Council of Graduate Students

5 Year Strategic Plan:
2013-2014 Progress Report
This is an annual progress report issued to our Michigan State University (MSU) stakeholders regarding various initiatives that COGS has taken over the past 12 months to fulfill the objectives of the Strategic Plan. The aim of this report is to highlight COGS priorities and be accountable to our constituents and to continue our commitment to transparency and stewardship of the tax collected by the organization.

The Council of Graduate Students (COGS) approved a five-year strategic plan in the Spring of 2013. This document helps to provide a framework within which COGS serves graduate and professional students at 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) who helped to guide COGS through this process.

Sincerely,

Stefan J. Fletcher
President, Council of Graduate Students
2010-2014
Michigan State University
**Short Term Goals**

**Holistic support for graduate & professional student research from inception to completion**

- The 6th Annual Graduate Academic Conference organized by COGS aimed to increase professional presentation and communication skills, develop a research network, build curriculum vital for future career opportunities, and encourage research through monetary compensation.
  - Over 150 graduate and professional students presented at this year’s conference.
  - Of the 154 presenters, there were 102 Doctoral students, 36 Masters students, 10 Medical students, and 1 student from the College of Law.
  - Graduate and professional students came from 61 different departments ranging from Anthropology to Zoology.
  - The total number of students presenting increased by 25% from last year, with registration from students in the professional colleges tripling.
  - COGS raised over $13,500 of support from the Michigan State University community this year and are proud to support MSU graduate and professional students through this event.

**Mid Term Goals**

**Expansion of conference grant funding**

- COGS allocates $33,551, on average, annually to the COGS Conference Grant Program.
- In fall of 2013, COGS partnered with Michigan State University Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU) and the MSU Vice President of Research and Graduate Studies (VPRGS), Dr. Stephen Hsu, to provide $10,000 in funding per year over three years totaling an extra $30,000 on top of what COGS already allocates to conference grant program.
- 130 Conference Grants have been awarded from Spring 2013-Fall 2013 totaling $35,799.57 in funds awarded.
## Short Term Goals

**Streamline and diversify communication methodologies to reach a broader audience about events and activities that encourage interdisciplinary connections.**

- COGS has reached over 750 likes on Facebook and has over 650 followers on Twitter.
- Visibility on Facebook has increased by over 60% from January 2013.
- COGS social media has expanded to include Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Vine.
- COGS provides monthly Newsletters with information pertinent to graduate and professional students and lists upcoming events going on around campus to all graduate and professional students.

**Normalize and incentivize a culture of networking across disciplines.**

- Event funding has been provided to a wide range of graduate organizations and interdisciplinary groups such as Horticulture Organization of Graduate Students, Indonesian Student Association, and Graduate Women in Science.
- Since Spring Semester 2013 COGS has provided over $25,000 in event funding.

## Mid Term Goals

**More specific outreach and inclusion of master’s students into the activities of COGS.**

- Fall 2013 marked the second annual Welcome Back Picnic that has worked to help graduate and professional students socialize and network across disciplines.
- This year there were over 300 people in attendance at the Welcome Back Picnic.

## Long Term Goals

**Augment graduate student seminar opportunities.**

COGS has sponsored and advertised several workshops including:

- Leadership Academy: a four session experience designed to educate and empower graduate students as leaders
- Versatile PhD Careers Week at MSU: a week long workshop designed for doctoral and post-doc students wishing to expand their PhD careers beyond the professoriate by becoming more versatile.
- Graduate Student Leadership Institute: an intensive, one-day leadership conference that teaches what it means to KNOW, BE, and DO Leadership from top administrative leaders in higher education, faculty, government, and business.

**Increase the number and diversity of COGS sponsors to reach out to all quarters of the graduate and professional student populations.**

- COGS has partnered with over 35 different internal and external offices and organizations, including: Graduate Student Life & Wellness, The Graduate School, Teaching Assistant Program, Olin Health Center, PhD Career Services, Graduate Employee Union, Interfraternity Council, Pan-Hellenic Council, Athletic Department, Student Parents on a Mission, Associated Students of MSU, University Activities Board, International Students Association, Office of International Students and Scholars, Community Relations Coalition, BROAD MBA Association, Student Bar Association, Council of Medical Students, The College of Osteopathic Medicine, The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Services, College of Social Science, MSU Federal Credit Union, College of Engineering, College of Veterinary Medicine, College of Natural Science, The Office of the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, State Farm Insurance - Michael Church Group, The Office of the Vice President for Finance and Operations, College of Nursing, Residential and Hospitality Services, Sparrow Health System, The Office of the Vice President for Governmental Affairs, MSU Administrative Services, College of Fisheries and Wildlife, MSU Family Resource Center, MSU Writing Center, MSU Recycling Center, MSU Surplus, MSU Bikes, MSU Archives and Historical Collections, and the Kellogg Center.
## Short Term Goals

