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# GPSC Strategic Plan

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## *BRIDGING THE DIVIDE*

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Based on the preliminary  
version compiled by Jeremy  
Block in April 2009.

Revised by the GPSC Strategic  
Planning Committee in April  
2010.

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# Executive Summary

This plan seeks to capture the aspirations of Duke University's Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) over the next several years. It draws its inspiration from an overarching vision that sees GPSC not only as a body representing all graduate and professional students at Duke, but as an institution committed to strengthening the various communities to which those students belong. These communities include: (1) the community of graduate and professional students, (2) the Duke community as a whole, and (3) various communities beyond the academic setting (including the Durham community, the community of Duke's graduate and professional alumni, and the global environment). The Council's commitment to these three communities guides this document's structure and purpose.

To be successful, GPSC must aspire to build bridges within and between the communities listed above, seeking to foster mutual understanding while also advocating for the interests of its members within those communities. In each of the following three categories, GPSC hopes to accomplish several specific goals that will improve the lives of graduate and professional students and improve the communities to which they belong:

(1) **The Graduate and Professional Student Community:** GPSC must work to improve communications between its institutions (the Executive Board and the General Assembly) and its constituents, making itself a model of responsiveness and transparency. Moreover, it must fulfill its commitment to creating a dedicated space for the graduate and professional student community on campus.

(2) **The Duke Community:** GPSC must advocate for ongoing improvements in graduate education, while providing graduate and professional students with the tools needed to develop excellent relationships as teachers of undergraduate students, and as advisees of faculty mentors. The Council will work to make Duke's institutions more responsive to its constituents' needs, paying special attention to guaranteeing assistance for students that encounter personal and professional difficulties during their time at Duke.

(3) **Communities beyond Duke:** GPSC is committed to giving graduate and professional students better opportunities to engage with communities beyond Duke's walls. To this end, it must work to improve opportunities for outreach with the Durham community, to forge a stronger link between current students and alumni, and to show leadership as a responsible steward of the environment.

This document was produced in its current form in Spring 2010, after the General Assembly of GPSC formed an ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee for the purpose of revising GPSC's draft Strategic Plan of April 2009. The 2009 Draft was an invaluable resource for this current document, and not enough gratitude can be expressed by the drafters of this document to the drafters of the 2009 Draft. The drafters of this document were charged with the task of maintaining the goals of the original draft, while revising the structure and language of the document. After several weeks of work, the Committee produced a revised plan that represents a viable statement of the Council's goals, while providing a template for concrete steps to be taken

by the members of GPSC's Executive Board and its representatives in the Duke administration. It was then approved by GPSC's Executive Board and General Assembly on [date approved].

A new strategic plan is only a first step in the process of institutional improvement. While members of the Council's Executive Board and General Assembly representatives change from year to year, the institution must stay focused on its key long-term goals and evaluate them regularly. The General Assembly has adopted this document with the express purpose of making GPSC's leadership accountable for carrying out the long-term goals critical for the Council's future. Upon taking office, GPSC's President and other executive officers shall review the goals set forth in this document and decide how best to advance them during their tenure. Before leaving office, they shall report to the incoming leadership team on how they fared in meeting those goals, and what steps are necessary for the future. This strategic plan will fail in its purpose without continued attention to its purpose and goals. Furthermore, this document is not designed to last forever. After a period of no more than four years, the General Assembly should appoint a new Strategic Planning Committee to draft a completely new document that reflects new challenges and new possibilities unimaginable at the current time.

## Vision Statement

GPSC aspires to be the ultimate representative body for the interests of Duke graduate and professional students by building bridges within the Duke graduate and professional student community and between our community, the university, and beyond.

## Mission Statement

GPSC provides a voice for student opinion, enables students to participate in the growth of the community, and empowers students to share in the governing of Duke University.

# Strategy

In order to realize GPSC's vision, goals have been developed under the following rubric: (1) goals contributing to building bridges within the Duke graduate and professional student community, (2) goals contributing to building bridges between the Duke graduate and professional student community and the Duke administration, and (3) goals contributing to building bridges between the Duke graduate and professional student community and the world beyond.

The remainder of this Strategic Plan is organized under these three categories. The reader should note that the vision of GPSC is holistic, and, therefore, progress made in one of the categories should occur alongside progress in the other two categories. Furthermore, efforts made in any one of these categories should complement advancement in the other two categories.

Under each goal, you will find a clear and concise statement of the goal with a timeline for completion. Following the statement of the goal, each section contains additional information regarding who is responsible for ensuring the goal's completion, what resources may be helpful, potential obstacles to the completion of the goal, proposed solutions for each obstacle, a timeline for reviewing the progress toward a goal, and recommendations for ensuring the completion of multi-year goals.

