

Graduate Student Assembly

Ensuring a vibrant graduate student life

2015-2025 Strategic Plan

2015-2018
Progress Report



Carnegie Mellon University

Acknowledgments

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Kaycee Palko, Senior Coordinator of SLICE (formerly Coordinator of Student Activities)

Jamie Rossi, Associate Director of Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion (formerly Assistant Director of Graduate Student Initiatives)

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*We could never have
accomplished this without you!*

Acknowledgments



Fall 2018 Reps Retreat

Contents

Letter from the President	6
<i>2015 - 2016 GSA President Carolyn Commer</i>	
<i>2018 - 2019 GSA President Surya D. Aggarwal</i>	
Connecting Communities in a Decade of Growth	10
<i>A breakdown of Carnegie Mellon's GSA and graduate student body</i>	
Executive Summary	12
Section A	18
<i>Organizational Development & Infrastructure</i>	
Section B	38
<i>Advocacy, Partnership, & Connection to Resources</i>	
Appendices	88
<i>Appendix A: Strategic Planning Committee Bios</i>	
<i>Appendix B: Campus Input & Presentation Sessions</i>	

Letter from the GSA President (2015)



In the fall of 2013, I attended a conference of the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS) where I saw a presentation about a strategic planning initiative from Cornell's Graduate and Professional Student Assembly. It was then that I realized many of the key issues graduate students were facing here at Carnegie Mellon were also issues for graduate students across the country: growing student loan debt, shrinking federal research funding, visa issues for international students, and the need for expanded mental health services, childcare, and professional development for graduate students.

When I returned from the conference, our GSA voted to make a strategic plan to address these shared issues. Our effort became a two-year inquiry into the day-to-day intricacies of graduate student life here at Carnegie Mellon. This inquiry also led us into the archives of GSA's history where we discovered not only meeting minutes and budget reports (there were a lot of those), but the untold story of how graduate students at Carnegie Mellon have organized to create positive change for decades—how we created a campus coffee house in the 1990s as a common meeting space for students; how we organized a volunteer babysitting network for graduate students with children; and how we helped inform important campus decisions related to PhD stipend levels and student health insurance. GSA has a legacy for being the graduate student voice, but as our graduate student body grows and diversifies—especially internationally—we are left with a difficult question: how can we ensure that the distinct needs of all graduate students, both PhD and Master's, are met?

This graduate student question has never been more important. As of 2015–16, our graduate student population—predominantly Master's students—has grown to over 7,000. More than 60% of our graduate student population is international. These graduate students are not only the majority of our student population, but they will also be our largest alumni community, too. Given this growth and diversity, our GSA strategic plan is an attempt to re-envision the way we have approached graduate student life here at Carnegie Mellon and to consider both the challenges and opportunities we face for creating a world-renowned graduate education experience.

The external challenges for graduate education are great, but if there is one thing our GSA history shows, it is that we have an incredible capacity to solve problems when we work together collectively as a campus community. I invite those of you reading this strategic plan to see it as a touchstone for a conversation that we need to keep having about graduate student life at Carnegie Mellon—a conversation that is fundamentally about our collective future as a university.

On behalf of the GSA, I welcome you to join us in this endeavor.

“On behalf of the GSA, I welcome you to join us in this endeavor.”



Yours in the service of graduate students,

Carolyn Commer
President of the Graduate Student Assembly, 2014–2016
PhD Candidate in Rhetoric, Department of English

Letter from the GSA President (2018)



In the fall of 2014, I joined CMU to pursue my Ph.D. At the time, GSA was in the middle of a two-year period of creating this strategic plan. It was in those early stages of the planning process that I first heard from my departmental GSA Representative, Katie Lagree, about this visionary project. The sense of excitement was palpable - somebody was attempting to understand the breadth of the graduate student experience at the university level and lay out the organization's priorities based on student feedback. In the spring of 2016, I was serving as the GSA Representative for my department when this document was first officially launched.

In the years since, I have seen many significant strides being taken to improve the graduate education experience at CMU. Continuing our commitment to this vision, GSA has represented the graduate student voice and brought to the fore many conversations that were previously overlooked - What does the mentoring climate for Master's and PhD students at CMU look like? Are there ample professional development opportunities for graduate students? Are there avenues for adequate financial support for both Master's and PhD students across the different departments and colleges? - I am proud to report that GSA has worked with many partners in the campus community, and has taken a leadership role in affecting positive change on not only our campus, but nationwide. Some of the achievements include - creating a graduate student lounge for all students, instituting a program to provide free legal consultations for students, providing programming support for family-centric events, opposing the federal taxation of graduate student tuition waivers, and more recently, partnering and supporting the launch of the CMU Pantry. Graduate students all around the campus have contributed to this vision by making a difference in their departments and colleges.

However, much still remains to be achieved. The graduate student population, particularly the number of Master's students has continued to increase. Graduate students make up more than 50% of the student population at CMU. With this, an important question that needs continued evaluation is - has the growth of resources kept pace with this surge in student population? Nationally, many issues that were facing graduate students in 2015 and were highlighted by this strategic plan continue to remain issues today. Student loan debt is still on the rise, and it was only recently that legislation that would limit graduate students' access to federal loans was being debated. With the recent decline of public confidence in higher education, the challenges facing graduate education have never been higher. And it is incumbent on us, and institutions like Carnegie Mellon, to produce well-rounded leaders who can change that perception.

As we continue to work on implementing the vision laid out by this plan, it is important to pause and reflect on the progress achieved; and reevaluate our evolving needs and concerns. It is imperative that we remain engaged with various stakeholders at CMU and nationwide, and continue to have conversations about how we can improve the graduate student experience. As CMU undertakes its next chapter of growth, ensuring an exceptional overall student experience will not only help our current students succeed, but will be critical to continue recruiting the best and brightest students.

It is heartening to see the collective progress that Carnegie Mellon has made in implementing the vision laid out by this document, while adeptly dealing with other challenges that have emerged along the way. I hope that this living document continues to inspire the current and future members of our community to push the boundaries in what we can achieve together, as it encouraged me, and serves an example for our peers at other universities worldwide. I invite you to join us in this journey, and play a role in taking us to that future.



In service,

Surya D. Aggarwal
President of the Graduate Student Assembly, 2018-2019
PhD Candidate, Department of Biological Sciences

Connecting Communities

Carnegie Mellon's Graduate Student Assembly

Our Vision

A culture of cross-disciplinary community and collaboration that enhances the Carnegie Mellon graduate Student experience.

Our Mission

To advocate for and support the diverse needs of all Carnegie Mellon University graduate students in their personal, professional, and public lives.

1. Improving quality of life on and off campus.
2. Supporting academic and professional goals.
3. Encouraging civic and public engagement.

How We Work



National Peer GSAs



GSA



CMU Graduate Student Body



CMU Community



Student Government



The GSA Strategic Plan

2015 — 2025

For the next 10 years

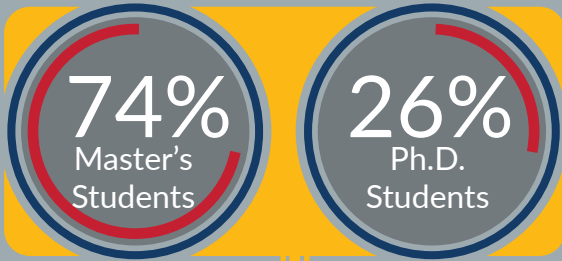
A Decade of Growth

Carnegie Mellon's Graduate Student Body Breakdown

2005
Graduate Student Population



2015
Graduate Student Population



67% Growth
So Who's Who?



Our largest international populations for 2015 grad students are from...



Executive Summary

Early in our Strategic Plan process we realized that in order for GSA to do effective advocacy, we needed better training, mentoring, and support for our graduate student leaders. This realization inspired a 2-part structure for our overall plan: the first section focuses on GSA's organizational development and infrastructure (**Section A**) while the second section focuses on the core issue areas impacting graduate students where we need partnership and better connection to existing resources on campus (**Section B**).

A Organizational Development & Infrastructure

This section focuses on the internal workings of our GSA and a re-evaluation of how we recruit, train, and support graduate student leaders.

1

Strengthening Executive Leadership

Recommends new models of training and support for the GSA Executive Board as they lead the graduate student community.

2

Engaging & Training Representatives

Outlines how to train Representatives and engage them in opportunities for more leadership through GSA.

3

Cultivating Support Networks

Focuses on how GSA can cultivate support networks and communicate effectively with predecessors and the GSA Executive Advisory Board.

4

Creating Institutional Memory

Draws attention to the importance of our GSA history and sharing our past work in ways that will help future students learn from our failures and successes.

B Advocacy, Partnership, & Connection to Resources

This section outlines four themes that characterize graduate student life and recommendations for how GSA and university partners can work together to improve the graduate student experience.

1

Holistic Graduate Student Experience

Focuses on improving aspects of the graduate student experience that have major impact on student success and support. Key areas include: Health & Wellbeing, Sense of Community, Financial Security, and Family Support.

2

Relationship to Campus Environment

Details how graduate students relate to the campus environment and how the geography and location of services impacts their sense of community. Key areas include: Grad Commons, Housing, Dining, Transportation & Parking, and Fitness Facilities.

3

Supporting a Diverse Community

Recommends supporting the needs of our growing international student population, as well as our underrepresented students: women, domestic minorities, students of varying abilities and capabilities, LGBTQ, and first-generation students. Key Areas include: International Student Support and Diversity & Inclusivity.

4

Development Beyond the Classroom

Re-envision the professional needs of graduate students, including how to leverage leadership and public engagement opportunities as professional development. Key areas include: Professional Development and Leadership & Public Engagement.

2-year Strategic Planning Process

The GSA's 2-year strategic planning process was characterized by an experimental and participatory approach to facilitating campus-wide conversation about graduate student life at Carnegie Mellon. Given the differing experiences of both Master's and PhD students across many programs, we were intentional about engaging differing perspectives in the campus community.

Our methods for public engagement included: face-to-face meetings, "pop-up" lunch feedback sessions, online surveys, Open Space sessions, focused interviews, and three day-long workshop retreats with GSA Representatives from every college. Our process reflects the overarching theme and guiding question of our plan: how can GSA and the rest of the university work together to improve the graduate student experience over the next decade?

Stage 1: Groundwork (Fall 2013–Late Spring 2014)

Fall 2013 – Initial Inspiration

The idea for our GSA Strategic Plan was initiated by members of the GSA External Affairs Committee at the NAGPS National Conference, inspired by Cornell's Graduate and Professional Student Community Initiative.

Early Spring 2014 – Deciding our Approach

GSA's VP of External Affairs Carolyn Commer and President Patrick Foley began convening the GSA Executive Board and Advisory Board for Strategic Planning Meetings, conducting the initial "notecard survey" with GSA Representatives to determine the most important issues graduate students face. Based on the survey, the Strategic Planning Committee identified eight campus-wide issue areas and drafted a proposal for a planning process.

Late Spring 2014 – GSA Commits to the Project

The GSA voted to approve the Strategic Plan project, including a budget for the project. The GSA interviewed and elected a Strategic Plan Coordinator—Sarah Tedrow-Azizi, (MBA; Tepper 2016).

GSA opted for a long-term, collaborative approach in order to develop a effective strategic plan for the next decade of graduate student growth.

Stage 2: Gathering Input (Summer 2014–Early Spring 2015)

Summer 2014 – Historical Review of GSA's Advocacy Efforts

The GSA conducted a historical review of its advocacy work and core issue areas since 1980.

Fall 2014 – Re-defining our GSA Mission and Scope

Under Sarah Tedrow-Azizi's leadership, the Executive board refined GSA's Vision, Mission, and Values at their first retreat and solicited feedback from Representatives at the September assembly meeting. At a GSA Representative Retreat, we conducted an "Open Space" brainstorming session to develop goals for each of the eight issue areas. From this planning, the GSA Executive board launched eight working groups with GSA Representatives.

Early Spring 2015 – Engaging the Community through Planning, Surveys, & Interviews

Our eight working groups began to meet, conducting interviews with graduate students to gather student–experience insights.

We surveyed GSA Representatives on "What makes the graduate experience unique at CMU?" and held a GSA Strategic Planning Retreat to plan recommendations in each issue area.

Stage 3: Conversation (Spring 2015)

Spring 2015 – Presentations to the Campus Community

Presented a draft of the University Strategic Planning Pillar 2: The Transformative CMU Experience, other university leadership councils, and graduate students across the colleges at eight "pop-up" lunches hosted by the GSA Executive board and Representatives.

Stage 4: Final Report (Fall 2015–Spring 2016)

Summer 2015 – Final Revisions to the Plan

The GSA Strategic Planning Committee implemented suggestions and feedback into a working draft of the plan.

Fall 2015 – Document Design

A document designer helped revise our final report.

Spring 2016 – Official Launch

Formal announcement and circulation of the plan to the campus community.

Strategic Plan Progress Update Process

To update the Strategic Plan document with the progress accomplished, we engaged with different stakeholders. We stuck with the approach that was employed during the process of creating the strategic plan - to be intentional in engaging both Master's and PhD students in different departments across the university.

Stage 1: Gathering Input

Spring 2018 — Listening Tours

GSA's VP of External Affairs Surya Aggarwal, along with members of the Executive Committee and External Affairs Committee conducted listening tours (with coffee and donuts) across the campus to understand the graduate student experience. Interactive sessions were held where graduate students were asked to share their experiences, concerns and needs as it pertained to different sections of the strategic plan. The sessions were held in April 2018 in six campus buildings - Hamburg Hall, Margaret Morrison, Posner Hall, Wean Hall, Baker Hall, and Gates Hillman Center.

Summer 2018 - Strategic Plan Progress Reflection Retreat

Members of all the GSA Executive Committees from 2014-15 onwards were invited to gather in Pittsburgh to share their experiences and progress in implementing the vision laid down by the strategic plan. The progress achieved was noted with discussions on the future direction of the organization.

Summer & Fall 2018 - Inviting Input from GSA Advisors

Members of the GSA Executive Advisory Board were invited to share their inputs in the progress achieved.

Fall 2018 - GSA Reps Retreat

The goals, process and progress update were presented to the GSA Representatives at the Fall Reps Retreat.

Stage 2: Final Report

Fall 2018 - Document Design

The document designer helped us draft the progress update report.

Fall 2018 - Official Launch

Formal announcement and circulation of the progress update to the campus community.

In the document, progress of each goal and task item is updated to one of four **stages of process**, visually labelled by their corresponding colors and icons:



Achieved

The item is completed and no future efforts are needed.



Ongoing

The item is completed but continuous execution is needed in the future.



In Progress

The item has started but has not been completed. More efforts are needed.



Not Started

The item has not started. Future efforts are needed to initiate progress.

Organizational Development & Infrastructure

As part legislative body, part advocacy organization, and part social facilitator, the GSA provides graduate students with multiple opportunities for leadership development and community engagement. In our Strategic Planning feedback sessions, many graduate students were surprised to learn about the broad reach of GSA's involvement—locally and nationally—and excited about our vision for the graduate student community.

In feedback from our GSA Representatives, we learned that they were most invested in their graduate work when they felt a strong sense of community; for many, their deepest sense of community was felt in GSA. This left us with the question: how can we create more opportunities for Representatives to become involved in leading initiatives in the GSA?

This section focuses on improving the visibility of GSA's work. In particular, we focus on opportunities for leadership and community-building, and making these opportunities visible to our Representatives and graduate students throughout the university. We hope to attract graduate students who can provide GSA with the energy, diversity of perspective, and civic commitment it needs to fulfill the mission and the goals of this strategic plan.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

The development of the organizational structure and infrastructure is critical to the success of GSA, and the vision laid down by this strategic plan. As GSA increases the range of initiatives, projects, and programming activities offered to the increasing graduate student population, it becomes more imperative that the GSA executive leadership and representatives are trained to carry out those responsibilities and are prepared to meet any potential challenges. The networks available in the university to support the work of GSA need to be further strengthened to help GSA succeed in the vision laid down by this plan.

