GSA Budget 101
GSA 1959-2009

- GSA established under the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) as a separate entity from the University; a not-for-profit organization with its own corporate structure

- A period of recurring wild swings and organizational instability
Old GSA

Budget

- Restricted & unrestricted fees in the same pot
- 198 individual budget lines
- No professional with a financial designation overseeing budget
- No forecasting
- Year-by-year budget
- Saving money while infrastructure crumbled
Old GSA

Operations

- Staff underpaid, negative office environment, record-high turnover in staff

- GSA/grad students on only 40 University committees; ineffective/inconsistent advocacy

- Operations were decades out of date and few records were kept

- Non-compliance and no infrastructure to carry out corporate responsibilities under PSLA

- Blurred lines between and among elected officials, management, and staff
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New GSA

- Intense period of rebuilding and recovery
- New budget format and first multi-year budget/business plan created in 2011-2012 (3-year forecasts)
- Operating and restricted budgets
New GSA

- Robust policies surrounding finances and financial reporting
- Accountant has oversight for budget, reporting to President and Executive Director
- Regular Term Financial Statements submitted to GSA Council
- GSA BFC & GSA Board reorganized; GSA NoC established
- Creation of the Early Call for Talent and Training
- Clear roles and responsibilities between and among elected officials and staff
New GSA

- Human Resources (HR) structure established, staff collective agreement in place
- Complete overhaul of operations from IT, to payroll, to grants
- Over two dozen contracts and Memoranda of Understanding reviewed
- Regular review of all budget lines and creation of new ones/reduction or augmentation of existing lines as needed
- External reviews
Apply CPI increases where appropriate to budget lines and 198 lines organized into 7 broad categories:

- Governance
- Advocacy
- Human Resources
- Office Administration
- Professional
- Services Expenses
- Operating/Contingency Fund
The GSA is fees driven; # of graduate students is key budget driver

2011-2012 GSA fees increased by $10 ($98.20 for full-time students); 2012-2013 GSA fees increased by $30 ($128.20 for full-time students); 2013-2014 GSA fees increased by $25 ($153.20 for full-time students), no increases since then beyond CPI

In the interests of having a more balanced budget in which revenues are in line with expenses, the GSA is moving forward with a 2% reduction in the fee (and projecting that the fee could be further decreased by 2% each year for the next two years); this can be done without compromising services

Several sponsorship agreements in place and revenue generated (~ $30,000/year) from Chopped Leaf in PAW (no risk partnership with the SU)
Advocacy ($48,848)
$47,269 in 2018-2019

- University Relations
- Government and External Relations (including business travel for elected officials)
- ab-GPAC membership fee ($4/graduate student per year all coming from the GSA’s operating budget, removal of the dedicated fee)
Services ($109,700)
$12,900 in 2018-2019

- Academic workshop subsidies
- Campus Food Bank MoU (founded by the GSA)
- GSA Awards Night
- Engagement, Orientations, and Outreach Events
- External grants
- GSA Graduate Student Group Awards and GSA Council remuneration to departmental GSAs
Governance ($214,959)

$208,912 in 2018-2019

- Directly-Elected Officers stipends and benefits, directors & officers insurance
- GSA Council & GSA Board & GSA committee costs
- CRO & Speaker honoraria
- Training and development for GSA Directly-Elected Officers
- Transition/Early Call for Talent and Training
Human Resources ($684,749)
$739,454 in 2018-2019

Unionized Staff (represented by NASA)
- Salaries, limited benefits
- Aim to attract and retain through marketplace competition

Administrative/Professional Staff
- Salaries, limited benefits
- Executive Director hired through legal contract; others hired through appointment letters
- Aim to attract and retain through marketplace competition
Office Administration ($32,579)

$28,347 in 2018-2019

- Capital budget (eg computers)
- Photocopiers
- General Liability insurance
- Office supplies
Professional ($58,200)
$65,000 in 2018-2019

- Audit
- Legal
- Consulting
A contingency fund is a fund set aside to handle unexpected expenses that are outside the range of the operating budget.
New GSA: Restricted Budget

Funds collected or provided for a specific purpose; held separately and only used for that purpose:

- Funding for the GSA Planner through ad sales
- The Graduate Student Support Fund (negotiated for from the University, funds GSA Academic Travel Grants, GSA Child Care Grants, GSA Emergency Bursaries, and GSA Recognition Awards)
- Fees collected to support CSJR (as set by referendum)
- Fees collected to provide the Graduate Student Assistance Program (as set by referendum)
- GSA Health and Dental Plan fee (established by referendum with the fee set annually based on usage by GSA Council)
Learn More

✧ Visit the “Budget and Audit” section of the GSA website to view the current GSA annual operating and capital budget and three-year budget/business plan

✧ Visit the “Budget and Audit” section of the GSA website to view the most recent GSA audit

✧ Visit the “GSA Council” section of the GSA website to view Term Financial Reports on the GSA’s finances as reported to GSA Council
Future GSA

- Maintain stability and strive for a balanced budget
- Ensure prudent spending and budgeting
- Be vigilant