



GPSA Annual Report 2018



From:
GPSA President
Michelle Sullivan Govani
Term 2018-19



A note from the President:

"What is GPSA?" ... This is the question I am most often asked as the President of the Graduate and Professional Student Association. Well let me tell you: GPSA is ASU's graduate student government, representing more than 12,000 diverse graduate student constituents. GPSA is a university-wide organization; we serve and represent all students no matter which campus they call home.

And GPSA would not run without the dozens of hard working, passionate people I am honored to call my teammates: our 5 Executives, 17 Directors, 33 Assembly Members, 5 Supreme Court justices (and their clerk!), and hundreds of volunteers. It's been such a privilege to see them all accomplish their goals for making ASU a better place for graduate students. We've hosted empowering leadership and well-being summits, produced a mentoring compact, cultivated community through social events and programming, engaged in advocacy work with the state and federal legislative processes, and provided hundreds of thousands of dollars in travel and research support for ASU graduate students. And that's not even a half-complete list. You'll learn more about all that we do in the annual report that follows -- our first ever!



Many years ago, I got involved with student government because I wanted to give back to and learn more about my community, but I got so much in return as well. I've made close friends, met interesting people, and challenged myself to learn and adapt to new situations quickly. But I am most rewarded and humbled by the open, brave, and generous manner in which our team members and constituents have shared their ideas, energy, concerns, and passion. You've all demonstrated that our positive impact stems from the ways in which we empower one another. Thank you for an unforgettable year!

Sincerely,
Michelle Sullivan Govani
GPSA President 2018-2019

Office of the President

Led the GPSA Executive Team in writing and implementing our 2018-2019 Vision Statement based on input from GPSA's Assembly and Directors:

GPSA gives voice to graduate and professional students across ASU to promote success, inclusion, and vitality among the diverse communities we represent and serve. We seek to foster and empower the next generation of academic and professional leaders through professional development, advocacy, and service opportunities.

Conducted monthly meetings with administrative leadership of ASU, including Dean of Students, Dr. Vogel; Dean of the Graduate College, Dr. Artiles; and Vice President of EOSS, Dr. Rund.

Attended Quarterly meetings of ASU's Graduate Program Directors and Administrators to share updates from GPSA. Conducted a panel regarding the benefits of Graduate Student Councils for Graduate Programs.

Delivered several speeches, including at International Student Welcomes, TA Orientations, and Graduate Commencements.

Oversaw GPSA's \$1.1 million dollar budget.

Attended monthly meetings (as an ex-officio member) of the University Senate's Student Faculty Policy Committee meeting, the primary committee reviewing and proposing policies for faculty and students.

Appointed more than 50 graduate students to ASU's University Boards and Committees to fill almost every seat for GPSA and ensure that graduate student voices are heard.

Represented graduate students at ASU President Michael Crow's quarterly University Council meetings.

Implemented a GPSA Advocacy Survey to better understand graduate student concerns and needs.

Wellness Initiatives

(Led by Director of Wellness, Anthony Basile)

Hosted two hikes in the Phoenix-area and one hike in Sedona, AZ, to build community and promote healthy exercise among ASU graduate students with 30 and 45 graduate student attendees each.

Developed a GPSA Mentoring Compact. For-students, by-students, the compact is intended to empower graduate students to talk about wellness topics, including mental health, with their mentors.

Hosted a Wellbeing Summit focused on improving mentor-mentee relationships.

Created a student-discount document (hosted on the GPSA website) detailing businesses that provide students with reduced cost services and goods in education, entertainment, food, clothing, and other sectors.



GPSA Wellness

Hike in Phoenix, AZ

International Student Affairs

(Led by Director of International Student Affairs, Fred Agbemade)

Hosted a Fall Welcome for International Students. More than **600 graduate students attended** to enjoy food, music, and dance from different cultures around the world.

Hosted a Spring Welcome. More than **60 students participated** in the event. The event was expanded to include new and returning graduate students. The round table discussion structure allowed students to get to know one another better, ask questions, and **build relationships with others**.



Conducted monthly meetings focused on professional development, advocacy, well-being, and community building in the international student community.

Hosted a Thanksgiving Potluck with more than **70 graduate students in attendance**. This event plays a **major role in building community between domestic and international graduate students**. The event also fosters the development of intercultural competence among students as both domestic and international students dialogue about their respective cultures.

Collaborated with the Lebanese Students Association to host a student potluck in October. **45 students attended to learn about Lebanese food and culture**.

