2015-2016 GSA Officer Election Candidate Statements
Elections will be held at Council Meeting 11, Monday, April 6 at 6pm in the Price Center Forum

President
Lindsay Freeman, Candidate for GSA President
Donald Johnson, Candidate for GSA President

VP Academic
Matthew Cohen, Candidate for VP of Academic Affairs
Teresa Zimmerman-Liu, Candidate for VP of Academic Affairs

VP Finance
Mukanth Vaidyanathan, Candidate for VP of Financial Affairs

VP External
Garrett Bredell, Candidate for VP of External Affairs

VP Student and Campus
Daniel Jacobsen, Candidate for VP of Student and Campus Affairs
Betty Ramirez, Candidate for VP of Student and Campus Affairs

VP Diversity, Service, Equity and Inclusion
Troy Andreas Araiza Kokinis, Candidate for VP of Diversity, Service, Equity and Inclusion Affairs
Tara-Lynne Pixley, Candidate for VP of Diversity, Service, Equity and Inclusion Affairs
Lindsay Freeman, Candidate for GSA President

After serving on the UCSD Graduate Student Association executive board for 2 years, I am running for GSA President. I am a fifth year PhD student in the Nanoengineering Department and have been involved in student government since my undergraduate education. My experience this year as GSA's VP of Student and Campus Affairs has provided me the skills and abilities needed to serve as the next President of the GSA. **If elected as your President, I will strengthen the graduate and professional student community by accomplishing the following tasks:**

1) **Execute the recommendations of the Graduate and Professional Student Experience and Satisfaction (GPSES) committee** - We will form GSA committees to (i) provide departmental breakdown statistics to all departments so they can see where they need to improve in terms of academic advising, community, and faculty relations, (ii) investigate what issues are affecting international students' academic progress based on GPSES data, and (iii) further develop the GSA website to serve as a hub for all graduate student information. I will also help GSA council use the GPSES data to improve the access and supply of mental health services on and off campus.

2) **Improve communication between GSA and departments/student organizations** - Many departments lack a strong departmental student government. I will work on unifying departments and student organizations with GSA. To build a strong community, we need to start at the departmental level. In addition, we need a better connection with student organizations, including the co-ops. I will continue to work on increasing the communication between GSA council and the co-ops, and will ensure that necessary changes are made to the Master Space Agreement.

3) **Increase lobbying and external advocacy efforts** - I attended the Students Advocating for Graduate Education (SAGE) retreat, a national organization that works with national legislatures. If elected, I will push for UCSD to host the Fall '15 SAGE retreat, which is an excellent opportunity to showcase our university to the other top public universities in the United States. In addition, I will further improve our state lobbying efforts. I helped bring Scott Peters, one of San Diego's US representatives, to campus last year. We should continue to work with the legislators in our area and California. I will push for more GSA council members to get involved in our lobbying efforts.

4) **Implement professional development programs** - With the recent investment by the Chancellor in professional development, I will work with GSA council to see what programs we want put into place. One of the programs we can implement is a certification program, in which students have the opportunity to obtain a certificate in areas outside their field of study by taking UCSD extension courses. I will make sure that this program is realized.

This is only a short list of what I intend to accomplish as the GSA President for the '14-'15 school year. With the help of GSA council and other students, we can further improve the environment on our campus. If elected, I believe I have the tools and knowledge to improve both academic and non-academic life for UCSD graduate and professional students.

**My GSA Accomplishments thus far** include ensuring that there are more spaces for graduate students on campus, dramatically increasing attendance of our social and cultural events, and improving communication between GSA and the general graduate student population. With the help of other graduate students, we were able to renovate and re-open both Cafe Vita and the Graduate Lounge to all graduate students. As social coordinator in '13-'14, I used social networking to significantly increase awareness and attendance of our events. I have also worked on re-designing our website and using our facebook page as a useful source of information for graduate students. I have served on numerous committees throughout my time on GSA, and most recently chaired the GPSES survey committee. **Not only do I have the necessary experience to excel as GSA President, I also have the excitement and dedication to succeed.**
Donald Johnson, Candidate for GSA President

