

**The University of Michigan  
Regents' Communication**

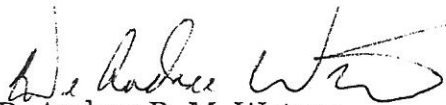
**Received by the Regents  
March 15, 2012**

**ITEM FOR INFORMATION**

Subject: Central Student Government Report

Attached is the March update on the projects and activities of the Central Student Government.

Respectfully Submitted,



DeAndree R. M. Watson  
President, Central Student Government

March, 2012

President Coleman, members of the Board of Regents, and Executive Officers of the University, it is my privilege and honor to submit the following report to you on behalf of the Central Student Government. Below is a brief update of our activities and operations, as we continue to serve the students of this University.

### **CSG March Elections**

The March 2012 Election has officially been scheduled for March 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. During this 48-hour period, students across the University will have the opportunity to select their representatives and other student government members through an online voting system located at: [vote.umich.edu](http://vote.umich.edu). In a manner consistent with past practices, we have coordinated our election cycle with those of other student government elections across campus, including the LSA Student Government and the University of Michigan Engineering Council, to reduce confusion and maximize voter turnout.

It is important to note that this election cycle is unique because it is the first full election under the rules of the new Constitution that was ratified by the student body during the March 2010 election. Under the old Constitution the seats of the Assembly were staggered, with half of the seats up for election in November and the remainder up for election in March. Now all elected terms for the Central Student Government are synchronized, beginning and ending with the March election. As a result, every elected seat in CSG is up for election creating an unprecedented level of electoral opportunities for students. During this election cycle approximately 60 positions are slated to be filled, including the President, Vice President, and student representation on the DPS Oversight Committee.

As of March 1<sup>st</sup>, several coalitions of students seeking positions within CSG have already emerged, and as a result, I expect a very active election cycle with high student-voter participation given the magnitude of candidacy opportunities. The candidacy application deadline is March 7<sup>th</sup>, and the final number of registered candidates will not be available until that time. I look forward to providing a more accurate overview soon.

### **Child Care Subsidy**

The Student Assembly recently passed a resolution to improve access to the childcare subsidy program that is run through the Office of Financial Aid to provide need-based financial subsidies

for the childcare expenses of student parents. Since its initiation by the former MSA in the mid-1990s, the Central Student Government has participated in this program by transferring \$1 of the CSG student fee over to the Office of Financial Aid to administer the childcare subsidy program in an effort to subsidize the cost of child care for students. During the 2010-2011 academic school year alone, student government fees contributed to over \$94,000 of funding for the program. These funds are combined with other University sources to form an adequate program fund sufficient for the campus need.

Currently, the childcare subsidy program requires that spouses or partners of parents must be enrolled at least half-time or work a minimum of 20 hours per week to be eligible for the subsidy. As a result, two groups of students within our community are systematically denied access to this subsidy: international students on student visas that prohibit their spouses from working, and students with spouses who are unemployed. In an effort to rectify this issue, the Central Student Government has pledged \$30,000 to supplement any reforms or additions to the eligibility requirement in an effort to increase access to the program. Aware of the funds that have been allocated by the University to finance the implementation of any changes to the current eligibility policy currently under review by a special committee, CSG has decided to contribute additional funds to the program to aid in this endeavor. We hope that together we can work to ensure that all students have access to the resources they need to thrive in our academic environment.

### **Graduate Student Affairs Commission**

The Central Student Government is charged with the responsibility of representing the interests of all students at the University: undergraduate, graduate, and professional. However, CSG has consistently struggled to address the unique issues faced by students of the graduate and professional academic communities adequately. As a result, we have suffered enormous vacancy rates on the Assembly and have been construed, by some, as a primarily undergraduate student government that lacks the capacity to serve its graduate and professional student constituencies.

In an effort to rectify this issue I have established the Graduate Student Affairs Commission, as suggested by one of our graduate student representatives, to study issues affecting graduate students on campus and bring them to the forefront of CSG discussions. In addition, this commission will serve as a forum for graduate students to bring their issues to CSG and have them addressed by students who share common concerns and have personal experiences dealing with them.

I expect this commission to help shape CSG's priorities in a way that makes them more inclusive and relevant for all members of our campus community. It is absolutely imperative that we address the needs of every student on our campus, and I am looking forward to the positive contributions that the Graduate Student Affairs Commission will make to the organization.

## University Budget Town Hall Presentations

For the past few years, the cost of higher education has been a topic of increasing importance within the student community, and as tuition rates rise with declining State appropriations, the expenses of colleges and universities have been under very strict scrutiny by their consumers. As a result, the University budget has been the source of concern for many students questioning the relationship between tuition rates, construction and renovation projects, salary increases, and endowment funds.

To help alleviate some of these concerns and provide more clarity about how the academic enterprise of the University is financed, the Central Student Government is hosting Provost Hanlon as he conducts three separate presentations on the University budget. The first will be for CSG members on Tuesday March 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm in the Kuenzel room of the Michigan Union. The other two will be general presentations for the entire campus community, with one on March 9<sup>th</sup> at 5:15 pm in room 1670 of the Computer Science and Engineering building on North Campus, and the other on March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:15 pm in the Kalamazoo room of the Michigan League.

These presentations will serve as an educational opportunity for students to obtain the information they need as they continue to advocate for the prioritization of higher education at the State level, and affordability at the University level. We express our sincerest gratitude to Provost Hanlon for his commitment to serving the students of this University in a spirit of transparency, and we thank him for providing such an important opportunity.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,



DeAndree R. M. Watson

President