# Goals

## *Bridges within the Graduate and Professional Student Community*

One of the most important functions GPSC carries out is the creation of a sense of community among all graduate and professional students. This task is not easy, as these students work in a wide range of fields, and often have different professional and personal interests. For this reason, GPSC must commit to ongoing improvement in its ability to bring its members together. First and foremost, this involves effective communication with members about the actions that the Council takes on behalf of students, but also striving to increase the Council's responsiveness to constituent needs. GPSC's leadership must also not lose sight of its long-standing goal of creating a campus Graduate Student Center that serves the needs of graduate and professional students. As a key event unifying large numbers of graduate and professional students from across Duke, the annual basketball ticket campout demands ongoing attention from the institution. Finally, the Council must work to improve its effectiveness as an institution responsible for developing leaders among its constituents.

### *1. Perception of GPSC*

It is GPSC's goal to improve graduate and professional student perception of GPSC by increasing our communication with them before the 2013-2014 academic year.

The responsibility for the perception of GPSC ultimately falls on every member of the Executive Board and General Assembly, however, the GPSC President and Vice President should ensure that these processes are enacted and delegate specific tasks when necessary to individuals on the Executive Board and General Assembly. Some of the ways in which GPSC can improve information flow to graduate and professional students may include:

- Establishing consistent venues of communication between members of the graduate and professional student community and GPSC by:
  - Utilizing athletic events as venues for sharing important and relevant information
  - Utilizing departmental or professional school retreats and events by having General Assembly representative give talks
  - Improving accessibility and usability of the GPSC website
- Increasing communication between General Assembly representatives and their constituents by:
  - Informing graduate and professional students that their General Assembly representative is their resource for information and raising issues of concern

- Additional training of General Assembly representatives to direct students to the appropriate resources

GPSC may confront two potential obstacles in accomplishing this goal. First, accountability of the General Assembly representatives may be hard to regulate. While GPSC cannot follow up with each representative personally to ensure that they are doing their job, it can (1) make regular communication with their constituents a formal requirement, and (2) encourage them to be more engaging with the student population. Second, GPSC may find it difficult to find the time to further train General Assembly representatives. GPSC can confront this obstacle by reorganizing resources currently available, such as the website and the annual retreat, and formalizing a chain of command for further questions.

This goal shall be reviewed annually. This review shall take place shortly after the GPSC Spring election cycle. The current GPSC Vice President shall prepare a review document detailing efforts made over the prior year toward accomplishing this goal. Both the current and future GPSC Vice Presidents and Presidents shall meet to discuss the strategy for the following year. At this meeting, the current GPSC Vice President shall give the review document to the future GPSC Vice President.

## 2. Information Technology

It is GPSC's goal to better share information with graduate and professional students by updating our information technology services before the 2011-2012 academic year. Examples of information technology include website, social media, and email listserves.

The Communications Coordinator is responsible for ensuring progress is made towards this goal; he or she may delegate specific tasks when necessary to individuals on the Executive Board and General Assembly. Some of the ways in which GPSC can improve information sharing with graduate and professional students may include:

- Redesigning the existing website to make it more user-friendly and manageable for the Communications Coordinator.
- Conduct surveys of graduate and professional students to identify what information they need and work with the university to integrate this into its online offerings.
- Utilize social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, for the benefit of graduate and professional students in terms of information sharing and gathering processes.
- Review and extend the white papers written in conjunction with GSA and Career Services and use them to provide recommendations to the Duke administration for improvements.
- Develop and deploy a calendar for GPSC integrated with the Duke website

A redesign of the website is scheduled to be underway the summer of 2010 and should accomplish many of the goals currently set forth and allow for newer goals in improving the services.

This goal shall be reviewed annually. More specifically, this goal shall be reviewed after the website developed during the summer of 2010 is launched. This review shall take place shortly after the GPSC Spring election cycle. The current GPSC Communications Coordinator shall prepare a review document detailing efforts made over the prior year toward accomplishing this goal. Both the current and future GPSC Communication Coordinators shall meet to discuss the strategy for the following year. At this meeting, the current GPSC Communication Coordinator shall give the review document to the future GPSC Communication Coordinator.

### 3. The Graduate Student Center

It is GPSC's goal to collaborate with the Duke administration in planning and building a dedicated space on West Campus for the use of graduate and professional students before the end of the 2017-2018 academic year.

The current GPSC President shall be ultimately responsible for ensuring progress is made toward this goal. The GPSC President may find the following resources helpful:

- personal meetings with University administrators and Duke University Board of Trustees members,
- GPSC representatives to relevant University Committees,
- GPSC representatives to the standing committees of the Duke University Board of Trustees (especially the "Business and Finance Committee," and the "Facilities and Environment Committee"),
- surveys of graduate and professional students to determine the probable benefits and utilization of a Graduate Student Center,
- professional consulting services,
- formal proposals to the Duke University Board of Trustees, and
- any other resources that may he or she may find helpful.