Don Johnson for GSA President: Defining a sustainable, bolder measure for collective leadership
webpage: http://donjohnsonjr.wix.com/studentsb4politics

Since joining the GSA as a council representative in Spring 2011 from the Chemistry & Biochemistry department, I have worked tirelessly to ensure that the student voice is strong, unified and not compromised by any external interest. I have witnessed and studied the differences in leadership among 4 GSA Presidents. I have seen the direction of this GSA go from executive-centered to council-centered and back to executive-centered. I have co-authored legislation that directly and positively affects the graduate students. I have co-led constitutional reform, and inspired constitution and by-law reform of GSA executive officer positions, including the VP Campus & Student Affairs. When asked, why do you want to be GSA President? My answer is simple: There needs to be a GSA President that can lead as a part of the collective interest. I believe this will lead to a transformative year in defining council’s legislative authority and our relationship with University administration, in developing stronger, bolder measures that last for years in developing a sustainable council-centered student government.

Strengthening Legislative Authority in GSA Council

It is not, nor should it ever be, the position of the GSA executive that “all resolutions should be vetted by the executive before going to council” (GSA executive). Council is the place for legislation, not a “rubber stamp.” To end this, executives including myself will work directly with council representatives on initiatives as a first measure. Following this, council will be informed through committee reports and proposals more often, leading to a more informed council. As a final measure, I will seek by-law reform for the GSA President’s by-laws to give council the ability to select its own council chair. As a result, the GSA President will have flexibility in enforcing policy efficiently, while clearly carrying out the will of council.

Developing a streamlined, more centralized student government on a department level

Each department is different in how it manages and supports its students. Some departments do and some departments do not have student governments. The GPSES data has shown the need for department level structure that interfaces with the GSA. Rather than dictate to departments, I aim to hold a conference in the coming year that brings together all departments and discusses the development of some structure that interfaces with the GSA and improves the quality of life for graduate students.

Reassessing our relationship with the University

Trust a University administrator’s actions is commonplace for most GSA executives. While there are administrators that have our best interest in mind, there are those who “believe” they have our best interest in mind. In certain cases, trust can blind and compromise great efforts. In working with the new GSA executive, I aim to execute the student voice in my discussions with University administrators. I aim to have meeting notes be taken for meetings with administrators and made public to GSA council. I aim to direct the executives to utilize their council collaborations in making sure council representatives and executives are in the important meetings with university administrators. Rather than introducing an antagonistic GSA, I will work to organize a firmly grounded student voice that cannot be ignored by administrators. I have seen this type of collective leadership play out on the GSA Diversity Committee, where workgroups of council representatives are in charge of specific initiatives. This has driven the innovative spirit of the office for Diversity, Service, Equity and Inclusion. We have to be innovative and tactical about our work, even while we are respectful and friendly with administrators.

Directing policy by in-house assessment tools and analytics

The 2012 Childcare Survey and the 2014 GPSES survey have shown that the students should craft the survey questions. As a result, we have been able to use student input to direct policy. Let’s make this a common mechanism for the GSA. Let’s take a stronger position from survey data and not rush reports to council for political points. Let’s work to develop a committee that is solely focused on analyzing survey data represented by graduate and professional students. In the end, I do not think this is one person’s effort to lead. In order to effect transformative change, we need to work together regardless of our politics, to achieve common goals for all students. As a result, in considering me for President, please also consider the great people who have decided to run with me.
My name is Matthew Cohen, and I am a MBA Candidate at the Rady School of Management. This year, after expressing an interest in the GSA and being appointed by the Vice President of Student and Campus Affairs, I worked with Cory Stevenson on the Strategic Residential Living and Learning Workgroup. While my involvement was brief, I learned a great deal about UCSD as a campus and was able to work with Dean Barrett, Juan Gonzalez (Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs) and Mark Cunningham (Assistant Vice Chancellor of Housing, Dining and Hospitality) on a regular basis. In addition, I am starting my term as the President of the Rady Student Board this quarter. At Rady, our transitions take place for all clubs and student organizations at the beginning of spring quarter, which is why you will notice new GSA representatives at the April 6th meeting. Prior to coming to UCSD, I have had extensive experience in student government. While studying economics at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, I was involved with Associated Students throughout my four years, as well as numerous other clubs and student organizations.