In **Section A**, we focus on four core areas that we believe will fundamentally improve GSA's organizational development and infrastructure:

1

Strengthening Executive Leadership
to lead the vision for GSA

2

Engaging & Training Representatives
to help carry out the vision

3

Cultivating Support Networks
to help guide GSA's future

4

Creating Institutional Memory
to inform advocacy efforts and smooth transition between leaders

Strengthening Executive Leadership

The GSA Executive board is not only the backbone of the GSA, it also represents one of the most unique leadership opportunities for graduate students at Carnegie Mellon. It provides an opportunity to become deeply involved in university affairs, learn about graduate education and life, and work with a team from disciplinary backgrounds. As the graduate population grows, this has meant greater leadership responsibility for GSA. This section outlines how to train and strengthen the Executive leadership in a way that best aligns with our values of creating a diverse, inclusive community and equipping the team with the leadership and managerial skills needed to build a strong community.

Vision

A diverse, representative Executive board that communicates effectively (internally and externally), maintains work-life balance, regularly connects with GSA advisors, and has public visibility of their leadership and service to the University.

The Executive board represents one of the most unique leadership teams for graduate students at Carnegie Mellon.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	<h3>Recommendations</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Achieved  Ongoing  In Progress  Not Started
<p>Create leadership training opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Adapt to different communication styles. (4a)  • Train on unconscious bias. (4b)  • Train on best management practices. (4c)  • Provide financial, event planning, and policy. (4d)  • Train on healthy work–life balance. (4e)
<p>Build relationships for leadership and professional development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Include GSA Advisory Board in transition of Executives. (2)  • Establish GSA Executive board alumni group. (5a)  • Invite previous GSA Executives to serve on the Advisory Board. (5b)
<p>Increase visibility of leadership opportunities</p>	
<p>Develop indicators of effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Recruit graduate students from diverse backgrounds and disciplines. (1)  • Formalize "Exec Orientation". (3a)  • Formalize end of year report summaries. (3b)  • Formalize transition documents. (3c)  • Evenly distribute Executive board workload. (6)

** Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.*

While some progress has been made to recruit graduate students from a variety of backgrounds to serve in GSA leadership opportunities, additional concrete steps need to be taken to help prepare the students to serve in these leadership positions. Further, the support networks available for students serving in these positions need to be strengthened. More opportunities should be created to provide feedback for Executive Committee members.

Goals

1. Create professional and leadership training opportunities for GSA Executive board.

While there are some scattered mechanisms that currently exist to train the members of the GSA Executive Committee, efforts have not been made to streamline these opportunities to make them available for the GSA Executive Committee.

2. Build relationships with current advisors, staff in student affairs, and campus centers for leadership and professional development.

Some advisors are invited to help train GSA Executive Committee members in how to run effective committee meetings, but more conscious efforts need to be made to invite other campus offices in imparting leadership and professional development skills.

3. Increase visibility of the unique leadership opportunities that are available for the GSA Executive board.

The various leadership opportunities that are available to members of the GSA Executive Committee are made visible through presentations at Reps meetings and one-on-one meetings with graduate students interested in running for Executive Committee positions.

4. Develop indicators of effectiveness that measure:

a. Diversity of board representation.

Indicators that breakdown the Executive Committee representation by level of program (Masters/ PhD), gender, and domestic/international status are currently in place. However, more indicators of diversity could be developed and tracked.

b. Successful completion of projects and programming activities.





Regular feedback is sought from attendees upon completion of programming activities to gauge the success of the event. Further, timelines are taken into consideration to evaluate the progress of the projects - upon the completion of these projects, the dates these projects were initiated is communicated to the graduate student body. For instance, in the email that announced the launch of legal consultation program, the date the proposal was made was communicated to the grad student body.

c. Engagement and cohesion (one-on-ones with advisors, time spent with Executive team).

Qualitative indicators (e.g. presence and level of engagement at meetings, responsiveness to emails) and interaction are currently in place to assess engagement and cohesion, but more explicit indicators need to be put in place.

d. Management success (360-degree performance review, time spent communicating and delegating tasks to the administrative coordinator and GSA committees).

While annual feedback was sought from advisors on the functioning of the GSA Executive Committee at the end of AY 2017-18, regular and comprehensive feedback mechanisms for each member of the Executive Committee are yet to be put in place.

Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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Recommendations

1. Recruit graduate students from diverse backgrounds and disciplines for best representation.

Over the past few years, GSA has actively attempted to recruit students from varied backgrounds to serve on the Executive Committee. Specifically, we have recruited Master's students, international students, and women to serve on Executive Committee, as these groups have been underrepresented on the committee in the past. However, more work needs to be done to recruit students from other underrepresented populations.

2. Include GSA Advisory Board in transition of Executives to strengthen visibility of support.

The GSA Executive Advisory Board (or GEAB) has been included in transition meetings over the summer. The May meeting of GEAB includes both the outgoing and incoming Executive Committee. Additionally, one-on-one meetings with each member of the incoming Executive Committee are scheduled with GSA's Advisory Board.

3. Formalize GSA Executive board transition process for each VP, including:

a. "Exec Orientation" with topics related to: Policies and Protocols, University Organization and Hierarchy, Working as an Effective Team, Key Campus Issues, GSA Role in Student Government.

The Executive Committee Orientation includes discussions of all these topics. Additionally, an informal event is organized to help facilitate more discussions on these topics and build a more effective team.

b. End of year report summaries.

This has taken different formats over different years. While end of the year reports were presented in a Repls meeting in the AY 2016-2017, they were compiled in a document and presented as a memo to Provost's Graduate Advisory Board (PGAB) in AY 2017-2018.

c. Transition documents in shared Google Drive.

Transition documents are prepared by each member of the Executive Committee and shared with their successor. Additionally, they have one-on-one transition meetings. Every year, the transition documents are refined and made more comprehensive.

Over the past few years, GSA has actively attempted to recruit students from different backgrounds to serve on Exec, and help inform the working.


4. Train the GSA Executive board on the following:

 a. Adapting to different communication styles, including intercultural communication and conflict resolution.

These trainings are not yet held. It is recommended that trainings on conflict resolution and team management are provided to prevent an unhealthy work environment from arising.

 b. Unconscious bias training.

Unconscious bias trainings are not currently provided to members of the Executive Committee. These trainings should also be offered to the Reps.

 c. Best practices for management (including emotional intelligence, organizational skills, change management, and coaching).

While some of these trainings such as organizational skills and running effective committee meetings have been given in the past, these need to be institutionalized.

 d. Financial, event planning, and policy trainings available to Student Organization leaders.

Different members of the Executive Committee receive trainings relevant to their roles. Trainings on Finance and Event Planning are part of the newly designed Tartan Leadership Conference. Policy trainings are a part of the programming offered at NAGPS Legislative Action Days.


 e. Healthy work–life balance and stress relief.

Serving on the GSA Executive Committee is a highly stress-inducing role, and activities are organized to help members manage their stress. However, additional trainings for members of Executive Committee on healthy work-life balance and stress-relief should be implemented.


5. Build stronger peer support network for graduate students in leadership roles.

 a. Establish GSA Executive board alumni group.

With the convening of GSA Executive Committee alumni from AY 2014-2015 to present day in Pittsburgh over the summer of 2018 to discuss the progress of the GSA strategic plan, different mechanisms of achieving this were debated upon. It was decided that an email list was the best way to establish the alumni group, and was subsequently put in place.

 b. Invite previous GSA Executive board members to serve on the Advisory Board or play an ex–officio role.

Some initial conversations on this issue occurred in June 2018, and continue to be held to evaluate the role, feasibility, and structure of an Executive Alumni Advisory Board. Ongoing points of discussions include whether graduate student leaders (past or present) from peer institutions, or members of other student advocacy groups should be included on this Advisory Board and be invited in an ex-officio role.

 6. Distribute Executive board workload as evenly and fairly as possible (e.g., use a "chore chart" for cleaning office, helping to set up GSA meetings, social hosting responsibilities).

The duties and workload of the Executive Committee have become more streamlined over the past few years, especially with the creation of the position of VP Internal Affairs. The general duties of the Executive Committee are largely evenly distributed. However, by the virtue of the nature of the positions, some members, such as VP Campus Affairs or External Affairs, have a greater workload than the others - and this is something that needs to be addressed in the future.

Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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Engaging & Training Representatives

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges that GSA faces is recruiting graduate students who represent the diversity of graduate students at CMU and are able to assume the full responsibilities of being a GSA Representative.

When recruiting graduate students for GSA, many Representatives assume that downplaying the effort involved in GSA is key, since graduate students have such busy schedules; however, as we discovered at our 2014 Representative retreat, many Representatives are pleasantly surprised to discover the many opportunities for engagement through GSA. Improving visibility of GSA's committee work and initiatives, in addition to providing recommended protocols for electing or appointing Representatives, may help in recruiting the graduate students who are best prepared to fulfill GSA duties.

In addition to recruiting, we find it crucial to provide more explicit support for new Representatives, especially in helping them understand their roles as leaders within their departments who are in charge of GSA social funds. Providing training in institutional policies regarding issues like alcohol at social events, how to work with departmental business managers to access GSA funds, and how to connect with campus resources is key for all new Representatives.


This section focuses on how to engage and train GSA Representatives so they are better equipped to serve their departments and the university community well.

Vision

Engagement from a diverse community of GSA Representatives, stemming from a consistent and public elections process, clarity of role and responsibility, access to appropriate training and development, personal connection to other Representatives, and policies that promote a broad spectrum of involvement.

Many GSA Representatives are pleasantly surprised to discover the many opportunities for engagement the GSA provides.






2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Recommendations</h2> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p> ✓ Achieved ↻ Ongoing ⌚ In Progress ⏸ Not Started </p> </div>
<p>Advocate for consistency in election or appointment across departments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⏸ • Establish Best Practices Guide for election of GSA Representatives. (1)
<p>Build relationships to communicate GSA work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⌚ • Develop communications protocol for working with department business managers. (5)
<p>Increase visibility of GSA on campus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⏸ • Write and publish “Why You Should Become a GSA Representative”. (2) ✓ • Institutionalize the GSA Representative Awards. (3)
<p>Collect timelines for GSA Representative appointments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↻ • Formalize and run “New Representatives Workshop”. (4) <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Establish opportunities to provide feedback on: ↻ • Sense of GSA community. (7a) ↻ • GSA Representative trainings. (7b) ↻ • GSA–Departmental connection. (7c)
<p>Develop indicators of diversity and participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↻ • Create opportunities for Representatives to socialize. (6) <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Establish reporting systems for: ↻ • GSA meeting attendance. (8a) ↻ • Representative–initiated efforts in departments. (8c) ⌚ • Establish reporting systems for committee involvement. (8b)


** Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.*


Representatives are the core of the GSA, and an engaged, well-trained representative body is critical to the success of the organization. While steps have been taken for representatives to have more visibility on campus by serving on university committees, more steps need to be taken to help train them. Additionally, best practices for GSA-related business and event planning need to be put in place and shared publicly for the disposal of GSA representatives and graduate program coordinators.


Goals


-  **1. Advocate for consistency across departments in election or appointment of GSA Representatives in accordance with GSA best practices and guidelines.**
Data needs to be collected on the mechanisms and timelines adopted by each department in appointing their departmental GSA Reps, and best practices should be suggested.
-  **2. Build relationships with graduate program coordinators, CMU graduate student organizations, and graduate students across all departments to communicate the work and importance of GSA activities.**
Steps are continually taken to engage with CMU graduate student organizations and graduate students across the university. GSA Executive Committee has also presented GSA priorities and initiatives to graduate program coordinators at the invitation of Assistant Vice Provost for Graduate Education.
-  **3. Increase visibility of GSA on campus, committee leadership opportunities, and GSA Representatives' service to the University.**
GSA events, initiatives, service and leadership opportunities are well advertised on campus through various channels, such as email and social media.
-  **4. Collect data on individual department timelines for GSA Representative appointments, process for appointing or electing Representatives, and levels of satisfaction and engagement.**
The levels of satisfaction and engagement of Reps is collected through the annual Reps survey but no data has been collected on the individual department timelines for GSA Reps appointments.
-  **5. Develop indicators of effectiveness that measure diversity, participation levels, and Representative-reported satisfaction with personal GSA involvement.**
Some of this data is collected through the annual GSA Reps survey. Other measures need to be taken to track diversity.


Recommendations


-  **1. Establish Best Practices Guide for election of GSA Representatives.**

While the different mechanisms for selection of GSA departmental representatives are presented at the semesterly Reps trainings, a best practices guide has not yet been established.
-  **2. Write and publish “Why You Should Become a GSA Representative” on website, framing GSA’s work in accordance with organizational values and mission.**





The GSA Executive Committee addresses this question in the presentations made at department graduate student orientations, but a document has not been made easily available on the GSA website.
-  **3. Institutionalize the GSA Representative Awards to acknowledge the many ways Representatives can serve their departments and the GSA.**

Since 2014, GSA acknowledges the great work done by the departmental representatives by presenting GSA Reps Awards. In AY 2016-2017, these awards were institutionalized as the “Graduate Student Assembly Carolyn Commer Award”, presented once a semester. Further, in AY 2018-2019, Reps Engagement and Planning Spotlights program has also been initiated to highlight work done by Reps in their departments.
-  **4. Formalize the “New Representatives Workshop” and run at least once a semester or in better conjunction with departmental election schedule.**

The new representative workshop was piloted in the AY 2013-2014. However, over the subsequent years, the frequency of holding these workshops has been increased to two a year to account for new reps who join in the middle of the academic year. The fall and spring workshop are conducted towards the end of September and February, respectively, to account for the election of majority of the new reps.
-  **5. Develop communications protocol for working with department business managers and share with Representatives.**

A communication protocol was provided to the Reps during their onboarding AY 2016-2017, but no formal document has been prepared. This document needs to be prepared by the GSA VP Finance in collaboration with GSA VP Internal Affairs, and shared with the Reps.
-  **6. Create more opportunities for Representatives to socialize and build community (e.g., gathering at least once per semester in addition to the retreat).**

In the past, Reps socials were organized regularly at ‘The Porch’ after monthly Reps meetings. However, to improve the attendance of these socials, other events such as ‘Repsgiving’, Reps picnics, and bowling nights are organized instead.

Annotations	 Achieved	 Ongoing	 In-Progress	 Not Started
	The item is completed.	The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	The item has started but has not been completed.	The item has not started.

7. Establish regular opportunities for Representatives to provide feedback on:

 **a. Sense of GSA community.**

The annual Reps survey run by the GSA VP Communications at the end of the AY has a number of questions through which Reps can provide feedback on sense of GSA community. Additionally, dedicated 'Open Floor' at Reps meetings provides opportunities for reps to bring up any issue they may have.

 **b. GSA Representative trainings.**

While the annual Reps survey includes questions that evaluate the adequacy of the Reps trainings, there is a plan to initiate surveys prior to Reps retreat to understand what Reps wish to be trained in.

 **c. GSA–Departmental connection.**

Questions in this subject are included in the Annual Reps survey.

8. Establish reporting systems for Representatives' involvement and participation; including:

 **a. GSA meeting attendance.**

The Reps are required to sign-in to indicate their presence at each Reps meeting. This attendance is recorded and tracked, and delinquent Reps are informed after two consecutive absences to ensure their presence at the next general body meeting.

 **b. Committee involvement.**

There is not a uniform process of tracking committee involvement across all the committees that is currently in place. Some committees maintain a detailed record of Reps involvement, and these best practices need to be replicated across all the other committees. Additionally, efforts need to be made to track Reps involvement in committees external to GSA.

 **c. Representative–initiated efforts and advocacy in their departments.**

Institutionalizing 'REPS' or Reps Engagement and Planning Spotlights at each Reps meeting in AY 2018-2019 has created an avenue to report and share Reps-initiated event planning and advocacy efforts.

Reps Engagement and Planning Spotlights program has been initiated to highlight work done by Reps in their departments.