Before the end of the 2013-2014 academic year, the GPSC President shall lobby for full commitment from the Duke University Board of Trustees for funds necessary to build a Graduate Student Center. After a full commitment is received, the GPSC President shall lobby for the design and construction of a Graduate Student Center to (1) meet the space needs of graduate and professional students, and (2) be completed by the end of the 2017-2018 academic year. Examples of the space needs of graduate and professional students may include:

- Space for centralized resources for graduate and professional students, such as
  - A staffed office for career services
  - A staffed office for financial aid and financial advising
  - A staffed office for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) for graduate and professional students
  - Additional office space for Graduate Student Affairs (GSA)
  - An office for Duke Alumni Affairs
  - A computer cluster and study space similar to the LiNK in Perkins Library
- Space for the successful operation of graduate and professional student groups

- An office for GPSC
- Meeting and conference room space for both GPSC affiliated groups and other graduate and professional student groups
- Space for building the graduate and professional student community
  - Space for an eatery developed in consultation with Duke Dining Services
  - Recreational spaces
- A bus stop directly in front of the Graduate Student Center

GPSC may confront three potential obstacles in accomplishing this goal. First, Duke University may be unable to fund this project due to the diminished availability of funds after the recession of 2008-2010. While GPSC cannot directly increase available funds, it can (1) continue to lobby for the Graduate Student Center until funds are available, and (2) fundraise funds specifically for this effort. Second, Duke University may be ideologically opposed to a Graduate Student Center. GPSC can confront this obstacle by informing the Administration and Board of Trustees of the benefits of a Graduate Student Center. Third, the design of the Graduate Student Center may not meet all the needs of the graduate and professional student community. GPSC can confront this obstacle by (1) clarifying the top-tier essential space requirements, and the second-tier desired space requirements and (2) influencing the Administration and Board of Trustees through information and direct pressure.

This goal shall be reviewed annually. This review shall take place shortly after the GPSC Spring election cycle. The current GPSC President shall prepare a review document detailing efforts made over the prior year toward accomplishing this goal. The current and future GPSC President shall meet to discuss the Graduate Student Center strategy for the following year. At this meeting, the current GPSC President shall give the review document to the future GPSC President.

#### *4. The Graduate and Professional Student Basketball Ticket Campout*

It is GPSC's continuing goal to improve graduate and professional student experiences with the Basketball Ticket Campout.

The Basketball co-chairs are responsible for ensuring progress is made towards this goal; they may delegate specific tasks when necessary to individuals on the Basketball Committee. Some of the ways in which GPSC can improve graduate and professional student experiences with the Basketball Ticket Campout may include:

- Ensuring that the Basketball Committee and the council work more closely together. Some of the ways this could be done are:
  - Encourage general assembly representatives to join the Basketball Committee.
  - Increase attendance of the Executive Board to the Basketball Committee meetings and Campout itself.
  - Invite the Basketball co-chairs to meetings with the Executive Board to discuss ideas and progress.

- Improve the overall quality of Campout. Some of the ways that this could be done include:
  - Increase the safety of the campers by encouraging responsible behavior and drinking habits in addition to raising the number of safety squad members.
  - Create more activities at Campout.
  - Continue to strive for more members on the Basketball Committee.
  - Continue to lobby on behalf of the graduate and professional students to the athletic department for a larger section at games.
- Clarify the procedures and roles of responsible individuals within the committee. This can be accomplished by:
  - Updating the policy and Basketball Committee website to include details of the committee structure and procedures.
  - Conduct regular reviews of the current procedures to ensure that the proper precautions are being taken to protect student's privacy and interests.

GPSC may confront several obstacles in accomplishing these goals. First, general assembly representatives are busy and may not have the time or interest in serving on another committee. This could be overcome by requiring that some general assembly representatives join the Basketball Committee each year. Second, encouraging responsible behavior at Campout may not be sufficient to curb excessive drinking at Campout. It may be necessary to clarify the standards of conduct at Campout, and ensure that students comply with the standard through more observation and enforcement where necessary. Lastly, the Athletic Department may not be able to provide a larger student section. GPSC can work to overcome this obstacle by continuing to provide a self sufficient section that fills up every game. This will show the Athletic Department that the graduate and professional students deserve a larger section if more seating becomes available in the future.

This goal shall be reviewed annually. More specifically, this goal shall be reviewed prior to the spring policy meeting. The current Basketball co-chairs shall prepare a review document detailing efforts made over the prior year toward accomplishing this goal. Both the current and future Basketball co-chairs and the GPSC Vice President shall meet to discuss the strategy for the policy meeting. At this meeting, the current Basketball co-chairs shall propose the discussed strategy and ways to implement them into the revised policy to the Committee.

### 5. Leadership Development

It is GPSC's continuing goal to provide graduate and professional students with leadership development opportunities. Leadership opportunities are not just those that come from serving on the executive board, but also those which stem from involvement in the Campus and Durham communities as well as leadership development activities. This is a goal that should be reevaluated both on a yearly basis and continually throughout the year.

