The GPSC Mission

- To promote and advocate for the academic, economic, and social aims of the graduate and professional students of the University of Arizona.
- To establish effective communication among graduate and professional students.
- To facilitate communication within the University and with other organizations.

GPSC 2020 is the strategic plan for the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) at the University of Arizona (UA). GPSC 2020 has two themes: internal and external.

1. First, GPSC 2020 is designed to assist future GPSC leaders in accomplishing tangible advocacy and service goals on behalf of graduate and professional students. GPSC 2020 provides GPSC and other campus leaders with a vision of how graduate and professional students fit within and contribute to UA and ABOR 2020 strategic plans.
2. Second, GPSC 2020 is designed to contribute to the betterment of the UA by framing its own objectives within statewide and university-wide goals.

Since graduate and professional students are on the cutting-edge of every major higher education initiative in the state, GPSC expects that it will directly benefit the quality of life and lifetime earnings of graduate and professional students and help UA increase its prominence and national competitiveness as an innovative research and educational enterprise. GPSC’s advocacy and services complement Arizona’s goals of improving educational attainment, making significant contributions to the knowledge economy, and better cultivating the economic prosperity and social rewards of this great state’s citizens and students. These goals will only be realized as a result of healthier connections among graduate and professional students, undergraduate students, university administrators, statewide leaders, community, and industry leaders. GPSC and the graduate and professional students it represents are on the cutting-edge of defining UofA as the land-grant university of the 21st century through “comprehensive engagement with the full spectrum of human endeavor” (Hart, 11.30.2012). GPSC asks for resources and recognition to match the teaching, research, administrative, and clinical contributions graduate and professional students provide to the University of Arizona and the state of Arizona.

Inside-Out

GPSC’s Inside-Out philosophy guides the organization’s actions. By investing in ourselves, we are in a position to provide advocacy and services to those we represent. By investing in ourselves, we are in a position to act as a fair and strong partner with campus, state, and national organizations. As graduate and professional students who help fulfill the UA’s land-grant mission of research, teaching, and service, GPSC is uniquely positioned to achieve an array of University of Arizona goals through cross-cutting innovations. As the UA doubles research dollars and increases undergraduate, masters, and doctoral enrollment and graduation rates by 2020, the GPSC will ensure that consistent and commensurate investments advance graduate and professional students’ experiences and professional development. Inside-Out is the philosophy that underpins GPSC’s successful advocacy, cutting-edge services, and indispensible role in achieving ABOR 2020 Goals, UA Goals, and above all graduate and professional student goals.
GPSC 2020 Goals

**GPSC Internal**

- Triple travel grant funding for University of Arizona graduate and professional students by 2020 (based on FY 2012-13 data).
- Double travel grant funding rates for University of Arizona graduate and professional students by 2020 (based on FY 2012-13 data).
- Increase research grant funding to $200,000 annually for University of Arizona graduate and professional students by 2020 (based on FY 2012-13 data).
- Increase research grant funding rates for University of Arizona graduate and professional students by 2020 (based on FY 2012-13 data).
- Provide 50% of all graduate and professional students with some GPSC funding to improve their professional skill development opportunities by 2020 (based on FY 2012-13 data).

**GPSC-UA Big Picture**

- Help improve retention rates by 10% from 2013 to 2020.
- Help improve graduation rates by 10% from 2013 to 2020.
- Help improve time to degree by an average of one semester by 2020

**What GPSC Advocates For**

Advancing graduate and professional students and UA’s goals means that GPSC advocates to:

- Improve graduation rates
- Improve time to completion
- Improve retention rates
- Increase percentage of graduate and professional students who are funded
- Increase amount of funding per student (higher funding + better benefits = more competitive & higher ranking university)
- Diversify types of funding (Graduate, Teaching, Research, External funding, employment)
- Improve health care services on campus to UA graduate and professional students
- Improve benefits to UA graduate and professional students
- Improve childcare services for graduate and professional students on campus
- Build a child care facility on campus open to graduate and professional students
- Expand graduate and professional students professional development opportunities
How GPSC Improves the University of Arizona

GPSC represents graduate and professional students who benefit the UA in several tangible ways:

- **Teaching.** As of 2012-2013, UA graduate and professional students are the instructor on record for 18% of all undergraduate courses and 25% of all courses taught. As of 2012-2013, there are 1,574 Graduate Teaching Assistants, 1,113 Graduate Research Assistants, and 180 Graduate Assistants, Other (source: Graduate College). In total graduate students represent roughly 45% of all instructors on campus (ca. 5,932 tenured, faculty professionals, and non-tenure faculty).
- **Research.** Graduate and professional students produce millions of dollars annually in programs, departments, schools, and colleges.
- **Administration.** Graduate and professional students work in many administrative positions.
- **Clinicians.** Graduate and professional students work in numerous clinical settings.

