



Graduate Student Involvement: Progress Report

April 26, 2004

Duties of the Coordinator of Graduate Student Involvement

1. Coordinate a network of organizations dedicated to graduate student needs.
2. Advocate on behalf of graduate students in all University forums.
3. Conduct research on a regular basis on the quality of life for graduate students.
4. Advise the Graduate Student Government (GSG) and other graduate organizations.
5. Design and implement programs of interest to graduate students.

Current Projects and Initiatives

Graduate Student Handbook Project (www.union.umd.edu/GH)

Web site currently under construction to replace some of the services offered through the Graduate Student Involvement website. The Graduate Student Handbook is intended to provide “one-stop-shopping” for graduate students needing information on available resources both on and off-campus.

Upgraded Graduate Student Involvement Website (www.union.umd.edu/GSI)

Graduate Student Involvement has developed a graduate student services web site for that includes information on the GSI office, programs, services, benefits, involvement opportunities and more. The site has shown steady use, the highest number of hits occurring during the month of August.

Review of Coordinator of Graduate Student Involvement Job Description

Graduate Student Government Transition Program

The Coordinator is working with Graduate Student Government to provide more structured transitions of student leadership. A system has been devised for both GSG executives and GSG Assembly department representatives.

Weekly Graduate Student Services Emails

The Mega mailer is a weekly email sent to all registered graduate students each Thursdays. After its first semester, the mega mailer has been an unqualified success. Its use has significantly increased attendance for the Lyceum Dinner Series and led to sell-outs for the last five Monthly Graduate Social Series events. The mega mailer has received a great deal of positive feedback and very few complaints (about 30).

Advisor to Graduate Student Government

The Coordinator works closely on a regular basis advising the Graduate Student Government (GSG) executives and other GSG committees.

Registered Graduate Student Organizations

Thus for the 2003-2004 academic year, there are 62 registered graduate student organizations. Thirty of these are department-affiliated. This is an increase from the record number of 57 organizations registered in 2002-03 and 23 organizations in 2001-2002.

Lyceum Dinner Series

The Lyceum Dinner Series is held twice a semester and combines a free dinner with a discussion of serious issues related to graduate student quality of life. A Lyceum Dinner begins with a panel discussion of experts followed by dinner and more informal conversation. The next dinner is "Financial Planning for Graduate Students" on May 7, 2004.

Orientation Activities

The Coordinator supports various orientation activities for incoming graduate students including presenting at both Graduate School and IES orientations, offering tours of campus, information on forming graduate organizations, airport shuttles, temporary housing and an on-line New Student Guide.

Monthly Graduate Social Series

The Monthly Graduate Social Series began in the fall of 2002 offering at least one graduate social program each month. During this semester we offered the following events:

- DC walking tour (8 attendees)
- Cats, the musical (28 tickets, sold out)
- Hiking trip to Old Rag Mountain (15 spaces, sold out)
- Sea kayaking (9 spaces, sold out)
- Mamma Mia, the musical (35 tickets, sold out)
- Alvin Ailey Dance Troop (30 tickets, sold out)

Classics Film Series

The film series is a joint venture between the Hoff Theater and Graduate Student Involvement to provide more classic films on campus. Films are free and shown every 2nd Thursday at 7:00 p.m. in the Hoff Theater. Here are the movies from this semester:

- West Side Story (50 in attendance)
- Strangers on a Train (30 in attendance, conflicted with Maryland-UVA game)
- Casablanca (60 in attendance)

NASPA Graduate Services Pre-Conference Planning Committee

The Coordinator is serving on the planning committee for the 3rd annual NASPA pre-conference held for graduate student service. The event is sponsored by the AGAPSS Knowledge Community (Association of Graduate and Professional Student Services).

Annual Presentation to Southern Management Corporation on Graduate Needs/Concerns

For the past two years...

Graduate Student Services Network Spring Meeting

The Graduate Student Services Network is a network of UMCP administrators who work with graduate student services. It meets twice a year to discuss ways to better meet the needs of the graduate student population. The next meeting will be held in May 2004 to discuss the previous semester.

Graduate Student Lounge

As part of the Graduate Student Suite that opened in August of 2003, the Graduate Student Lounge will officially open in the spring of 2004. It is meant to serve as a small lounge and graduate resource center. Services will include brochures and flyers of interest to graduate students, free coffee on Thursday afternoons, internet access, games and reference books. The graduate lounge represents the first permanent graduate student community space on campus.