This is a goal which should not be addressed by just one member of the executive board, but by the group as a whole. The GPSC Executive Board is already designed with this goal in mind; for example:

- The University Affairs Coordinator helps representatives have a voice in the Duke administration.
- The Community Outreach Coordinator helps students plan and execute service events.
- The Student Group Liaison helps leaders find funding and brainstorm their own events.
- The Academic Officer provides opportunities for students to meet with administrators and discuss leadership strategies.

There are two paths that GPSC should take to ensure the success of this project.

- The President and Vice President will be responsible, at the beginning of each term, for meeting with each GPSC officer in order to plan how they will proceed in the upcoming year with leadership as a focus. The GPSC President will be ultimately responsible for the planning, while the Vice President will have executive board members report their progress periodically.
- The Vice President will organize a retreat at the beginning of the school year for the express purpose of developing leadership skills—not just for the GPSC executive board and representatives, but for the student leaders as a whole. Events may include but are not limited to:
  - Information sessions on group funding procedures or administrative rules.
  - Information sessions on group advertising.
  - Planning meetings for GPSC representatives and executive board members.

Resources for achieving this goal may primarily come from previous executive board members: each office should have a transition folder with information on achieving leadership objectives, and this should be a topic of conversation during the yearly transition meeting. Officers should attend the periodic leadership development events provided by the University, when possible. Also, the Academic Officer should provide informal opportunities for officers and students at large to meet with University administrators, a forum through which students can discuss leadership strategies with current leaders. It is important for executive board members to keep the advancement of leadership opportunities at the front of their minds: the greatest hindrance to the success of this goal is our executive board members taking on too much responsibility themselves and not providing access to others. This burden, while ultimately falling under the responsibility of each member, can be lightened by the sustained effort of the Vice President to make sure that developing leadership is stressed during their periodic meetings with executive board members. As well, the planning of the annual retreat is time consuming and draining. The Vice President should make it their primary goal for the summer; in addition, the GPSC executive board members should be aware of this event and assist in its planning and execution.

Progress toward this goal should be reviewed on a continuous basis, with a special emphasis at the time of transition. The Vice President should ensure that his or her successor will have the resources necessary to begin planning the annual retreat immediately after transition.

## *Bridges between the Graduate and Professional Student Community and the Duke Administration*

GPSC serves a unique function for graduate and professional students as the only body devoted to representing their interests at the University level. As it advocates for the issues and interests important to its constituents, it must also keep in mind the shared goal of making Duke University a premier institution for learning, research, and personal and social development. As part of its core mission, the Council must continue to advocate for improved graduate education. It must also commit to ongoing improvement of the relationships between Duke students and other parts of the community, both by ensuring that graduate students can be effective as teachers of undergraduate students, and by working to create positive mentoring relationships between students and their faculty advisors. Part of making Duke a premier location for graduate study is providing support for those graduate and professional students who experience difficulties; for this reason, GPSC must work to create a fair process for graduate students with academic grievances, and to guarantee high-quality mental health services for them. Finally, GPSC should continue its ongoing efforts to make sure other campus services are responsive to the needs of its constituents.

### *6. Improving Graduate and Professional Education*

One of GPSC's ongoing aims is to ensure that Duke's faculty invest as much thought, attention, and zeal to graduate education as they do to other responsibilities like research and undergraduate education. It will encourage Duke's academic departments and professional schools to further develop a culture in which graduate teaching is a key priority alongside research, professional activities, and, where applicable, undergraduate teaching.

The Council's Academic Officer shall assume responsibility for meeting this goal. He or she shall coordinate this effort, as appropriate, with GPSC's Academic Council Liaison and its representatives to the Arts & Sciences Council, the University Priorities Committee, and the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee. Under the leadership of the Academic Officer, all these individuals will encourage the University to adopt rules promoting a high level of graduate education, for example by:

- Ensuring that faculty receive the resources and incentives necessary to offer high-quality courses for graduate students;
- Giving increased importance to graduate-level teaching during the hiring, evaluation, and promotion of faculty.

The surest way to achieve better education for Duke's graduate students is to make graduate education a key priority for all faculty members. A potential obstacle lies in the fact that faculty may resist such efforts if they seem tantamount to taking on new responsibilities in the face of their existing and weighty duties in research, university administration, and

undergraduate education. Thus, GPSC's representatives on these matters must carefully put forth a vision in which faculty responsibilities are not increased, but merely reoriented so as to increase the relative importance of graduate teaching. We should always remind faculty that, in the words of the Graduate School's 2006 Strategic Plan, "the quality of faculty and graduate students at a research university are inexorably intertwined."

Each year shortly after the new Executive Board is elected, the Academic Officer shall review the success of such advocacy efforts. At this time, he or she shall consider what impact such efforts have had, and are likely to have, on Duke's graduate and professional students, and how to make constituents aware of such changes. He or she will record these observations, along with recommendations for future action, in a written review document to be presented to the incoming Academic Officer. The incoming and outgoing Academic Officers shall also meet to discuss the contents of the review.