I first approached the GSA this year because I felt that Rady was cut-off from the greater UCSD community, and much of that was its own doing. I wanted to connect other graduate and professional students to Rady because I felt that the relationship could be very mutually beneficial. As professional students, namely in the MBA program, we are not at UCSD for very long. Our program lasts for two years, so to serve as an officer, we must run at the end of our first year. We cannot sit on GSA committees, or even be a council representative, and gain experience for several years, but I have done everything that I can to get around this obstacle.

After pouring over the GSA Constitution and all GSA bylaws, meeting with the current VP of Academic Affairs and VP of Student and Campus Affairs, as well as researching current academic issues and professional development opportunities, I know that I am an excellent candidate to be the next Vice President of Academic Affairs. If elected, I will make it my top priority to achieve the following initiatives:

1. Increase professional development opportunities, utilizing resources at Rady and elsewhere. After talking with STEM students last quarter, I realized that we need to enable our extraordinary researchers here at UCSD to communicate and promote both themselves and their work to the public. That is why I have already met with a member of the Rady administration in order to discuss continuing the Micro-MBA program, as well as beginning a “Lab-to-Market” course for non-Rady students. In addition, I am currently working on expanding the reach of the Micro-MBA program from Ph.D. students to all graduate and professional students at UCSD. I will also build on great programs which we already have, like Grad Slam, the Ph.D. Career Conference and Interdisciplinary Research Awards.

2. Ensure that the Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities is formally recognized by the Academic Senate and Chancellor Khosla, as well as clarify the Policies and Procedures Manual’s impact on all graduate and professional students.

3. Work with the Academic Senate on developing a mentorship program between faculty and students. The GPSES report showed that many students have difficulties with their advisor relationships. Having a faculty mentor outside of a student's research group or program can help them grow both academically and professionally.

I hope to have the pleasure of serving you as your Vice President of Academic Affairs for the 2015-2016 academic year. Whether I am elected or not, the Rady School of Management will begin to play a much more substantial role in the GSA. Thank you.
Teresa Zimmerman-Liu, Candidate for VP of Academic Affairs

Website: http://donjohnsonjr.wix.com/studentsb4politics

I am a 2nd year PhD student in the department of Sociology. I have a BS in Spanish Literature from Georgetown University and an MA in Asian Studies (Chinese Studies & Asian Literature) from CSU Long Beach. My PhD area of research is Chinese religions and culture, focusing specifically on the Taiwanese Buddhist NGO, Tzu Chi, which promotes sustainable living and helping the poor. As a non-traditional student, I have considerable life experience to draw upon. I worked as assistant to the staff economist in a U.S. Senator's office. I was a lecturer and the Coordinator of the College of Business’s Conversational English Program at Chung Yuan University in Taiwan. I founded, managed, and taught at a private, K-12 co-op school for families raising bilingual children. I have worked for many years as a Chinese-English translator, doing legal and academic translations. From 2009-2013, I was the grad student intern for the faculty union at CSU Long Beach where I managed their databases on trends in higher education and online education. I also did research contributing to several of the union’s internal white papers on higher education in California. In that job, I learned much about working with the academic senate and forming coalitions among student and faculty groups on campus to improve the campus climate for everyone. As GSA rep this year, I serve on the UCSD academic senate’s Committee on Planning and Budget. I have also been working with members of the GSA executive committee to draft a resolution about MOOCs and to help brainstorm on lobbying for more state support for the UC system. I am passionate about social justice and believe in doing my part to make the world a better place. I want to be VP Academic so I can use my skills and life experiences to form coalitions with student organizations, faculty, and staff to make UCSD more responsive to the needs of grad students.