Graduate Student Awards

The Coordinator works with several committees dedicated to recognizing outstanding contributions by graduate students. These committees will meet again for the spring of 2004:

- Graduate Student Distinguished Service Award (3rd year)
- GSG Outstanding GA, RA, TA and faculty Awards (2nd year)
- Division of Student Affairs' Outstanding Graduate Student Employee Awards (2nd year)

Graduate Student Appreciation Week

The week of April 8-12 will be our time to celebrate and recognize the important contributions of graduate students here at Maryland. The schedule for that week is still in progress, and we will be contacting departments and assistantship providers soon about ways they can recognize their students.

Graduate Student Family Events

Part of a new initiative to provide at least two graduate family events each year, GSI has programmed two successful events: a Family Pool Party in the summer and a Halloween Pumpkin Painting Party in the fall.

Projects in the Works

On-Campus Graduate Student/Graduate Family Residence Halls

Convert available campus resident halls into residences for graduate students and their families.

Standing Committee on Graduate Student Housing

Coordinator is serving on a Graduate School sponsored committee to re-evaluate and improve the state of graduate student housing at the University of Maryland.

Graduate Student FYI Service

The Coordinator has been working with OIT this semester to set up an FYI-like service for graduate students called "GradNews". It would provide a central communications system for graduate organizations, graduate departments and student affairs departments to advertise programs and services.

GPS Tracking System for Shuttle UM

Coordinator is working with GSG and Transportation services to explore the possibility of improving campus safety and transit efficiency with a GPS locator system for Shuttle UM.

Graduate Workout Night at the CRC

The Graduate Workout Night is a proposed program to foster a greater sense of community among graduate students using the facility. Using trend usage data provided by the CRC we have identified some peak times for graduate student usage. We intend to provide special events and/or incentives during those times.

Long Term Goals

Create a Centralized Office Incorporating Graduate and Undergraduate Housing.

Provide a central repository of housing information for all students on campus.

Graduate Club at the Rossborough

Expand the faculty club at the Rossborough to include graduate student members. Use the main house to provide quiet study space when not otherwise reserved.

Graduate Student Center

Build a center for graduate student services including study areas, storage lockers, computer labs, and meeting rooms. A physical graduate space is important for providing a true graduate student presence on campus and competing with peer and aspirational peer universities.

Community Coordinators in Graduate Hills/Graduate Gardens

Create two resident community directors for Graduate Hills and Graduate Gardens. These two directors would be graduate students with a small budget for planning community events in each complex. The concept would be similar to that of the above mentioned practicum program.

Longitudinal Study of Graduate Students

Conduct a long-term study that examines the lives of several graduate students from different departments during their tenure at the University of Maryland.

Completed Projects

Include a Section on Graduate Student Services for all Student Affairs Annual Reports

Creation of Graduate Student Email Distribution System

The Mega mailer is a weekly email sent to all registered graduate students each Thursdays. After its first semester, the mega mailer has been an unqualified success. Its use has significantly increased attendance for the Lyceum Dinner Series and led to sell-outs for the last five Monthly Graduate Social Series events. The mega mailer has received a great deal of positive feedback and very few complaints (about 30).

Creation of a Graduate Student Lounge in the Stamp Student Union

Summary: With the new graduate space opening in the Union, many groups will be interested in making decisions on the space. This issue is about a year away, but I foresee Graduate Student Government and possibly the Graduate School wanting to get involved in setting up this new space.

Graduate Student Suite

Opening in August of 2003, the Graduate Student Suite in the Stamp Student Union is comprised of three offices for the GSG, a graduate lounge and the Coordinator of Graduate Student Involvement's office. The graduate lounge represents the first permanent graduate student community space on campus.

Metrochek for Graduate Assistants (Metrochek first offered on April 7)

Over the last year and a half, the Coordinator has been working with Transportation Services to initiate Metrochek benefits for graduate students eligible for payroll deduction. Metrochek would provide students with the ability to save hundreds of dollars a year in commuting costs. The program has been delayed several times.

Graduate Housing Benchmarking Survey (November 2003)

A benchmark study of peer and local universities to assess what graduate university housing they provide and who runs the services. Major themes were that the vast majority of institutions provide university graduate and family housing run through a division of student affairs. The study was conducted in cooperation with Off-Campus Housing and on behalf of the Graduate School's Standing Committee for Graduate Student Housing.

Dulles Airport Shuttle

The shuttle is a cooperative effort with the Student Council of India, Graduate Student Involvement, Graduate Student Government and the Graduate School to provide free transportation in August for new students arriving at Dulles Airport. It is used primarily by new international graduate students.