### 7. Supporting Graduate Students as Teachers

One of graduate students' key contributions to the University community is their work as instructors, teaching assistants, and graders in undergraduate courses. GPSC would like to see graduate instructors receive additional training and resources to assist them in these important activities.

The Council's Academic Officer shall assume responsibility for meeting this goal. He or she shall coordinate this effort, as appropriate, with GPSC's Academic Council Liaison and its representatives to the Arts & Sciences Council, the Committee on Undergraduate Teaching, and the Board of Trustees Undergraduate Education and Academic Affairs Committees. Under the leadership of the Academic Officer, all these individuals will urge the University to support graduate instructors by:

- Providing additional formal training for graduate and professional students who serve as instructors or teaching assistants;
- Investigating the possibility of a teaching certificate for graduate and professional students who do a significant amount of high-quality teaching during their time at Duke;
- Ensuring that graduate instructors have adequate access to, and training in, the ever-expanding field of IT teaching solutions used at Duke and its peer institutions.

Potential obstacles to these suggestions lie in the need for the University and individual departments to invest additional resources to curriculum development at a time of financial distress and uncertainty. GPSC's representatives should remind University administrators and faculty that increased investment in graduate instruction advances two of Duke's key goals, better teaching for undergraduates and better training for graduate students.

Each year shortly after the new Executive Board is elected, the Academic Officer shall review the success of such advocacy efforts. At this time, he or she shall consider what impact such efforts have had, and are likely to have, on Duke's graduate and professional students, and how to make constituents aware of such changes. He or she will record these observations, along

with recommendations for future action, in a written review document to be presented to the incoming Academic Officer. The incoming and outgoing Academic Officers shall also meet to discuss the contents of the review.

## 8. Mentoring

It is GPSC's goal to foster positive and mutually beneficial relationships between students and their academic or professional mentors, and to facilitate a clear exchange of expectations and responsibilities inherent to each party.

The Academic Officer shall be responsible for promoting a quality mentorship experience for every graduate and professional student in pursuit of this goal. Appropriate resources include personal meetings among university administrators (especially the provost and the deans of the individual schools), student satisfaction surveys, the implementation of mentorship training programs, and university sponsored rewards or incentives for quality mentors. Specific items to pursue include the following:

- Working with the Duke administration, develop and jointly sign a resolution establishing a mentorship bill of rights for graduate and professional students which is signed by each student along with signatures of their mentors and committee member(s).
- Improve the overall value of mentorship in the faculty evaluation and promotion process.
- Provide truly independent mediation and alternative dispute resolution services to graduate and professional students or faculty who encounter adverse circumstances.
- Investigate possibility of and sign a joint resolution with the Duke administration allowing at least one graduate or professional student to attend all faculty meetings in their department or school. There is recognition that some portions of meetings may not be appropriate for attendance, but that these would be limited and described and agreed upon beforehand.

Significant obstacles to the achievement of this goal primarily involve faculty resistance to the adoption of new mentorship initiatives. It is important to keep in mind that each faculty member has experienced a unique mentor-mentee relationship in their time as a student, which has shaped his or her vision of mentor/mentee responsibilities and expectations of the mentorship process. Furthermore, each student is unique in his or her particular needs. Therefore, any initiative proposed by GPSC ought to be adaptable to this unique relationship that exists between each mentor and mentee. Rather than attempt to define an objective standard for mentorship, GPSC needs to focus on facilitating an environment where mentors and mentees may comfortably discuss mutual expectations and performance.

Progress towards this goal shall be reviewed each semester, and regular updates shall be presented to the Executive Board. Upon the transition of office, the outgoing Academic Officer shall prepare and review a document detailing progress made to that point. The outgoing and incoming Academic Officer shall discuss future efforts together and devise a one-year timeline for future action.

## 9. New Protections for Students with Grievances

It is GPSC's goal to improve the dispute resolution process for students with grievances before the end of the 2012-2013 academic year. This goal can be subdivided into two smaller goals: (1) partnering with Duke to create a university committee for the purposes of both reviewing grievance procedures and standards and suggesting recommendations for change, and (2) partnering with Duke to create an independent alternative dispute resolution (ADR) center.

The Academic Officer shall be in charge of ensuring progress is made toward this goal. The Academic Officer may find the following resources helpful:

- The current GPSC President
- Personal meetings with Duke administrators
- The last year-end summary report (see below)
- Other resources that the Academic Officer deems necessary

The Academic Officer may encounter the following obstacles. First, in light of the diminished financial resources available to the Duke administration, the administration may find it difficult to find the funds necessary to establishing an ADR center. While there is no easy solution to this obstacle, the Academic Officer can continue to lay a foundation for a future ADR center (once funds become available). Furthermore, the Academic Officer can also focus on the first sub-goal of establishing a university committee to review current grievance resolution procedures. Second, the Duke administration may be reluctant to move away from the status quo on this issue. This could be due in part to a difference in reform priorities. The Academic Officer can overcome this obstacle through persistence (regular meetings with more than one administrator) and providing easy-to-comprehend resources for administrators to review (e.g., a flyer detailing current grievance resolution regime, failings of the current regime, and proposed solutions). Third, the Academic Officer may encounter political pushback from Department Chairs who may be asked to cede power to a new ADR center. The Academic Officer can overcome this obstacle through persistence and providing easy-to-comprehend resources. Furthermore, a petition signed by a significant percentage of graduate and/or professional students may also prove helpful, and an open meeting for department chairs to attend to explain the proposal may be helpful in the later stages of lobbying.