If elected VP Academic,

∙ I would work to be fair and in the students’ best interest with the judicial review committee.
∙ I would fill academic senate committees early by incentivizing reps with summer travel/research grants.
∙ I would create a GSA committee of all reps sitting on academic senate committees that would meet twice a quarter to discuss how concerns among the faculty affect grad students and how we can resolve those concerns by working with faculty, administrators, and other student organizations.
∙ I would work with VP DSEI, VP Campus, administrators and the cultural centers to develop a series of sensitivity training certificates for faculty, TAs and GSRs on 1) racial issues, 2) LGBTQ issues, and 3) ability issues, as one way of addressing GPSES issues.
∙ I would develop and foster more interdisciplinary research partnerships and interdisciplinary conferences between student groups and departments.
∙ I would work with VP External to promote the results of grad student research and the importance of TAs to the UC system in lobbying efforts for grant funding in DC and state support of the UC system in Sacramento.
∙ I would continue working with the academic senate, GSA council, and the TA union to proactively address the issue of MOOCs.
∙ I would work with the other GSA executives to improve conditions for international students.
Mukanth Vaidyanathan, Candidate for VP of Financial Affairs

I, Mukanth Vaidyanathan, am a third year PhD candidate in the Department of Nanoengineering at UC San Diego in the laboratory of Dr. Sadik Esener. Since 2013, I have been serving as the department representative in Graduate Student Association (GSA), and a member of the finance committee. I also appoint as a GSA representative in the Student Fee Activity Committee (SFAC). My involvement as a member of finance committee and interim finance chair during fall 2014 makes me an excellent candidate for the Vice President of Financial Affairs (VP Finance).

The VP Finance mediates the GSA fees to various graduate students and Student Organizations by chairing the finance committee, regulating the funding procedures through GSA guidelines and complies with the university’s funding guidelines. I have demonstrated my ability to fulfill these responsibilities by meeting with the fund manager, Executive council members and conducting finance meetings during my interim term this fall. I have assisted Negin Nazarian, the VP finance in the annual budget and have allocated the Department Per Capita (DPC) for the year 2014-2015.

If elected as the VP Finance, my goals would be to help clarify and improve the funding process based on the feedback from executive members, members of the council and my fellow graduate students. I aim to increase grassroots interaction with the representatives and student organizations as I am convinced that GSA can benefit greatly from a closer relationship with the graduate student body. Additionally, by collaborating closely with the administration, I would be able to better understand the university policies, procedures and resources available for graduate students. I shall also reach out to additional funding to meet the demands for various departments, which have a lower graduate student representation.

I have enjoyed my time serving as the GSA department representative and hope to continue my work on the executive council as the Vice President of Financial Affairs.
Garrett Bredell, Candidate for VP of External Affairs

Higher education is a perennial issue for lawmakers in California and on the Hill. Every year our elected politicians review laws and policies pertaining to graduate students, and every year graduate students face burdens, old and new, which can be addressed by our lawmakers. However, it is up to graduate students to advocate for their personal and professional lives, and to communicate to legislators that our research and livelihood is important to us and to the wider community. I have had the pleasure of establishing this communication as the Vice President of External Affairs, and serving alongside our appointed Legislative Liaisons, our office has worked both by itself and within coalitions to push legislators to be responsive to graduate student related issues and concerns. I ask you to allow me to continue to serve our graduate student community and UCSD’s Graduate Student Association as Vice President of External Affairs.

At the state level, we must maintain vigilance over ongoing negotiations between the UC Presidency, the Regents and the California Governor. While many of the proposed changes are likely to affect undergraduates most acutely, there are proposals with respect to the structure of education which may also impact graduate students. I intend to continue to work with our excellent Legislative Liaison for for State and Local Affairs to make sure the UC Leadership and our representatives sitting in Sacramento understand the value and role of graduate students in maintaining a standard of excellence for education here at UCSD and across the University of California Campuses. I am especially interested in working with the Council, and with the initiative of Representative Zimmerman-Liu, to address the potential threats new online education programs may have on overall education quality and on graduate student employment. Current deliberations will prove to be a critical juncture in shaping the UCs of the future, and it is imperative that graduate students have a voice at the table.

At the national level, we continue to advocate on three primary issues: taxation and indebtedness, research funding increases, and immigration. We have worked closely with both the National Association for Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) and the Student Advocates for Graduate Education (SAGE), making two visits to the offices of our national representatives and relating personal stories of graduate student hardship and tailoring appeals to pending legislation. Here too, I hope to work closely again with our Legislative Liaison for National Affairs to repeat our message to Congress and emphasize how their votes will affect graduate student lives and research. I also hope to continue our working, professional relations with the Education Legislative Assistants and Associates serving in these offices who have expressed partial or whole hearted support for our advocacy agenda, and who have made specific requests of our office to provide information to use to better information their position on education.