Cultivating Support Networks

The expanding scope of the GSA requires a vast and dedicated support network. The GSA is fortunate to have an Advisory Board that includes mentors from multiple offices on campus, including the Office for the Assistant Vice–Provost for Graduate Education (AVPGE), the Division of Student Affairs (DoSA), the Office of Student Activities, and the Office for International Education (OIE). In addition to this advisory board, the GSA employs a full–time Administrative Coordinator who assists in the daily operation of GSA, helps execute our social events, handles purchasing and financial paperwork, and supports our seven internal committees.

Although GSA has a broad network of dedicated mentors and advisors, it can be challenging for the Executive board—especially new Executive members—to know who to seek out for support, depending on the type of issues or initiatives for which they need help. Since graduate students often work independently in their own coursework or research, they may tend toward working independently when it comes to their GSA responsibilities as well. Learning to work effectively as an Executive team, delegate responsibilities to committee members, and use the currently–available support network is key to fulfilling Executive duties while maintaining a work–life balance.











This section focuses on how to help the GSA Executive board strengthen their support network in order to fulfill their GSA duties and balance coursework, research, and teaching responsibilities.

Vision

A strong, visible support network for GSA, comprising advisors, administrative support, GSA Executive board and representative alumni, and broader connections throughout Student Government and the campus community.

Learning to work as an Executive Board, delegate responsibilities, and use the currently–available support network is key to maintaining healthy work–life balance.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	<h3>Recommendations</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Achieved  Ongoing  In Progress  Not Started
<p>Build relationships with boards and councils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Plan transition process with GSA Advisory Board and former Executives. (1)  • Set up regular one-on-one meetings with Advisory Board members. (3)  • Manage relationships with GSA Executive board and Representative alumni. (4)  • Invite GSA Executive board alumni for advise and support. (5)
<p>Increase visibility of support networks and contacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Profile the Advisory Board and the Coordinator on the GSA website. (2)
<p>Collect and compile data on hours worked</p>	
<p>Establish indicators of the strength of outside ties</p>	

** Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.*

Substantial work needs to be put in place to help strengthen the support networks that are available to GSA Executive Committee members and representatives. Further, the help provided by these support networks needs to be explicitly defined. Progress has been made to include these support networks in transitions and training of the members of the GSA Executive Committee.

Goals

1. Continue to build relationships with GSA Advisory Board, Student Activities staff, GSA alumni, Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and Student Government.

While mechanisms have been put in place to build relationships with these bodies and offices, these need to be improved and cultivated each year. GSA Advisory Board is the one group that GSA Executive Committee and Reps interact the most with. Documenting how each advisor helps the Executive Committee will be critical in cultivating relationships with the GSA Advisory Board. Relationships with Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and Student Government are maintained through Elected Leadership Council but not limited to that group. Further, GSA alumni are used as an important resource to help shed light on historical initiatives and to gain additional perspectives. More work needs to be done to build relationships with more individuals in the Student Activities staff.

2. Increase visibility of existing GSA support networks and individual contacts.

Steps need to be taken to better streamline and delineate roles played by the GSA support networks, including official GSA advisors and other members of the university. Following that, steps should be taken to increase the visibility of these networks.

3. Collect and compile data on hours worked by GSA Executive board and Administrative Coordinator to regularly assess level of additional support needed for GSA operations.

While the GSA Coordinator compiles data on hours worked, the same needs to be done by other members of the Executive Committee.

4. Establish indicators of effectiveness to measure the number and strength of ties with contacts outside GSA, and create outreach efforts to expand and strengthen networks (e.g., number of new contacts, number of new activities and programs as a result of new contacts, level and quality of interactions).

No explicit indicators have been established to evaluate the effectiveness of interactions and support provided by support networks. However, many qualitative discussions have been had to evaluate the support provided by the existing support networks.

GSA alumni are used as an important resource to help shed light on historical initiatives and to gain additional perspectives.


Recommendations

 **1. Engage with the GSA Advisory Board and former Executives in planning transition process.**


The transition process for the new Executive Committee has been designed to include meetings with both the members of the outgoing Executive Committee and the administrators to help ease the transition. The outgoing and incoming Executive Committees meet to discuss unfinished business of the year, and the daily GSA functioning. The incoming Executive Committee is also invited to the end of semester meetings with the GSA Executive Advisory Board and the Provost's Graduate Advisory Board. Further, each member of the Executive Committee has one-on-one meetings with the Advisory Board.

 **2. Profile the Advisory Board and the GSA Coordinator on the GSA website, making clear how they support the GSA.**

The GSA Coordinator is profiled on the GSA website, but the members of the Advisory Board have not yet been profiled. Work is currently underway on delineating how each advisor specifically supports the GSA Executive Committee before profiling them on the GSA website.

 **3. Set up regular one-on-one meetings with Advisory Board members to discuss leadership goals and receive guidance on committee issues and projects.**

The GSA Executive Committee has a standing meeting with the advisors once a month to discuss ongoing projects. Additionally, the GSA President has a standing meeting with the advisors once every two weeks.

 **4. Manage relationships with GSA Executive board and Representative alumni by creating an alumni board email list.**

In the summer of 2018, the issue of GSA Executive Committee alumni email list was revisited and revived. The GSA Executive Committee alumni email list was updated, and used to collaborate on the GSA Strategic Plan progress update report. Although historical data on Repls alumni has been kept and updated since 2016, no work has been started on creating a GSA Representative alumni email list.

 **5. Invite GSA Executive board alumni to advise or support specific projects or initiatives.**

Specific GSA Executive Committee alumni have been invited to advise and provide support on certain GSA projects and initiatives in the past. Specifically, these projects included tax bill advocacy, the CMU Presidential search in 2017-2018, the GSA Strategic Plan progress update, and GSA advising.

Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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4 Creating Institutional Memory

The GSA has existed as an organization at CMU for almost 35 years, but our history and past accomplishments could be better documented and used as a resource. Currently, there is limited documentation and visibility of our meeting minutes, surveys, and past GSA projects and events. Of the records we do have, they are mostly in hard copies stashed away in unlabeled binders or filing cabinets in the GSA office.

By developing stronger institutional memory and record-keeping practices, GSA can better learn from past accomplishments and challenges. For example, when we attempt to tackle issues that have been addressed in the past (e.g., childcare, campus safety, stipend levels) we can better identify the key players who worked on these initiatives, including former Executive board members who may offer important insight into current efforts.















In this section we focus on how to improve not only the technicalities of our record-keeping, but also the regular practices of developing our institutional memory so that future generations can learn from our work.

Vision

Continuous process of developing institutional memory, as well as sustainment of well-maintained (organized, updated, digitized) records and files, to promote smooth transition among the GSA Executive board and Representatives, improve visibility of GSA history, and enable year-on-year progress-tracking.

Developing stronger institutional memory and record-keeping practices, GSA can better learn from past accomplishments and challenges.

2015-2018 Progress Summary


Goals	<h3>Recommendations</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Achieved  Ongoing  In Progress  Not Started
<p>Preserve historical GSA information for effective use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Formalize descriptions of all GSA positions. (1)  • Formalize meeting minutes template. (2)  • Plan time to reflect on what has and has not worked. (4)  • Create an online archive of GSA work and history. (5)  • Scan and organize hard copy files in the GSA office. (6)
<p>Build and maintain key relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Compile and publish GSA history on GSA website. (7)  • Assemble a list of GSA Executive board alumni. (8)
<p>Increase visibility of GSA's history and achievements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Present annual updates on goals. (3)  • Recommend at least one GSA member to serve on national NAGPS board. (9)

** Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.*

Creation of a GSA Google Drive has been instrumental in improving GSA institutional memory. This cloud storage is used as a repository for all GSA-related work and includes tremendous amounts of information about the work carried over multiple years. Additionally, adoption of detailed transition documents has helped with institutional memory. Work needs to be done in exhaustively documenting standard operating procedures and archiving all documents. Additionally, steps need to be taken to back-up this storage to safeguard the organization from any potential loss of information.

Goals

1. Prioritize the development and maintenance of systems that preserve historical GSA information and enable its effective use:

 a. Document procedures for day-to-day operations, including instructions for performing tasks and schedules of who will do what and when.


With the development of Executive Committee Orientation, Open Action Items, and Transition Documents, steps have been taken to document standard operating procedures and scheduling of tasks. However, these documents need to be further developed to include procedures for all the operations completed by each Executive Committee member.

 b. Develop documentation that support strategic initiatives by tracking progress, action taken, and key leaders and stakeholders.





The creation of strategic plan progress report and an online system to track the same is the first step in better documenting progress of GSA strategic initiatives. However, better documentation needs to be developed for initiatives that have been piloted by GSA and have since been transferred to university offices for future administration.

 2. Build and maintain relationships with GSA Executive board alumni, GSA Advisory Board, and University Archives.

While some steps have been taken to maintain relationships with Executive Committee alumni and Advisory Board, future Executive Committees need to continue cultivating those relationships. Institutionalizing ways of facilitating such conversations would help future Executive Committees accomplish these goals. Additionally, GSA needs to reach out to University Archives for better archiving of GSA history and initiatives.

 3. Increase visibility of GSA's history, leadership, past achievements, and progress on current initiatives.

GSA's achievements and leadership are highlighted through various mechanisms which include orientation presentations, emails to graduate students, and social media. Progress on current initiatives are often shared during Reps meeting. Most of these means are scattered and do not result in a "one-stop shop" for all GSA-related information. This has negative consequences on the visibility of GSA-initiatives, and may result in information being forgotten with leadership turnover. Creation of a resource like a GSA Blog, whose posts are also shared through social media, may result in better preservation of institutional memory.

Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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Recommendations

-  **1. Formalize descriptions of all GSA Executive board and committee positions, clearly outlining roles, responsibilities, historical activities, and predecessors.**

The description of the roles and responsibilities of the GSA Executive Committee and advocate positions has been formalized through their inclusion in the GSA bylaws. However, these need to be continually refined given any future changes in these positions. The information on historical activities and predecessors is compiled and updated in the transition documents for each Executive Committee position.
-  **2. Formalize meeting minutes template.**

A template for the meeting minutes was formalized in AY 2016-2017, and is in common use at GSA Executive Committee, Reps, and Committee meetings.
-  **3. Present annual updates to provide more consistent progress towards goals (e.g., “State of the GSA”).**

A mechanism hasn't yet been established to provide annual updates to graduate students. In AY 2017-2018, key projects and challenges for the GSA were highlighted in an email to the graduate student body by the GSA President as a potential update route. A better mechanism needs to be institutionalized, perhaps during the Graduate & Professional Student Appreciation Week, to make this a regular feature.
-  **4. Plan time to reflect regularly on what has worked—and what has not—in the past to improve future advocacy and work.**

Time is usually set aside at GSA Executive Committee meetings to reflect on issues and advocacy work. Further, it is encouraged that this information is documented for institutional memory in order to help future Executive Committees.
-  **5. Create an online archive of documented GSA work and history.**

The minutes of GSA Executive Committee and Reps meetings are published on the GSA website. Further, new mechanisms such as weekly blog posts are being developed to further create an online archive of GSA work.
-  **6. Scan and organize all the hard copy files in the GSA office, and make searchable by issue and keywords.**

GSA has not devoted time or resources to achieve this. It is recommended that this is completed with the help of an archivist.
-  **7. Compile and publish GSA history.**

GSA history has not been published on the website. This needs to be compiled using GSA documents and consultation with GSA advisors.
-  **8. Assemble list of GSA Executive board alumni with updated contact information.**

A list of the GSA Executive Committee alumni with their updated contact information has been compiled, and has been used to develop the alumni email list.
-  **9. Recommend at least one Executive board member to serve on national NAGPS board each year.**

Since 2014, GSA has regularly recommended that CMU graduate students serve on the NAGPS national and the northeast regional boards. However, the goal of this recommendation is to ensure that GSA maintains relationships with external graduate and professional student community through mechanisms that may include but are not limited to engagement with NAGPS.

Advocacy, Partnership, & Connection to Resources

One of GSA's primary responsibilities is to be the voice of graduate students on campus and advocate effectively for graduate student needs. Many of the key areas of need for graduate students cannot be solved by GSA alone—they require partnership with other stakeholders at the university.

We have organized our goals in this section according to four types of needs for GSA: Advocacy, Relationship-Building, Visibility, and Data Collection.

Advocacy

Although GSA has wide representation across the university on more than twenty university committees, we found that our GSA Representatives need clearly-articulated points for what they should advocate for. One of our key goals in each section focuses specifically on what graduate student Representatives should prioritize in their role on these university committees.

Relationship-Building

In many cases, GSA has been most effective in advocating for graduate students when we were able to build relationships with the appropriate organizations, staff members, or offices on campus that are trying to address similar issues. For example, working with staff in transportation and parking was a key way to build momentum and support for the biking committee and mobilized university efforts to improve campus infrastructure.

Visibility

In other cases, the university or GSA provides resources to graduate students that simply need greater visibility. For example, some students requested access to an emergency loan fund (one is offered through the Division of Student Affairs) or help understanding the intricacies of the student health plan and medical bills (University Health Services can assist with this). We realized that we could have a major impact by helping to increase visibility of currently-existing resources.

Data Collection

Lastly, there are some issues that require us to collect more information before we can pinpoint areas of need and plan courses of action. For example, when it comes to issues like financial security and making support for PhD students more equitable across programs, it would help to gather both internal and external data on how PhD's are funded and what funding packages include (elements like health care stipends, technology provided, and travel funding). We have pinpointed areas where further data collection is key for taking action.

In **Section B**, we provide an in-depth look at four broad issue areas that characterize the graduate student experience and how university partners can help.

1

Holistic Graduate Student Experience

Health & Wellbeing
Sense of Community
Financial Security
Family Support

2

Relationship to Campus Environment

Grad Commons
Housing
Dining
Transportation & Parking
Fitness Facilities

3

Supporting a Diverse Community

International Student Support
Diversity & Inclusivity

4

Development Beyond the Classroom

Professional Development
Leadership & Public Engagement

Holistic Graduate Student Experience

While graduate education has traditionally focused on professional development, there are many factors that impact a graduate student's holistic experience at Carnegie Mellon. GSA has a long history of improving the holistic graduate student experience, particularly in terms of negotiating affordable health insurance rates, creating a sense of community through our events, advocating for financial resources, and providing family-friendly campus facilities, such as the Wean Hall lactation room and changing tables in campus bathrooms.

As the graduate student population continues to grow, there is need to expand the resources and support services currently offered. Given the rise in student debt nationally, our growing international student population, and the need for more mental health resources, it is imperative to develop campus resources that are geared for the unique needs of our graduate students. Graduate students tend to be older, may have families of their own, and may also have mental health issues requiring different support services.

In this section we outline how the Carnegie Mellon community can work together to support the holistic experience of graduate students in the following four areas: Health & Wellbeing, Sense of Community, Financial Security, and Family Support.

As the graduate student population continues to grow, there is need to expand the resources and support services offered.

Health & Wellbeing

Vision

A campus environment that supports the holistic well-being (mental, physical, and spiritual) of all its graduate students.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
Advocate for increased access to health-related services and resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 In Progress • Provide affordable student health insurance with dependent coverage. (2)
Build relationships with key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 In Progress • Advise on development of mental health workshops. (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🔄 Ongoing • Develop and promote mental health workshops. (1) 🚩 Not Started • Schedule health info sessions for graduate students. (4)
Increase visibility of health-related services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚩 Not Started • Collaborate with other graduate student organizations. (4) 🕒 In Progress • Make Survivor Support Network and Safe Zone liaisons visible. (5) 🕒 In Progress • Publicize resources for sexual assault and relationship violence prevention. (6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 In Progress • Promote health-related resources. (3) 🕒 In Progress • Train and do outreach to graduate student liaisons in each college. (6) 🕒 In Progress • Publicize resources for sexual assault and relationship violence prevention. (7)
Collect health-related data on graduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 In Progress • Charge a GSA committee to document and communicate health insurance policies issues. (1) 🕒 In Progress • Create a GSA policy to review health insurance plans and vote on major changes. (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 In Progress • Benchmark financial support to grad students for health insurance. (5)


* Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.