Graduate Student Involvement Website

The office has recently created comprehensive web-site for graduate events, services and involvement opportunities. Located at www.union.umd.edu/GSI.

Graduate Student Mega mailer

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Expand Temporary Housing for August

Temporary Housing has not been a well utilized or advertised service for graduate students. I have met with Jan Davidson about expanding these services and he is supportive, though he does have some reservations. I have working with Commuter Affairs and IES to discuss manageable expansion.

Graduate Student Services Network

Travis Sheffler and I are coordinating a network of administrators who work closely with graduate student issues. We plan to meet 1-2 times each year to discuss better ways to serve graduate students on campus.

Graduate Department Student Services Survey (November 2003)

Survey was conducted to better understand graduate student services provided at the department and college level. For the survey, 2,000 randomly selected graduate students were sent a web-based instrument in November 2003. There were 431 responses for a 22% response rate.

Graduate Student Involvement Practicum Program

Based on a program at Harvard and Yale Universities, the program creates 5 hour a week paid practicums for various projects on campus. One position has already been created to administer the Monthly Graduate Social Series. The student is paid \$3,000 over 9.5 months. We are exploring options for expanding the program in the future.

Graduate Student Outdoor Recreation Program

Using the Graduate Student Needs Assessment Survey as a guide, we have learned that graduate students are highly interested in outdoor recreation programs. Using this information, we have submitted a proposal to Jay Gilchrist after several conversations with him. Since Spring 2003 we have included at least one outdoor recreation activity (run by Outdoor Recreation Services) to the Monthly Social Series program. The hiking and kayaking trips we've offered have proven very popular.

Graduate Student Services Needs Assessment Survey

The Coordinator surveyed 2,000 randomly selected graduate students to better understand the needs of graduate students with respect to quality of life issues. The survey was administered via email in April 2002 and received a 32% response rate.

Graduate Pub

The Graduate Pub has been a big success with attendance approaching 200 graduate students each Friday. The Pub currently runs every Friday from 3:30-7:00 p.m. and is serving not only as a place to get some free food and good beverage, but is beginning to be a social hub for graduate students to meet new people or even hold meetings. In the future we hope to expand the pub, not only in duration but in scope. We plan to start inviting departments to hold lectures/seminars in the first hour of the pub.

Graduate Student ID & Discount System

The Coordinator worked with the Registrar and Graduate Student Government to create a separate Maryland ID card for graduate students. The new ID recognizes graduate students for their distinctive status and provides a platform for graduate student discounts both on- and off-campus

Graduate Student ID

As you may have seen in the February 15th edition of the Diamondback, the graduate student population here at Maryland now has their own ID. All new students are being issued the new graduate ID and returning students can trade in their current ID for a new graduate ID. It's free! We are working now to help show graduate students that membership (and their IDs) have some special privileges.

Online Voting for Graduate Student Government

The Coordinator worked with the Registrar's office and GSG to establish on-line elections for the GSG starting in 2002, increasing voter turnout eight-fold in the first year. In the second year, the Coordinator facilitated a partnership with GSG and University Senate to coordinate elections and share costs.

Graduate Student Services Presentation on Campus

The Coordinator has presented on graduate student services to the following audiences on campus:

- Vice President for Student Affairs Office
- Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies Office
- Directors of Student Affairs Departments
- Office of Judicial Programs & Student Ethical Development
- Stamp Student Union Senior Staff
- Brown bag presentation on the Graduate Student Needs Assessment Survey

Graduate Student Services Presentations at Regional and National Conferences

The Coordinator has represented the University and Graduate Student Involvement through the following programs at regional and national conferences:

- **Breaking through the undergraduate barrier.** Presented at the Maryland Student Affairs Conference, College Park, February, 2002.
- **Graduate student services: An institutional commitment to meeting graduate student needs.** Presented at the Maryland Student Affairs Conference, College Park, February, 2003.
- **Understanding and addressing the needs of graduate students.** Presented at the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, St. Louis, March, 2003.
- **Working toward an understanding of graduate student needs.** Presented at the American College Personnel Association, Minneapolis, April, 2003.
- **Administrators in Graduate and Professional Student Service (AGAPSS) NASPA Knowledge Community Pre-Conference.** (co-coordinator): "It's our turn: Enhancing services for graduate and professional students. Regis University, Denver, CO. 2004 NASPA National Conference.
- **Building graduate student community through social event planning.** Presented at the NASPA's AGAPSS Knowledge Community Pre-Conference, Denver, CO, March 2004.