



Graduate Student Council

of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

63.gsc.15

A Resolution To Update the Legislative Platform of the Graduate Student Council

Author: External Affairs Board

Whereas, graduate students at MIT are stakeholders in policy issues at the local, state, and national levels;

Whereas, the External Affairs Board (EAB, or "the Board") shall coordinate the external affairs and activities of the GSC, including statements of the positions of the GSC or the graduate student body on issues of significance to the welfare of graduate students at MIT;

Whereas, the Board is responsible for assisting the GSC in development of its policy positions by annually submitting a proposed Policy Platform for consideration and approval by the membership; and

Whereas, the External Affairs Board approved the text included in Appendix 1 unanimously at its February 10th meeting, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the current text of the Policy Platform of the Graduate Student Council shall be struck and replaced with the text included in Appendix 1 of this resolution.

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Appendix 1

Policy Platform of the Graduate Student Council

FOREWORD

The GSC External Affairs Board (EAB) is responsible for assisting the GSC in development of its policy positions by annually submitting a proposed Policy Platform for consideration and approval by the membership. As specified in the GSC Bylaws, the Board is empowered to communicate the positions contained in this Policy Platform to relevant external organizations.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND DIVERSITY

The GSC firmly supports:

1. Protecting the First Amendment rights of students to publish scholarly work and to engage in advocacy, lobbying, and debate without fear of reprisal.
2. Protecting the rights of all students regardless of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin.
3. All efforts that encourage diversity at institutions of higher learning.
4. Policies that increase the ease of access to public records, including affordable access and increased online availability of public documents.
5. Policies that provide complete privacy protection for student treatment records at postsecondary institutions to prevent disclosure to any party not directly involved in the treatment of the student without the student's consent, regardless of whether any previous disclosure has occurred.
6. Policies that ensure that personal information about a student or students, held by a postsecondary institution, is always maintained securely and never disclosed unnecessarily or inappropriately.
7. Policies that forbid university faculty and staff from demanding information from students, including account credentials for electronic or online services, that could be used against the students in any university process, including the university disciplinary process.
8. Policies that ensure students are always given appropriate credit for their work.

The GSC firmly *opposes*:

9. Policies that disrupt students' work or studies.

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QUALITY OF LIFE

The GSC firmly supports:

10. Policies that ensure that MIT graduate student income increases at or above the overall rate of increase of cost of living and remains competitive with graduate student income at peer institutions.
11. Access to affordable and comprehensive healthcare, including mental health care and dental coverage, for all graduate students and their dependents. Coverage should apply regardless of where the student lives or works.
12. Medical leave policies for all students that ensure access to all services, rights, and privileges of active students, including medical insurance and stipend support.
13. 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.
14. Access to gender neutral paid parental leave for all graduate students.
15. Access to affordable, quality childcare both on and off campus for all graduate students.
16. Access to affordable, quality housing, accessible from MIT, for all members of graduate student households.
17. Policies and developments that increase the availability, quality, and affordability of transportation services and infrastructure used by students.
18. Access to affordable, quality options for shopping, dining, and basic services both on and off campus.
19. Extension of benefits to graduate students that are currently exclusively offered to undergraduates to the extent to which those benefits are relevant to the graduate population.

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HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

The GSC firmly supports:

20. Efforts to maintain and/or increase the amount of state and federal funding provided for colleges and universities in the United States.
21. The expansion of graduate fellowship and need-based scholarship programs, especially those that provide educational opportunities to traditionally underrepresented groups and underfunded disciplines.
22. Actions taken to promote affordable tuition and low student loan interest rates.
23. Policies that ensure that tax benefits are fairly applied to graduate students given their unique financial situation.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

The GSC firmly supports:

24. Policies that encourage public and private investments in research and development in order to improve the competitiveness of the United States.
25. Policies that promote the use of federal discretionary spending for research and development that supports grants and fellowships at institutions of higher education.

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ISSUES

The GSC firmly supports:

26. All measures that enable international students enrolled at accredited US universities, including MIT, to obtain visas to study in the US and enter the country unimpeded.
27. All measures that enable international students, research staff, and faculty to renew their visas, renew or update their legal status, and enter and leave the US unimpeded.
28. Student visa policy that allows international students to participate in the same extracurricular, educational, training, and on-campus employment opportunities during their studies that are available to domestic students, and that allows their spouses to pursue employment opportunities in the United States.
29. All measures that make more employment opportunities and more employment-based visas (particularly H-1B) available to international students who obtain their graduate degrees in the US.
30. Policies that encourage entrepreneurship and enable international students and graduates of US universities to found companies in the US.
31. Efforts to streamline the immigration processes relevant to undocumented students.

The GSC firmly *opposes*:

32. Any government actions that would result in the deportation of students enrolled at MIT, including undocumented students, or would limit the future admission of undocumented students.

PROMOTING RESEARCH

The GSC firmly supports:

33. Federal initiatives to increase the public dissemination of scholarly research products.
34. Efforts supporting open access to publications resulting from federally funded research.
35. Efforts by lawmakers to take action on issues raised by the scientific community that are crucial to society's well-being, including, but not limited to, climate change and sustainability.
36. Strengthening ties between policy makers and experts in order to take full advantage of the investments by the federal government in research by using research findings to inform policy decision making.