The key to successful advocacy is repeating our message, and ensuring that persons with oversight over education policies continue to hear from graduate students on ongoing and nascent issues. With your support I will continue our outreach with legislators in California and Washington, and insist that graduate student voices be heard.
Daniel Jacobsen, Candidate for VP of Student and Campus Affairs

Daniel Jacobsen
Candidate Statement-GSA VP Student and Campus Affairs
2015-2016 School Year

My interest in VPSCA: VP of Student and Campus Affairs has become a multi-faceted position since the removal of VP Internal. Not only does VPSCA manage the social and cultural event portfolio, the position appoints to several committees related to housing (ARCHAC, BAC), transportation (TPC, STAC), student health (WCSAB, SHIP), and university centers (UCAB, Co-Op). Because of my experience as social coordinator and serving on various committees across campus, I am the ideal candidate for the position of VPSCA. I served as Bioengineering Rep for two years (‘12-‘14) before becoming Social Coordinator in ‘14-‘15. I have also served on the UCAB (‘13-’14) and TPC (‘14-’15). Internal to GSA I have assisted with the Bylaws committee, served on Che committee, and chaired the AS/GSA Joint Transportation committee.

On Roaming Socials and Free-For-Alls: Our events have become immensely popular in the last few years and we need to keep making improvements to maintain this popularity, such as:

- I will increase the roaming social budget above $300/social. At $120-$150/keg, this is barely above 2 kegs per event and provides no budget for interesting food.
- I will acquire additional food vendors/types for events. Our beer selection is immensely popular and our food varieties should reflect this success.
- I will find new venues for roaming socials. Venues such as Cafe Vita and the Grad Lounge no longer work well for the larger scale of socials. Acquiring alternative venues is important for the future.
- I will add variety to event themes. Themes and additional activities are a great way to keep popularity. Example: Winter 2015 social in the Rec Gym with Dodgeball.

On Committees and Campus Affairs: Committees and campus affairs are a dynamic landscape with new issues every year. Some of these issues include:

- Graduate Housing: I will ensure we have strong input from many students to make sure the new housing by Mesa best suits our needs.
- Cooperatives: The cooperatives are a unique part of UCSD, and should be protected and assisted with oversight by the student governments. I will work to ensure that they operate and thrive.
- Porter’s Pub: We as graduate students need to get our voice heard in the proposal process early to ensure the Pub is a vital space for graduate students.
- Transportation: I will work with MTS to improve public transportation as well as with Transportation Services (TS) to improve parking - both important aspects of graduate commuting.
- Anything Else: While it would be my duty as VP Campus to advocate for graduate students on campus affairs, I can’t know everything or be everywhere. Please bring me any affair you believe needs my attention, and we can work together to get the issue addressed.
Happy spring quarter everyone! My name is Betty Ramirez. I am a first year in the Comparative Literature Ph.D program. As an incoming student to UCSD, I have become involved in graduate student affairs through my participation as the Literature rep and the Graduate Climate Intern. Within these positions, I have come to experience the accomplishments and hardships of being a graduate student trying to improve graduate engagement at UCSD. Such improvements have been made difficult based on the lack of communication within GSA, administrators, and other collaborators. It becomes difficult to debate a policy when it is not clearly understood, or when debates center around other conversations that council has not been previewed to. As an elected executive, I will commit myself to forming better collaborations; I will ensure to improve the current communication we have within council and its outside relations.

