

ASSU Budgeting Priorities and Student Input

February 25, 2018

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Improving Student Belonging

“You can imagine my surprise, then, when I – a normal person – was admitted...I did not match the image of a Stanford student in my head, and I thought I could never belong at a place like Stanford.

My thoughts became haunted by the pestering question: Why am I here? And despite my greatest efforts, I could not dismiss them. I think that this question is one that has crossed more than just my mind alone.”

–Phoebe Quinton, “Belonging at Stanford,” 2/1/2018

Key Priorities

- Support for students with disabilities
- Increase mental health and wellness resources
- Better academic advising support for students

Support for Students with Disabilities

- Strengthen advising and programming available through the Office of Accessible Education
- Promote collaboration between the Office of Accessible Education and other units on campus
- Develop stronger training on supporting people with disabilities for faculty, staff, postdoctoral fellows, teaching assistants, and other student staff

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This meeting was honestly traumatizing...[the department chair] said that disabled students are a burden...Finally, I asked him what he wanted me to do as a disabled student. After a long pause, he said the words “I guess you’ll have to take [the class] elsewhere.” My jaw dropped.

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Brooke Vittimberga, undergraduate student

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I had an advisor say ‘[this] lab is like Boston when they closed the looney bin,’ because there were several people in his lab with mental illness. He now has a high-ranking position in academic affairs.

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People question your dedication to graduate school or your academic ability and commitment. I've thought about going to the Office of Accessible Education, but I don't know what they'd do for me.

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Graduate student with a non-visible disability

Increase Mental Health and Wellness Resources

- Hire more clinical staff at CAPS
- Development of community-based support structures beyond the traditional community center model
 - Veterans
 - Students with dependents
 - First generation and low income students
 - Students with disabilities
- Implementation of new CAPS strategies for engaging students and providing ongoing support
- Increase funding for Residential Programs to provide opportunities for stress relief and overall well being

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CAPS is overbooked, underfunded, and understaffed. As an RA, I've sent half a dozen freshmen there this quarter alone and few, if any, have had positive experiences —with CAPS even telling some of them that they couldn't handle their issues.

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I think for me personally it would help my mental health if there were some type of ‘coach’ I could talk to. Not a psychiatrist, but someone with campus connections.

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Better Academic Advising Support

- Increase training for faculty, staff, and teaching assistants on mentorship and working with students across different academic levels at Stanford, as well as where to direct students who need additional support
- Strengthen the academic advising director program, allowing for greater collaboration with different types of advisors and more opportunities for students to meet with AADs

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My [faculty] advisor was difficult to make an appointment with and seemed pretty disinterested.

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I think all advisors should receive regular training...I have been incredibly disappointed with the quality and inconsistency of doctoral advising at Stanford.

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PhD student

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Relationships with advisors are really important...I have one great advisor and one advisor that I feel like has wreaked havoc on both my physical health and my mental health.

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PhD student

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I went into meetings with my Academic Advising Directors, Pre-Major Adviser and now Major Adviser with hesitancy, but I left pleasantly surprised. Each time I meet with an adviser, I leave feeling informed, relieved and greatly helped.

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Angie Lee, “Underestimating my need for help and the help I’d receive,” 10/9/2018

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Your pre major advisor and academic advising director are also great sources of free food. They might take you to lunch or offer snacks at meetings, so stop avoiding them!

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Phoebe Quinton, “A college student’s guide to free food,” 10/25/2017

Emerging Priorities

- Improve affordability at Stanford for FLI students
- Support sexual violence prevention programming and resources
- Continue and expand support for students caring for children or other family members
- Pipeline development for future faculty

Thank you.

Follow-up questions?
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