A holistic graduate student experience is incredibly important for graduate students at Carnegie Mellon. The first aspect laid out in the GSA Strategic Plan is Health and Wellbeing, in which there has been mixed progress by both the GSA and our University Partners.


Focus on mental health has become a priority at Carnegie Mellon. Efforts are being made to destigmatize seeking assistance and to promote support groups. GSA has helped with these efforts by targeted programming for various demographics (grad oriented Safe Zone trainings, partner and family events, supporting cultural orgs, etc). GSA should make more of an effort to promote resources available for graduate students. University partners should make more of an effort to recognize the difference in constituencies and include graduate students in their mental health promotion efforts. Spiritual health at Carnegie Mellon, like mental health, is making progress and this has included the hiring of part-time coordinator of Religious Life Programs. Programming through the Student Affairs Wellness Initiatives has included a free access to guided meditations using Headspace and numerous other initiatives. In addition, GSA should better promote resources available and advocate for graduate student inclusion in planning of programming-surrounding these activities.


Attention to physical health of graduate students continues to need more attention. New fitness facilities in the CUC and Tepper buildings address the issue of space, but greater attention needs to be paid to frequency and scheduling of fitness classes. GSA has supported student-led intramural initiatives; absence of grad-only intramurals (other than the GSA sports league) has resulted in these activities remaining undergrad-dominated. With the success of an expanded GSA sports league in the summer of AY 2018-19 and a huge interest in 'Movember in AY 2018-19, it has become apparent there is a demand for fitness resources among grad populations. While the student health care plan provides excellent coverage, the high-cost of healthcare (and the recent significant increases in the cost of CMU's plan) are typically borne by graduate students whose stipends are on average calculated to just cover cost of living expenses. The decentralized structure of Carnegie Mellon makes benchmarking of how programs cover healthcare costs difficult. It also creates massive disparities between students' ability in different programs to cover their health care costs.

Goals

-  **1. Advocate for increased access to health-related services and resources, including mental health resources and affordable student health care.**

This continues to be an important issue for graduate students at CMU. GSA should establish direct ties to groups like UHS and CaPS. Information on the student health care plan has in the past been one way, the general body is informed of the changes being made but not directly able to influence decisions.
-  **2. Build relationships with key partners and groups in the development of programs that improve health literacy, healthy lifestyles, and communication flow between students and University Health Services.**


GSA should establish more connections with the key groups who promote health literacy, healthy lifestyles, mental and spiritual health, etc.
-  **3. Increase visibility of programs and services, both on-campus and locally, that support graduate students' well-being.**


GSA often promote specific health and well being events, but resources on and off campus are not generally promoted.
-  **4. Collect data on graduate students' health needs, access to resources, and efficacy of existing programs and services.**


The GSA Graduate Student Stipend Report combines information on program coverage of health care costs, but beyond this data collection on health needs are lacking.


Recommendations


For University Partners

-  **1. Develop and effectively promote mental health workshops for graduate students.**

Mental Health First Aid Training is available to all Carnegie Mellon staff, faculty, and students but there is no workshop targeted specifically for graduate students. CaPS has started to facilitate PhD and Masters student support groups. The promotion of these resources are still lacking, but the services are gaining some awareness. There are also multiple examples of colleges and departments within Carnegie Mellon addressing graduate student mental health workshops.
-  **2. Provide affordable student health insurance plans with dependent coverage.**


Current student health care coverage is larger than most peer institutions but the price is higher than desired. Financial support for Masters Students is necessary in the future. The decentralized structure of Carnegie Mellon creates massive disparities in the ability of graduate students in different programs to address their health care costs. The university should ideally fully cover the health insurance costs for all graduate students. Since graduate students on average aren't paid much beyond cost of living, the rising cost of health insurance gravely affects people of lower socioeconomic status as well as those with pre-existing medical conditions.
-  **3. Better promote:**
 - a. S-CHIP resources for dependents.**
 - b. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) resources.**
 - c. Mental health resources for graduate students.**

Many steps have been taken to promote CaPS and mental health resources such as the BeWell newsletter, overhauled websites for CaPS and UHS and workshops on the topics during orientation events. More work needs to be done by university partners in better promoting these resources. These programs are gaining general awareness, but promotion could be improved (signage, promotion in graduate student spaces, etc). GSA has published a compilation of campus resources including health resources for graduate students to help with this issue.
-  **4. Schedule health info sessions organized for graduate students at key times covering healthcare topics such as:**
 - a. Deadlines regarding health insurance registration.**
 - b. How the U.S. healthcare system works (what is a deductible, referral, etc.)**


Information on healthcare topics provided by university partners are hard to parse, sporadically provided after orientation and outsourced to the healthcare provider. Health information sessions should be held more frequently to address these topics for often overwhelmed and confused students who are on their own for the first time and/or international students who are not used to the U.S. healthcare system.
-  **5. Benchmark financial support given to graduate students across CMU for health insurance.**

Information across all the departments and colleges has not been collected and made available. The university has made some efforts in attempting to collect this information - however, remains to be established if this information will be collected and available to be viewed by graduate students. GSA has made strides in this domain through the publishing of the Graduate Student Stipend Report for information on students' financial support. This report contains information on how programs handle the cost of healthcare, but this information is unclear in some cases. More work should be done to standardize how we classify a program covering a graduate student's healthcare cost.

Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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 **6. Train and do outreach to at least five graduate student liaisons per college in Survivor Support Network (SSN) and Safe Zone.**

Two grad-oriented SafeZone sessions occur per year usually, facilitated by GSA and university partner. While SSN trainings are no longer offered by the university, more workshops should be organized in partnership with UHS and the Title IX office.


 **7. Publicize resources for sexual assault and relationship violence prevention in graduate student spaces, at graduate student program orientations, and through graduate student channels.**

The Title IX office holds trainings at university-wide and some departmental orientations. Some departments have a graduate-student specific online module for TA trainings. However, the awareness of resources for sexual assault and relationship violence remain low. University partners should make more of an effort to publicize available resources to graduate students.


For GSA

 **1. Charge a GSA committee to document ongoing issues with student health insurance policies and communicate these issues to University Health Services.**

GSA's Campus Affairs Committee and the recently formed Healthcare Committee have begun to look at graduate students' relationship to healthcare and University Health Services, but has yet to undertake efforts to survey ongoing issues with health insurance policies.

 **2. Create a GSA policy for reviewing health insurance plans and voting on any major changes to student health insurance plan.**

The GSA Executive Committee and General Body are notified of changes only after plans are finalized. We currently don't vote on changes, but only get presented the changes and get to offer feedback, although it is too late to make changes. It is unclear whether feedback from the GSA General Body or Executive Committee will inform future decisions for University Health Services.

 **3. Advise University Health Services on the development of mental health workshops.**


With the formation of mental health workshops and graduate student support groups, GSA should turn its attention to working with CaPS to promote resources and identify difference in need between Masters and PhD students. The VP Campus Affairs has undertaken efforts in collaboration with CaPS on developing mental health workshops.

 **4. Collaborate with other graduate student organizations to promote health care options and educational opportunities.**

No such effort has been started. GSA has published documents and benefits highlighting the various health care options but hasn't collaborated with other graduate student organizations on this initiative.

 **5. Make visible the Survivor Support Network (SSN) & Safe Zone graduate student liaisons.**

Grad oriented SafeZone trainings are well advertised, and liaisons publicly appreciated. However, more work needs to be done to increase their visibility.

 **6. Help publicize resources for sexual assault and relationship violence prevention.**

GSA recommended students for training through the Green Dot Bystander Intervention Training program. More effort from the GSA should be made to publicize resources in regards to sexual assault and relationship violence prevention.

Sense of Community

Vision

A graduate student community that is connected in multiple social and professional ways (more than disciplinary identity) and is empowered to enrich the community through a variety of events, forums, and organizations.

2015-2018 Progress Summary


Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
Advocate for more social and professional events	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Achieved  Ongoing  In Progress  Not Started 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Achieved  Ongoing  In Progress  Not Started
Build relationships with key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Advocate for letting GSA Representatives become university-trained social hosts. (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Provide more explicit support for graduate student organizations. (1)
Collect data on existing social and professional programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Make social events more inclusive. (2) 	
Increase visibility of existing social and professional programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Plan and promote Graduate & Professional Student Appreciation Week. (4) 	


** Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.*


Outside of classes and research, graduate students benefit from a sense of community in order to grow personally and professionally. Both university partners and GSA have made progress in creating a sense of community for graduate students.


GSA social and professional programming is well-attended but we need more feedback to be effective as a body that serves a larger community. Areas that are lacking include professional development events, involvement and collaboration with student groups, more graduate student-friendly alcohol and food policies, and increasing interactions between departments. All of the recommendations that have not been started are related to food and alcohol. In the future, GSA and university partners should work together to improve related policies.

Goals

-  **1. Advocate for more social and professional events that foster interdepartmental interaction.**





Events like GSA wine tasting and sailgating encourage interdepartmental interaction. Trivia Night had great success in fostering those interactions. We need more events that encourage interaction in addition to inviting students across departments. GSA also hosts events that have ranged from hosting speakers to opportunities for taking professional headshots for students. However, more can be done to develop professional development opportunities to address the sheer diversity in needs across departments. GSA SocialLink is a social forum specifically tailored for students to create events that promote interdepartmental interaction that are not otherwise organized. This further forms a sense of community with a direct ability to communicate across departments.
-  **2. Build relationships with administrative offices, Student Activities, and student groups that already promote interaction between graduate students from different programs.**

GSA executive members have close relationships with administrative offices and Student Activities through advising groups and meetings. An area to focus on would be increasing involvement or collaboration with student groups.
-  **3. Collect data on existing social and professional programming that helps to foster interdepartmental interaction.**

Surveys on event proceedings as well as data from ticket collection helps us understand who attends our events and what we could do better. Further analysis is required to fully understand our constituents' needs.
-  **4. Increase visibility of existing on-campus social and professional programming that fosters interdepartmental interaction.**

On-campus programming is publicized through our website, emails, and social media accounts. GSA Representatives forward the emailed information to their constituents.

A strong sense of community is key for improving mental health and well-being for CMU's graduate student population.

Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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Recommendations

For University Partners


-  **1. Provide more explicit support for the development of graduate student organizations.**


Little support currently exists to help with the development of graduate student organizations. SLICE has recently started offering open office hours for graduate student organizations, but more work needs to be done to help grad organizations increase their impact. The Fair now comprises all organizations and resources that are available to undergraduate and graduate students, but much more work needs to be done to attract graduate student populations. Now more than ever, graduate student organizations require more exposure to truly be a part of CMU-student culture.
- 2. Revise campus policies to make it easier and more affordable for graduate student groups to have events on campus:**
 -  **a. Adjust policies on food and alcohol in Cohon University Center to make events more affordable for graduate student organizations.**


There is a need to revisit food and alcohol policies in Cohon University Center.
 -  **b. Develop alcohol policy that is more conducive to graduate student socialization needs (e.g., allow GSA Representatives to complete the university's alcohol training program and serve as social hosts).**


Work on policies that allow GSA Representatives to complete the University's alcohol training program and serve as social hosts has not yet been started.


For GSA

-  **1. Create regular events that provide continuity and opportunities for graduate students to meet other graduate students.**

GSA provides regular social programming that students anticipate and participate in. The events are accessible to all graduate students and facilitate interdepartmental interactions.
-  **2. Make social events more inclusive—sensitive to timeframe, food, and drink offerings (e.g., many students do not drink alcohol).**

There is a wide range of social programming that is offered to students. Conscious effort is taken to design events that are family-friendly, and also cater to students who do not drink alcohol. Further, flexibility is provided in timeframes for ticket collection to cater to our part-time students.
-  **3. Continue advocating for a bar or space on campus with more flexible food and alcohol policies.**

Events in the Graduate Student Lounge have included food but not alcohol. Finding a place with relaxed alcohol and food policies is a continued effort.
-  **4. Plan and promote Graduate & Professional Student Appreciation Week (GPSAW) as a time for unifying graduate student activities across campus.**

GSA programming involves events for the entirety of GPSAW to celebrate graduate students. Focusing on the event as more of a unifying experience could be a potential improvement.
-  **5. Advocate for allowing GSA Representatives to become university-trained social hosts.**

Currently, members of GSA Executive Committee are allowed to social host only GSA events. While some casual conversations have been started regarding social training GSA representatives and/or graduate student organization leaders, more concrete efforts need to be made to advocate for a change in social host policies.

Financial Security

Vision

Every graduate student has adequate funding, support, and access to resources for financing their education and professional career at Carnegie Mellon.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
Advocate for more fellowships and scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for more stipend, scholarships and research assistantships. (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the availability of Master's scholarships and fellowships. (4)
Build relationships with alumni, donors, and representatives in Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to advocate for reduced student loan interest rates. (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicate new funds to those with the most unmet financial need. (3)
Increase visibility of PhD funding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure funding packages and stipends meet minimum cost of living. (2)
Collect finance-related data on graduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help publicize the emergency loan programs. (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data on the PhD funding packages offered in each program. (1) • Create financial aid and literacy workshops. (5)


* Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.


The sense of financial security can have an outsized impact on the graduate student population. PhD students often earn only enough to cover cost of living with little to none discretionary spending. Master's students often pay a large sum of money to enrol in their programs. Financial insecurity may disproportionately affect students from a lower socioeconomic status.


While efforts to collect data on financial security have been successful, and more are coming from our University Partners, more progress can be made to address financial insecurity across Carnegie Mellon student population as a whole. Disparities among PhD stipends across departments leave some graduate students living just above the poverty level. GSA has collected data on PhD stipends for a few years and provided it for use in departmental advocacy efforts, but has not been able to successfully advocate for university-stipend floors or standardization of funding policies. There


are very limited opportunities for scholarships and fellowships for Master's students at Carnegie Mellon. More uniform policies and transparency is needed for managing fellowship funds like the Presidential Fellowships. On the federal front, GSA continues to advocate for graduate-student friendly student-loan interest policies; and has recently had some success in advocating against unreasonable proposed tax proposals.

Goals

-  **1. Advocate for more graduate student fellowships and scholarships based on need.**

Initiatives like GSA/Provost funded GuSH and conference travel awards are helping graduate students carry out and showcase their research to the world. More work needs to be done to expand graduate student fellowships and scholarships based on need, with an eye to the the unique needs of the Master's student population.
-  **2. Build relationships with alumni and donors to increase fellowship funds, as well as our representatives in Congress to reduce interest rates on student loans.**

While the University has continued to fund Presidential fellowships, more work needs to be done to increase these fellowship funds for graduate students. GSA continues to engage with Congressional representatives to reduce interest rates on student loans.
-  **3. Increase the visibility of PhD funding across the university and seek to correct funding inequities between graduate programs.**


While GSA has been collecting details on PhD funding through the Annual GSA Stipend Report, GSA has not taken up the cause of correcting funding inequities between graduate programs.
-  **4. Collect data on graduate student funding levels, stipends, scholarships, and loan debt.**


GSA has collected self-reported stipends from GSA reps for the past few years. Loan debt, funding levels, and scholarships vary from student to student.

Recommendations

For University Partners

-  **1. Collect data on the PhD funding packages offered in each graduate program.**

The Office of Graduate Education is working on putting together a report on PhD funding packages across the University. However, it remains imperative that this data is comprehensive and is shared with other campus partners and stakeholders including GSA. Additionally, a study on the support packages available to Master's students across different departments also needs to be undertaken.
-  **2. Ensure that all funding packages and stipends meet minimum cost of living, with 12-month annual support.**

There are huge disparities in funding packages offered to students. Some funded students only make \$13.5k per year, just above the US poverty level for 2018. We expect that a university of CMU's stature would establish stipend floors for PhD students to meet the cost of living in Pittsburgh. Furthermore, funding packages must also contain health insurance allowance equivalent to the cost of the CMU SHIP.
-  **3. Dedicate new funds to departments and individuals with the most unmet financial need.**

As with the previous goal, stipend disparities across programs or departments can be extreme. Funding from the university should be targeted to those programs where graduate students have the most financial need.