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<td>Cooperate with the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Program to promote programs &amp; workshops to graduate &amp; professional students.</td>
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<td>• COGS has promoted various RCR events through social media outlets and has been working to improve communications with department and program directors about RCR Requirements.</td>
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<td>Purposefully work to help advanced degree students build relationships with internal and external audiences that lead to a broad cross-section of career openings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Versatile PhD Careers Week at MSU: a week long workshop designed for doctoral and post-doc students wishing to expand their PhD careers beyond the professoriate by becoming more versatile.</td>
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## Mid Term Goals

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<td>Work with the Graduate School and Graduate Employees Union to build resources that enhance the professional development of advanced degree candidates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• New Professional Development Grant presented by the Graduate School for Spring 2014. The program is intended to support graduate/professional students attend events or engage in activities that enhance their professional development.</td>
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<td>• Professional Development Grant provide $10,000 annually to graduate and professional students in the form of $300 awards.</td>
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## Long Term Goals

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<td>Build a network of MSU graduate &amp; professional alumni for current students to connect with to aid in career development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• COGS has created a LinkedIn page to help connect COGS alumni to each other and to current graduate and professional students at Michigan State University.</td>
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## Short Term Goals

**Heightened Promotion of COGS Initiatives & Coordination of a well-publicized events schedule for graduate & professional students.**

- COGS has teamed up with MSU student organizations and offices to provide events such as Tailgates, Trivia Nights, discounted Redwings and Tigers tickets, our 2nd Annual Fall Welcome Back Picnic and many other events.
- COGS has also made updates to our website to include increased visibility of COGS events on home page and social media as well as in monthly Newsletters.

**Continued extension of partnership with student organizations, departments and offices to increase the number of events offered to graduate and professional students.**

**New COGS sponsored events include:** Volleyball charity tournament (March 2013), COGS cooking classes, Group discounted sporting events (Tigers and Redwings), and expansion of Graduate Appreciation Week to include more activities and promotions.

## Mid Term Goals

**Ensure affordable, high quality health insurance for graduate & professional students and their families.**

- COGS has advocated and continues to work so that funds be dedicated to help reduce the cost of dependent health insurance for graduate student families. COGS has worked with MSU Human Resources on this matter.

**Expand provision of health & wellness services to advanced degree candidates.**

- COGS has participated in a series of mental health talks to raise awareness to the university administrators in the hope of allocating more resource to increase the health and wellbeing of graduate students.
- COGS will be partnering with Olin Health on a need based assessments of the advanced degree population.

**Align COGS activities with the diverse, global population represented at MSU.**

- COGS has worked to maintain sponsorship and conversations with international student leaders and ASMSU regarding International Student Fees. COGS has worked to ensure that an apportionment of renewed International Student Fees goes to supporting the international community at MSU.

## Long Term Goals

**Support graduate and professional student families.**

- COGS has sponsored the Breslin Take Over Event a carnival & resource fair that raises awareness of MSU students who are working to balance their roles and responsibilities as students and parents while providing family friendly activities.
- The maintenance of the COGS Child Care FFE with over $31,000 invested in it.
- COGS has participated in conversations relative to Spartan Village redevelopment, advocating for family and single graduate student housing on Campus.

**Advocating for the increased provision of graduate and professional student space.**

- The $6.2 million Renovation of Chittenden Hall was approved by the MSU Board of Trustees on October 25, 2013.
- Chittenden Hall will serve as a single location for graduate students to locate resources and services to help them succeed in their programs. Please visit http://chittendenhall.grd.msu.edu/ for progress reports and updates.
COGS Strategic Plan:

Building For The Future

Short Term Goals

Form sustainable benchmarking methods to compare against other similar graduate and professional student government organizations to assure we continue to pioneer in the services, funding, and advocacy provided by COGS.

UPDATE

• COGS has created a benchmark based on the top ten graduate student governments in the United States. The COGS Executive Board is working to improve the organization based on benchmarked data.

Mid Term Goals

Focus on outreach to external stakeholders to better inform them of the vital work graduate and professional students perform.

UPDATE

• Expanded meetings and conversations with various internal and external groups and administrators to discuss graduate student, needs, and goals.

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

UPDATE

• Involvement with the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC). The CIC is a consortium of thirteen major teaching and research universities in the Midwest. CIC and its member universities work together to advance academic missions, generate unique opportunities for students and faculty, and serve the common good by sharing expertise, leveraging campus resources, and collaborating on innovative programs.

Long Term Goals

Take a leadership role in the strategic visioning efforts of the university.

UPDATE

• COGS has taken leadership in decisions regarding the Bolder by Design campaign at MSU pertaining to graduate and professional education.

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

UPDATE

• COGS has teamed with the City of East Lansing to provide discounted parking for Graduate and professional students with nearly 200 permit sold from spring 2013-fall 2013

• COGS has been part of the MSU Bike Advisory Committee working to improve the multimodal nature of MSU campus.