trickles to our world here at WCU. Some programs have higher stipend amounts because of the competition in the rest of the colleges and universities. We have to be competitive in certain areas. Assistantship amounts are raised from discontinued programs for the next year.

Comparing our assistantship dollars to other UNC System Sister Schools, we are right in the mix. More students equals more assistantship dollars. There is a trend now where students have to stop out. By adding support, WCU may be able to help students continue enrollment straight through to graduation. Summer research assistantships were started 2 years ago to help students continue their work through the summer. 30 the first year, 10 the second year. Any unspent assistantship money (terminated students, drop outs, etc.) is given to the summer assistantship pool and is paid out accordingly. These funds must be spent by July 1 due to the budget restrictions.

Other tuition awards will be awarded for residential and distance programs separately in the future. GPA requirements will be 4.0 for continuing students 3.85 for incoming students to be eligible for awards beginning this fall.

Could the money from the assistantships be spread into payments over 12 months instead of just 8? Student jobs/assistantships are given per semester, so extending the payments into the summer would not be allowed.

How do tuition remissions work? There are 13 in-state tuition remissions awarded each year from a budget of \$55,000. Programs are given 1 each and they choose which student gets it. The program director can request funds for out-of-state remissions. The Graduate School does not choose, they allow the programs to select the awarded students.

Q&A time: Lots of great discussion. Talks about funding TAs versus GAs versus Instructor of Record, etc., and how these positions are paid differently, and why. Adjuncts actually net less money than the paid assistantships because of taxes. It costs WCU more to hire adjuncts than to utilize students to teach. It's a win/win, but there is only certain amounts for student work versus adjuncts because of taxes and budgetary restrictions. *(I got a little lost in here- anyone have more details on this?)*

Could the 25 instructors of record who teach on campus possibly get instructor parking passes? This is already part of the GSA strategic plan. This could be a priority in the coming year if those students work with the GSA to promote this idea effectively and work with the Graduate School and our Parking Office to allocate those parking spots.

Dr. Fenton reassured that she is advocating for us and appreciates our ideas. Assistantship job descriptions have been completely revised and updated for Fall 2015 so all students have a meaningful experience with intended learning outcomes related to your academic experience,

and verification of your experience. “The Climb” professional development series is also coming this fall which will require 4 units of activities for all students with assistantships. Could be a program event, college speaker, conference, webinar, etc. The idea is to have mentorship and documentation to serve the students and broaden the assistantship experience.

Time is Up!!!! Thank you to our guest speakers and everyone in attendance!

Our next meeting will be February 18th at 4 pm in the Coulter Faculty Commons in the Hunter Library. If you have nominations for Executive Positions on the GSA, please email Elizabeth Nissly, President of GSA at ejnissly1@catamount.wcu.edu.