Progress towards this goal shall be reviewed at the end of each semester, and the Academic Officer shall make regular reports to the Executive Board. Upon the transition of office, the outgoing Academic Officer shall prepare and review a document detailing progress made to that point. The outgoing and incoming Academic Officer shall discuss future efforts together and devise a one-year timeline for future action.

## 10. Mental Health

It is GPSC's goal to monitor the effectiveness of the mental health services currently provided to the graduate and professional students, and to ensure that the university continue to provide useful mental health care to students at a minimal cost.

The current GPSC President shall be ultimately responsible for ensuring progress is made towards this goal. The GPSC President may take the following steps to achieve this goal:

- Creating a university committee to assess the impact of the mental health services currently provided by Duke, with a specific focus on their effect on the graduate and professional student population
- Identifying and critically evaluating in a timely fashion any issues or problems that are discovered
- Making recommendations and signing joint resolutions with university leadership and relevant officials to improve mental health services

GPSC may confront potential obstacles in accomplishing this goal. Duke administration may be resistant to the greater involvement of GPSC in these issues, and thus attempt to shrug off or ignore whatever recommendations are made. This could be overcome by the persistent lobbying of the administration and a focused advocacy campaign.

This goal should be reviewed annually. This review shall take place shortly after the GPSC Spring election cycle. The current GPSC President shall prepare a review document detailing efforts made over the prior year toward accomplishing this goal. The current and future GPSC President shall meet to discuss the Mental Health strategy for the following year. At this meeting, the current GPSC President shall give the review document to the future GPSC President.

### 11. Improving Campus Services

It is GPSC's goal to identify and address issues related to Duke campus services in a timely manner beginning in the 2009-2010 academic year. Specific campus services that may continue to be improved include the SafeRides system, bus routes and schedules, parking allocations and pricing, dedicated library space, disability access, and campus safety services.

The current President shall be in charge of ensuring progress toward this goal is made. The President may find the following resources helpful in accomplishing this goal:

- Identifying Issues
  - Periodic surveys of the graduate and professional student body
  - Discussion with the General Assembly and Executive Board
  - Personal conversations with students
- Implementing Solutions
  - GPSC representatives to University Committees
  - GPSC representatives to Duke University Board of Trustee standing committees
  - GPSC Executive Board members
  - Personal meetings, phone calls, and emails with Duke Administrators

GPSC may face two types of obstacles in improving campus services at Duke. First, the President may find it difficult to connect with the student body in timely manner to identify

issues confronting different parts of the graduate and professional study body. The President can overcome this obstacle by regularly engaging with students at on-campus and off-campus events, regularly discussing current issues with the General Assembly, and utilizing surveys of the graduate and professional student community. Regular (e.g. bi-monthly) utilization of one or more of these solutions will ensure that the President (and consequently GPSC) stay apprised of current issues affecting different parts of the graduate and professional students community in timely fashion. Second, the President's implementation of a solution to issues that are identified may be blocked by the administration. To overcome this obstacles, the President can be persistent in his or her efforts to inform and persuade the Duke administration about the issue and GPSC's proposed solution. Furthermore, the President can leverage interpersonal relationships that he or she has developed with Duke administrators.

Progress toward this goal should be reviewed annually. The President should prepare a document detailing issues that had been solved during the previous year, and issues that were identified, but not yet solved. After the President's successor is elected, the President should meet with his or her successor to discuss the current state of improving campus services. At that time, the President should hand over the document detailing both resolved issues and unresolved issues.

## *Bridges between the Graduate and Professional Student Community and the World Beyond Duke*

Duke's graduate and professional students do not live in an isolated ivory tower, but are a part of the Durham community, with most living off campus. As such, GPSC must consider new ways to make graduate and professional students more aware of and involved in community outreach efforts in the City of Medicine. Moreover, while education is a lifelong goal, being a student at an educational institution is a temporary stage in an individual's life: GPSC's constituents will one day enter the world beyond the University's walls and continue their lives elsewhere. The Council should work to give its members access to the career opportunities they need to make the greatest possible contributions to their new communities beyond Duke. GPSC must also attempt to strengthen the bonds between Duke's campus and the alumni of its graduate and professional schools. Finally, GPSC must make sure that graduate and professional students are responsible members of the national and global environmental community by working to improve the sustainability efforts of the University, especially those that involve or affect its constituents.

