

MEMORANDUM

P.O. Box 600
State University, AR 72467-0600

April 19, 2012

To: Ms. Angela Daniels, Chair
Shared Governance Oversight Committee

From: Dan Howard
Interim Chancellor

Re: Proposal to Clarify Graduate Student Representation

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Jonesboro, Arkansas

I received the following proposal from the Shared Governance Oversight Committee (SGOC). Pursuant to the governing language contained in the Faculty Handbook, I have reviewed the proposal carefully, consulted with other parties as appropriate, and hereby document my response:

- Proposal 11FA-16, Proposal to Clarify Graduate Student Representation. The SGOC met on October 10, 2011, to decide the disposition of the proposal. The SGOC determined that the proposal should receive full review under the direction of the Graduate Council and Faculty Handbook Committee. Set to review the proposal were the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Deans Council, Chairs Council, Student Government Association (SGA), and GSC (Graduate Student Council). Following review, the constituency groups indicated that the Faculty Senate, Chairs Council, Deans Council, and GSC supported the proposal. Staff Senate and SGA rejected the proposal.

Response: I support the position of the Student Government Association (SGA) and the Staff Senate as I share SGA's assertion that it is the representative body of all students (undergraduate and graduate) at the university.

Pursuant to the Shared Governance Proposal Review Process, the campus community will be informed of my decision, which will be done through the ASU Daily Digest. Please accept my heartfelt appreciation for your leadership and extend my appreciation to the SGOC members for their active service to our university.



GDH

/mb

xc: Dr. Tim Hudson
Executive Council

From: Angela Daniels
Sent: Friday, April 13, 2012 8:53 AM
To: Dan Howard
Cc: MARILYN C BREWER; SHERRY LYNN JOHNSON; THOMAS A. MOORE
Subject: Shared Governance Proposal 11FA-16 Proposal to Clarify Graduate Student Representation
Attachments: 11FA 16 GSC's SGOC Proposal to Clarify Graduate Student Representation.pdf; 11FA16 Disposition.pdf; SGA Response to GSC Proposal.pdf; Potts decision re GSC and SGA split - May 29 2009.pdf

TO: Dr. Dan Howard, Interim Chancellor ASU Jonesboro
FROM: Angela Daniels, Chair SGOC
DATE: April 13, 2012
RE: Shared Governance Proposal 11FA-16 Proposal to Clarify Graduate Student Representation

The SGOC met on October 10, 2011, to set the disposition for 11FA-16 Proposal to Clarify Graduate Student Representation. At that meeting it was decided that this was a shared governance issue and it should receive a full review under the direction of the Graduate Council and Faculty Handbook Committee. The constituency groups set to review this proposal were the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Dean's Council, Chair's Council, SGA, and GSC. The proposal was sent to the responsible committee and the constituency groups after the disposition meeting.

The response from the constituency groups indicated that the Faculty Senate, Chair's Council, Dean's Council, and GSC all supported the proposal. Staff Senate and SGA rejected the proposal. An excerpt of the response submitted by SGA is included below. The full response is attached as a separate document.

Excerpt from SGA's Response

"The Student Government Association does not support Shared Governance Proposal 11FA-16 Proposal to Clarify Graduate Student Representation. The Student Government Association (SGA) of Arkansas State University is the official governing voice of all students, graduate and undergraduate. The Student Government Association does not focus solely on undergraduate student issues, but issues that affect all students, undergraduate and graduate.