Hosted a funding and job-search workshop for 20 international students in collaboration with GPSA's Professional Development team.

Collaborated with Graduate College on mentoring programs such as the **SHADES cross-cultural mentoring program**. Some committee members served as peer-mentors to new international graduate students to help them transition smoothly into the ASU graduate community and develop intercultural competencies.

Hosted a "Grad Students' Finals Boost" at the end of the spring semester with more than **170 graduate students in attendance**. The event seeks to **encourage graduate students to take healthy measures that will boost their general well-being** as they write their final papers and exams.

Public Relations and IT

(Led by Director of Digital Marketing, Kat Jensen; Director of Communications, Rebecca Standfast; Director of Print Marketing, Urvashi Manral; and Director of IT, Justas Birgiolas)

Developed a new process and format for the GPSA Newsletter:

- A. Released quarterly video-format newsletters, "GPSA Update" written in the student voice so that students felt they were communicating with their peers and could recognize GPSA emails in the sea of other ASU emails.
- B. Released monthly newsletter regarding events
 - 1. **Averaged 15,218 subscribers out of 23,139 contacts.**
 - 2. Average open rate of 40% (readers who opened the email)
 - 3. Averaged a click rate of 1.47% (readers who took action and clicked on the links in the email). This is improved from the beginning of the year with an average 1.24% click rate in the first half of the year and an average 1.7% click rate in the second half.
 - 4. Average click through rate of 3.68% (ratio of clicks to opens)
 - 5. Industry standard is about 15.97% open rate and 1.6% click rate

Updated the GPSA Website with more information, photos, and team-member features to bring more personality to the departmental web pages.

- A. **During the 2018-19 school year, the GPSA website received an average of 9,900 views per month**
- B. August 2018 received the most views ever recorded: 20,800.
- C. The home page, grants, and awards pages were the top visited pages for the year.

Developed a new strategy for social media resulting in:

- A. **3,275 followers on Facebook** (up about 200 people since August)
- B. **540 Instagram Followers** (up from around 225 followers in August)
- C. **1,266 Twitter Followers** (no baseline)
- D. We have also increased the number of "Likes" on Facebook by about 215 to 3,099. Instagram post likes have risen to an average of 50 likes per post!
- E. Our Facebook events have reached 12.5 thousand people in 2019, with 873 responses (meaning they RSVP'ed or said they were "interested"). Our posts reach an average of almost 2,500 people, with about half of them engaging with the post, meaning they click on the links provided.

Outreach Initiatives

(Led by Directors of Outreach, Jessie Stone and Sid Srivastava)



Hosted several community-building events:

A. Downtown Phoenix Campus

1. Hosted three events at the Graduate Student Center in the Post Office, averaging 40 students in attendance.
2. Hosted three events for the Thunderbird School of Global Management, welcoming them to the DPC and sharing information on resources GPSA provides.
3. Hosted a “TA-chat” event with the Professional Development department.

B. West Campus:

1. Co-hosted an event with Career and Professional Development for 20-30 students
2. Participated in a tabling event hosted with many other clubs/organizations to raise awareness of GPSA on West campus
3. Hosted a big “open house” in the West Campus Graduate Student Center for 40 graduate students

C. Polytechnic Campus

1. Hosted four events and attended two tabling events to raise awareness of GPSA on the Polytechnic Campus.
2. At all the events we had at least 20 people in attendance, with a maximum of 42 students at the Fall Welcome.

For the first time, held monthly meetings with the Dean of Students on each campus to exchange goals, ideas, and collaborate on events and initiatives.

Reduced redundant programming by collaborating with the Assembly and other GPSA Departments to host events targeted toward their constituents’ availability and preferences.

Internal Affairs

(Led by Vice President of Internal Affairs, Alyssa Sherry; Director of Travel, Valentine Aglah; and Director of Research, Lydia Ross)

Travel Grant Program	# of Eligible Applicants	# of Students Funded	Annual Budget	Amount Awarded	Budget Remaining**
Individual	821	473	\$370,000	\$394,925.39	-\$24,925.39
Group	28	41	\$40,000	\$35,396.73	\$4,603.27
Internship	39	16	\$35,000	\$7,702.36	-\$13,956.59
Interview	18	6		\$3,250	
Career Development	117	66		\$34,969.13	

**Several students were unable to use their funding due to personal reasons or they were not accepted for the event. Thus, the funding actually spent will not exceed the budget.