 **4. Increase the availability of Master’s scholarships and fellowships.**

There are no Presidential fellowships provided to Master’s students, and this needs to be rectified going forward.

 **5. Create financial aid and literacy workshops for grad students, including Master’s students.**

This program exists in the form of SALT financial literacy program, but has not been appropriately publicized to the larger graduate student population.

For GSA

 **1. Advocate for :**

- a. 12–month stipends that meet the minimum cost of living for all PhD students.
- b. Increased scholarships and research assistantships for Master’s students.
- c. New fellowships dedicated to programs and individuals with the most need.
- d. New university guidelines requiring a minimum of a semester’s advance notice regarding funding availability.

While GSA has started data collection efforts in these regards, we have largely left advocacy to the department level. GSA should revamp efforts to advocate for financial well being in its many forms. In particular, for Master’s students, there are areas where we could make significant impact analogous to the research, conference, and dissertation writing group grants that we do for PhD students.

 **2. Help publicize the emergency loan programs through the Division of Student Affairs.**

The emergency loan program is advertised on the GSA website, but more regular and high impact marketing should be performed to make sure this resource reaches those who need it most.

 **3. Continue advocacy for reduced student loan interest rates.**

With our connections to the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students, GSA has advocated for reduced student loan interest, reunification of graduate and undergraduate student loan interest, and opposed the policies of the initial House version of Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (Dec’17) that proposed to tax graduate student tuition waivers. GSA should maintain its advocacy and attention to these areas.

There are important intersections between health, financial security, sense of community, and family support.

Family Support

Vision

A welcoming campus culture that supports all graduate students as people who have families.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
Advocate for increased financial support for those with dependents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 • Develop university-wide family accommodation policy. (1)
Build relationships with alumni and donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 • Continue advocating for university-subsidized childcare grants. (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📣 • Start fundraising campaign for childcare grant fund. (2)
Increase visibility of the needs of graduate students with dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🔄 • Fund and provide programming support for family events. (2) 🕒 • Publicize domestic partner benefits available through University. (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📣 • Provide workshops on discussing a family accommodation with an advisor. (3) 🕒 • Publicize lactation rooms. (4) 🕒 • Publicize university benefits for domestic partners. (5)
Collect data on the number of graduate students with dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📣 • Create social and professional events for partners of graduate students. (3) 	





* Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.

Family and partner issues continue to be important for graduate students. The GSA Executive Committee has started to appoint Family and Partner Advocate(s) to focus on the needs of those with dependents. So far, the advocates have focused on community building by providing family-oriented events. In the future, the GSA and the Family and Partner Advocate(s) should also focus on advocacy efforts and publishing of resources available to graduate students with dependents.

The major issue facing graduate students with children is the lack of affordable childcare on campus. University Partners should make efforts to accommodate to those graduate students with children, given they are not normally able to afford childcare without other help. For graduate

students' partners not a part of the Carnegie Mellon community, isolation is a major issue. In addition, international students with partners face added difficulties of visa issues, or visa-imposed work restrictions for their partners or children. GSA and university partners should both work more to address the needs of this segment of the graduate student population as well as to quantify the scope of these problems and population it affects.


Goals


-  **1. Advocate for increased financial support for graduate students with dependents.**
This is an important issue that needs addressed for graduate students with dependents are often under more duress.
-  **2. Build relationships with alumni and donors to create a child-care grant fund.**
Efforts in this domain have not been started yet.
-  **3. Increase visibility of the needs of graduate students with dependents (children, partners, and aging parents).**
The needs of graduate students with dependents are being increasingly raised when planning various initiatives within Carnegie Mellon.
-  **4. Collect data on the number of graduate students with dependents.**
No data has been collected by the University on the number of graduate students with dependents. While data collected in other forms (e.g. number of graduate students with dependents enrolling in CMU SHIP) can help provide some information on this, the University needs to be more conscious in its efforts in this domain. However, GSA has begun to collect some information on this through our Reps, by trying to estimate the number of graduate students that may have dependents.


The GSA Executive Committee has started to appoint a Family and Partner Advocate to bring the perspective of those with dependents.


Recommendations


For University Partners

-  **1. Develop university-wide family accommodation policy (including birth of child and care of sick family member or domestic partner).**

A Maternity Accommodation Protocol currently exists for graduate students across the university. However, this should be expanded to paternal accommodations as well.
-  **2. Start fundraising campaign for child care grant fund.**


No such fund has been created yet.
-  **3. Provide workshops on “How to discuss a family accommodation with an advisor.”**


Workshops for students focused on communicating issues pertaining to families and partners with their advisors are not currently offered.
-  **4. Better publicize lactation room locations and access.**


Work is underway by University’s Universal Access Committee to better identify and publicize the location of lactation rooms.
-  **5. Better publicize university benefits for domestic partners.**


Resources are made available on the Office of Graduate Education and Office of Dean of Students websites and are mentioned during orientation.

For GSA

-  **1. Continue advocating for university-subsidized child-care grants.**

Though no recent efforts have been made to advocate for university-subsidized childcare grants, efforts in the past have focused on driving attention to the fact that childcare is unaffordable for graduate students.
-  **2. Fund and provide programming support for family events.**

The GSA Family and Partner Advocate has regularly hosted family oriented programming including events such as trips to the Carnegie Science Center and Children’s Museum.
-  **3. Create social and professional networking events specifically for partners of graduate students.**

Events focused specifically for the partners of graduate student are yet to be organized.
-  **4. Better publicize domestic partner benefits available through University.**

GSA has been invited to the Partner and Family orientation session where these benefits are discussed (2017-19). In the future, GSA should ensure that the Partner and Family advocate is well-versed in these benefits and advertises these to the partner and family e-mailing list and Facebook group.

Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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Relationship to Campus Environment

Graduate students' relationship to the campus environment has a significant impact on their educational experience and overall mental health and wellbeing. We found that the geographical fragmentation of our graduate students across campus and the city of Pittsburgh, coupled with a lack of designated graduate student common areas, pose a significant challenge when trying to build a graduate community here at Carnegie Mellon.

Through our surveys and public discussions, we identified four challenges with how graduate students currently relate to the campus environment:

1. Graduate students who do not work on the main campus report a significant sense of disconnection from the campus community (e.g., students whose primary academic environments are on Craig Street, Mellon Institute, or the Pittsburgh Technology Center). The expansion of graduate degree programs in other cities and countries means that some graduate students have little to no connection to the main Pittsburgh campus at all.
2. Graduate students who are located on the main campus report rarely leaving the one building—or floor—where their lab or office is located, since even the common spaces on campus are crowded (e.g., Cohon University Center, Hunt Library, Gates Cafe).
3. When students are given department–designated offices or communal spaces, they are sometimes scattered across campus, resulting in a lack of cohesion at the departmental level.
4. Space for Master's students to study, collaborate, and socialize is particularly limited.

This section outlines the five key areas of campus life that can positively impact graduate students' relationship to the campus environment and overall sense of community, by improving: space for study, socialization and collaboration (Grad Commons), residential life (Housing), the availability of healthy and affordable food options (Dining), accessible modes of transportation to and from campus (Transportation & Parking), and resources for exercise and relaxation (Fitness Facilities).

We need to ensure that grad common spaces are a top priority in future campus master planning.

Grad Commons

Vision

Every graduate student has space to study, research, collaborate and socialize on campus.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
Advocate for more university common areas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure grad common spaces are a top priority in future planning. (1)
Build relationships with people in charge of campus design and allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure graduate student Representatives on university committees focus on space allocation and campus planning. (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forge partnerships with local businesses. (2)
Increase visibility of graduate student spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicize on GSA website graduate student space location. (2) 	
Collect data on graduate lounge spaces		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark and report on departmental graduate lounge spaces. (3)

** Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.*

GSA laid out three aspects of progress that could be made in this section: increased inclusion of graduate student common spaces in current buildings and future planning, data collection and better advertisement of existing spaces, and more common spaces off-campus in local businesses.

Progress has been made on the first of these fronts with the introduction of the Graduate Student Lounge, as well as graduate common spaces in the new Tepper Building. GSA has not done enough to ensure that graduate student common spaces has been included in the design process, and need to ensure that space is formalized as a metric in the future.

On the second set of goals, GSA and the University have not made progress on auditing graduate student common spaces or better publicizing them. As this is a low-cost project, compared to building new spaces, GSA should undertake a data collection project focusing on these spaces. Publicity of

these spaces should help current graduate students better utilize them, as well as ensure the quality of these spaces is maintained through investment by the departments, university, or GSA.

Finally, while there are local eateries on Craig Street., the introduction of common spaces on that corridor through partnerships with local businesses has not materialized. The University must put in more effort to partner with local businesses, and GSA should consider trying to forge some of these partnerships themselves, as graduate students desire further investment in Pittsburgh as a community.

Goals



1. Advocate for more university common areas that promote grad student interaction.

GSA department representatives sit on various campus planning committees. GSA has built the Graduate Student Lounge to address this need and provide space for graduate students to study and collaborate. GSA needs to evaluate the current state of graduate student spaces and advocate for representation of graduate students on committees to further these recommendations.



2. Build relationships with people who are in charge of campus design and space allocations.

GSA does not currently have a working relationship with people in charge of campus design and space allocations, other than Reps that sit on University committees which participate in these activities. GSA needs to initiate and cultivate relationships with campus committees and planners to ensure that future development of campus spaces include graduate student spaces.







3. Increase visibility of where graduate student spaces are located.

Neither the University nor GSA have undertaken an effort to increase visibility of graduate student spaces on campus. GSA should publish this information on their website, along with photographs and rules for each space.






4. Collect data on location and condition of departmental grad lounge spaces.

Neither the University nor GSA have collected information on the location or condition of departmental graduate student spaces. This is something GSA should undertake.

Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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Recommendations

For University Partners

-  **1. Ensure that grad common spaces are a top priority in future campus planning.**
The new Tepper Building includes commons designated for graduate students. It is unknown if graduate student common spaces is included as a metric in future campus development.
-  **2. Forge partnerships with local businesses to create near-campus social spaces, with particular focus on the Craig Street corridor.**
CMU has not undertaken many significant efforts to partner with local businesses on or off Craig Street to create near-campus social spaces. Craig Street Crawl organized during orientation remains the primary near-campus social gathering. University policies on approved vendors (contracts, payments) often make it difficult for university groups to work with local businesses.
-  **3. Benchmark and report on departmental graduate lounge spaces.**
There is not currently any report detailing the location or condition of departmental graduate lounge spaces.

For GSA

-  **1. Ensure graduate student Representatives on university committees focus on space allocation and campus planning (e.g., Design Review Committee, Public Art Committee, Craig Street Corridor Committee) and represent our advocacy points.**
Graduate Students have served on the Design Review Committee and Public Art Committee during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 academic years. The Craig Street Corridor Committee has become the Craig Street Crawl Committee, and exclusively focuses on the planning of that event.
-  **2. Publicize on GSA website where graduate student spaces are located.**
The GSA website does not include information about graduate student spaces.

The new Tepper Building includes commons designated for graduate students.

Housing

Vision

Every graduate student has access to resources for securing quality, affordable, and safe housing.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
Advocate for quality, affordable, and safe housing	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Advocate for University-sponsored housing for graduate students. (1a)  • Advocate for furnished options with flexible 9-month leases. (1b)  • Advocate for legal support for students dealing with housing issues. (1c) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Expand on-campus or university-sponsored housing for graduate students. (1)
Build relationships with housing-related partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Collaborate with Pittsburgh Student Governance Council (PSGC) to provide legal help. (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Partner with local management companies to make housing transitions easier. (2)
Increase visibility of existing resources		
Collect housing-related data on graduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Continue to collect housing-related stories and issues international students face. (2) 	


* Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.


The recommendations made for graduate students housing fall into four main categories: advocating for University-sponsored graduate housing, increasing legal resources, strengthening tenants' rights in Pittsburgh, and data collection on housing issues, locations, and rents. The most progress has been made on providing legal resources, as GSA, Undergraduate Student Senate, and the Provost's office now fund free 20-minute legal consultations for students, which are intended


to help students with tenant disputes, among other legal issues. As part of this initiative, more workshops are being held to inform students of their rights with regards to housing.


Small amounts of university-sponsored housing for graduate students existed, but that is no longer the case. CMU's Office of Housing Services only provides resources for students looking for off-campus housing. Neither GSA nor CMU have sufficiently or robustly researched where graduate students are living or what they are paying in rent. GSA sent out surveys to capture stories about housing issues, but has not made an effort to measure quantitatively how many students are impacted by such issues.

Goals

-  **1. Advocate for graduate student rights to quality, affordable, and safe housing.**

GSA has not recently advocated for better housing for graduate students since graduate student housing was discontinued. Some preliminary conversations have been had to provide more resources for housing Master's students who are enrolled in programs that require 4 or 6-month housing as opposed to the standard 12-month housing contracts.
-  **2. Build relationships with CMU Housing services, local legal services, campus multicultural organizations, and regional student governments working on housing and tenants rights.**


GSA has been active in the Pittsburgh Student Government Council, with the VP External Affairs serving on the council. However, this has not been successfully leveraged to improve housing and tenants' rights in Pittsburgh. Relationships with CMU Housing Services are non-existent. GSA has started to form stronger bonds with campus multicultural organizations through social events and creating a sense of community, but the issue of housing has not been broached.
-  **3. Increase visibility of existing resources (e.g., CMU off-campus housing website).**

GSA is not currently promoting existing resources to find housing or deal with issues that may arise from housing. GSA has introduced free legal consultations to help students deal with landlord disputes, but this was not an existing resource at the time of the original writing of this goal.
-  **4. Collect data on where graduate students live and their rent prices.**

GSA has not collected data on where students live or what they are paying in rent. Completing this goal could greatly improve GSA's approach to graduate student financial security, transportation policy, and other areas of campus life. A pilot survey of GSA Reps has been done to collect this data. Additionally, the University Registrar has recently helped with data accessibility on this front.

Recommendations

For University Partners

-  1. **Continue expanding on-campus or university-sponsored housing for graduate students, specifically for international students and Master's students.**

No on-campus or university-sponsored housing is currently available for graduate students.

-  2. **Partner with preferred local management companies to make housing transitions easier.**

CMU does not currently partner with any local management companies.

For GSA

1. **Appoint graduate student representatives to the university housing committee each year that represent our advocacy points, including, but not limited to:**

-  a. **University-sponsored housing for graduate students that competes with market rates.**

GSA advocated for graduate student housing in the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years, but no graduate student housing currently exists. CMU Housing Services has offered to continue to include graduate students on the university housing committee, but due to the absence of graduate housing, it has been difficult to justify placing graduate students on this committee.

-  b. **Furnished options with flexible 9-month leases.**


There are no options for graduate housing at the moment.

-  c. **Legal support for students dealing with difficult landlords and poor living conditions.**

In the fall of 2017, GSA submitted a proposal to the Provost's office to provide free legal consultations to students. Starting August 2018, students can now schedule free 20-minute session with a lawyer during 30 weeks on campus. The lawyer can consult on a variety of issues, including housing issues. Utilization of at legal consultation sessions should be regularly evaluated so that the frequency of consultations are adapted to the volume of students' needs.

-  2. **Continue to collect stories and issues international students face with housing issues.**

GSA has sporadically collected testimonials from graduate students using the GSA Story Form, and some students have reached out to the GSA International Student Advocate. However, there has not been a rigorous and frequent collection of this data.

-  3. **Collaborate with Pittsburgh Student Governance Council (PSGC) to provide legal help to students dealing with difficult landlords and poor living conditions.**

GSA, in collaboration with Undergraduate Student Senate and the Provost's office, has initiated a program for free legal consultations. This program was done without collaborating with the PSGC.