### *12. Encouraging Community Outreach*

It is GPSC's goal to double the number of graduate and professional student participants in community outreach events by the 2011-2012 academic year.

The Community Outreach Coordinator shall be responsible for ensuring progress is made towards this goal. He or she shall work with the Community Outreach Committee to: (1) determine the current rate of participation, (2) organize additional opportunities for community outreach, and (3) communicate available community outreach opportunities to the graduate and professional student community.

- Soliciting the involvement of the Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership and the graduate and professional schools to support students whose efforts improve our community. By publicizing the work of these individuals, more students may be encouraged to volunteer in community organizations.
- Working with the Duke Center for Civic Engagement to expand the DukeEngage program to include graduate and professional students. Through this expansion, graduate and professional students could both participate in activities themselves as well as serve as mentors or project leaders for undergraduates.
- Promoting and supporting home ownership in the Durham area by graduate and professional students, thus helping students to become integrated with and personally invested in Durham neighborhoods.

Perhaps the largest obstacle in accomplishing the goal of greater student involvement is the students' inability to commit to volunteer activity, either because of apathy or a perfectly

understandable lack of time. By creating incentives to participate by, for example, publicly recognizing students who have gone "above and beyond" in their dedication to the Durham community and by creating a greater number of opportunities to participate (as well as by continuing to offer enjoyable volunteer activities), more graduate and professional students may be drawn to service of some sort.

This goal shall be reviewed annually. Before the GPSC spring election cycle, the the Community Outreach Coordinator shall brief the General Assembly on notable achievements made during the academic year toward the goal of greater graduate and professional student community involvement, and on the efforts of any student whose contributions have been outstanding. These students may be commended for their work by the Assembly.

### 13. Post-Graduation Career Opportunities

The graduate and professional schools at Duke University provide excellent resources for graduating students pursuing careers in their respective fields. However, GPSC recognizes that many graduate and professional students are interested in exploring alternative career paths. It is GPSC's goal to work together with the career center in each respective school to ensure that students have the tools and resources to find alternative career opportunities. It will be the responsibility of the Academic Officer to ensure that measured progress towards this goal is achieved. The Academic Officer may find the following resources helpful:

- Researching and understanding how Duke University allocates money to different activities
- Researching and understanding the current structure of career services across Duke, including undergraduate, graduate and professional schools' career services
- Personal meetings with Duke administration officials
- Conducting surveys of graduate and professional students regarding their career service needs
- Preparing and disseminating reports on the current structure of career services, its problems, and proposed solutions for those problems
- Targeted publicity campaigns

Steps the Academic Officer can take towards completing this goal include, but are not limited to:

- Facilitating communication between the individual career services offices at the graduate and professional schools
- Publicizing opportunities such as job fairs and networking opportunities
- Working with the Duke Alumni Affairs to increase the participation of graduate and professional school alumni in the Fannie Mitchell Career Conference, and disseminating information about the Career Conference as widely as possible through collaboration with GPSC representatives
- Partnering with the Duke administration to create an university committee for a two-year period to review career services available in all departments and schools.

- Advocating for an increase in the budgets of Graduate Student Affairs and Career Services.
- Identifying and providing career planning and personal development services for graduate and professional students. This could include services such as Meyers Briggs testing, and participation in programs like the Oxford Leadership Model.

In pursuing this goal, the Academic Officer may confront several two primary obstacles. First, the individual departments and professional schools may be reluctant to share their career service resources with students from other departments and schools. The Academic Officer can overcome this obstacle by educating and persuading the appropriate administrators and Deans about the benefits of sharing career service resources. For example, if the Law School allowed non-law students to participate in its career service programming, then reciprocity would allow law students to utilize the career services of the other departments and schools. Second, the collection of the pertinent information (e.g., career fairs, contact persons at various career service centers, etc.) will change frequently. The Academic Officer can overcome this obstacle by conducting a regular review of the pertinent websites and other resources (for example, reviewing the relevant websites and contacting at least one career services center director every month).

Progress toward this goal should be reviewed twice every semester. The Academic Officer should make a report to the Executive Board in the middle of the fall semester, at the end of the fall semester, in the middle of the spring semester, and at the end of the spring semester. The Academic Officer should prepare a document detailing relevant resources (e.g., contact information for career service directors, relevant website addresses, etc.). After the spring elections, the Academic Officer should transfer this document to his or her successor and explain what has been done previously and actions currently in progress.

#### *14. Strengthening the Graduate and Professional Alumni Community*

It is GPSC's goal to rebalance the representation that graduate students receive within the Duke Alumni community. GPSC will work to create a stronger alumni community which includes a greater proportion of alumni from the Graduate School. It will be the responsibility of the GPSC President to ensure that measured progress toward this goal is achieved. The President can call on the Student Life Chairs to plan events that cater to alumni, homecoming being a great opportunity. The following resources may be found helpful in reaching this goal:

- Engaging with the University Development Office to ensure that the Graduate School and the professional schools have representation among the officers of the GPSC General Assembly
- Working with the Duke Alumni Association Director of Young Alumni and Student Programs to create an alumni advisory board and board of visitors for the Graduate School similar to those for other schools at Duke
- Seeking to create separate accounts and representation within the Alumni Association for the Graduate School, similar to those for the professional schools at Duke.
- Working to create a Graduate School reception at Homecoming each year.

