

UCSD GSA Policy Platform

The 2017-2018 Legislative Advocacy Committee (LAC) has created this document to outline the policy priorities of the UCSD Graduate Student Association (GSA). The content of this document will be reauthorized by the full Council at least yearly, during the Fall Quarter. After passage by the GSA Council, the Executive Board and the LAC are encouraged to use this platform as guidelines when advocating on behalf of graduate students to administration as well as local, state, and federal legislators. However, these guidelines are not intended to supplant current communication with or updates to GSA Council regarding advocacy undertaken on behalf of graduate students.

Higher Education and Research Funding

The UCSD GSA strongly supports:

- Efforts to ensure the competitiveness of the United States by maintaining or increasing the amount of federal and state funding for graduate education
- Expansion of merit- and need-based graduate scholarship programs
- Policies that ensure fair tax credits and deductions for graduate students
- Policies that ensure affordable graduate tuition
- Policies that help alleviate the student debt crisis, i.e., low student loan interest rates, graduate student eligibility for work study, public service loan forgiveness programs
- Policies that encourage financial support in academic research
- Efficient utilization of the federal investments in academic research by using research findings to inform policy decision making

Promoting Academic Freedom and Transparency

The UCSD GSA strongly supports:

- Policies which increase transparency in higher education institutions in order to help current and future graduate students make informed academic and professional decisions
- Policies that ensure that program fees and graduate student income are transparent, competitive with peer institutions, and in line with or above the cost of living for the area
- Initiatives to increase the public dissemination of scholarly research products, e.g., open access to publications of research funded by the federal government
- The right of graduate students to pursue their education to the fullest, including the utilization of academic freedom as well as unrestricted liberty to question and test received wisdom.
- The right of graduate students to refuse tasks, if those tasks are not aligned with their

academic and/or professional development program

- Policies which value students' education across disparate disciplines, especially those that help to lessen financial disparity, particularly in non-STEM fields.

The UCSD GSA strongly opposes:

- Limits to intellectual freedom and scientific autonomy with respect to federally funded research
- Policies that do not value students' education across disparate disciplines, particularly for students in non-STEM fields

Student Rights:

The UCSD GSA strongly supports:

- Policies that effectively prevent sexual harassment and assault, provide resources and support for survivors, and result in fair and timely investigations with appropriate consequences for perpetrators
- Policies that protect students from being exploited to the personal advantage of faculty members and administration, given that the unique position of graduate students in academia makes them vulnerable to coercion, such as students from historically underrepresented groups, non-US citizens, and/or lower socio-economic status
- The instruction of faculty on the power disparity inherent to graduate study to curb the damaging effects of mismanaging this gap
- Faculty accountability with respect to their responsibilities as advisors, mentors, and educators in parity with their expectations of graduate students
- Efforts to evaluate faculty and university officials for the purpose of providing feedback without threat or retaliation
- Policies that protect and recognize the authority of the UAW 2865 contract protecting graduate TAs
- Programs that support and protect civic engagement and voting rights of graduate students

The UCSD GSA strongly opposes:

- Any attempt on the part of the institution to prevent or coerce graduate students from their right to pursue appropriate legal representation if they believe that their rights have been violated

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

The UCSD GSA strongly supports:

- Protecting the rights of all students regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual

orientation, religion, disability, age, genetic information, ancestry, socioeconomic status, national origin, or immigration status

- All university efforts that promote equity, diversity, and inclusion
- All efforts that enable international students enrolled at US institutions to obtain visas, study in the US, and enter and depart the country
- All efforts that enable university students, faculty, and staff to renew or update their visas and legal status efficiently
- All efforts that increase the number of education and employment opportunities available to international students, faculty, and staff

The UCSD GSA strongly opposes:

- Policies that selectively impact students based on any of the abovementioned criteria
- Any measures or regulations that would result in deportation or harassment of students enrolled at US institutions based on immigration status
- Any measures that would limit future admission of students based on their visa or immigration status

Graduate Student Standards of Living:

The UCSD GSA strongly supports:

- Policies that promote high quality, affordable housing for graduate students that is accessible from areas where graduate students work
- Policies that establish emergency provisions for graduate students facing severe financial hardship, including access to shelters and/or housing assistance for homeless students and assurance of adequate nutrition
- Policies that promote affordable child care for graduate students
- Convenient access to healthy, affordable, high-quality dining and grocery options both on- and off-campus
- Policies that ensure graduate student income sufficient to support a humane standard of living, including adjustments at or above increases in overall cost of living.
- Access to and creation of alternative forms of transit that allow graduate students efficient access to campus and outlying areas
- Increased educational space and housing on and around campus to support amenities such as restaurants and shops and facilitate increased use of public transit.
- Access to comprehensive, affordable healthcare including mental health, dental, and vision coverage for all graduate students and their dependents, with convenient access to qualified in-network healthcare providers on- and off-campus