In 2009, the Graduate Student Council (GSC) submitted Shared Governance Proposal 09SP-07, seeking a similar change in student government structure and funding. At that time, Chancellor Robert L. Potts, responded by stating, "The Student Government Association must continue to be the voice of the students on campus as recognized in the Faculty Handbook" (see attached). To date, the Student Government Association has not received notification that this decision has wavered and the Student Government Association structure remains strong and adequately serves our student population. The structure of the Student Government Association provides representation for all classifications, including graduate students, academic colleges, international students, and non-traditional students. In addition, the staff of the Student Government Association, although appointed by the sitting SGA president, reflects diversity in academic major, classification and student interests. With these actions, the Student Government Association truly represents a cross section of the student population and serves as the voice for all ASUJ students. "

Respectfully submitted,

Angela J. Daniels



Angela J. Daniels

Shared Governance Oversight Committee Chair

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Shared Governance Oversight Committee

Disposition Form

Proposal: 11FA-16 Proposal to Clarify Graduate Student Representation

Disposition Date: October 10, 2011

Is Proposal a SGOC Issue? Yes No

Responsible Assigned Committee: Graduate Council & Faculty Handbook Committee

Type of Review:

Expedited

Full

Extended

Handbook Issue: Yes No

Constituency Groups:

Faculty Senate

Staff Senate

Dean's Council

Chair's Council

SGA

GSC

Vice Chancellor(s)

Other Committees:

Title:

Proposal to Clarify Graduate Student Representation

Brief Description:

The change would be a clarification to make the handbook reflect the changed needs of graduate students due to explosive growth in graduate student enrollment at Arkansas State University since this section was originally written, and to reflect the effective role currently being manifested by the Graduate Student Council. The proposed change is: alter “The Student Government Association (SGA) serves as the collective voice of the student body” to “The Student Government Association (SGA) serves as the collective voice of the undergraduate student body and the Graduate Student Council (GSC) serves as the collective voice of the graduate student body, while together they represent the collective voice of the entire student body.”

Sponsoring Committee:

Graduate Student Council

Contact:

LaDesta McCann, GSC President

Tom Henry, GSC Vice-President

Statement of Proposed Action:

Proposed change in the Faculty Handbook, Section I, Part b.6, Students: p. 7.

Rationale:

After review of the current University Faculty Handbook, Section I, Part b regarding *Goals, Rights and Responsibilities at Arkansas State University-Jonesboro*, with regards to I.b.6, *Students*, this committee proposes to clarify the Handbook’s wording from “The Student Government Association (SGA) serves as the collective voice of the student body” to “The Student Government Association (SGA) serves as the collective voice of the undergraduate student body and the Graduate Student Council (GSC) serves as the collective voice of the graduate student body, while together they represent the collective voice of the entire student body.”

This clarification is needed due to the rapid and explosive growth of graduate student enrollment since this Faculty Handbook section was previously written. Since that time graduate student enrollment has nearly doubled from approximately 13% to over 25% of the overall university enrollment as listed in the official University Fact Book as distributed by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment. Also, this change will reflect how the Graduate Student Council is currently representing the needs of ASU graduate students despite being hampered by outdated and somewhat ineffective structural limitations. As a result of this change, the GSC will also be allowed to name committee members to the last three SGOC committees that they are currently excluded from as well as to all ad hoc committees formed for purposes such as search committees for positions such as Chancellor and System President.

Additionally this change would allow the Faculty Handbook to more accurately reflect current manifestations of student representation as well as allow the GSC and the SGA to "play to their strengths" while better helping the University accomplish its goal of becoming a quality research oriented school of choice.

Student Government Association Response Shared Governance Proposal—Graduate Student Council

The Student Government Association does not support Shared Governance Proposal 11FA-16 Proposal to Clarify Graduate Student Representation. The Student Government Association (SGA) of Arkansas State University is the official governing voice of all students, graduate and undergraduate. The Student Government Association does not focus solely on undergraduate student issues, but issues that affect all students, undergraduate and graduate.

In 2009, the Graduate Student Council (GSC) submitted Shared Governance Proposal 09SP-07, seeking a similar change in student government structure and funding. At that time, Chancellor Robert L. Potts, responded by stating, “The Student Government Association must continue to be the voice of the students on campus as recognized in the Faculty Handbook” (see attached). To date, the Student Government Association has not received notification that this decision has wavered and the Student Government Association structure remains strong and adequately serves our student population. The structure of the Student Government Association provides representation for all classifications, including graduate students, academic colleges, international students, and non-traditional students. In addition, the staff of the Student Government Association, although appointed by the sitting SGA president, reflects diversity in academic major, classification and student interests. With these actions, the Student Government Association truly represents a cross section of the student population and serves as the voice for all ASUJ students.

