

Towson at a Glance

- There are 21,111 students enrolled at Towson University
- 79.9 percent of students enrolled call Maryland home
- Towson produces the more teachers than any other school in Maryland
- There are over 70,000 Towson alumni living in Maryland today
- Over 3,000 Towson students have been registered to vote since 2006 through the efforts of university officials and student groups
- Students of color graduate at rates equal to or greater than non-minority students



To Maintain Access and Affordability

The ability for citizens to gain access to higher education throughout Maryland is essential to the future economy and well being of the state. For Towson students, tuition is a central factor in choosing to enroll and continue to graduation. With today's current economic difficulties, students and families are finding it increasingly challenging to shoulder the burden of student loan debt that often results from higher education expenses. This difficulty coupled with increasing annual costs is hindering some of Maryland's most qualified students from accessing an affordable education.

- From FY 2000 to FY 2009, Towson University full-time in-state undergraduate students have seen a 61.8 percent increase in tuition. Full-time undergraduate in-state tuition and fees have risen from \$4,520 in 2000 to \$7,314 in 2008, totaling an increase of \$2,794 over this nine year period.
- Towson's Student Government Association commends Governor O'Malley and the General Assembly for making possible three consecutive tuition freezes while supporting the University System of Maryland's Education General Fund.

SOLUTION: A freeze on in-state tuition for the past three years along with the Higher Education Investment Fund passed in the 2007 special legislative session have made access and affordability a reality for many Towson students and their families. The Student Government Association recognizes the financial burdens that accompany tuition freezes and urges the General Assembly and the governor to continue allocating funds to offset the increasing costs of tuition on Maryland families and students. We also urge you to continue to dedicate the corporate income tax increase to the Higher Education Investment Fund in support of higher education capital construction.

Enrollment Growth Funding

Designated as one of Maryland's growth institutions, Towson University is expanding its enrollment and infrastructure across the board. With a projected enrollment of 25,000 students by 2013, Towson requires continued enrollment growth funding in order to offer the best quality education while expanding access to a growing number of students.

SOLUTION: In order to meet the increased needs that accompany Towson's designation as Maryland's growth institution, continued funding will be needed over the coming years to successfully expand without sacrificing the quality of education.

Towson University's Student Achievements— Something Every Marylander Can Be Proud Of

Towson students Dayvon Love and Deven Cooper became the first African American National College Debate champions in the spring of 2008. The spring of 2008 also marked the 10th year in a row the TU Dance Team clinched the national championship.



To Support Sustainability Initiatives

As a community of lifelong learners, leaders and innovators, Towson University students recognize that environmental issues constitute some of the foremost concerns of our time. Creating a sustainable campus is a long-term investment that will save money, increase efficiency and address the global issue of climate change.

- Towson University is committed to improving our campus and the greater Towson community by limiting our total energy use by employing sustainable building design, construction and operating procedures; minimizing waste production achieved through reduce, reuse and recycle programs; and promoting responsible environmental stewardship.
- Student organizations have been leaders at Towson for sustainability. The Towson Energy Activists collected 3,000 petition signatures in the fall of 2007 from Towson students who agreed that the University System of Maryland should adopt a carbon neutrality policy. The Towson Energy Activists and other student organizations in the University System of Maryland presented 12,000 signatures to the Board of Regents in February of 2008. Shortly thereafter, Chancellor Kirwan implemented a system-wide sustainability initiative.

SOLUTION: Towson University students strongly support the General Assembly's efforts to support our environment and our future well-being. In particular, Towson students support the passage of a Global Warming Solutions Act.

Advocate for Responsible Textbook Legislation

The rising cost of higher education does not end with tuition. The high cost of textbooks is a further financial burden for students. On average, Towson students spend between \$400 and \$700 on textbooks *each academic term*, or an estimated \$3,792 over their college career.

- The 2008-2009 Student Government Association has made a concerted effort to listen to student concerns regarding textbooks through forums and is actively working to implement an online system in which students can exchange textbooks with one another at lower costs.
- The 2008-2009 Student Government Association is working to produce a "best practices" guide for professors and students outlining numerous suggestions educators can employ in order to help reduce the cost of textbooks for students.
- In order to further tackle the problem of the high cost of textbooks Towson President Robert Caret established an initiative for ISBN number disclosure a year before it was required by the Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act.

SOLUTION: In accordance with student concerns, the SGA strongly supports the General Assembly in its efforts to approach this issue. The SGA will examine each piece of legislation concerning textbooks in depth and relay the opinion of the students back to legislators as bills arise during the 2009 session.

The SGA represents over 17,000 undergraduate students at Towson University.

To Encourage Student Participation in the Electoral Process— TU has 20,000 Eligible Voters

Too often those who are a part of the college-age generation are denounced for demonstrating apathy toward politics and the election process on every level of government. Yet, if the recent election season has proven anything, it is that, once energized, young people with power and passion can impact an election. For Towson students, apathy does not lie within students themselves but rather within the political system.

- As voters with full course loads and part-time jobs, Towson students, especially those living on campus, have found it difficult to access polling stations on Election Day, often having to choose between missing classes or voting.
- The number of registered voters living on campus continues to grow every year, creating greater and greater need for on-campus polling stations.

SOLUTION: The Student Government Association strongly supports the establishment of on-campus voting booths as a response to Towson's growing student population and student needs.

The Student Government Association would like to thank all who have been part of the Towson experience. We would like to acknowledge the following alumni legislators in particular:

Delegate Charles Barkley
Delegate Pam Beidle
Delegate John Bohanan Jr.
Delegate Ann Marie Doory
Delegate Jolene Ivey
Delegate Susan Krebs

Delegate Warren Miller
Delegate Karen Montgomery
Delegate B. Daniel Riley
Delegate Tanya Thorton Shewell



SAVE THE DATE: 10TH ANNUAL TIGER PRIDE DAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2009



Maximizing Efficiency: Towson's Trimester

Now in its second year of operation, Towson's Trimester pilot program is in its refinement stages. Approved by the Efficiency and Effectiveness Committee of the Board of Regents in 2006 to maximize the use of educational space on campus during the summer, the Trimester program benefits students by offering high-demand classes and expediting graduation rates. This program will require enrollment growth support to continue.



Dear Policymakers,

Towson University Student Government Association

On behalf of Towson University's 17,272 undergraduate students, we, the Student Government Association, present our legislative agenda for the 2009 General Session. In this document, the Student Government Association continues our tradition of a student-driven legislative agenda that encapsulates the passions specific to Towson students and students of higher education in general. Unanimously approved by the Student Government Association, this agenda represents of the needs and views of our student body. While specific issues are highlighted, our agenda is not limited to what is presented here. We will continue to advocate on behalf of the Towson University student body as relevant issues arise.

As in years past, we look forward to the continued efforts of the General Assembly to ensure that higher education in Maryland continues in its tradition of quality, access and affordability.

Sincerely,



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2009 Legislative Agenda

