GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT FEDERATION

M I D - Y E A R R E P O R T

Presented to Student Congress on
Tuesday, October 2, 2000

by
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GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT FEDERATION
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MISSION STATEMENT:  It shall be the goal of the Graduate and Professional Student Federation in 2000-01 to seek the opinions of graduate and professional students, assess their needs and work to improve the quality of their experiences at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It shall also be the goal of the Graduate and Professional Student Federation to involve graduate and professional students in their government at all levels and to promote their active participation in all facets of University life.

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I. President’s Message

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT FEDERATION

Thad F. Woody
GPSF President

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Tuesday, October 2, 2000

Dear Fellow Tar Heel:

Serving as President of over 14,000 students is often times a daunting task. Aside from a great time commitment, it takes a great deal of support from other individuals to make things happen. It has been a pleasure to meet many of you during the past six months – learning more about why you chose Carolina and where you would like to be after leaving Chapel Hill. Carolina is a special place for a lot of us and I am grateful to serve such a talented, diverse and energetic group of students.

As many of you might recall, I was elected as a write-in candidate. As a result, I have been fortunate to involve several other people to help determine which issues are most crucial to graduate and professional students at UNC. Meeting people from across our campus, identifying their needs and helping them address those needs has been our chief priority during the past six months. Our cabinet has been filled with an amazing group of students (i.e. smart, diverse, committed, sometimes fun etc.) and I feel confident that we can continue to do even more to improve the quality of life for graduate and professional students at UNC.

I hope you will take time to read this report and comment to me (twoody@email.unc.edu) about both your opinion of the past six months and what you want the GPSF to tackle in the next six months. Thank you to everyone who has worked in or with the GPSF over the past six months. I appreciate everyone’s efforts and look forward to serving Carolina graduate and professional students during the next six months.

Best Regards,

Thad F. Woody
GPSF President, 2000-01
II. Lobbying and the Bonds

This summer, students played a large role in lobbying legislators to pass a bonds package for higher education. Thank you to all students who participated in these campaigns by sending emails, making phone calls to legislators or traveling to Raleigh to lobby in person.

The bonds, to be voted on by North Carolina citizens in the November election, upgrade all 59 community college institutions and all 16 UNC campuses. The appropriations for UNC totals close to $500 million. Bonds will finance upgrades, renovations, modernization and new construction projects. If you are interested in checking out the specific projects planned for UNC, see Appendix A or visit http://www.unc.edu/depts/govrel/bondpackage.htm if reading on-line.

Morehead Planetarium Voting Site

Students have worked hard for three years to get a poll site on campus. This year that work has paid off and students will be able to vote at Morehead Planetarium. Everyone is encouraged to make it out to the opening ceremony (Monday, October 13 at 9:30 a.m.) where state officials, university officials and students will gather to cast the first ballots for the University and Community College Bonds and share a generous donation of Krispy Kreme doughnuts.

For those who might not know, all North Carolina citizens are able to vote this year starting 3 weeks prior to election day (no-excuse absentee voting). If you are an Orange County voter, we would encourage you to stop by the poll in Morehead Planetarium and cast your vote and any period during that time. A great deal of thanks to Chris McClure for helping make this event possible.
III. On-Campus Initiatives

**Graduate Mentoring Awards**

Few things are more important to a student seeking a graduate degree than having a strong one-to-one relationship with a faculty member. An ideal relationship is one where the student is well advised about both current academic endeavors and how to prepare for a professional future. This relationship is the core of the student’s graduate study and the key to success. Lee Conner helped secure funding for the project and now we are working with Mike Poock in the Graduate School to begin the process of establishing the awards.

**Teaching Assistant Pay**

Recently, GPSF was notified of a University administration decision to change the current policy of paying teaching assistants every two weeks to every month. This was met by opposition from several teaching assistants (about 30) who were disappointed with the suggested change.

GPSF assembled a package that included the e-mails we had received from disgruntled TA’s and expressed our understanding that the University had an ethical duty to pay TA’s, and others at the University earning less than a livable wage, on a two week basis.

The Vice Chancellor of Finance agreed to table the suggested change and TA’s will continue to receive paychecks every two weeks versus each month.

**Campus-wide Socials**

Dorothy Acee and Nicole Schmid are doing a wonderful job of organizing campus-wide social events. Since the beginning of the fall semester, the GPSF has sponsored two more socials, both at Zog’s. GPSF also sponsored an ice cream social at the Bell Tower that was heavily attended with over 300 graduate and professional students.