Furthermore, the Student Government Association received a directive from Chancellor Potts in 2009 to work with the Graduate Student Council to provide additional funding for the GSC. After a \$10,000 funding offer from the Chancellor’s Office was declined by the Graduate Student Council in 2009, the Student Government Association leadership developed a funding formula to provide assistance for the GSC which was supported and approved by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Beginning in July 2011, the Graduate Student Council received \$19,000 (\$12,500 for operating budget, \$6,500 for graduate student Action Fund) in funding from the Student Activity Fee. Chancellor Potts stated in his letter: “A divorce does not need to take place between the two organizations in order for the funding issue to be addressed.” This financial support demonstrates the Student Government Association’s desire to work in harmony with the Graduate Student Council while continuing to serve the entire student body.

One of the main points made by the Graduate Student Council in its proposal is that graduate student enrollment at Arkansas State University has nearly doubled from 13% to over 25% of the overall enrollment. While that is an accurate statement, only 16.9% of those graduate students physically attend classes on our campus (see Official University Fact book). This means that nearly 8% of graduate students do not pay the Student Activity Fee. In 2010, the graduate student enrollment on campus was 1,819. To date the graduate student enrollment on campus is 1,711 students, a decrease in nearly 6% of the enrollment.

Finally, the Student Government Association has concerns regarding the structure of the Graduate Student Council. The Graduate Student Council is a registered student organization that focuses on issues and the progression of graduate students at Arkansas State University. The Graduate Student Council consists of forty-four representatives and an executive board. These positions have experienced high turnover, Shared Governance Oversight Committee appointments have not been made in a timely manner, and campus graduate student organizations have been denied assistance for various reasons. The stability and longevity of this student organization is uncertain which raises the question as to why equal representation should be granted.

In conclusion, the Student Government Association has fulfilled all requests outlined by Chancellor Potts in the 2009 response to the Shared Governance Proposal 09SP-07 through provision of support to the Graduate Student Council, continued representation of graduate students, and assisting assistance with securing funds for the Graduate Student Council. While the Graduate Student Council has a valid mission as a student organization at ASUJ, the GSC must remain a student organization, and its representation on the Shared Governance Oversight Committee should be re-evaluated to allow the Student Government Association to continue serving ASUJ as the sole voice for the students of Arkansas State University-Jonesboro.

In The Matter
of
Shared Governance Proposal, No. 09SP-07, to Change the Existing
Student Government Structure and Funding

May 29, 2009

On January 21, 2009, Nathan Gastineau, Graduate Student Council (GSC) president and MS candidate in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics; Andrew J. Peck, Graduate School representative and Ph.D. candidate in the Environmental Sciences Program; and Erin Macchia, GSC Vice President for External Affairs and Ph.D. candidate in the Environmental Sciences Program, issued a thoughtful paper to the campus community entitled, "Arkansas State University Student Government Structure and Funding: The Graduate Student Perspective." This position paper was a precursor to the proposal submitted to the Shared Governance Oversight Committee dated February 23, 2009, entitled "Shared Governance Proposal to Change Existing Student Government Structure and Funding."

The essence of this proposal is to remove the GSC as a registered student organization within the Student Government Association (SGA) and place it in the ASUJ student governance structure parallel to the SGA so that the GSC is the sole voice of graduate students and the SGA is the sole voice of undergraduate students. As the GSC noted in its proposal, this would require a change to the Faculty Handbook, which currently provides that the SGA serves as the collective voice of the student body (see Faculty Handbook, Section I.b.6.). The proposal also requested that in graduated steps, the GSC be allocated 60 percent of the total amount of student activity fees paid by the graduate student population.

