

Graduate and Professional Leadership Council
Open Meeting
February 28, 2017 6:00 pm

Executive Board 2016-2017

Executive Board Member and Meeting Attendee Introductions – Board members in attendance: Sasha Goldman, Drew Trlica, Mary Studebaker-Reed, Marshal Caro
Call for new Board Members
Application will be emailed out soon

GPLC Grad Student Survey Results: Highlights from November 2016 Workplace Survey
Survey Result Presentation (Drew)

- Total 2,144 responses (20% representation)

- Main Points

- Dental Insurance

- Most students do not have health insurance
 - Those who do, have no dental insurance
 - Many students are unaware of the program at the dental school
 - Those who have sought it out are generally satisfied with it
 - Interest in adding dental coverage for a premium= generally yes

- Parental Leave Policy

- 14% of graduate students who responded have dependents
 - Most of these dependents are unemployed (children/elderly)
 - Most students would delay starting a family because of financial hardship
 - BU should be doing more for these students
 - If it were offered, majority of students with dependents would apply

- Funding Model

- Majority of students receive some sort of funding from BU
 - Majority of students have sought external funding
 - Very difficult to find external funding
 - Summer funding tends to fall short
 - Majority of students work for pay outside of BU
 - Of this work, much of the work is somewhat or not at all helpful to their career goals
 - BU policy against working outside of BU
 - Many people are working outside of BU anyway
 - Most advisors/ departments are aware of and supportive of outside work

Discussion of Recommendations moving forward

Student Attendee Feedback:

Funding for PhD students:

- Students should be able to focus on their studies, as their success is a reflection of the school
- If they are struggling financially, this could have a negative impact
- Cost of living in Boston is very high, not everyone has help from family
- Students not receiving time off despite the institution of a parental leave policy

- Requirements for student loans are difficult; loans being used to cover cost of living and childcare costs
- Other universities promote being family friendly
- Some offer additional grants or childcare on campus/options for families
- As a PhD student, difficulty taking out student loans if not enrolled but registered over the summer
 - Due to a clerical/admin error
- Students being told they cannot take out loans through financial aid- some students urban camping or leaving altogether because they have to give a story in order to be told about loan options

Dental Insurance:

- Dental school= hard to schedule for busy students
 - New option for dental coverage:
 - Aetna Dentistry Plan
 - Covers cleanings, fillings, root canals, at about 50% savings
 - Vital Savings.com
 - Sign up for a dental card or dental plus pharmacy card
 - \$7.99/ month plus processing fee
 - Add family for \$10.99/month
 - Must find a doctor in the program who takes the Vital Savings Card
 - Bring card in to appointment to receive savings benefits
 - a Vision program is also available

Funding for Master's students:

- 100% out of pocket costs for Masters projects
- Example: Forensic Anthropology program
 - Currently, no funding for forensic anthropology program
 - Oversaturation in the program, lack of space within GMS
 - Lack of physical space (labs, offices)
 - Overnight observations for thesis research- no overnight break space
 - Students being kicked out of 14th floor lounge when using it overnight
 - No space to accommodate outside of class hours
 - Issues have been brought up to dept chairs and no change
 - Spend over 9 hours on steel chairs
 - Programs on the same floor have much nicer amenities
 - One of the only FA programs in the country, looked down on by other universities/ programs on for the way students are treated
 - “Our money is not going to our resources”- misappropriation of funds
 - Recommendation: form a committee under GPLC umbrella within non-funded students
 - Assign first year of Forensic Anthropology Program to be chair of the committee
 - Move to open committee: facilities
 - allotted resources being paid for by students are not being given to those students

Summer Funding:

- Tuition fees are already insurmountable, plus the issue of cost of living in Boston
- 10 month funding model- each department takes in less people to increase funding for individuals
 - Administrative sympathy to summer funding?
- DGS seem more reluctant to discuss funding than higher admin
 - conflict of interest?
- Many funding options are offered in specific departments, but no university-wide policy
- International students at a disadvantage because they cannot seek external funding/work
 - Cannot be hired as research assistants within the university
- Because of restriction of international students being unable to work off campus, no students are allowed to work off campus
- International students can apply for OPTs through the school, but professors have to sponsor you and the international students and scholar office has to approve it before they are allowed to work outside campus
- Non-funded students feel pressure to work outside of campus, but departments are not flexible in acknowledging that students need to work outside of class in order to support themselves

Part-Time Graduate Students:

- School of public health- some students elect to not be funded by the university, can work outside the school
- Now being told from the dean level that the university is moving toward fully funded graduate students only; removing support for part-time students who do not elect to have funding
- Some working in jobs that are beneficial for their careers (work in health sector and take night classes)
- Full funding does not mean cost of living realistic funding- just a funding package
- Blanket policy is inappropriate
- Once there are enough fully funded students- schedule would be changed so that people cannot take night classes?
- Concern over losing grad student part time option
 - Competition with other grad schools?
 - “opt in” full funding??

International Students:

- International students: even less opportunities to make cost of living
- Where does the university stand on visas??
- What is happening to renewing visas?
- Students unable to renew visas, getting stuck in home countries?

Credit-limit for part time students:

- Credit distribution= 11 credit limit per semester for part time students
- Difference of \$12,000 for 1 credit over limit...?!
- Provost: course offerings in January to help finish faster are counted as spring credits= one less that can be taken during the semester
- Treating winter session as summer session to give more credits in spring credit limit
- Hyper flexibility, classes throughout the year
- Move to open committee: part time credit

Safety issues on Med campus:

- Getting catcalled waiting for the bus at Mass ave
- Getting groped by strangers
- Edge of campus
- Who is responsible?
- Escort service- needs more publicity? Accessibility?
- Resources to be put on the GPLC site

New Committees to be Opened

Facilities Committee (Co-Chairs: Chelsea Carter and Drew Trlica)

Move to Open

Open: Seconded

Non-funded Students Committee (Chair: Jennifer Kroll)

Move to Open

Open: Seconded

J-Term/Part Time Students Committee (Chair: Marshal Caro)

Move to Open

Open: Seconded

Next Steps

- Met with Daniel Kleinman (New Provost of Graduate Affairs) last month
- Upcoming: Will send a memo to Dr. Kleinman, outlining the major student issues
- Will meet with Dr. Kleinman to present the findings of the graduate student survey
- Another open meeting will be held to report what happened at the Kleinman meeting (in early summer?)