

Meeting with President Shelton - 2009.09.21 - no student names recorded
Notes taken by Bryan Korth
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Introduction

Shelton -

No intention or plan to cut GTA benefits/insurance, has to come from the state down, university does not have control over those funds.

No intention to cut GTA tuition remission, in fact has worked to protect tuition remission. Current cuts have resulted in \$105 M reduction in budget and money has to come from somewhere. Shelton has worked to protect financial aid, tuition remission falls under this category, so university has to find the difference elsewhere.

Student question/comment -

Feels that certain priorities should be acknowledged and worked toward which may directly or indirectly benefit GTA students including minimizing current teaching load, health care review, caps on class sizes, improvement of technology in classrooms.

Shelton response -

The work harder statement - also every workload must be geared properly and that working over desired hours on occasion is ok but not ok for the extended weeks to become the norm. In regards to money, UA has purposefully grown slower than state population, expected to be compensated from the state to counter differences brought in by tuition etc. but have not seen anticipated aid from legislature. On a Bill of rights for Graduate Students -

To students - who and what do students want out of a BoR. Currently there are 14 policies in place that GS fall under, first thing to do would be to gather these policies in one location and determine the adequacy of these policies for the current GS. Need to communicate needs rationally, not in the fear state that is often expressed currently.

Student question / comment -

The current climate has gone beyond fear, no longer just afraid, now climate is effecting morale of students and faculty as well as university as a whole. When concerns brought to administration get unprofessional responses, i.e. "If they do not like it, they can go somewhere else" instead of constructive discussion. Students could be biggest advocates if current challenges handled properly but on flip side, students could be largest and loudest critics. If there are so many policies in place, concern of multiplicity, difficult to find proper course for redress.

Shelton response -

First is a concern of advocacy at all levels, starting with the state level - major cuts to education, k-12 and higher ed. Fundamental need to unite and express concern to state government that cuts are not acceptable and not compatible with having world class institution. Next level of advocacy should come from department /department head, most invested in the student of own department, head should be a major point of contact, in addition to deans of respective colleges. Currently there are meetings / trainings with department heads, but need input from staff and students on how to improve or what is lacking.

GPSC president Talenfeld - necessities in BoR

Greivance board that has student representation that has voting / decision making power - not simply a front. Also require a formal document that has power in regards to responsibilities and redress. The document must protect GS employees, especially in concerns to relationships of student to advisor, department, and university.

Shelton response -

Have to do more with less concept - numbers are increasing but budget is decreasing, have to figure out the most appropriate balance.

In regards to fundamental definition of GTA - student versus employee has far reaching implications not only in regards to options for redress, health care, and tuition but also in how interact with faculty, possible that definition could create animosity with some faculty, change of status and BoR would effectively take some power away from advisors, department and college.

Student question / comment -

In explanation of transformation, emails often read like press releases and sometimes have press office signatures. Often read like pep rallies with real problems being sandwiched between statements for UA support. Would be more productive to provide university members with cut and dry numbers and effects versus superficial cheering. Also more focused distribution of information, send information to those impacted versus whole community.

Student question / comment -

What can students do in regards to advocating, who and where should we target, specifically in regards to the state legislature

Shelton response -

Legislature is where to start in regards to budget. Have recently received alert from Governor's office to determine how an additional 15% budget cut this year would effect state agency, at the university level, 15% would mean an additional \$50-77 M cut (unsure if the number provided indicates all universities in total unsure or if the amount is specific to UA). In such issues, the legislature and the governor need to hear from students, families, communities as to the impact. Also helpful to show that are voting members of the community, more likely to listen if there is a direct impact, voting, on the representative.

Future Plans -

GPSC president and Shelton will work to convene committee comprised of faculty, administration and students to take up issue of developing graduate student bill of rights. Shelton has agreed to meet on a semi-regular basis (once a month) to discuss current progress and get input from students. GPSC president will look to form students for committee in the coming weeks.

End of meeting