After the Shared Governance Oversight Committee (SGOC) met on February 23, 2009, to decide the disposition of this proposal, it was determined that this was a shared governance issue and it should receive a full review by the Graduate Council and the Faculty Handbook Committee. Additionally, constituency groups that were asked to review this proposal were the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, the Deans Council, the Chairs Council, the GSC, and the SGA. Shortly after this date, consideration of the proposal was suspended upon the Chancellor's request for negotiations between the SGA and GSC. On March 5, 2009, a meeting occurred between the president of the SGA, the president of the GSC, the chancellor, the Graduate School dean, and the vice chancellor for student affairs to discuss a possible compromise between the two groups. At the meeting, a proposal was made that if the GSC would withdraw its shared governance proposal seeking a formal separation from SGA and a portion of SGA funding, the university would provide, effective July 1, 2009, an initial annual budget of \$10,000 to the GSC for its purposes and activities that would enhance the quality of the graduate education experience for students at ASUJ. Further, as a registered student organization the GSC could also continue to seek action fund support for additional needs. After due consideration with their respective constituencies, the SGA accepted this compromise, but the GSC rejected it on March 11, 2009, with its president stating that the GSC wished to keep this matter within the shared governance process.

Accordingly, on March 19, 2009, the proposal was reactivated by the SGOC and sent to the Graduate Council to be directed through the shared governance process. Certain amendments suggested by the Graduate Council were rejected and the original proposal of the GSC was sent out for a final up or down vote on April 18, 2009, where all constituency groups, except for the Staff Senate and the SGA, voted to support the proposal. On

May 11, 2009, the proposal was forwarded to the chancellor for a decision within 21 calendar days. (See Faculty Handbook, Section 1.c.2).

Reluctantly, the chancellor has decided that he cannot support the proposal for the following reasons:

(I) IT IS NOT DESIRABLE NOR APPROPRIATE FOR ONE PARTICIPANT IN A CAREFULLY NEGOTIATED SHARED GOVERNANCE PROCESS TO SEEK TO SPLINTER THE AUTHORITY AND ORGANIZATION OF ANOTHER PARTICIPANT, ESPECIALLY WHEN OTHER AVENUES EXIST TO ADDRESS THE CONCERNS OF THE GROUP PROPOSING THE CHANGE.

Shared governance on the ASU-Jonesboro campus has had a relatively recent and carefully negotiated history on our campus. It has only been within the last three years that the GSC has been recognized as a voice in the shared governance process since the SGA is still recognized in the Faculty Handbook and in its constitution and bylaws as the collective voice of the student body on our campus. The delicate balance that has been negotiated among the various interest groups could easily unravel if one party successfully uses the process to attack the structure of another. For example, what would be the reaction if the Deans Council proposed changes in the structure of the Faculty Senate, or the Faculty Senate proposed changes in the structure of the Staff Senate? Understandably, the group being "changed" would probably object vehemently. Here, the SGA vigorously opposes this proposal of the GSC. The GSC now is a part of the SGA that operates under a constitution and bylaws which provide for representation for graduate students and other classes of students and a process by which the constitution may be amended. With graduate students currently comprising approximately 15 percent of the student body, a block vote of the graduate students could most likely elect officers and effect changes through the existing SGA. However, in the thoughtful GSC position paper, the graduate students assert that the current student government structure fails to provide an adequate forum to address issues faced by graduate students, but anecdotal evidence indicates that there has been no concerted effort, at least during recent times, for the GSC to assert itself through the democratic processes provided in the SGA structural documents. This GSC proposal, if approved, would severely diminish the stature of the SGA as serving as the collective voice of the students on the campus, and would likely foster future conflict between the two groups.

(II) THE GSC CURRENTLY HAS AN EQUAL VOICE WITH THE SGA IN THE SHARED GOVERNANCE PROCESS WHERE POLICY DECISIONS CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY ARE CONSIDERED.