Dining

Vision

Every graduate student has access to affordable and healthy food options within proximity to where they work and study.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
Advocate for affordable and healthy food options	Appoint representatives to the university dining committee and advocate for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy, affordable dining options. (1a) • Strategic location. (1b) • Hours of operation aligning with needs. (1c) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create quality, healthy meal options in \$5–6 range. (1) • Establish healthy, more diversified food options not close to central campus. (2) • Expand dining hours in strategic ways. (3)
Build relationships with dining-related partners		
Increase visibility of existing dining options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer graduate student access to coupon books. (2) 	
Collect dining-related data on graduate students		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to collect data on dining usage patterns. (4)

** Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.*

Dining on campus has changed, and will likely continue to change with the arrival of new primary dining vendor, Chartwells. There has been a noticeable effort to increase options and visibility of healthy food options, such as at the new Tepper building. However, dining prices have not entered the targeted range that GSA recommends of \$5-\$6. GSA and CMU have not done comprehensive

reviews of graduate student dining needs, and therefore do not have a good grasp on graduate student desires for price range, food quality, and dining hours.

GSA representative have been actively involved in the university dining committee, and have promoted on-campus sustainability and helped students in non-central locations (Pittsburgh Technology Center and Mellon Institute) organize external dining options such as food trucks.

One of the visions for dining near CMU's campus was for the University to make a concentrated effort to partner with nearby external eateries, but that has not occurred. GSA often caters from these places for events, but also has not successfully partnered with local businesses in a way that benefits graduate students on an ongoing daily basis.

Goals

1. Advocate for affordable and healthy food options at all campus dining locations.

Representatives that GSA has appointed to the dining services committee have advocated for more affordable and healthy food options at CMU. CMU has introduced some healthier options around campus, including at the new Tepper Building, but affordability of campus dining is still a concern for graduate students.

2. Build relationships with campus dining operations and nearby external vendors.





GSA has built relationships with campus dining operations through students that sit on the dining committee, and external vendors that have catered GSA events. However, GSA has not sufficiently built relationships with external vendors near campus in a way that benefits graduate students as a whole.

3. Increase visibility of existing dining options and historical GSA efforts to improve graduate student dining experiences on campus.

GSA has not increased visibility of dining options on campus or historical GSA efforts on the topic of dining, but it would be a good first step towards improving campus dining options.


4. Collect data on graduate students' dining needs, access to affordable and healthy food options, and satisfaction with existing dining options on and near campus.


GSA has not collected data about graduate student dining needs or satisfaction with on campus dining options. On the subject of affordability, GSA has made significant efforts looking at student food insecurity, and had submitted a proposal for starting a campus pantry for students that was subsequently approved. However, this food pantry will not address the dining needs of the campus community as a whole but fill a significant need for the most vulnerable. Additionally, GSA has continued to serve as an avenue for students to share their opinions and concerns about various campus issues, including dining options and prices.


Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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Recommendations

For University Partners

-  **1. Create quality, healthy meal options in \$5–6 range.**


On-campus meal options are currently in the \$7–\$10 range, and there are no vendors who provide affordable food options. Additionally, there are few to no food options within the target range provided by the current vendors.
-  **2. Establish healthy, more diversified food options in areas not close to central campus.**


Healthy food options has been a focus area for the university. Notably, CMU has added some healthy and diversified food options to the new Tepper Building. However, areas such as the Pittsburgh Technology Center still lack dining options.
-  **3. Expand dining hours in strategic ways to meet graduate student schedules (especially summer, weekends, and breaks).**


Dining hours have not been expanded to cater to summer or weekend hours.
-  **4. Continue to collect data on dining usage patterns for graduate students.**


To our knowledge, data on dining usage patterns for graduate students is not being collected.

For GSA

- 1. Appoint graduate student representatives to the university dining committee each year that represent GSA advocacy points:**
 -  **a. Healthy, affordable dining options.**

GSA regularly appoints representatives to the university dining committee. The University has pushed towards opening healthy locations throughout campus, with most options available at the Cohon University Center and Resnik Hall. However, affordability is a concern for all graduate students, and there has been little focus on the topic of affordable dining options.
 -  **b. Strategic locations that better serve graduate students.**

The two major underserved areas for dining are the Mellon Institute, and the Pittsburgh Technology Center, located in South Oakland. There have been talks about how to better serve these communities, however a concrete solution for Pittsburgh Technology Center has not been formalized.
 -  **c. Hours of operation that align with graduate student needs.**

While the vastly different schedules of graduate students make it difficult to set ideal hours of operations, little data has been gathered to understand the routines of different graduate students. However, services need to be expanded to cater to summer and weekend hours.
-  **2. Offer graduate student access to coupon books offered by student groups.**

GSA does not currently provide coupon books or discount for local businesses.

Transportation & Parking

Vision

Every graduate student has access to multiple kinds of reliable transportation that allow for safe, direct commutes to and from campus.


2015-2018 Progress Summary


Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
Advocate for safe, reliable, and accessible transportation options		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚩 • Expand shuttle routes to areas with more affordable housing. (1)
Build relationships with transportation-related partners		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚩 • Provide parking discounts to graduate students who carpool. (3)
Increase visibility of existing public transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚩 • Support biking education and awareness with the Bike Advocacy Committee. (1) 🚩 • Help publicize biking resources and maps on GSA website. (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚩 • Install signs at all shuttle pick-up locations and bike parking areas. (4) 🚩 • Add bike parking areas to all campus maps. (5)
Collect data on biking and transportation issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚩 • Continue to improve CMU Shuttle and Escort services. (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🔄 • Address bike infrastructure needs. (2) 🚩 • Publicize where to report bike and shuttle ridership issues. (6)


* Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.


In terms of short-term progress on improving transportation for graduate students, there are a lot of recommendations in this subsection that remain uncompleted. These include: increasing visibility of existing public transit and biking resources, installing signs at shuttle stops, supporting bike education, and collecting data on student usage of shuttles and the shuttle tracking application. Long-term goals, such as the expansion of shuttle services to new areas, are primarily impeded by a lack of data sufficiently robust to inform future decisions. However, this particular issue has garnered momentum in recent years. GSA has formed a Transportation Working Group to bring together key campus stakeholders, and has partnered with a class in the Human-Computer Interaction Institute, User-Centered Research & Evaluation, to work on examining current issues and unmet needs with the Shuttle and Escort service. These should help inform more long-term transportation goals, but should not impede short-term progress.

Goals

-  **1. Advocate for safe, reliable, and accessible transportation options that meet students' needs.**

In the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years, GSA has convened a Transportation Task Force to bring together stakeholders across campus. The goal of the task force is to share data and ideate new ways to improve all modes of transportation to and from campus.
-  **2. Build relationships with campus police services, shuttle drivers, and local transportation organizations to support and develop new programs and future infrastructure.**


During the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years, GSA has formed a Transportation Task Force to bring together campus stakeholders in topics of transportation. This is the primary forum by which GSA is engaging with campus police on the shuttle and escort services. GSA has not partnered with local transportation organizations.
-  **3. Increase visibility of existing public transportation, including bike and pedestrian resources.**


GSA has not recently publicized existing transportation resources for public transit riders, cyclists, or pedestrians.
-  **4. Collect data on biking and transportation issues.**


In the Spring 2018 and Fall 2018 semesters, GSA has partnered with a course in the Human-Computer Interaction Institute, User-Centered Research and Evaluation, to collect qualitative data on transportation issues from all campus stakeholders, especially students.


Recommendations


For University Partners


-  **1. Expand shuttle routes to areas with more affordable housing (e.g., Bloomfield, East Liberty, Regent Square, Greenfield).**

The Pittsburgh Technology Center shuttle serves portions of Greenfield, but otherwise the shuttle routes have not been changed to serve areas with more affordable housing.
-  **2. Consult the Bike Advocacy Committee for addressing bike infrastructure needs (bike racks, lanes, repair support) in all future campus master planning.**

The Bike Advocacy Committee is regularly contacted by the GSA VP Campus Affairs as relevant issues arise. It is unknown whether the committee is consulted in aspects of future campus planning.
-  **3. Provide parking discounts to graduate students who carpool.**




CMU does not currently offer any discounts for students who carpool, although staff and faculty can receive a \$10 discount per payroll deduction.
-  **4. Install signs at all shuttle pick-up and drop-off locations and bike parking areas.**

CMU has not installed signs at shuttle pick-up locations or bike parking areas.
-  **5. Add bike parking areas to all campus maps.**

Bike parking areas are not included on current campus maps.
-  **6. Publicize where to report bike and shuttle ridership issues.**

Shuttle ridership issues should be reported to Campus Police, although there is no publicized contact information for this specific request. There is no obvious place to report bike issues, other than the Bike Advocacy Committee.

For GSA

-  **1. Support biking education and awareness with the Bike Advocacy Committee.**
After formation of the bike Advocacy Committee, GSA has not continued to consistently support bike education and awareness.
-  **2. Continue to improve CMU Shuttle and Escort services through ongoing work with RideSystems shuttle tracking (a current resource) and collecting data every two years on student satisfaction of these offerings.**
After introduction of the Ride Systems application, GSA has not continued to improve it by working closely with Ride Systems. Additionally, GSA has not collected data on student satisfaction with this. However, ongoing work by the Transportation Working group has started to address issues of satisfaction with the offerings by CMU Shuttle and Escort services.
-  **3. Help publicize biking resources and maps on GSA website.**
The GSA website does not currently include information on biking resources or maps.

Every graduate student should have access to multiple kinds of reliable transportation that allow for safe, direct commutes to and from campus.

Fitness Facilities

Vision

Every graduate student has access to fitness facilities for exercise and recreation.

2015-2018 Progress Summary


Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
Advocate for expanded fitness and recreation resources	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Achieved  Ongoing  In Progress  Not Started 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Achieved  Ongoing  In Progress  Not Started <ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Expand fitness and recreation resources. (1)  • Provide more free Group-X classes for graduate students. (2)
Build relationships with key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Expand and promote GSA intramural sports leagues. (2) 	
Increase visibility of available fitness resources	<p>Better communicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Fitness d-list. (1a)  • Live calendar options for reserving basketball courts. (1b)  • GSA Intramural options. (1c)  • Budgets and funds spent on Group-X. (1d) 	
Collect fitness-related data on graduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Overhaul GSA sports management. (3) 	


* Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.


In many ways, campus fitness facilities have improved since the initial plan writing. For campus fitness facilities, CMU now has some facilities in Mellon Institute (funded through GSA Special Allocations), and the new Tepper Building. The University Center fitness facilities were expanded with the recent University Center renovations. Group-X classes are now free at the recommendation of the CMU Task Force on the Student Experience. However, the


Pittsburgh Technology Center still lacks fitness facilities. A thorough survey into how graduate students exercise or would like to exercise has not been conducted, but some classes have been rescheduled in an attempt to attract more graduate student participation. GSA has recently changed the format of the Summer Sports League to have six different sports, but there are still kinks to work out in the leadership transition for that program to ensure that the League runs smoothly each year. There is a lot of interest from graduate students in the Summer Sports League, indicating that GSA may be currently undeserving graduate student desires for recreational activities. The GSA should research Summer Sports League and increase visibility of existing resources.

Goals

- 
1. Advocate for expanded fitness and recreation resources to non–central locations.

GSA supported, through Special Allocations, the MellonFit initiative to turn departmental lounge space in Mellon Institute into a fitness facility. GSA needs to better advocate for other fitness and recreation spaces around campus.
- 
2. Build relationships with fitness staff and intramural coordinators.


The VP Campus Affairs occasionally meets with fitness staff and intramural coordinators, but a more regular form of collaboration should be established.
- 
3. Increase visibility of available fitness resources, classes, and discounts.


GSA links to the Wellness site from the GSA website, and advertises the GSA Summer Sports League. However, GSA should do more to promote fitness resources, especially the (now free) Group-X classes.
- 
4. Collect data on where and when graduate students exercise, as well as the types of classes that are most useful to graduate students.

The VP Campus Affairs has informally polled the GSA Reps on the time and type of classes that should be offered for graduate students, but a more formal survey of graduate students may yield more results.





Recommendations

For University Partners

- 
1. Expand fitness and recreation resources to non–central locations.

GSA funded fitness facilities in the Mellon Institute through Special Allocations, and the Biology graduate students gave up their lounge space for the MellonFit space. CMU has constructed new fitness facilities in the recently built Tepper Building. The Pittsburgh Technology Center still lacks fitness facilities.
- 
2. Provide more free Group–X classes for graduate students.

GSA pushed for more Group-X classes to be free for students, and in 2016 the CMU Task-Force recommended that all students be able to access Group-X classes free of charge.

Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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For GSA

i. Better communicate:



a. Fitness d-list.

GSA does not actively promote the Fitness d-list.



b. Live calendar options for reserving basketball courts.

There is no live calendar option for reserving basketball courts.



c. GSA Intramural options.

The GSA Summer Sports league has significant participation in Summer 2018 after emails were sent to the graduate student body and the league was publicized on the GSA website.



d. Historical budgets and GSA funds spent on Group-X.

Group-X classes are now free for students (see above), and GSA funds are no longer spent on these classes.



2. Expand and promote GSA intramural sports leagues.

As of Summer 2018, the GSA Summer Sports league operates over the summer semester and has teams for Soccer, Football, Wiffle Ball, Kickball, Volleyball, and Ultimate Frisbee. Over 230 students signed up to participate in the Summer 2018 year, and about 190 participated at least once. We will consider expanding it into the academic year after Summer 2019.



3. Overhaul GSA sports management, including leadership transition and finances.

Since Summer 2018, GSA is working with the current chair of the GSA Summer Sports league to ensure a smooth transition. We have allocated \$1000/year for the league to buy equipment, and will entertain further requests for funding through GSA Special Allocations as needed.



4. Increase funding for discounted Group-X passes and initiatives that support graduate student fitness opportunities.

Group-X classes are now free for students.

Group-X classes are now free at the recommendation of the CMU Task Force on the Student Experience.

Supporting a Diverse Community

As the graduate student body has grown, so has the diversity of our graduate student population. In terms of nationality, international students now comprise the majority of the graduate student population at around 60%, primarily from China and India. Our international students face unique challenges transitioning to life in the United States, including communication and cultural barriers, navigation of complex legal regulations, and employment concerns post-graduation. Additionally, we found that while they sometimes have the greatest support in enclaves of students from the same country, this can also lead to “siloeing” that makes it difficult for international students to go beyond for support or sense of community.

While the overall graduate student population has seen major changes in terms of the international student population, we could do more to increase the diversity and support of historically underrepresented groups in our campus community, specifically: domestic minorities, those of differing ability and capability, first-generation college students, women, and LGBTQ students. Oftentimes when the ideal of “diversity” is invoked in institutional settings, it can be a stand-in for addressing issues of systemic discrimination; knowing this, our plan seeks to balance both awareness-raising about the challenges these students face, with concrete initiatives for making our community culture more inclusive.

This section focuses on ways to make our academic community more attuned of the unique needs in our graduate student body and provide the tailored resources that are necessary for all students to thrive.


















Supporting a more diverse graduate community will significantly impact how graduates will interact with the world outside CMU.

International Student Support

Vision

A campus community where international students thrive and feel supported through ongoing advocacy, transition resources, and opportunities for connecting to diverse communities.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
Advocate for International students concerns	  Achieved  Ongoing  In Progress  Not Started	  Achieved  Ongoing  In Progress  Not Started
Build relationships with other partners	 • Increase GSA involvement in International Student Orientation. (3)  • Coordinate with OIE and Government Relations on policy and advocacy work. (4)	Develop cultural talks such as:  • How the American Healthcare System Works. (1a)  • Your Rights in the American Legal System. (1b)
Increase visibility of needs of international students	 • Ensure GSA Reps to University committees advocate for international student needs. (5)	 • Ensure availability of pre-arrival material by larger international student groups. (2)
Collect data on international student participation in graduate student life	 • Solicit more international student perspective on GSA initiatives. (2)	

* Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.

