

## **Graduate school leaders visit Philly**

## Sacramento leaders seek advice

By Stanley Wright on April 22, 2011 in News

Representatives from Drexel's graduate school in Sacramento, Calif. visited the University City campus this week to gain perspective on how to promote unity at their developing campus in California.



Francesca Martelli The Triangle

Drexel administrators and student government representatives welcomed visitors from the Sacramento Center for Graduate Studies to the University City campus April 20.

The trip's secondary purpose was to enlighten the visiting students about student life at the main campus. Board members from the school's student government, the Graduate Student Association, represented the Sacramento campus over the three-day period. During this time, the representatives met with Associate Dean Frank Linnehan, took a tour of the campus and explored Philadelphia, among other things.

The GSA board members commented on their perception of East Coast Drexel University, making note of things they will

try to transfer to their campus. Some of the topics discussed included fortifying their student government, encouraging students to participate in University-sanctioned events and heightening school pride on the Sacramento campus and beyond.

Christopher Levermore, a GSA board member and Master of Business Administration candidate, made note of the importance of civil service to the University.

"One thing that I've noticed that's strong here that we're building in Sacramento is community outreach, [especially] in terms of partnering with developing areas in the community," Levermore said.

"[What] is ... becoming more important at Drexel Sacramento is [starting] programs that will help the people in the community we share," he continued.

In this spirit, fellow board member and treasurer Dean O'Brien organized a clothing drive at the Sacramento food bank. GSA also held a volunteer event, cleaning parks during Earth Day.

"... Drexel students and <u>alumni</u> come out to [these events] to participate, and it doesn't matter what department you're from, you're coming together and you're helping to clean a park and help the homeless," Levermore said.

Unifying the small, part-time student body has proven to be a difficult task, as many have jobs and families. Activities and benefit events are rare occasions where students get together, noted Benjamin Walker, a doctoral student in education.

"We rarely see [other departments]. The only time we get to meet is during the activities section, and that's where we try to build our camaraderie," Walker said.

Carol Boles, President of the GSA and MS-LIS Candidate expanded on this point.

"I think the challenge is to build camaraderie within the graduate center itself. Within your individual program, you're very tight, but we have eight programs on campus, and we don't even know each other," she said.

Another key area of improvement the representatives discussed was how to run their student government. Leapfrogging off the existing policies of University City's Undergraduate Student Government Association, the Sacramento board discussed implementing changes regarding elections in student government.

"One of the things that we learned from your student government president was that during the election process they said that you had to participate in the student government for at least a year before you could run for a position. His perspective on that was that it gives somebody a perspective on how to lead," Levermore said.

He added, "That's one of the things that I'd be interested in bringing back to our meetings just to talk about."

Michelle Heppner, a doctoral student in education, chimed in, saying, "I think we could do a better job of making all the students feel welcome coming to the meetings as visitors. I don't think we broadcast very well when we're meeting, what's on the agenda and the fact that we welcome input."

When asked what the highlight of the trip was for the group, O'Brien referred to a trustee luncheon the group attended.

"It was kind of an intimate setting in which we were able to get to establish relationships and get to know them. I think everyone has been so open and friendly and wants to help Sacramento succeed. That was pretty evident by yesterday's luncheon," O'Brien said.

The group also discussed the necessity for departmental growth and expansion of the physical space on campus. Two degree programs, business and medicine, are already in the works in Sacramento.

The GSA members noted that the school is beginning to establish an alumni branch and addressed the vitality of increasing school pride. Additionally, they entertained the possibility of working with <a href="Triangle">The Triangle</a> to develop Sacramento campus-specific content on the paper's website.

Levermore expressed gratitude towards the Philadelphia Drexel community for their hospitality.

"We're extremely thankful for the opportunity and we've learned a lot. We were always treated like the most important thing with everyone we met with," Levermore said.

Boles added, "I think I've gotten a better sense of connection with Drexel."

Drexel Sacramento offers an open invitation to anyone wanting to visit the graduate campus in California.