By being included in the current shared governance process and on shared governance committees as an equal participant with the SGA, the GSC has already achieved a major voice in the decision-making process on the ASUJ campus. The SGA does not have to be fragmented. With only 15 percent of the total student population being graduate students, the GSC has a disproportionate voice already in the shared governance process, which the SGA has acquiesced in. It does not seem necessary to achieve the desire of the GSC for an independent source of funding, to segregate the graduate students from the undergraduate students in the overarching student organization on campus, the SGA.

(III) THE GSC'S PRIMARY COMPLAINT SOUGHT TO BE ADDRESSED BY ITS SHARED GOVERNANCE PROPOSAL APPEARS TO BE THAT OF FUNDING BECAUSE IT MUST PETITION THE SGA FOR FUNDS.

A divorce does not need to take place between the two organizations in order for the funding issue to be addressed. In the compromise proposal submitted on behalf of the administration to the GSC and the SGA, which the SGA accepted and the GSC rejected, start-up funding of \$10,000 commencing on July 1, 2009, was offered. As indicated above, the GSC rejected that proposal for a number of reasons which were articulated in a memorandum to the chancellor. As a consequence, that offer has been rescinded and not included in the budget which has been considered by the University Planning Committee (UPC) and forwarded to the Board of Trustees, which adopted the same on May 29, 2009. However, understanding the legitimate need of the GSC to have an independent source of funding for its activities such as graduate student orientation, expenses of its officers, and other needs in representing the graduate students, the GSC is encouraged to approach the Executive Council with a request for specific funding for the upcoming fiscal year. Additionally, the GSC can petition the SGA for additional action funds for specific projects in the event the amount granted by the Executive Council (as may be allowed within the Board approved FY2010 budget) is not sufficient for their purposes.

(IV) SURVEY RESULTS FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES DO NOT SUPPORT ANY ONE STUDENT GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND THEREFORE ASU SHOULD CRAFT THE SOLUTION THAT BEST ADDRESSES THE ISSUES ON THIS CAMPUS.

The GSC officers who submitted the well-written position paper demonstrated that institutions surveyed are "all over the block," as to how graduate organizations are structured and funded. The Chancellor's Office also surveyed several universities to obtain additional comparative information. The University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, which uses a college-based model for representatives with each college having associated student government senate seats in direct proportion to the college enrollments, but all within the same structure. Likewise, the University of Arkansas-Little Rock has an SGA that represents all students including graduate students and the Graduate Student Association applies for student activity funding. The University of Louisiana-Lafayette SGA includes both undergraduate and graduate students, but every graduate student is automatically a member of the graduate student organization and the graduate students pay a fee to generate funding for the Graduate Student Organization, and if that money is not sufficient, the GSO can apply to the SGA for additional financial assistance. Troy University has one overarching SGA and there is no governance structure for graduate students. Western Kentucky University has an SGA that is the official voice of the student body with a senate of 35 members, two of whom must be graduate students, but 17 being at-large senators who can be graduate students. At the University of Texas at Austin, the overarching student governance voice is the SGA and it has two other groups that are recognized within the student government, which are the Graduate Student Assembly and the Student Senate of College Councils. The SGA serves as the official voice of the students to the UT administration, the Board of Regents, and to the Texas legislature. The ratio of undergraduate to graduate students in Texas is about 3:1 and the operating budgets for the SGA and the Graduate Student Assembly are roughly divided in the same proportion. Conflicts do arise from time to time and sometimes an overlap occurs. So, this small survey too shows different arrangements in different places.

In conclusion, the chancellor believes that there are many possibilities for a compromise that can be achieved between the SGA and the GSC which will accommodate the interests of both groups. The SGA must continue to be the voice of the students on campus as recognized in the Faculty Handbook, but the GSC is already participating in the shared governance process alongside the SGA representatives, but more work must be done to assure an adequate source of funding for the graduate students. The ASUJ administration stands ready to assist

the GSC and the SGA to explore all alternatives over the next year with a view toward achieving an acceptable compromise for all parties concerned.

The chancellor and the administration of ASUJ deeply appreciate the contributions made by the SGA, GSC and their constituents to the life of the university.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert L. Potts
Chancellor

RLP:mb