Although I may only have two quarters of exposure to UCSD GSA legislation, I do have experience working with administrators and reviewing policy since I was in high school. I have interned with the Office of Public Instruction of Washington State. In my internship I mentored student projects that promoted healthier high school environments. I also interned with the non-profit “Voices of Youth” to create networking conferences for different high school students to learn how to develop dialogue with administrators. I helped develop the Decision Making Model for Black Hills High School to ensure student voice regarding important decisions made about scheduling, budget, and school lunches. As an undergrad I was also involved in residential government as a program coordinator and hall representative to the Residence Hall Association. I helped review and finalize the Good Samaritan policy that allowed undergraduates to seek assistance for alcoholic intoxication or drug-related situation from police, medical staff, and university staff without being subjected to formal discipline by the university. With this experience in mind, I am running for VP Campus because I am invested in student affairs. I want to become a part of the leadership that will lead initiatives and resolutions that will give a stronger voice and presence to graduate students. As VP Campus, I will review our current status with UCEN, STAC, and the C4 to develop strategic plans that will lead to successful implementations of council’s interest. On another note, I believe that the GPSES data is a crucial point of attention to start tackling issues and developing resolutions for positive changes to graduate and professional life. If elected, I will work with the new executives to begin laying out resolutions and events that will reflect a positive change towards graduate life.

Some of the changes that can be implement right away are our approaches to graduate events. I believe that we have a great foundation of staple events that can be enhanced through different activities and facilitated interactions. I will review the budget to make sure that we can add events that target multiple graduate communities. While some graduate students enjoy the Roaming Social Hours, others have expressed an interest for events that are not centered around beer. I will ensure that the Roaming Socials continue to be successful, while allowing room for graduate events that center around other forms of community enrichment such as the Community Kickbacks. My events as the Graduate Climate Intern demonstrated that there are some gaps and pockets of graduate students that seek more meaningful networking opportunities, whether that is a support group or a chance to meet other grads. Continuing the off-campus tours and events, with a carpooling system in mind, will ensure that we can provide variety in the events hosted by my position. I believe that with my experience and enthusiasm, executives and council can work together to make long-lasting improvements on council legislation and graduate events.
Troy Andreas Araiza Kokinis, Candidate for VP of Diversity, Service, Equity and Inclusion Affairs

I kindly and sincerely ask the UCSD GSA to support my nomination for the position of VP of Diversity, Service, Equity, and Inclusion Affairs. My experiences with social justice community organizing and teaching, both on university campuses and in various Southern California communities, have given me the insight needed to effectively perform the duties required of the position. While completing my undergraduate degree at Pitzer College, I was one of the small handful of students from the local Pomona Valley area. I always kept in close contact with the local community through tutoring in the AVID Program at Garey High School, but I still felt as though I was living between two worlds: one at college and one in the community. I eventually decided to utilize my position in the institution to garner resources to develop a bridge between the Claremont Colleges and the city of Pomona. During my sophomore year at Pitzer College, I began volunteering at the Pomona Economic Opportunities Center, a day laborer center. Inspired by Paulo Freire, I organized fellow students to give English lessons to workers with a specific focus on empowerment, such as negotiating for higher wages and denouncing abusive employers. We also used these networks to organize a community response to police checkpoints set up throughout the neighborhood intended to impound vehicles of undocumented drivers with the intention of later deporting them. I spent Saturday night, from 9pm to 3am, standing on the street corner with roughly thirty other students and community members while holding large banner to make drivers aware of the checkpoints ahead. This was quite the task after spending my Saturday afternoons playing third base on the NCAA Pomona-Pitzer baseball. In 2009, I co-founded the Hyde Park Half, a community center in Inglewood, California, where we offered high school students resources to explore various forms of artistic expression, such as music recording and muralism. The center served for two years as one of the few local options for students to explore artistic expression because the school district was suffering from cuts to “non-academic” programs. The project disbanded shortly after I left to live abroad and work as an English teacher in a small fishing village in the Spanish Basque Country.

Since moving to San Diego for graduate studies, I have dedicated two years as a head steward for the UAW 2865 TA union. I served as a bargaining team member for the last negotiations, during which I specifically worked on proposals for smaller class sizes, undocumented student fellowships, and gender neutral bathrooms. I currently volunteer one morning a week to the Student Worker Collective Intercambio Program, in which we offer ESL classes to UCSD service workers during their lunch breaks. I have also recently been involved supporting the CHE Café, as the space is an invaluable campus resource due to its service to a demographic of UCSD students and community members already extremely underrepresented at our university, those from the surrounding working class minority communities of San Diego and Tijuana.

