

Board of Control Meeting, October 4, 2007
Graduate Student Council
Emily McCarthy, President

Thank you for the opportunity to present to you how the Graduate Student Council is addressing the goals of the strategic plan. The Graduate Student Council (GSC) was established to represent the professional, intellectual, and academic concerns of graduate students to the various governing and policy-making bodies of the university; inform graduate students of newly developing policies and procedures affecting them. We also strive to foster a sense of camaraderie among students across disciplinary lines. To these ends, we believe that GSC programming addresses the goals of the strategic plan.

Goal 1: Attract and support a world-class and diverse faculty, staff, and student population.

- Professional development opportunities: The GSC hosts a **monthly professional development luncheon** with topics ranging from presenting at conferences and job hunting to academic integrity and becoming a better teacher. These sessions are well attended, with 30-50 students participating each time. The Graduate School has offered personnel support in identifying potential topics and speakers. We also provide opportunities for students to present their research on campus through a fall **poster session** and a **research symposium** in the spring. Finally, the GSC awards **travel grants** for students attending and presenting at conferences. This is a great opportunity for students to gain experience in presenting and to keep current in their research field.
- Support and reward faculty: Each year, the GSC acknowledges the **Outstanding Graduate Mentor**. Nominees are reviewed and an awardee is selected by the executive board of the GSC in the spring semester.
- Attract and retain students: The GSC coordinates the **First Contact Program** along with the Graduate School. A graduate student from each department sends welcoming e-mail message to newly accepted graduate students in their department and offers to answer any questions a new student might have. Some first contact representatives even help with finding housing for new students. From my own participation in this program, I know it is very rewarding to make that connection with new students and be an ally when they arrive at Tech. The Graduate School and GSC also distribute the GSC publication, **Call of the Keweenaw**. This book gives insights on places to live, people to call, and life in general in the Keweenaw and at Tech. We are currently working on a new version of the publication and hope to have it ready for 2008-2009. The GSC makes every effort to provide a sense of community among graduate students, which is an important aspect of student retention. We start each year with a series of **orientation events** to welcome new students and introduce them to the area and people. These popular events are free for all new grad students and include a picnic at Hancock Beach, Quincy Mine Tour, waterfall hike, karaoke social, and Keweenaw Star Cruise. Throughout the year, we also host a variety of **social events**, such as sledding, curling, and musical entertainment, which

provide an opportunity to mix and mingle with students from different departments. Last year, the GSC organized a Spring reception for graduate students and their families, which was well-attended. This year, we will be adding a Fall reception with a Halloween theme. By far one of most popular social activities is the GSC **summer softball league**. This year, we had 10 teams participate with players representing every department on campus. The Summer Softball Barbeque was catered by a local restaurant this year, and a big hit.

- Cultural enrichment: Approximately 40% of graduate students are international students. The GSC is able to provide **discretionary funds** to help support new international graduate student groups and events. In the past we have provided support for Diwali Nite sponsored by the Indian Student Association.
- Facilities: The Graduate Student Council maintains the **Graduate Student Center** (ROTC 101) as a presentation room, available for meetings and defense presentations for graduate students and other presenters. We have a computer with a Windows XP operating system, LCD projector, and screen.

Goal 2: Deliver a distinctive and rigorous discovery-based learning experience grounded in science, engineering, technology, sustainability, and the business of innovation.

- Student-centered activities, programs, and services: Aside from our own broad programming organized by our Lecture, Academic, and Social committees, the GSC **provides funding and support to graduate student groups and events**.
- Promote and encourage student engagement and civic responsibility: This is the foundation of the Graduate Student Council. With representation from all graduate programs on campus, we **encourage students to take an active role** in their education and present to us any issues affecting grad student life, which are addressed by our Student Issues committee. These issues are discussed among the council and sent through the appropriate administrative channels. We have also financially supported civic activities, such as **“Rock the Vote 2006.”** GSC representatives also serve on most of the university’s standing committees including the University Senate, Graduate Faculty Council, and the President’s Commission on Substance Abuse Prevention. We also have representation on administrative search committees.
- Produce graduates with strong leadership capabilities: The GSC is the **graduate student leadership group**. Representatives have the opportunity to affect change at the university level including stipend increases, health care benefits, and policies affecting the graduate student community. The GSC recognizes an **Outstanding Graduate Student Leader** each year. This person is nominated by fellow graduate students and selected by the executive board of the GSC in the spring semester.

Goal 3: Establish world-class research, scholarship and innovation in science, engineering, and technology that promotes sustainable economic development in Michigan and the nation.

- Develop and support superior graduate programs: The GSC provides **professional development, academic, and social opportunities** for all MTU grad students. We serve as a **venue for students to voice concerns** and **take action on significant issues** affecting graduate student life. The GSC also recognizes an **Exceptional Graduate Student Scholar** each year, nominated by fellow graduate students and selected by the executive board of the GSC in the spring semester.
- Encourage and support start-up businesses from students: The GSC has held **panel discussions** on starting businesses in the U.P. as a part of its lecture series and plans to continue to offer such events.
- Increase partnerships with government, industry, and universities: The GSC President and Dr. Huntoon, Dean of the Graduate School, will attend the first annual **Michigan Graduate Student Summit** at the end of September at Eastern Michigan University. The purposes of the summit are 1) to explore what other graduate student associations and schools are doing, 2) to create a grad student conglomerate group with the potential for lobbying at the state level, and 3) to determine how to best serve our graduate students. This summit has attracted the attention of Governor Granholm and Senator Stabenow, who will both address the group.