Research Grant Program	# of Eligible Applications	# of Students Funded	Annual Budget	Amount Awarded	Budget Remaining**
GRSP	100	67	\$100,000	\$100,904.08	-\$904.08
Jumpstart	8	8	\$18,000	\$11,857.39	\$6,142.61
Athletics Research	10	10	\$50,000	\$24,713.50	\$25,286.50

Grant Reviewers:

- A. Trained student volunteers**
- B. Review 3-10 applications per month, depending on application volume**
- C. Every application is assigned to 5 reviewers**
- D. Number of Travel Grant Reviewers: 158**
- E. Number of Research Grant Reviewers: 122**

Summer Semester Deadlines:

- A. Travel**
 - 1. Individual, Group, and Out-of-State Internship and Career Development Grants - Deadlines are on the 1st of the month, two months prior to departure**
 - 2. Local Internship and Career Development: Spring Semester – July 1**
- B. Research**
 - 1. GRSP (Graduate research support program): Fall Semester – August 1**
 - 2. Jumpstart: Fall Semester – August 1**

Events:

- A. Information Sessions – The VP and Directors presented information at each ASU campus about the travel and research grants that GPSA offers to graduate students.**
- B. Research Symposium – Awardees of GPSA's Research Grant programs were invited to present a "lightning talk" about their research project during Grad Week**
- C. Reviewer Social – Event honoring the students that volunteer their time to review travel, research, and awards applications throughout the year.**

External Affairs

(Led by Vice President of External Affairs, Sarah Geren; Director of Advocacy, Alyssa Henning; Director of Federal Government Affairs, George Bruschi IV; Director of Local and State Government Affairs, Christian Ross; Assistant Director of Government Affairs, Malena Grosz)

Events:

- A. **Held voter registration events at every campus**, including three at the Tempe GSC, one at the Handlebar Tempe, and one in each of the GSCs at West, Downtown, and Polytechnic
 - 1. An estimated 50 new graduate and professional students registered
- B. National Voter Registration Day, tabled at the event hosted by USG Tempe
- C. Arizona Talks Policy event, spearheaded by the Tempe USG
- D. **Wear Purple Day for Domestic Violence Awareness tabling event**, hosted by the Sexual Violence Prevention department
- E. Hosted GPSA Family Picnic at the ASU Desert Arboretum with ASU 365.
 - 1. Purpose of the event was to bring together graduate students with local families and **start a discussion of the issue of food security** among graduate students
 - 2. Arizona Head Start and Pitchfork Pantry tabled
 - 3. 35-40 students and their families attended
- F. Provided logistical support for Sexual Assault Awareness Month speaker event with Tim Mousseau titled "Retaking Our Story"
- G. **Tabled at Tempe campus Denim Day event** for Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Advocacy accomplishments:

- A. Created new director positions - **split the Director of Legislative Affairs position into the Director of Federal Government Affairs and Director of State and Local Government Affairs** - so GPSA can effectively advocate at all levels of government.
- B. Legislative Actions Days and Student Advocacy Summit hosted by the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students
 - 1. **Sent six student delegates from GPSA to Washington, D.C.**, for the Fall events, and met with every Arizonan Representative and Senator Flake's offices, in collaboration with U of A delegates.



2. **Sent seven student delegates from GPSA to Washington, D.C., for the Spring events, and met with nearly every Arizonan Representative's office and both Arizona Senators' offices, in collaboration with U of A and NAU delegates.**

- C. **Sent several Assembly Members, Directors, and Execs to both the regional and national conferences for NAGPS to learn about and share important tips and information related to advocating for graduate students at ASU and beyond.**



- D. **ASU Day at the Capitol: ASASU brought 50 students to the Arizona Capitol for this annual event, and participated in meeting with legislative offices**
- E. **Wrote and submitted a public comment to the Federal Register on the proposed changes to Title IX**
- F. **Proposed Assembly bills supporting trans and non-binary students and opposing harmful and limiting changes to the definition of sex used in Title IX, and establishing GPSA support of the 50/50 funding model and the Arizona legislative bill proposing this funding model for the state budget**
- G. **Initiated plan to increase state level advocacy, which included:**
 1. **Sending a letter advocating for increased, ongoing state funding for in-state Arizona university students**
 2. **Vice President of External Affairs attended the April 27th Democratic caucus Town Hall on the state budget, making a statement and asking a question about funding and support for graduate and professional education.**
- H. **Committee provided feedback and recommendations on the GPSA advocacy survey, Grad College mentoring informational flyers**
- I. **Director of State and Local Government Affairs viewed all public ABOR hearings, and one committee member traveled to Tucson to attend a fall hearing in person**