**GPSC's Principled, Data-driven Advocacy and Services**

Talk is talk. Data is data. Hence, starting in 2013 GPSC will conduct annual surveys to track advocacy needs and service. The “GPSC Institute” will be lead by the Policy Chair and GPSC Representatives, and it will be staffed by the Policy Analyst. GPSC will adhere to the highest quality standards of statistical reliability and validity with the aim of producing the most well-respected surveys on campus. GPSC will submit their research proposals to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) so that it can share its findings with the academic community. In addition, GPSC will partner with campus groups to develop surveys, so long as GPSC maintains control over the content and delivery of its surveys. Annual GPSC surveys will be:

**Financial Life**
- Total cost of attendance: tuition, fees, salary, benefits, debt, childcare, healthcare, living expenses

**Workload**
- Relationship of UA and non-UA workload to degree completion rates, time to degree, successful professional development

**GPSC Programs**
- Events, Travel Grants, Research Grants, Club Funding, Professional Opportunities Funding, Graduate Enrichment Program workshops

**Professional Development/Mentoring**
- Assessing the relationship of mentoring to graduate and professional student success

Survey data will help GPSC make direct asks to improve graduate and professional student quality of life and help the UA achieve its research, teaching and community engagement goals. GPSC will constantly assess its survey practices and modify as needed. GPSC will actively assess other data and policies that affect graduate and professional students.
GPSC Challenges

In order for GPSC to provide cutting-edge services and advocacy for graduate and professional students and to assist the UA reach its ABOR 2020 goals GPSC will address ten (10) key areas.

1. Travel Grants Program

GPSC is a campus leader in providing funding to graduate and professional students and the growth in its Travel Grants Program demonstrates GPSC’s success in providing opportunities. Since 1993, GPSC's has offered a Travel Grant Program. In the last five years, the number of applicants for GPSC travel grants has increased from 394 to 650, a 60% increase (see Fig. 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Applicants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY2008/09</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2009/10</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2010/11</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2011/12</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2012/13 (Projection)</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Travel Grant Applications Received from Fiscal Year (FY) 2008/09 through a Projection of FY 2012/13.

Increasing applications translates to an increase in requested funds. Since 2008-09, the amount requested has risen from $171,320 to $315,000 annually, a 54% increase (see Fig. 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount Requested</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY2008/09</td>
<td>$171,320.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2009/10</td>
<td>$229,300.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY2010/11</td>
<td>$257,148.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY2011/12</td>
<td>$282,068.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2012/13 (Projection)</td>
<td>$315,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Total Travel Grant Funding Requests during Fiscal Year (FY) 2008/09 through a Projection of FY 2012/13.

In 2012-13, the Students Services Fee Advisory Board (SSFAB) awarded GPSC $165,000 for its travel grant program, $53,700 more than 2011-12, a 48% increase. This increase reflects the importance that graduate and professional students place on travel (#1 priority in SSF surveys, 2009-12). GPSC has partnered with the Confluence Center and UA Alumni to match additional travel grant funding to more qualified applicants. Still, given the goals to double the research enterprise and double the number of UA graduate and professional students by 2020, GPSC believes that travel grants funding needs to be closely indexed to the fees and services graduate and professional students contribute to the UA. While GPSC is proud of its Travel Grants Program, in order to help the University achieve its strategic goals, research goals, and 100% Engagement initiatives GPSC needs to triple its funding for travel grants.
2. Research Grants Program

GPSC’s Research Grant Program will begin in Fall 2013. As the program is unfolded, GPSC will monitor its progress and as it is expected to grow, it will apply for SSFAB funding. In addition, GPSC has hired a Development Administrator to help raise funds for GPSC through its UA Foundation account. GPSC has had discussions about raising funds for its Research Grant Program from the Dean of the College of Education and the VP of UA Foundation. GPSC’s Research Program is expected to provide an important service to graduate and professional students but also materially support the University of Arizona’s 2020 goals. As such, GPSC believes it is critical that UA administration commits strategic dollars from its “100% Engagement” initiative and interdisciplinary research to help fund GPSC’s Research Grant Program.

3. Club/Professional Opportunities Development Funding

GPSC’s Club and Professional Opportunities Development funding provides valuable support for groups of graduate students who join together to work on a myriad of social and research issues. It also provides GPSC with an important and direct link to engaged graduate and professional students who may not know about GPSC’s services and advocacy. As GPSC approaches 2020, GPSC may consider taking over the approval process for club recognition and may consider trying to incentivize more participation in GPSC by allocating college-specific club funding based on GPSC General Council attendance. In order for GPSC to engage more graduate and professional students and inheriting the graduate and professional club recognition process, GPSC would need to 1) create a recognition process and guidelines, 2) create an administrator position to oversee the club recognition process, and 3) ensure that GPSC receives adequate monies from SSFAB that are dedicated specifically to club funding.