- Working with the Alumni Association to plan events during reunion weekend specifically for graduate and professional alumni.

The greatest obstacle to this goal is that shared by the Alumni Association, namely encouraging students to give some of their time and resources to their graduate institution in addition to their undergraduate institution. The Alumni Association is working on ways to combat the problem, and GPSC can both learn from and support the Association. Awareness is the best remedy: by encouraging students throughout their campus career to think ahead about alumni involvement, we can be sure that graduates understand the importance of having a strong alumni base; this in turn can be demonstrated through alumni programming that puts current students in contact with alumni. GPSC should work with the Alumni Association to develop programming that will take advantage of graduate and professional alumni in ways that highlight this period of education with its unique problems and idiosyncrasies.

This is an ongoing process that should be reviewed annually, either during planning sessions or the GPSC retreat. As well, the President and Social Chairs should meet periodically with the Duke Alumni Association to keep abreast of current goals and strategies. The President should prepare a report during the spring term detailing successful efforts, failed efforts and efforts underway. When the President leaves office, he or she should provide this report to his or her successor.

### 15. Environmental Sustainability

It is GPSC's goal to continue improving the environmental sustainability of our community. This goal can be divided into four sub-goals: (1) campus infrastructure, (2) student activities, (3) awareness, and (4) green initiatives. It shall be the responsibility of the chair of the GPSC Green Team to ensure progress towards this goal is made.

The chair of the GPSC Green Team may find the following resources helpful in achieving this goal:

- Campus Infrastructure
  - Reports from the GPSC representative to the Board of Trustees Facilities and Environment standing committee
  - Reports from the GPSC representative to the Campus Sustainability Committee, a University Committee
  - Reports from the GPSC representative to the Committee on Facilities and Environment, a University Committee
  - Reports from the GPSC representative to the Environmental Management Advisory Committee, a University Committee
  - Reports from the GPSC representative to the Transportation Advisory Committee, a University Committee
- Student Activities
  - Working together with the Community Outreach Coordinator to plan events that have an environmental sustainability component

- Awareness
  - Using GPSC resources such as the website, GPSC News and Newsflashes and General Assembly meeting to publicize current issues and events
- Green Initiatives
  - Planning and executing an annual on-campus initiative (e.g., the Recycling Bin Distribution Program of 2008-2010)

In attempting to achieve a more environmentally sustainable community, the Green Team may face several obstacles. First, the student body may be unmotivated to involve themselves in environmental sustainability. The Green Team can overcome this apathy by inculcating a sense of environmental ownership, through (1) directly communicating the importance of sustainability to the student body, and (2) partnering with the Duke administration to provide a sustainability “theme” in the academic, social and work environments at Duke. Second, the Green Team is not currently a formal internal committee within GPSC. This may cause the dissolution of the Green Team before environmental sustainability can be realized. GPSC can overcome this obstacle by formally making the Green Team an independent committee or rolling the Green Team into an existing committee.

Progress toward this goal should be systematically reviewed annually. During the spring semester, the chair of the Green Team should prepare a report that details efforts which have been made (both successful and unsuccessful) and efforts underway. The chair of the Green Team can then pass this report to his or her successor at the end of the spring term. The chair of the Green Team should prepare this report regardless of whether he or she will be continuing in the position for the next academic year in order to provide a systematic review of what has been done, what is currently underway, and what further efforts should be undertaken.

## Conclusion

The preceding strategic plan lays out a multi-year vision for Duke's Graduate and Professional Student Council. Through concerted action, GPSC can help Duke graduate and professional students improve their own community, the Duke and Durham communities, and the world. It is now up to the Council's leadership and members to commit the time, energy and enthusiasm necessary to realize the plan's goals. In particular, members of the Council's Executive Board must take primary responsibility for regularly reviewing and acting upon the plan's recommendations. They must also seek to use the talents of those around them, most notably student representatives to the GPSC General Assembly and to the University's administrative committees, but also other leaders in the larger graduate and professional student community.

The General Assembly has a special role to play in this process as the legislative body within GPSC, and as the group responsible for electing Executive Board members. The Assembly should ask members of the Executive Board to provide regular updates on progress towards GPSC's strategic goals. Student representatives should endeavor to assist Executive Board members in carrying out the elements of the strategic plan, and also to hold the Executive Board accountable for its leadership toward the plan's goals. Ultimately, such efforts should culminate in the formation of a new Strategic Planning Committee charged with crafting a new vision for Duke GPSC, no more than four years after April 2010. If the next few years see concerted effort on the part of graduate and professional student leaders, that Committee will continue our success in building strong, vibrant, sustainable communities.