

Graduate Student Advisory Council
of the
College of Agricultural Sciences

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

ABOUT

The Graduate Student Advisory Council (GSAC) is organized by graduate students in the College of Agricultural Sciences for graduate students in the College of Agricultural Sciences.¹ The goal of GSAC is to enhance the graduate student experience for graduate students in the College of Agricultural Sciences. The Council serves three functions: to represent the needs of graduate students to the leadership in the College of Agricultural Sciences, to serve as a resource for fellow graduate students, and to serve as mentors to undergraduate students.

1. GSAC will represent the needs of graduate students to the leadership in the College of Agricultural Sciences. Specifically, this will be achieved by
 - a. Reviewing and making recommendations based on the results of the bi-annual Graduate Student Survey.
 - b. Participating in interviews for new hires in key leadership positions.
 - c. Providing input regarding the use of graduate student activity and educational enrichment funds.
 - d. Other activities as defined by GSAC.

2. GSAC will serve as a resource for fellow graduate students. Specifically, this will be achieved by
 - a. Organizing a student-to-student mentor program through which incoming graduate students are matched with current graduate students.
 - b. Sponsoring a brownbag lunch workshop series in the fall and spring semesters to provide graduate students with additional career development skills.
 - c. Supporting the Office for Graduate Education in its activities, such as the annual Fall Welcome & Fall Resource Fair.
 - d. Communicating opportunities and activities of interest to graduate students through the graduate student listserv and graduate student web pages.
 - e. Facilitating the organization of social and athletic activities, such as happy hour get-togethers and intramural sports.
 - f. Representing the interests of graduate students in the College of Agricultural Sciences to the university-wide Graduate Student Association (GSA) and other appropriate groups to facilitate interdisciplinary networking.
 - g. Emphasizing the public scholarship mission of the land-grant university by communicating applied research opportunities through PS Action and organizing with Cooperative Extension applied research tours of Pennsylvania.
 - h. Conducting exit interviews with graduating graduate students to contribute to quality improvement in graduate education, particularly concerning student-advisor relationships, in the College of Agricultural Sciences.
 - i. Other activities defined by GSAC.

¹ A graduate student is considered a graduate student in the College of Agricultural Sciences if s/he is advised by a faculty member of the College of Agricultural Sciences.

3. GSAC will serve as mentors to undergraduate students. Specifically, this will be achieved by
 - a. Serving as members of the review panel for the College of Agricultural Sciences Undergraduate Student Research Proposal
 - b. Attending the Ag Student Council, Ag Advocates and MANNRS club meetings to offer support.
 - c. Other activities defined by GSAC.

MEMBERSHIP

Members of GSAC are volunteer graduate student representatives from graduate programs and intercollege programs throughout the College of Agricultural Sciences. GSAC members receive no special privileges. The group shall evolve organically in that no formal mechanisms for membership have been established. It is preferred that GSAC members are not appointed to the committee; such appointments would challenge the tenet that the group is organized by graduate students for graduate students. Thus, membership shall be voluntarily maintained.

Any graduate student advised by a faculty member in the College of Agricultural Sciences may join GSAC at anytime during the year by completing and submitting a GSAC Interest Form to the Office for Graduate Education. More than one student from any graduate program may join. There are no term limits.

GSAC members should commit to attend two meetings per semester unless scheduling conflicts and/or illness prevent attendance. All GSAC members also should make a "good faith" effort to attend all special events (i.e., Fall Welcome & Resource Fair, brownbag lunch workshop series, etc.). The Council will review attendance at the end of each semester. Members who have not attended at least two meetings per semester nor any special events will be consulted about their participation. Such consultation is NOT intended to limit membership; rather it is a tool to keep the GSAC membership list updated.

DECISION-MAKING and GSAC ACTIVITY

GSAC will organize and make decisions collectively. Therefore there will be no executive positions. Rather, GSAC members are asked to participate in a committee for the activities identified above and listed below:

1. Student-to-student mentoring committee: This committee is responsible for conducting a survey of current and incoming graduate students to identify graduate students who would like to participate in the student-to-student mentoring activities. In addition, this committee will make the student mentoring matches and facilitate meetings among mentors and mentees.
2. Brownbag lunch workshop series and communications committee: This committee is responsible for organizing spring and fall semester brownbag lunch workshops, as well as communicating opportunities and activities of interest to graduate students through the graduate student listserv and graduate student web pages.
3. Social and athletic and applied research activities committee: This committee is responsible for facilitating the organization of social and athletic activities, such as happy hour get-togethers and intramural sports, and organizing with Cooperative Extension applied research tours of Pennsylvania.
4. Undergraduate liaison committee: This committee is responsible for serving as members of the review panel for the College of Agricultural Sciences Undergraduate Student Research Proposal, as well as offering support to undergraduate clubs in the College of Agricultural Sciences.

5. Exit interviews and funding recommendations committee: This committee is responsible for conducting exit interviews with graduating graduate students and providing input regarding the use of graduate student activity and educational enrichment funds.
6. Graduate liaison and GSAC membership committee: This committee is responsible for acting as a liaison between GSAC and the Office for Graduate Education in the College of Agricultural Sciences, representing the College of Agricultural Sciences at university-wide Graduate Student Association (GSA) meetings, and managing membership for GSAC.

Each committee will nominate one committee member to represent the committee and serve as 'committee chair'.

Any GSAC member is able to suggest or call for a meeting, make recommendations, address college leadership or other external audience on behalf of GSAC, organize activities, etc. with the consensus of other GSAC members.

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