International student concerns are of extreme importance to our university and students. CMU prides itself on being a global university and has a responsibility to support our diverse global population. GSA put in mechanisms to explicitly address international student concerns with the creation and the work of the international graduate student concerns task force and the subsequent creation of International Student Advocate position. Further, we have worked on creating and better publicizing resources for all graduate students with a particular focus on the needs of international students (e.g. health insurance information, student legal consultation).

In the future, GSA recommends that the University host consistent workshops, provide students with more legal help for immigration and visa issues, and ensure that students receive adequate pre-arrival materials on adjusting to life in the United States and at CMU.

Goals

1. Advocate for international student concerns, including:

GSA has created the International Student Advocate position to better target the international student population on campus. This role encompasses information collection from international students, better engaging with international student organizations, and advising GSA and relevant university offices on specific concerns.

a. Domestic revalidation of student visas.

GSA continues to regularly advocate for this issue with members of the Senate and House of Representatives in Washington DC. Many GSA-affiliates have taken the lead on advocating for this issue at the national level.

b. Making it easier to find housing in Pittsburgh (e.g., 9-month, furnished leases).

Some initial discussions have been had on this subject, but more concrete work needs to be done.

c. Cultural primers (What is a Superbowl? A healthcare deductible? How do I get my security deposit back from my landlord?).

GSA has made efforts to create better guide documents for students, with special consideration for those from outside the United States, on issues including healthcare and landlord legal disputes.

However, a unique initiative to introduce these domestic primers has not been introduced.

2. Build relationships with other international student groups, the Office of International Education (OIE), and the Intercultural Communication Center (ICC).

GSA works with OIE and has reached out to coordinate with ICC. Our goal moving forward is to schedule regular meetings to strengthen our relationship. OIE and ICC are well positioned to help students understand healthcare, legal issues, and other adjustments issues of coming to the United States.

3. Increase visibility of the unique and various needs of international PhD and Master's students.

GSA has created an International Student Advocate position to increase visibility of international student issues within GSA and partner offices. Some effort to distinguish issues by degree level has been discussed, but has yet to be implemented.

4. Collect data on international student participation in graduate student life.

GSA has discussed methods to better log attendance at social events as an aspect of graduate student life on campus at CMU, however efforts to track such metrics have yet to be successfully implemented.




Recommendations

For University Partners

1. With relevant on-campus offices, develop cultural talks such as:

a. How the American Healthcare System Works

The University Health Services has held sessions on this subject in the past. This needs to be an area for continued improvement with greater focus of the timing and frequency of these sessions.

Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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b. Your Rights in the American Legal System

The Office of International Education has hosted such sessions in previous academic years. Additionally, GSA has also held workshops on the subject in partnership with ACLU. In conjunction with the launch of Student Legal Consultations in AY 2018-2019, workshops by legal professionals to educate students have also been piloted.

2. Make sure pre-arrival material provided by larger international student groups is available to all incoming international students.

To date, efforts to collect, translate, and fact-check guides created by specific international student organizations have not materialized. Several CMU offices host generic pre-arrival materials that were independently created.

3. Provide more legal support to international students facing immigration and visa issues.

OIE provides referrals to legal services outside of the University. It is recommended that more direct legal support is offered to international students going forward.

For GSA

1. Develop a Graduate Student International Student Concerns Committee or Task Force to identify specific points of advocacy and determine viability of a new GSA VP position for international student concerns.

GSA launched the International Graduate Student Concerns Task Force in AY 2015-2016 to assess the state of international graduate student concerns and levels of institutionally provided support. The outcome of that assessment resulted in the creation of the GSA International Student Advocate, appointed from AY 2016-2017 to present. This role provides special advocacy for international students within GSA, as well as to the university community at large.

2. Solicit more international student perspective on GSA initiatives and resources.

The GSA International Student Advocate position allows a dedicated individual to ensure the GSA Executive Committee is apprised of the information the Advocate collects. Additionally, at the Advocate's recommendation, GSA attempts to host more cultural events and outreach to cultural organizations on campus for potential partnerships.

3. Increase GSA involvement in International Student Orientation.

While the opportunity has not arisen to participate in International Student Orientation, GSA has undergone various efforts to better assist in the orientation of international graduate students to Pittsburgh through the creation of guide documents and answer emails directing students to appropriate resources.

4. Coordinate with Office of International Education (OIE) and Government Relations on policy and advocacy work that impacts student visas.

GSA has been in contact with both OIE and Government Relations on this issue; continued effort in coordinated projects in policy and advocacy efforts are advised.

5. Ensure our GSA graduate student Representatives to University committees advocate for international student needs, especially Housing, Dining, Health Services, and Career & Professional Development Center.

GSA has student representation on many of these committees. More conscious effort needs to be undertaken that international student perspectives are considered in those committees.

Diversity & Inclusivity

Vision

A campus community where students of diverse backgrounds, identities, and capabilities thrive and feel supported through ongoing advocacy and resources for building a stronger sense of community.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
Advocate for increased resources and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved Ongoing In Progress Not Started <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene leadership of under-represented graduate student groups. (1) • Include “Helps to Support Diverse and Inclusive Community” as metric in GSA funding decisions. (7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved Ongoing In Progress Not Started <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish diversity-based graduate fellowships. (2) • Develop Diversity Grants for campus initiatives and programs. (4)
Build relationships with key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure five grad Reps per college become SafeZone trained per year. (2) • Promote grad representation in SSN and SafeZone training. (3) • Increase GSA leadership attendance at multicultural events. (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor “How to Be An Ally” workshops and Unconscious Bias trainings. (1) • Ensure five graduate students per college are trained in SSN and SafeZone per year. (6)
Increase visibility of current support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote ongoing effort to support underrepresented groups. (5) • Publicize domestic partner benefits available through the university. (6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular programming and forums supporting discussion and reflection on diversity. (3) • Expand leadership development opportunities for women and underrepresented minorities. (5)
Collect data on diverse applicants		

* Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.

Diversity and inclusivity is important to the graduate student experience as there is much to be learned and gained from students of diverse backgrounds. Promoting diversity alone is not sufficient; inclusivity is also required so that all people regardless of background feel a part of the community.

CMU and GSA have both taken steps to prioritize supporting a diverse student body and bolstering inclusivity at CMU. The opening of the Center of Student Diversity & Inclusion was a huge step for the University to give diverse students a space and a dedicated staff focused on programming and centralized support. While the Center is a huge step forward in support of diversity on campus, the decentralized university structure requires individual departments to also keep a focus on diversity for any efforts to succeed. Going forward it is essential that GSA develops methods to compile information on diversity and address each of the unique programs' cultures and how they foster or don't foster inclusivity because the graduate student experience can vary so much by program.

Goals

1. Advocate for increased resources and support for graduate students of diverse backgrounds, identities, and capabilities.

To improve our internal awareness of the unique needs of various graduate student populations, GSA created the International Student Advocate and the Partner and Family Advocate positions in AY 2016-17. GSA recognizes that students have differing levels of financial and legal preparedness when entering graduate school and thus has advocated and helped in the institution of the Student Legal Consultations service program and an on-campus food pantry.

2. Build relationships with Diversity Advisory Council, Coordinator of Gender Programs, Manager of Disability Resources, Directors of Title IX, Women in SCS, and graduate student organizations representing diverse groups.

The GSA Executive Committee has worked in partnership with graduate student organizations representing diverse sub-populations of campus. In addition, GSA coordinates with relevant offices and councils on joint workshops and advocacy efforts when appropriate.

3. Increase visibility of current support for diverse groups and differing needs.

The creation of the Center of Student Diversity & Inclusion has provided a central location of campus for student and student organization support. Since its creation, the Center has gained additional publicity among students and staff on campus, however, additional attention should be given to publicize resources and needs at the program level.

4. Collect data on recruiting, admissions, and retention of diverse applicants.

The University currently publishes data on diversity (most commonly quantified by gender and nationality) of admitted students, but GSA also advocates to get access or begin data collection on recruitment and retention of this diverse group of students.

Recommendations

For University Partners

-  1. Sponsor “How to Be An Ally” workshops and regular Unconscious Bias trainings for graduate students (see also Professional Development).

The University hosts SafeZone trainings and coordinates with graduate student groups to host Unconscious Bias trainings.

-  2. Establish diversity-based graduate fellowships to recruit and support diverse applicants.


No university-wide program currently exists to recruit and support diverse applicants. However, there are some colleges such as Heinz that partner with external organizations to provide funding opportunities to recruit diverse applicants.

-  3. Provide regular programming and forums supporting discussion and reflection on diversity.


The Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion has held regular programming and discussion around diversity. Some departments such as the Drama department have also organized programming on this issue.

-  4. Develop Diversity Grants (like ProSEED) for campus initiatives and diversity programs.

There is no specific diversity grants for campus and diversity programs that currently exists.


-  5. Expand leadership development opportunities for women and underrepresented minorities and extend this programming to less visible groups, such as students with disabilities and first-generation students.

Expansion of efforts from the Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion is looking to address some of these areas. Further, Graduate Women's and Graduate Student of Color events provide programming in this space. The FirstTogether initiative needs to further efforts to attract and support more first-generation graduate students.





-  6. Ensure that five graduate students from every college are trained in the Survivor Support Network (SSN) and SafeZone; develop short versions of these trainings that are open to all graduate students.







Direct outreach to graduate students from every college need to be made to train students in SafeZone. SSN is no longer offered at the University. Further, shorter trainings in these domains still need to be developed.

For GSA

-  1. Convene leadership of underrepresented graduate student groups to discuss possibilities for GSA Diversity Forum Executive meetings.

In AY 2016-2017, GSA convened a meeting of minority/international graduate student organization but the attendance was limited. This effort has been replicated since with various levels of engagement. GSA is working on institutionalizing the relationships with other organizations so it can go beyond the year to year strategy based on individual people. The formation of these two-way relationships can help ensure long term sustainability of initiatives.

Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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-  **2. Ensure five grad Representatives per college become SafeZone trained per year.**
GSA VP Campus Affairs hosts one to two trainings per year however there is not currently a mechanism to ensure the college level distribution of trained individuals.
-  **3. Promote grad representation in Survivor Support Network (SSN) and SafeZone training.**
There have been graduate student student specific SafeZone training hosted by GSA and the inclusion of graduate student organization leadership in the bystander intervention (Green Dot Program) hosted by UHS and the Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion and promoted by GSA.
-  **4. Increase GSA leadership attendance at MLK day events and other multicultural events.**
GSA leadership has increased its support and attendance at multicultural events. We have recently supported initiatives by different organizations (such as BGSO, IGSA, Allies Grad) to organize more events. Additionally, GSA executive leadership has participated in The Conversation 2015-2016.
-  **5. Promote ongoing effort to support underrepresented groups with less visibility (e.g., graduate students with disabilities and first-generation graduate students).**
Special Allocations Funding and Graduate Student Organization Support Fund have been used to support initiatives supporting underrepresented groups.
-  **6. Help publicize domestic partner benefits available through the university (see also Family Support).**
The GSA has publicized these benefits through the resources page on our website. Further, Family & Partner Advocate in AY 2018-19 is working on these issues.
-  **7. Include “Helps to Support Diverse and Inclusive Community” as metric in GSA Special Allocations funding decisions.**
GSA Special Allocations Funding includes metrics on initiative’s impacts on supporting diverse and inclusive community.

Diversity and inclusivity is important to the graduate student experience and there is much to be learned and gained from students from diverse backgrounds.

4 Development Beyond the Classroom

Graduate education is often characterized by an emphasis on professional development, with a presumption that the goal of an advanced degree is specialization. The old model for professional development in graduate school, especially at the PhD level, was an apprentice-type training with an advisor. While aspects of this model still persist, given the growth in the Master's student population, as well as a changing job market for PhDs, we found that this model does not provide the most accurate framework for meeting new needs. As Master's degrees become increasingly more expensive and the job market more competitive, students feel a great deal of pressure to develop skills for a global job market. And as tenure-track academic jobs become more scarce, PhD students are seeking alternate careers to academia. This section focuses on how to support the growing professional development needs of students beyond the classroom.

In addition to professional development, this section aims to highlight the leadership and public engagement opportunities available at Carnegie Mellon. Many PhD students express interest in these opportunities, but feel pressure from advisors to avoid "extracurricular" opportunities (e.g., joining GSA or having a long-standing commitment to a service organization) so that they can focus on research. Master's students similarly report a desire for becoming more involved in campus life, but often do not know how to make these public service connections. GSA and other university stakeholders can play a role in helping to bridge existing support networks and make these opportunities more visible to graduate students.

Navigating professional and leadership opportunities, translating them into employable skills, and leveraging the value of their graduate education can be difficult for graduate students to figure out alone. This section is entitled "Beyond the Classroom" to acknowledge the support that graduate students need in realms of professional and public engagement development.

Master's students want to be more involved in campus life, but need help figuring out how to make connections to existing resources.

Professional Development

Vision

All graduate students connected to a variety of both academic and non-academic professional development opportunities.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
<p>Advocate for resources supporting the different professional needs</p>	<p> ✓ Achieved ⌚ Ongoing 🕒 In Progress 🚩 Not Started </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 Advocate for increased conference funding. (2) 🕒 Promote mentorship opportunities for all graduate students. (3) 	<p> ✓ Achieved ⌚ Ongoing 🕒 In Progress 🚩 Not Started </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 Create and publish an annual calendar of all university professional development workshops. (3) 🕒 Match GSA level of conference and research funding support. (7)
<p>Build relationships with key partners</p>	<p>🚩 Appoint GSA Reps to serve on Career and Professional Development Center advising committee. (4)</p>	<p>🚩 Develop alumni networking lunch program. (1)</p>
<p>Increase visibility of mentorship opportunities and alternate career paths</p>	<p>🕒 Help sponsor “How to be an Ally” workshops. (1)</p>	<p> 🚩 Sponsor more alternate career panels for all PhD students. (2) ⌚ Continue supporting robust mentorship programs. (4) 🕒 Sponsor regular Unconscious Bias Trainings. (5) </p>
<p>Collect data on professional development</p>		<p>🚩 Benchmark a baseline level of professional support development for Master’s students. (6)</p>

** Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.*

Professional Development is an important aspect of the graduate student experience that plays a role in guiding students to impactful careers. The decentralized nature of CMU has created many obstacles to graduate students feeling supported in this realm. For instance, opportunities for professional development are not uniform across the university. Although career centered schools,

such as Tepper School of Business and Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy, have specific goals in professional development, other departments lack such emphasis. Additionally, there is limited data collected to look at what opportunities are currently offered by departments and how centralized or targeted career development can enhance the experiences of graduate students. Many students rely on one or two career fairs throughout the year to interact with recruiters and be able to find a job, and lack other important professional development opportunities.

Little progress has been made on information and exposure to alternative career paths, especially for PhDs in the humanities, social sciences and sciences. Furthermore, there is currently no structure available for students to give feedback or help shape the professional development opportunities given to them.

Progress has been made in offering mentorship opportunities to minorities of diverse backgrounds such as graduate women and students of color. Additionally the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion has increased accessibility to unconscious bias trainings requested by student organizations and departments. The graduate education office has begun compiling some opportunities open to students through their newsletter and calendar. GSA has taken tremendous strides with the advising survey to better understand issues related to advisee-advisor relationships and mentoring.

Goals



1. Advocate for resources that support the multiple, different professional needs of Master's and PhD students.

GSA has allocated funding students to attend professional conferences and advocated for increased funding from the University in this area. The Office of Graduate Education publishes a calendar and newsletter to inform students of upcoming opportunities. GSA has additionally worked on promoting mentorship by issuing an advising survey in AY 2017-18 to help improve advisee relationships. Additionally GSA has made outreach to Alumni Association to look into other types of mentorship outside of the academic advising relationship.



2. Build relationships with the Career and Professional Development Center, Eberly Center for Teaching, Global Communication Center (GCC), and CMU alumni who can help build pathways to alternate careers.

There is currently a lack of university committees centered around professional development. The University doesn't currently offer Alumni networking lunches for graduate students.



3. Increase visibility of mentorship opportunities, alternate career paths, and inter-cultural barriers to professional connection and communication.