Collaborations:

- A. **Continued working with ASU's Office of Government Relations**
- B. **Member of Sexual Violence Prevention Coalition**
- C. **Participating in Food Security Working Group, a collaboration of groups from across the university to address food insecurity among the ASU student population**
- D. **VP of External Affairs participated in working group to improve women's health and wellness at ASU**
- E. **Director of Advocacy is chairing the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, which has participated in the planning of heritage week and month events**
- F. **Assembly committee members participated in Arizona State University Sustainability Alliance**

Professional Development

(Led by Vice President of Professional Development, Amelia Miholca;
Director of Awards, Neeta Kumar; Director of Events, Dorinda Wilson)

TA Orientation:

- A. Amelia coordinated with Grad College to moderate the panel of TAs and professors at the TA Orientation in August and in January. The five TAs were selected from previous GPSA TEA Award winners

Awards Program Fall 2018:

- A. Revised the application questions and scoring rubrics for Teaching Excellence Award
- B. Received 78 Teaching Excellence Award applications , awarded 25 applications for a total of \$12,500
- C. 84 reviewers recruited to conduct in-class observations and Zoomgrants application review
- D. Created new online training materials for reviewers

Awards Program Spring 2019:

- A. Awarded 3 out of 3 applications for Advocacy Award
- B. Awarded 13 out of 21 applications for Mentor Award
- C. Awarded 13 out of 42 applications for Research Award
- D. Awarded 25 out of 43 applications for Teaching Excellence Award
- E. Awarded 3 out of 6 applications for Staff Award
- F. Awarded a total of \$28,500 for all 5 awards
- G. Recruited 82 reviewers
- H. Honored the award recipients at the Awards Ceremony on April 24 in the Student Pavilion

Centennial Professorship Award:

- A. Led the Centennial Committee, which promoted and selected Centennial award recipients
- B. Trained USG members of the Centennial Committee on how to effectively review award applications
- C. Revised the award rubric and eliminated the application's nomination requirement
- D. Received 38 applications from faculty on all ASU campuses
- E. Three Award Recipients: Dr. Marianne Moore, College of Integrative Sciences and Arts, Science and Mathematics (Poly); Dr. Matthew Buman, College of Health Solutions (Downtown Phoenix); Dr. Javier Gonzalez-Sanchez, CIDSE (Poly)

Fall Welcome:

- A. Tuesday, August 14, in Sparky's Den, MU, provided ice cream and GPSA swag
- B. **400 graduate students attended**

Fall Social:

- A. Thursday, October 25, at Dave&Busters, provided catered meal and game cards
- B. **120 graduate students attended**

TA Chats: social mixer and discussion for graduate students who are TAs, **connecting with other TAs and sharing their experiences**; low to moderate attendance at each event but very productive and insightful conversations on TAs lacking departmental support, balancing teaching and their own programs, cultural differences, etc.

- A. First one in September on Tempe campus: 60 RSVPs, 15 attended
- B. October on Tempe campus: 15 attended
- C. November on Downtown campus: 5 attended
- D. January on Tempe Campus: 6 attended; Dr. Jennifer Cason from Grad College in attendance to discuss Grad College resources and hear what TA training departments provide to students

Spring Welcome:

- A. January 8 in the Student Pavilion
- B. **280 graduate students attended**

Spring Social:

- A. February 21, at Snakes & Lattes restaurant on Mill Ave.
- B. **140 graduate students attended**

Grad Picnic:

- A. March 19 on the Student Services Lawn
- B. Provided Firehouse Sub sandwiches and ice cream sandwiches; soccer game from AZ Bounce Pro; and therapy dogs
- C. **280 graduate students attended**

Grad College: Amelia and Elizabeth attended monthly Professional Development meetings with Grad College to discuss PD events and how to reach a wider graduate student audience.



Assembly

(Led by Assembly President, Nich Weller; Assembly President Pro Tempore, Nicole Mayberry; and Assembly Secretary-Parliamentarian, Sean McAllister)

The Assembly was nearly full throughout 2018-2019 and finished the year with 33 (of a possible 39) seats full. Members consistently contributed to programs and events across GPSA.

