



Graduate Student Association

Report to University Council

February 17, 2011

Report on Ongoing Activities of GSA

- 2011 Interdisciplinary Conference**

Scheduled for April 2, the 2011 GSA Interdisciplinary Conference is themed *Building Bridges: Impacts of Graduate Research* and will be held on campus in the Miller Learning Center. The deadline for submissions is tomorrow, February 18, and we anticipate a strong collection of posters and presentations from UGA students as well as students from neighboring colleges.

The Conference planning committee has assembled a strong lineup of events for the conference including an opening presentation from Vice Provost Libby Morris on UGA initiatives to advance interdisciplinary studies and a keynote speech from Dr. Lorilee Sandman. In addition to the presentations, GSA is assembling two separate workshops for conference presenters. One workshop will focus on the issues surrounding graduate student life, and the other will be a practical interdisciplinary approach to solving a series of global policy issues.

The committee is also working to invite faculty members who focus on interdisciplinary research to join our conference attendees for lunch where we hope to have a roundtable discussion over sandwiches about how each of us is working on specific issues that have broader interdisciplinary applications. If any of the faculty present are interested in learning more about the conference or

attending any of the events, I would encourage you to contact GSA and we would be honored to have you involved with the conference.

- **Regarding President Adams' State of the University Address**

The leadership and students who are active in GSA were very happy to hear President Adams commitments during the 2011 State of the University. As you can imagine, a renewed focus on graduate education is something GSA whole-heartedly supports. Expanded funding of research assistantships, a commitment to subsidizing graduate student health insurance premiums, and providing more opportunities to work with senior faculty members are all initiatives that GSA fully supports.

We are also very excited about the prospect of a new Graduate School building. We have been in discussions with the administration and the Graduate School staff on exactly what types of facilities could enhance the graduate student experience, and we are looking forward to a cooperative relationship in making this vision a reality. In light of GSA's focus on interdisciplinary studies, through our conference and our general membership, it seems entirely appropriate that there be a building where graduate students can meet up to study, relax, practice presentations, and hold meetings. As much as I enjoy the social aspects of the Miller Learning Center on a weeknight, a quieter facility dedicated to graduate students would be a welcome addition.