GSA has increased professional development opportunities by hosting and advocating for graduate SafeZone trainings. The Center for Student Diversity has also hosted graduate lunches for women and students of color, as well as helping with unconscious bias trainings upon requests from various departments. There has been a lack of alternative career path and mentorship opportunities for graduate students.



4. Collect data on where alumni get jobs, as well as the levels of professional development support across programs.

No data has been made available on the levels of professional development across departments, however there is some department-collected data on where alumni work after graduation. Additionally, a university-wide effort to collect data on alumni jobs is currently being piloted.

Recommendations

For University Partners

-  **1. Develop alumni networking lunch program for 2nd year PhD students and 1st year Master's.**
Alumni working lunch programs do not exist as a University wide event, although some departments with an independant career development center, such as Heinz and Tepper, may have similar programs.
-  **2. Sponsor more alternate career panels for all PhD students, but especially in humanities and social sciences.**
There are not many alternate career panels currently available for PhD students.
-  **3. Create and publish an annual calendar of all university professional development workshops grouped by type.**
The Office of Graduate Education compiles a calendar with high-level workshop, however these are not sorted and grouped by type. Also, recurrent graduate education newsletter attempts to compile professional development opportunities for graduate students.
-  **4. Continue supporting robust mentorship programs, especially for women and underrepresented minorities.**
The Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion hosts mentorship events, and the university hosts Graduate Women's luncheons, and events targeted toward students of color.
-  **5. Sponsor regular Unconscious Bias Trainings as part of professional development (see also Supporting a Diverse Community section).**
The Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion has hosted unconscious bias trainings on request from student organizations and departments.
-  **6. Benchmark and develop a baseline level of professional support development for Master's students across the university.**
No data has been collected or reported regarding professional support development specific to masters or PhD students across the University.
-  **7. Match GSA level of conference and research funding support.**
The Office of the Provost has contributed partially to the conference and funding support offered by GSA but that amount needs to see a significant increase.

Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.
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For GSA

1. Help sponsor “How to be an Ally” workshops.

CMU does not have a centralized “How to be an Ally” workshop or training. In lieu of this, GSA has identified SafeZone Trainings as an alternative substitute to engage students in being good allies to our LGBTQ+ community. Each academic year from 2015-18 approximately two (2) SafeZone Trainings in conjunction with University offices were organized. In order to expand support to other minority communities on campus, GSA plans to work with the newly formed Center for Diversity and Inclusion on proactive programming/training efforts.

2. Advocate for increased conference funding from university partners.

GSA has an annual allocation for Conference Funding that was significantly increased in AY2016-2017. In AY 2015-16, a promise was secured from the Provost’s Office to match the allocation from GSA but needs to be followed up on.

3. Promote mentorship opportunities for all graduate students.

GSA recognizes that mentorship takes place in many different forms depending on student status and future career goals. In AY 2017-18, GSA conducted a campus-wide survey of graduate student advising (including all colleges and both graduate degree levels) to better assess the current state of mentorship by advisors. The findings from the survey have been conveyed to the University administration and the survey will continue to be run periodically to assess changes in advisor-student interactions. Additionally, in Summer 2018, GSA began communication with various groups in the CMU Alumni community to address mentorship as a career preparation step in a non-advisor based manner.

4. Appoint GSA Representatives to serve on Career and Professional Development Center advising committee to address professional development issues specific to both Master's and PhD students.

As of the 2016-17 AY, the CPDC Advising Committee is no longer convened. GSA is attempting to find alternative avenues to advise the university administration on professional development related issues.

Professional Development is an important aspect of the graduate student experience that plays a role in guiding students to impactful careers.

Leadership & Public Engagement

Vision

All graduate students connected to a wide range of leadership and public engagement opportunities.

2015-2018 Progress Summary

Goals	GSA	Univ. Partners
Advocate for a more robust conception of “public engagement”	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Achieved  Ongoing  In Progress  Not Started 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Achieved  Ongoing  In Progress  Not Started <ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Develop a university statement that encourages public engagement opportunities for graduate students. (1)  • Seek graduate student involvement in government policy and advocacy. (2)
Build relationships with campus, local, state, and national organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Continue training graduate students in policy and advocacy. (4) 	
Increase visibility of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Make the current pathways to public service available in GSA more visible. (1)  • Share with other graduate groups public engagement resources. (2)  • Appoint grad reps to the Partners Allied in Civic Engagement committee. (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Provide workshops on public service and leadership in higher education. (4)
Collect data on graduate student groups that engage in public service		<ul style="list-style-type: none">  • Survey departments on public engagement service opportunities. (3)


* Numbers in parentheses represent recommendation numbers.

Leadership and public engagement translate into skills that will be valuable to graduate students in both their personal and professional lives. Advocacy and knowing how to advocate for oneself is an essential skill to help create future leaders who will help transform the world and be able to effectively apply the skills they learn to have an impact.


One challenge is that Carnegie Mellon lacks services that offer a broad definition of public engagement that is likely to appeal to graduate students. Public engagement is not only direct service, but can also stem into research, legislation, and advocacy. The office tasked with civic engagement, Student Leadership, Involvement, and Civic Engagement (SLICE) focuses on the direct service aspect primarily for undergraduate students but not many resources are invested to engage graduate students in activism and advocacy. GSA has created an advocacy guide on our website, trained students at NAGPS Legislative Action Days, and organized advocacy training from the ACLU. GSA has also engaged students in callathons, local elections, legislative advocacy, and workshops on civic engagement. The University can move forward in this realm by offering workshops for graduate student about leadership and public engagement in higher education.


Another challenge in public engagement is that university programming as it currently stands is more appealing to undergraduate students than graduate students. This can be for multiple reasons including the timing of the event to lack of graduate student specific programming. One suggestion to engage graduate students more in service is to offer opportunities or projects that are more skills based in which graduates can apply skills they are learning; we've already seen the appeal with graduate service orgs that have a consulting focus being heavily engaged in by graduate students. Yet another issue is lack of public recognition of graduate student efforts in this domain. While SLICE organizes a ceremony to highlight all student organizations and leaders at the end of the year, it is advised that a special category focusing on graduate awards at the ceremony be considered going forward.


Lastly, it is important to collect data on what appeals to graduate students, what workshops and initiatives they would like to see, what is currently being done on a department level, and timing that would help to engage graduate students more in public engagement as it could be broadly defined. GSA has engaged with other student groups and promoted university events to try to increase visibility of opportunities but more needs to be done.


Annotations	 Achieved The item is completed.	 Ongoing The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	 In-Progress The item has started but has not been completed.	 Not Started The item has not started.

Goals

-  **1. Advocate for a more robust conception of “public engagement” that includes forms of leadership and advocacy in the university, the city of Pittsburgh, disciplinary fields, professional organizations, and beyond.**

CMU does not have services catering to a robust definition of public engagement, and resources are largely lacking in areas beyond direct volunteer service.
-  **2. Build relationships with campus, local, state, and national organizations to make visible the public impact and significance of graduate education.**

GSA has built relationships with campus, local, state, and national organization. GSA advocates at Legislative Action Days as part of NAGPS, and is a member of the Pittsburgh Student Government Council. Lastly, GSA has also worked with local and national organizations like League of Women Voters and the ACLU.
-  **3. Increase visibility of resources for public engagement and professional development.**


GSA has worked on increasing visibility of resources for public engagement and professional development. GSA has also helped advertise campus wide service events and events that promote public engagement and professional development, as well as created an advocacy resource guide. GSA continues to work with organizations like the Black Graduate Student Organization, and Allies Grad on promoting their public engagement events.
-  **4. Collect data on graduate student groups that engage in public service.**


There have been no efforts to collect information or data on graduate student groups that engage in public service. Collecting this data could help increase visibility of opportunities available to graduate students.


*Advocacy and knowing how to
advocate for oneself is an essential
skill to help create future leaders*


Recommendations

For University Partners

-  **1. Develop a university statement that encourages a broad range of public engagement opportunities for graduate students (like Stanford's Haas Center for Public Service).**


CMU currently lacks a broad definition of public engagement, and there is no comprehensive plan like Stanford Haas Center for Public Service.
-  **2. Seek graduate student involvement in government policy and advocacy efforts.**


GSA has continued to engage students in government policy and advocacy efforts, especially through NAGPS Legislative Action Days. While there have been isolated instances of collecting graduate student input, no mechanism has been initiated by the University to gather student involvement in policy and advocacy efforts.
-  **3. Survey departments to find out about public engagement service opportunities.**

The Student Experience Study survey collects some data on meta-curricular activities, but does not specifically survey public engagement service opportunities.
-  **4. Provide workshops on public service and leadership in higher education.**





The Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence provides programming focused on training future faculty and helping TAs develop leadership skills. The Gelfand Center also works in this space, and offers at-risk and K-12 public service and leadership opportunities. These are not focused on higher education, however. There could be more programming on public service and leadership in higher education beyond teaching opportunities.

For GSA

-  **1. Make more visible the current pathways to public service available in GSA.**


During GSA General Body Meetings, various service opportunities on and around campus are announced, including, but not limited to, 'Stop Hunger Now', '1000Plus', 'I <3 my bike', 'Food Pantry', 'PACE Service Saturday', and 'PACE Alternative Breaks'. These announcements are also spread to the larger campus community through distribution of the meeting minutes. Attempts were made in AY 2015-17 to organize graduate student groups to participate in the 1000Plus Day of Service on CMU's campus, however the result on overall student utilization of public service and volunteer opportunities was minimal.
-  **2. Connect with other graduate groups on campus to share public engagement resources and opportunities.**

GSA has a history of supporting various student groups on campus and connecting them with public engagement opportunities. These include hosting speakers and events with organizations such as the Black Graduate Student Organization and Allies Grad. Ongoing efforts to expand relationships with graduate based organizations through social events and financial resources will help expand collaborative efforts for public engagement activities.


Annotations	 Achieved	 Ongoing	 In-Progress	 Not Started
	The item is completed.	The item is completed but needs continuous execution.	The item has started but has not been completed.	The item has not started.

 **3. Frame GSA involvement in terms of leadership, public engagement, and professional development opportunities.**

GSA's structure of GSA Committees has allowed expansion in these areas, while the language used to refer to activities has changed to reflect the significance in a larger context for students. GSA activities on campus have been phrased as "advocacy", just like external affairs events. Training of Executive Committee members and committee chairs have been phrased in the form of professional development of transferable skills. In recruiting new GSA members, both in Executive Committee and Reps, the language describing the role has shifted away from focusing on social event planning and more on engagement and leadership.

 **4. Continue training graduate students in policy and advocacy (e.g, send at least six students per year to be trained in legislative advocacy with NAGPS).**

GSA has engaged students in policy and advocacy topics since 2015. Our status as a legacy member of NAGPS allows many of our students to attend their LAD conference (8 student spots 2015-16, 12 in 2016-17, 14 in 2017-18) and many have been elected to serve on the regional board for that organization. Additionally, in AY 2016-17, GSA began to regularly host ACLU training sessions on CMU's campus which were widely attended by the graduate student community. Policy and advocacy remain at the forefront of graduate students' minds and thus remains a priority issue for GSA to support their development in this space. GSA has also been a member of the Pittsburgh Student Government Council, and collaborated with other student governments in the city.

 **5. Appoint graduate student representatives to the Partners Allied in Civic Engagement (PACE) committee each year.**

The PACE committee is no longer active as of AY 2016-17, which preclude participation in the committee as recommended. However the VP of Campus Affairs and GSA representatives continued to meet with the Director of SLICE, in charge of PACE initiative, in the absence of a formal committee to ensure that graduate students are considered when campus-wide "Day of Service" activities are planned.

GSA has a history of supporting various student groups on campus and connecting them with public engagement opportunities.

GSA Strategic Plan Update Committee

The following members of the 2017-2019 GSA Executive Committees served as authors of this 3-year progress update document.



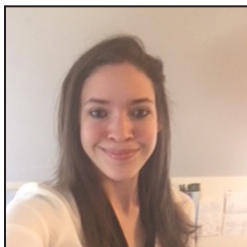
Surya D. Aggarwal is a PhD candidate in the Department of Biological Sciences. He studies the molecular mechanisms of antibiotic resistance and virulence in the bacterium, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. Surya served as the GSA Vice President of External Affairs in 2017-2018, NAGPS Northeast Director of Legislative Affairs in 2016, and NAGPS National Chair of Advocacy and International Student Concerns Advocate in 2017. Surya currently serves as the GSA President.



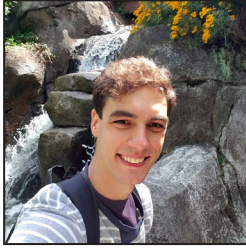
Cole Gleason is a PhD candidate in the Human Computer Interaction Institute, where he designs and evaluates assistive technology for people with vision impairments. Cole served as the GSA Vice President of Internal Affairs in 2017-2018, and currently serves as the GSA Vice President of Communications.



Stephanie Laughton is a PhD candidate in the Civil and Environmental Engineering department studying the agricultural applications of nanomaterials. She was GSA Vice President of Internal Affairs in 2016-17 and currently serves as Vice President of Campus Affairs.



Sarah Pesl is a Second Year Master's in Public Policy and Management student at the Heinz college. Her independent study research has focused on college food insecurity. She currently serves as the Vice President of External Affairs for the GSA. She also serves as the NAGPS Northeast Director of Legislative Affairs and the Chair of Public Relations for the Pittsburgh Student Government Council.



Antoine Remond-Tiedrez is a PhD candidate in the Department of Mathematical Sciences studying fluid dynamics. He was elected as GSA Vice President of Finance in 2017 and served in that position for two years.



Santiago D. Carrasquilla is a PhD candidate in Biomedical Engineering studying cornea tissue engineering. He is currently serving as the Vice President of Internal Affairs for the 2018-2019 year.



Pragna Mannam is a Masters student in the Robotics Institute. She studies manipulation and how robots can interact with everyday objects. Also, alumni from the CMU Electrical and Computer Engineering department, Pragna serves the graduate student body as GSA VP of Graduate Student Life.



Dacen Waters is a PhD candidate in the Physics Department, whose research focuses on the study of electrical and structural properties of two-dimensional materials. He previously served as the GSA Vice President of Communications in 2017-2018.



Brittani McKenna is GSA's full-time Program & Events Coordinator. She specializes in event coordination, graduate student life programming, and finance operations. Brittani has a B.A. in Business Marketing from Eastern University and a Graphic Design degree from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh.



Campus Input & Presentation Sessions

We hosted **15 sessions** for graduate students to provide input on the content and implementation of our plan, as well as **10 presentations** of our plan to key committees of stakeholders in the campus community.

Sessions for Graduate Students

GSA Reps Survey – April 2014

GSA Reps Retreat Open Space Technology Session – September 2014

Strategic Planning Working Group Interviews – December 2014

GSA Reps Experience Survey – January 2015

GSA Strategic Planning Retreat – February 2015

Graduate Women's Gathering – April 2015

Pop-up lunch feedback sessions hosted by GSA Reps – April 2015

- Biology & Chemistry (Mellon Institute)

- Architecture & Design (CFA)

- Civil & Environmental Engineering (Porter Hall)

- Physics & Mechanical Engineering (Wean Hall)

- Computer Science & Machine Learning (Gates-Hillman Center)

- Engineering & Public Policy (Porter Hall)

- Master's in HCI & Software Engineering (Craig Street)

- Entertainment Technology Center (PTC)

Sessions for University Partners

University Strategic Plan Committees: The Transformative PhD & Master's Experiences – March 2015

Associate Deans for Graduate Education Policy (ADGP) – April 2015

Board of Trustees Educational Affairs & Enrollment Committee – May 2015

Academic Leadership Council (ALC) – May 2015

University Education Council (UEC) – May 2015

Student Government Executive Council – September 2015

Campus Affairs Leadership Forum – October 2015

Faculty Senate – October 2015

Graduate Student Concerns Committee (GSCC) – November 2015



Graduate Student Assembly
Carnegie Mellon University
gsa@cmu.edu