My personal experiences growing up as a Chicano in LA’s predominately Latino suburban region of the Pomona Valley, as well as those I have shared while doing community organizing among racialized working class populations, lend me a unique and practical understanding of diversity. As VP of Diversity, Service, Equity, and Inclusion Affairs, I will engage and support women, ethnic minorities, and the LGBTQ community, as these historically underrepresented demographics offer unique perspectives in their scholarship and enrich the diverse cultural makeup of our campus community. Second, I will encourage the involvement of local non-academics in campus activity. We have a lot to learn from local artists, labor organizers, poets, high school students, construction workers, and city planners, among others, and I believe it is important for graduate students to engage with local community members to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and ideas beyond the confines of our institution. Finally, I will facilitate interdisciplinary scholarship, specifically between the arts and the hard sciences. After serving three years as a TA in the Sixth College Culture, Art, and Technology Writing Program, I have a clear understanding of the value of putting seemingly disparate divisions in conversations with one another, as these conversations allow for a more complex and critical analysis of where we are today, and where we are going in the future. I look forward to taking on these responsibilities from a position in graduate student government, as the position will merely institutionalize the diversity-oriented work that I have been carrying out for nearly a decade.

Troy Andreas Araiza Kokinis
PhD Student, Department of History, UC San Diego
Tara-Lynne Pixley, Candidate for VP of Diversity, Service, Equity and Inclusion Affairs

I am Tara Pixley, a third year in the Communication PhD program and a GSA representative who has worked extensively within various student interest groups including Diversity Committee, Childcare Oversight Committee [CCOC], the UCEN and the Cultural Student Organizations Council [CSOC]. Currently, I am co-chairing the Diversity Committee. In this position, I have worked toward improved mentorship relationships, student parent-friendly policy change, more open access to the GPSES data for GSA — which was realized this year— and have planned grad-oriented collaborations with various organizations including:

- 2013: Parent’s Night Out [Grad Div]
- 2014: Diversity Luncheon [Grad Div]
- 2015: Community Kickback [Div Comm/Grad Div]
- 2015: Community Centers Block Party [CSOC/Div Comm/ Grad Div]
- 2015: Grad Parents Townhall [Div Comm/ Grad Div]
- 2015: Grad Parents Works-in-Progress [GSA/Grad Div]

In addition, I have met consistently with the office of the VC EDI and been instrumental in broaching various grad student concerns to the staff there, working alongside the GSA President and VP DSEI to keep communication open between students and administration. This is indicative of the work I want to continue and expand as a GSA executive.

I have worked closely with the VP DSEI and GSA reps to identify issues affecting grad parents and to institute policy changes that will positively affect the lives of the student parents and their children. Though I have tried to do much to represent the best interests of graduate students on this campus, I know much more can be (must be) done. If elected as VP DSEI, I will build on my relationships with the Graduate Division, the VC EDI’s office, GSA, Diversity Committee and the CSOC, utilizing those partnerships to produce a more equitable social and academic environment for all graduate students.

Furthermore, I will work to bridge gaps in administration/grad student, faculty/grad, undergrad/grad and Humanities/STEM relationships, emphasizing the power of compromise and community to make this university an example of how to achieve strength and excellence through diversity.

My experience extends far beyond the university or student government setting. In my 15 years as a professional photographer, journalist and editor, I have hired, trained and managed small staffs as well as collaborated with multiple personalities to plan and implement huge projects, overhaul outdated admin systems, and to conceive and establish new modes of productivity. I will pair my experience in managing people, coordinating events and project implementation with a passion to improve quality of life for the graduate student body at UCSD through the following:

- Create departmental infrastructure for faculty and TA diversity training
- Improve GSA representation by seeking policy-minded participants
- Utilize recent GPSES data to push equal treatment reform for underprivileged groups
- Establish task force with UAW reps, Grad Div, VC EDI and VP Campus to address concerns of international students and other groups experiencing unsafe working environments
- Continue push for childcare reform including: Subsidies/Alternate care options/Childcare Fair
- Work toward UCEN programming that draws in more graduate participation