More socials are being planned for the winter and spring and a variety of locations and themes are being considered. Anyone interested in helping plan or contributing
ideas for the upcoming socials should contact Dorothy (acee@email.unc.edu) or Nicole (schmidn@bschool.unc.edu).

**Investigating the State of Childcare in Chapel Hill**
Ashley Matlock, cabinet member for childcare, has worked extensively by evaluating the current state of childcare in Chapel Hill. She interviewed several students living in Odum Village and utilizing University childcare. The next step of the process involves researching other schools and recommending improvements to the Chancellor based on the committee recommendations. If you have suggestions or would like to be part of the process, please email Ashley at matlock@email.unc.edu

**Helping the Frank Porter Graham Honor Society**
The Frank Porter Graham Graduate and Professional Student Honor Society recognizes graduate and professional students of high character and loyalty to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who possess such personal distinction as may be evidenced by high achievement and devotion to service and philanthropy, which have enhanced the University and its community. Following recent tradition, GPSF President Thad Woody assisted the society in the administrative aspects of its selection process and helped organize their induction ceremony. The GPSF also helped fund the induction ceremony.
IV. External Advocacy

Landlord Licensing

The goal of the GPSF’s advocacy for landlord licensing is to increase landlord accountability. The program would accomplish this goal by requiring an agent in the local area (in case pipes burst or some other emergency occurs), allowing a landlord to be reported to the Better Business Bureau and creating a process to facilitate inspection of dwellings. While the Chapel Hill Town Council and Town Manager’s office have been receptive to these ideas, there has been a competing movement by local, non-student residents to install a licensing program for the purpose of restricting how many unrelated individuals can live together in a house in certain neighborhood.

The GPSF will continue to lobby for landlord licensing that helps students by promoting landlord accountability. Takcus Nesbitt, Legislative and Local Issues Coordinator is leading this project. You may direct your concerns to him at takcus@email.unc.edu.

National Assoc. of Graduate and Prof. Students (NAGPS)

The GPSF renewed its membership to the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (“NAGPS”) for the 2000-01 academic year. The 2000 NAGPS National Conference is at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, from October 25-29. The GPSF plans on being represented at the annual event and has been nominated for organization of the year.
V. New Faces in South Building

James Moeser, New Chancellor

The UNC Board of Governors unanimously elected Chancellor Moeser as Chancellor last April. He started on August 15, 2000, succeeding William O. McCoy, who became interim chancellor in July 1999 following Michael Hooker’s death from non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

GPSF has been pleased with the past work of Chancellor Moeser while serving as President of the University of Nebraska – it ranks among the top 50 universities in the number of doctoral degrees awarded annually. Moeser also led successful efforts to reallocate state funds to areas of campus-wide priority, including information technology, libraries, distance education and areas of academic strength. As a side note for all those interested in or majoring in music, Chancellor Moeser is a concert organist and was a Fulbright scholar studying music in Berlin and Paris.

New Provost

GPSF played an active role in interviewing the five candidates for Provost and was pleased with the committee’s recommendation of Robert Shelton, vice provost for research at the University of California. He also serves as a professor of physics at the University of California-Davis. Mr. Shelton is currently under negotiation with the University and should be announcing in the next few weeks his decision.
VI. Internal Workings and Improvements

Creating a Cabinet

Last spring we were successful in compiling a dynamic group of individuals to serve as cabinet members. A list of our cabinet is provided (see Appendix B) or www.unc.edu/student/orgs/gpsf/officers.html if viewing by the web.

GPSF Senate Appropriations Updated On-Line

The GPSF webpage continues to provide the main forum of distributing information to graduate and professional students. Students are able to access the appropriations application and appropriate deadlines, a calendar of events, contact information for both cabinet members and Senators and a recent feature to join the GPSF listserv has been added. Much appreciation is given to Nicole Walker, GPSF webmaster and Library and Information Sciences graduate student, who has done a great deal of work updating the GPSF page.

Anyone with ideas for improving the webpage, especially in regards to information not currently provided that you would like to see on the website, please contact Thad Woody <twoody@email.unc.edu>. The GPSF webpage is located at: http://www.unc.edu/student/orgs/gpsf/

All Appointments Filled

Thanks to vigorous recruitment efforts, the GPSF has filled all external appointments to University boards and committees for the 2000-01 academic year.

Also, the GPSF thanks the many students who are devoting their time to serving on University boards and committees. Their service is critical to ensuring that the University is always aware of the needs and views of graduate and professional students. Their service is both vital and appreciated.