- A. Assembly Members serve on at least 2 committees, contributing to ideas, planning, and execution of programs and events highlighted throughout this report.
- B. The Assembly formalized two new committees in Spring 2019 to help to better address student needs, which are described below.

Creation of the GPSA Engineering Committee:

- A. The GPSA Engineering Committee, consisting of all GPSA Assembly Members from the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering and volunteer members from graduate programs within the Schools of Engineering, was formalized as a standing committee. The committee held several events to identify specific problems facing engineering students, such as course registration and TA and RA stipends, and held regular meetings with administration from the Schools of Engineering to address these problems and lay the groundwork for future collaboration.

GPSA Special Projects Committee & Innovation Fellows Program:

- A. The GPSA Special Projects Committee oversaw the newly created GPSA Innovation Fellows Program (IFP). **The Innovation Fellows Program gives students the opportunity to create new programs and pursue new ideas to improve the graduate student experience, and earn a stipend for their efforts.** This program facilitates the pursuance of passions by ASU graduate students and GPSA Assembly members who might otherwise be limited by funds or structured programming.
- B. To date, fellows have planned a **Women's Leadership Mixer and focus groups to inform future advocacy programming for international students.** The program will disburse approximately \$1300 in scholarship stipends by the end of the Spring semester, having only started in February 2019.
- C. The Special Projects Committee recommended improvements to this pilot program for next year and created a system for soliciting, receiving, reviewing, and administering projects proposed by IFP participants.

Restructured Assembly:

- A. In January 2019, the Assembly approved a restructuring of Assembly seats for 2019-2020 to create new paths of engagement between the graduate and professional student community, GPSA, and ASU administration.
- B. The allocation created explicit representation of schools and programs that previously did not have an independent voice from the larger schools and programs within their college, including seats specifically reserved for students enrolled online and seats for each of the six of Schools of Engineering (as opposed to treating the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering as one school with multiple seats).
- C. This structure allows for broader engagement with graduate and professional students in these colleges as well as continue to bring GPSA to the attention of graduate program coordinators, school directors, and college deans.

Focusing on graduate and professional student priorities:

- A. GPSA Assembly Members receive continual feedback about ASU and GPSA from graduate and professional students we represent. On the recommendation of the Assembly, **the Assembly Operations Committee created resources to support Assembly Member Open Houses where students can learn about what GPSA does and bring feedback to Assembly Members.**
- B. Cost of attendance is never far from most graduate students' minds. Brittany McCall, Assembly Member from the School for the Future of Innovation in Society, led an effort to **create a one-stop-shop for general information about tuition, fees, insurance, and scholarships** with help from the Assembly, Michelle Govani, and various offices at ASU. The guide will help current and future graduate students make more informed financial decisions.

Increased awareness of ASU's Online graduate student community:

- A. The Assembly invited EdPlus and ASU Online to present at the November Assembly Meeting to help us better serve online graduate students.
- B. This culminated in a proposal to include Assembly seats for online graduate students and to take online enrollment figures into consideration in adopting the 2019-2020 Assembly seat structure proposal to be voted on in January.

Graduate Student Organization Support:

- A. **Supported 104 requests for funding from Graduate Student Organizations (GSOs)** to support a broad range of events and programming activities, including documentary screenings, welcome back events, conferences, and invited speaker events.
- B. **Assembly President Pro Tempore, Nicole Mayberry, conducted a GSO Leadership Summit** on November 5, 2018. Attended by 25 students from 17 GSOs across



campus, the summit focused on cultivating leadership among graduate student leaders and dialogue about how GPSA can best serve GSOs. Talks by Dean of Students Joanne Vogel and Associate Dean of Students Ronald Jackson capped the summit.

- C. In the Spring, Nicole's team conducted another leadership summit focused on supporting GSOs and **encouraging sustainable event practices**. Kendon Jung, from ASU's Memorial Union, presented on ways how GSOs can improve their sustainability practices.

Promoting school-specific GSOs:

- A. The Assembly supported school-specific GSOs that serve as graduate councils within their department. As part of Grad Week 2019, we provided several school specific GSOs funding to help promote their operations within their departments.
- B. To compliment this effort, we compiled a list of active school-specific GSOs, presented at a meeting of Graduate Program Advisors in Fall about the benefits of school-specific GSOs, and compiled materials and lessons learned to support the development of a how-to guide for schools interested in starting their own school specific GSO.

Prepared by:
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Term 2018-19