4. Elections

Expanding opportunities for graduate and professional students begins by making UA graduate and professional students aware of GPSC Elections. Moving forward, GPSC will hold its elections to before Spring Break every year to align itself with ASUA’s Election. Holding elections earlier will not only increase the GPSC’s visibility, but it will also increase the likelihood that graduate and professional students will vote on campus-wide issues such as fee increases and constitutional amendments. Holding elections earlier will also allow GPSC to invest in better institutional memory and development as GPSC incoming officers and representatives will have a chance to shadow and train with outgoing GPSC representatives and officers. GPSC’s Elections are a way to maintain advocacy and service momentum and make successful advocacy and service not only expected, but also built into the way GPSC conducts itself as an organization.
5. Exclusive Recognition of GPSC

In order for GPSC to improve its elections process, GPSC also must be formally recognized by ASUA as the sole representative body for graduate and professional students on campus. In 2006, 94.4% of graduate and professional students voted NO to the question should ASUA represent graduate students. It is time for ASUA and UA Administration to recognize the desires of graduate and professional students who see GPSC as their representative organization.

Currently, GPSC must continuously promote and defend its status as the direct representative body for graduate and professional students. This is an unproductive use of its time and resources. GPSC respects the positive contributions ASUA makes to the University of Arizona, and GPSC recognizes that graduate and professional students benefit from ASUA services, just as undergraduates participate in GPSC’s Student Showcase and benefit from GPSC’s International Student Pickup. Nonetheless, GPSC believes that ASUA and UA administration recognition of its status as the exclusive advocates for UA graduate and professional students will improve its relationship-building capabilities with other campus groups and expand its ability to serve its constituents and act as a productive partner to the University of Arizona community. Our motto driving us forward in this endeavor: Exclusive advocacy, inclusive services.

6. Governance

As the UA expands to include more graduate and professional students online and at campuses in Phoenix and Sierra Vista, GPSC will work to ensure that graduate and professional students everywhere have access quality services and advocacy that students have on the Tucson campus.

7. Marketing/Branding

In 2012-2013, GPSC began to systematically review and refine its marketing and branding. GPSC hired a Marketing and Communications Administrator to assess and define its social media brand and set guidelines for the posting of social media content. Working closely with Student Affairs, GPSC is one of the first campus departments to adopt the new UA logos (included in-page header), and as the number of graduate and professional students grows, GPSC will constantly evaluate its marketing and branding efforts for its constituents and the wider UA community.

8. GPSC’s website

Part of GPSC’s goals for 2020 will be to ensure that its website is the best student government website in the United States. This may require that GPSC seek off-campus vendors to ensure that the design, content, and functionality of its website best reflect GPSC’s advocacy and services and help support UA’s mission and ABOR 2020 goals. As GPSC’s travel, research, club professional opportunities, and graduate enrichment programming grows, GPSC will develop the best suite of technological and administrative methods to serve more graduate and professional students high-quality applications processes. GPSC may develop and in-house software to ensure that it can scale its services upwards as the University of Arizona grows.
9. Childcare

As the campus leader on childcare initiatives, GPSC will continue to find campus partners such as Life and Work Connections to 1) increase subsidies for graduate, professional, and undergraduate students with childcare needs, 2) improve childcare services, and 3) ensure fair and proportional services for graduate and professional services for any and all childcare facilities at any University of Arizona facility.

10. Memorandum of Understanding

In 2012-2013, GPSC signed the document “Guidelines for Transparency and Shared Governance: Memorandum of Understanding between the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) and the Administration of The University of Arizona,” (MoU) with UA Administrators Provost Andrew Comrie, Vice-President of Student Affairs Melissa Vito, and Graduate College Dean Andrew Carnie. The signing of the MoU represents and important moment in GPSC’s 22-year history as it opens up new opportunities to work with key UA Administrators on important initiatives and it states that GPSC will always have a chance to review tuition and fee increases and provide feedback those proposals. It is critical that GPSC leadership track and review the implementation of the MoU annually to strengthen the relationship between GPSC and UA Administrators. It is also critical that GPSC leadership use this document as a major tool of its advocacy on behalf of the graduate and professional students of the University of Arizona.

GPSC 2020 – A Living Document

GPSC leaders from 2012-2013 intended to set GPSC on a path of improved advocacy and growth in services aligning its goals closely to the University of Arizona’s goals and the state of Arizona’s ABOR 2020 goals. While the GPSC leaders in 2012-2013 are completely confident that the majority of principles laid out in GPSC 2020 will still be valid for GPSC leaders in 2020, we recognize that things change. The GPSC leadership in 2012-2013 recommends that GPSC leadership reads GPSC 2020 annually, and then modifies it every year until 2020. This document is version 1.0 of what we hope will be part of your success as GPSC leaders. This document should help provide you context for decisions that have been made and a sense of successful and unsuccessful advocacy so that you can try again and improve on the approach to representing the greatest group of people at the University of Arizona – the graduate and professional students.