Council of Graduate Students
5 Year Strategic Plan
MSU COGS
The Council of Graduate Students (COGS) is proud to unveil its five-year strategic plan. This document will help to provide a framework within which COGS shall serve graduate and professional students at Michigan State University (MSU) in the coming years. The plan outlines five broad areas, under which more specific goals are detailed over different lengths of time. The main focal areas of the plan are:

I. Graduate Student Research Support
II. Supporting an Interdisciplinary, Graduate & Professional Student Community
III. Career & Professional Development
IV. Graduate Student Life & Welfare
V. Building For The Future

This plan was devised with input from the COGS Full Council, representing the various graduate departments and professional programs across the campus, and the Executive Board. A special mention also should go to John Beck (Associate Professor, School of Human Resources and Labor Relations and Director of the Labor Education Program) for helping to guide COGS through this process.

Other topics will arise that COGS will attend to in order to be good advocates for graduate & professional students. However, the following document should enable the organization to focus its resources, both financial and in terms of time, in a prudent manner so as to create new avenues to holistically support advanced degree students through their time at MSU.

Sincerely,

Stefan J. Fletcher
President, Council of Graduate Students
Michigan State University
I. Graduate Student Research Support

➢ Short Term Goals
  o Creation of a graduate & professional student research database to further connect the advanced degree community.
    ▪ MSU Graduate & Professional Researcher Wikipedia Pages exclusive to MSU
    ▪ Inter- & Intra- Field Mentoring Opportunities
    ▪ Department Involvement
  o Holistically support graduate & professional student research from inception to completion.
    ▪ Student / Faculty seminars led by Holistic Coaches
    ▪ Encourage 'Best Practices' for students and faculty to follow throughout the program

➢ Medium Term Goals
  o Expand conference grant funding.
    ▪ More advertisement & promotion of COGS grant funding opportunities
    ▪ Fund a larger number of students to help them attend conferences.
  o Support research pertaining to the enhancement of graduate student life.
    ▪ Gather input from a larger pool of graduate students with surveys at COGS events
  o Support research & grant writing skills development.
    ▪ Models & examples available on database at writing center and Wiki page
    ▪ Establish regulations / best-practices for graduate programs
  o Work with MSU libraries to ensure progress of academic & research endeavors.
    ▪ Pursue opportunities to increase space available for graduate students

➢ Long Term Goals
  o Continued promotion of graduate & professional research across disciplinary boundaries.
  o Foster the interdisciplinary collaboration of graduate & professional students.
II. Supporting an Interdisciplinary, Graduate & Professional Student Community

➢ Short Term Goals
  o Streamline and diversify communication methodologies to reach a broader audience about events and activities that encourage interdisciplinary connections.
    ▪ Increase Social Media Presence
    ▪ Deepen COGS Representative involvement in organizational activities
  o Normalize & incentivize a culture of networking across disciplines.
    ▪ Small grants for interdisciplinary groups
    ▪ Graduate School seminar on networking & collaboration
    ▪ Blurbs showcasing interdisciplinary research in COGS newsletter
    ▪ Interdisciplinary Innovation Awards

➢ Medium Term Goals
  o More specific outreach and inclusion of master's students into the activities of COGS.
    ▪ Reach-out during 1st year, orientation to show to get involved
    ▪ Emphasize what we do to include diverse groups
    ▪ Common connections, networking events, share & show benefits of collaborations
    ▪ Social media exposure to bridge physical gaps

➢ Long Term Goals
  o Augment graduate student seminar opportunities.
    ▪ Attempt to ensure seminar information is being broadcast to graduate students
    ▪ Record / Stream seminars
    ▪ Supplementary workshops to implement knowledge with professional assistance
  o Increase the number and diversity of COGS sponsors to reach out to all quarters of the graduate and professional student populations.
III. Career & Professional Development

- **Short Term Goals**
  - Cooperate with the RCR Program to promote programs & workshops to graduate & professional students.
    - Improve Workshop Calendar visibility
    - Communicate with Dept. / Program Directors about RCR requirements
    - Solicit external advice to improve compliance
  - Purposefully work to help advanced degree students build relationships with internal and external audiences that lead to a broad cross-section of career openings.
    - Link to campus career services & local/state professional groups and NGO's
    - Work with Graduate School on Career fair targeted at graduate & professional students
    - Increase awareness of web-based resources

- **Medium Term Goals**
  - Work with the Graduate School and Graduate Employees Union to build resources that enhance the professional development of advanced degree candidates.
    - Integrate COGS/GEU communities to review / make suggestions for current & future professional development workshops offered by the graduate school.
    - Increase awareness of professional development opportunities

- **Long Term Goals**
  - Build a network of MSU graduate & professional alumni for current students to connect with to aid in career development.
    - Encourage recent / current graduate students to become involved
    - For with / existence of alumni groups in each college
    - Work to establish graduate/professional alumni groups in all colleges
IV. Graduate Student Life & Welfare

➢ Short Term Goals
  o Heightened Promotion of COGS Initiatives & Coordination of a well-publicized events schedule for graduate & professional students.
    ▪ Increase web visibility of COGS Events
    ▪ Advertise COGS representative events through COGS
  o Continued extension of partnership with student organizations, departments and offices to increase the number of events offered to graduate and professional students.

➢ Medium Term Goals
  o Ensure affordable, high quality health insurance for graduate & professional students and their families.
    ▪ Reconsider option for month to month payments supported by COGS
  o Expand provision of health & wellness services to advanced degree candidates.
    ▪ Normalize benefits provided by fellowships to be equivalent to assistantships
  o Align COGS activities with the diverse, global population represented at MSU.
    ▪ Increase discussion and involvement of international student groups with COGS

➢ Long Term Goals
  o Support graduate and professional student families.
    ▪ Continue advocating the 'Get Chitt Done' initiative – Renovation of Chittenden Hall as a centralized service center for graduate & professional students.
    ▪ Advocate for departmental graduate lounges.
  o Advocating for the increased provision of space for services directed toward graduate and professional students.
    ▪ Re-evaluate the guidelines for child care grant
    ▪ Investigate extending graduate and professional ticket pricing to their families
V. Building For The Future

➢ Short Term Goals
  o Form sustainable bench-marking methods to compare against other similar graduate & professional student government organizations to assure we continue to pioneer in the services/funding/advocacy provided by COGS.
    ▪ Positively contribute to the sustainability efforts of the university.

➢ Medium Term Goals
  o Focus on outreach to external stakeholders to better inform them of the vital work graduate and professional students perform.

  o Continue to engage in national conversations related to graduate and professional education.

➢ Long Term Goals
  o Take a leadership role in the strategic visioning efforts of the university.

  o Work to improve the full range of transportation options for graduate and professional students on campus and in the broader region.