Good Afternoon! Happy 2005!!

I would like to thank Secretary Fisher and University Senate for allowing me to speak to you this afternoon.

First, I urge you and your families to attend the BuckeyeThon, a dance-athon, Saturday, Feb. 5th from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. As you have heard, Vice President Bill Hall is battling pancreatic cancer and this very special hour is dedicated to him. The funds raised will be donated to the James for pancreatic and liver cancer research in his honor.

I am proud to stand with my counterparts from USG and IPC this afternoon promoting this project which has been entirely student initiated. We urge you not only to register but to bring your families for this most worthwhile cause. Let us give back to a vice president who has given so much to this university and to its students!

The Council of Graduate Students has been busy working with Human Resources and the Graduate School finalizing standard documents of appointment. A pilot project will be conducted by MAPS and Student Affairs this quarter. We thank those willing to pilot the project—I believe it was just about every college.
We continue to work on other graduate concerns such as funding for higher education; increased tuition and fees; leaves for graduate assistants; and international student concerns. However, I have to say one of the most pressing concerns we have is the resignation of OUR Dean, Susan Huntington, Provost Snyder’s acceptance, and Dean Huntington’s successor. 

OUR dean has been a vocal advocate for graduate students during her tenure. It is partly because of her efforts, graduate assistants are: receiving higher stipends; greater health care benefits including benefits for their families; and standard appointment documents.

The dean is also responsible for collaborating with the Council of Graduate Students on the Graduate Quality of University Experience (G-QUE), and has been an active proponent for an update.

We graduate students have appreciated Dean Huntington’s voice in what seems to be a wilderness filled with those who have their own agendas; who believe the corporatization of the Academy is a better model than one of education -- teaching, research, and learning; and those who would rather take the “easy” way out by seeking to eliminate, rather than the more difficult task of improving, doctoral programs.
The provost has made it clear that she will not rescind her acceptance of the Dean’s resignation. Yet Dean Huntington’s reasons for resigning boil down to 2 simple elements. Indeed, she has told me that she would be thrilled to stay on as dean if only these two points were changed. First, the Freeman Committee which is made up of entirely of deans, needs to be expanded to include representation from all stakeholders in graduate education, including department chairs, graduate studies chairs, faculty, PIs, and graduate students.

Second, that the charge the provost gave to the committee be enlarged to address the many pressing needs of graduate education. These two points, it seems, could be easily accommodated by Provost Snyder.

We continue to remain steadfast: Dean Huntington's resignation should be rescinded by the provost and Susan Huntington continues on as OUR dean.

But, assuming that the provost doe not change her mind, there remains the issue of a new Graduate School dean and/or an interim dean. We thank Provost Snyder for promising the Council of Graduate Students an active role in all related searches.

CGS continues to be deeply concerned about the Freeman Committee.
Let me go on the record stating we are NOT opposed to a review of graduate education at this university. Indeed, we welcome it as, I might add, does Dean Huntington. A review of graduate programs is not only healthy for a strong graduate school and university, but should even be done on a regular basis. I dare say that has **not** been the case. However, that review should not consist only of deans, but ALL groups involved in graduate education, including those I noted above: graduate students, deans, department and graduate committee chairs, PIs and graduate faculty.

In the meantime, we understand Dean Huntington is no longer sitting on the Freeman Committee. I wrote to Dean Freeman earlier this week asking him for confirmation and/or clarification since her tenure as dean does not end until April 1. If a decision was made to no longer include the dean on committee deliberations, we must ask why? And by whom?

This then begs the question: Which GRADUATE SCHOOL dean is sitting on that committee to represent the interests of not only the Graduate School and its programs, but the 10,000 graduate students attending Ohio State?

Our final concern, and we feel it necessary to bring it before this body, is the possibility of eliminating the graduate school, or at least the graduate school as we know of it today,
and having all graduate programs fall under Vice President McGrath’s Office of Research.

One aspect of the 1995 “Revised Final Report from The Ohio State University Graduate School Review Committee” or the so-called “Ripley Report,” looked at the two models and came to the basic conclusion that our current model, although needed strengthening and changing in certain areas, overall, declined to suggest the Vice President for Research should oversee graduate education as vice president AND dean.

We fear attention to graduate student issues will be buried in the continual quest for funding and a focus to other priorities of the Office of Research. Further, it is not clear why a change is needed at this time. We ask the, “Why ‘fix’ something that is not broken?”

Therefore, as president of the Council of Graduate Students, we urge the provost and the president to retain the current model.

The graduate students at Ohio State have been most fortunate to have a dean who is a strong and vocal advocate, and an administration that is willing to communicate and work with the Council of Graduate Students thereby working with ALL graduate students. Again, we thank the Board of Trustees,
President Holbrook, Provost Snyder, Vice President Llewellen, and of course Dean Huntington, for their advocacy.

Conversations, however, need to occur for the graduate students, the graduate programs and this university to move forward. Still...we fear these doors of communication, these avenues of trust and mutual respect we have enjoyed for several years, are slowly closing thereby muting our 10,000 voices.

I am in the unique position of being able to speak individually but also as President of the largest graduate student population in the country. I take this responsibility VERY seriously. Thus, putting my own feelings aside, what about the 9,999 other graduate students? If not me then who?

I am reminded of the words of Pastor Martin Niemöller who wrote during World War II but sadly, its message is applicable today:

First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out—
because I was not a communist;

Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—
because I was not a socialist;

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—
because I was not a trade unionist;
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew;

Then they came for me—

and there was no one left to speak out for me.

So we must ask ourselves: Who will speak out for us—graduate students and faculty—when programs are eliminated and graduate students go elsewhere to study.

I fear...no one...because there will be no one left to speak out for us.

Thank you!