

State of the Zag

GSBA has had a busy semester programming, event planning, funding, passing legislation, and working to make our Gonzaga Community a more inclusive environment. President Athena Sok and Vice President Trent Smiley ran on three pillars of inclusivity, transparency, and accountability, and this semester the whole GSBA administration has worked to implement these values.

With regards to the Senate, our legislative body has been busy passing club funds, holding our GSBA members accountable to their bylaws and updating our organization's working documents so that they are relevant to the work we do. We have also passed two resolutions in order to help make our school a more inclusive community: The LGBTQ+ Resolution and the Undocumented Student Scholarship Resolution. On October 29, Freshman Senator Kevin Snow presented the LGBTQ+ resolution to Senate. In light of the Campus Climate Report, recent BIAS reports, and Westboro Baptist Church coming to campus, the Senate felt it was important to provide the community with a positive statement of affirmation for the LGBTQ+ community. Based off of the GSBA administration's pillar of inclusivity and the emphasis of social justice in our school's mission, the resolution affirmed support for the LGBTQ+ community. The resolution passed unanimously, and you can see the full text on the GSBA page on the Gonzaga website. Following this resolution, the Senate also worked to make our organization's working documents more gender inclusive by passing two bills to make the GSBA Bylaws and the GSBA Constitution have gender inclusive pronouns.

For the past few years, GSBA has been working to support students of undocumented status with the formation of a scholarship specifically for them. This semester, President Athena Sok, Director of Diversity and Inclusion Fese Elango, and Speaker of the Senate Julianna Pendleton worked with University Advancement, Admissions, UMEC, Student Development, and Financial Aid to create a fund for the scholarship. The fund is now open and GSBA is now working with University Advancement to fundraise for the scholarship so that it reaches endowment status. This scholarship will benefit current Gonzaga students with undocumented status. These students will be able to use the funds for books, tuition, or housing needs. Following the fund's creation, GSBA felt it would be pertinent to create a resolution in support of the scholarship and fundraising for it. On November 19, Senior Senator Sean Kimball presented the Undocumented Student Scholarship Resolution to the full Senate. The resolution passed unanimously, and you can see the full text at the GSBA page on the Gonzaga website. Following the passage of the resolution, we sent the document to University Advancement for them to send out to potential donors, as well as Faculty Senate and Staff Assembly to ask them if they would be willing to create similar documents.

There have also been several events that GSBA has helped put on to help create more transparency and inclusivity. These have included on-campus speakers, Courageous Conversations, a Health and Safety Forum, weekend events, and musical guests. One monumental event that happened on campus this semester that GSBA was honored to help with was the GU Town Hall. On November 27, we gathered students, staff, faculty, and administrators to have a conversation about the campus climate and the recent bias incident trends at Gonzaga. At the town hall, we had presentations on the Campus Climate Survey results, the BIAS reporting trends, fishbowl discussions, and round table dialogue. Our goals were to come together, learn from each other, and move forward as a unified community. This was a groundbreaking event because this is the first time in Gonzaga history where students, staff, faculty, and administrators gathered in a single room to discuss issues revolving our institution. The planning committee itself embodied the cohesive community we strive for at Gonzaga, as we gathered students, staff, and faculty who planned the town hall within 2 months. We hope that this town hall becomes an annual tradition at Gonzaga.

Moreover, last year previous President Carlo Juntilla helped create The Undergraduate Professional Development Grant to help first-generation students and other students with financial need to help succeed in their professional careers after college. The Undergraduate Professional Development Grant is a student-led initiative supporting undergraduates and their professional development. The focus of this grant would be to provide up to \$500 to assist primarily first-generation students and students who demonstrate significant financial need with specific professional development expenses including purchasing professional interview attire, attending professional conferences, paying for examinations related to certification and graduate or professional school admissions, and paying student memberships in professional associations. In collaboration with University Advancement, Career and Professional Development, and Student Financial Services, this grant has come into fruition in 2018. The committee meet for the first time in Fall 2018 and the grant will offer a total of \$2,500 in grants for students in Spring 2019. The application for the grant has now been released and will close February 1st, 2019. The scholarship will also be included in the upcoming Zags Give Day so the grant can reach endowment and be a permanent fund that students can utilize for the years to come.

On a university wide scale, our school is making huge changes with the structure of our institution. Our university is moving towards a truly integrative model with the creation of the Provost & Senior VP. The role of the Provost & Senior VP is to work collaboratively with other Vice Presidents and critical offices in the University to coordinate institutional strategic and intentional planning, fiscal decision making, and resource allocation efforts that supports the goal of the university. The Provost & Senior VP oversees Academic Affairs and the Division of Student Development, while they report directly to the President. Essentially, the Provost & Senior VP position oversees “internal” activities, while the President continues external efforts with our university, such as fundraising and community outreach. The semi-finalists for the Provost & Senior VP search arrived on campus from November 26th to December 3rd. The search committee will be deciphering candidates on December 10th and the announcement will be released in January.

Looking to next semester, we have many events planned already! The first week of February will be GSBA week, culminating with the GSBA concert featuring Marc E. Bassy. There will also be Diversity Week, Intersectionality Week, as well as our annual Presidential Speaker. If you are interested in getting more involved in GSBA we have our Spring Elections, dates to be determined. If you have any feedback for us, please send in a question to our new Question Box on our GSBA page on the Gonzaga website. You can also attend Senate meetings every Monday at 8:00pm in Hemmingson 314 or visit our Student Development Committee at Be Heard tabling. Thanks for reading this State of the Zag and happy holidays!