



# Graduate Student Council of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

## 63.gsc.3 Resolution to create a Funding Board Task Force Authors: GSC President Arolyn Conwill and GSC Treasurer Lisa Guay

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) promotes the general welfare of the graduate students both through its own work and by supporting individuals and groups in the graduate community at large. Funding Board (defined in Article II, Section G, Subsection 3 of the GSC Bylaws) is tasked with both awarding funds and setting funding guidelines and priorities.

However, the current process by which Funding Board allocates resources encounters the following barriers to efficiently and fairly distributing funds to support graduate student life on campus.

- The variety of funding sources and their separate applications impose high costs for both student groups and the GSC.
- The current funding application timelines do not allow sufficient time for review, discussion, and appeals to occur prior to cycle start.
- Funding guidelines are out-of-date, inaccessible, vague, and/or nonexistent.
- The current guidelines have not been effective in promoting meaningful collaboration between student groups.
- Events are often jointly funded by multiple GSC funding sources, but these decisions are made separately, often by different people, and using different criteria.
- Some funds are chronically underutilized.
- There is no funding available mid-cycle, regardless of circumstance.

In order to optimize Funding Board's allocation process, the GSC President shall convene a Task Force on Funding Board in accordance with the guidelines for ad hoc committees in the GSC Constitution and Bylaws, and in accordance with the committee charge attached to this Resolution.

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**Motivation:** Allocating funds to individuals and student groups within the graduate community is a significant way the GSC directly serves its constituents. However, the current system is inefficient, complex, and unresponsive to student needs. While updating Funding Board's internal guidelines is already underway, possible changes also include revisions to the GSC Bylaws, changes to the structure of GSC funds and applications, and updates to advertising and communication practices. Because viewpoints from outside Funding Board will be valuable as we consider how to make GSC funding work better for students, a Task Force is an appropriate mechanism for addressing these issues.

**Purpose:** The Funding Board Task Force shall examine the current GSC Bylaws and Funding Board guidelines that determine how the GSC allocates to individuals and student groups through Funding Board. The Task Force shall propose revisions to the GSC Bylaws and Funding Board guidelines that simplify application procedures, promote consistency across funding sources, improve the timeliness of funding decisions, and encourage

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collaboration and use of underutilized GSC resources.

**Timeline:** The Task Force shall be convened within a month of passage of the Resolution authorizing the creation of the Task Force. The Task Force shall report to the General Council at or before the October General Council Meeting with proposed actions that could be taken by Funding Board or by Council. The Task Force shall terminate with the delivery of this report.

**Membership:** The membership of this Task Force shall be determined at the discretion of the GSC President. An ideal Task Force will have at least four members total, including graduate students who have served on Funding Board and graduate students who have applied to Funding Board, and who will take into account the diverse interests of the graduate community. The GSC Treasurer will Chair this Task Force, and the GSC President shall serve as an *ex-officio* member of this Task Force. The Task Force will regularly consult with Funding Board members and student group representatives who are not members of the Task Force.

**Support:** Operating costs associated with this Task Force are capped at \$500 and will be charged to Executive Committee line item 1.1d ("Meetings: Task Forces") in the FY17 budget.

**Report:** The Task Force Chair will submit proposed changes to Funding Board's guidelines and priorities, as well as proposed changes to the GSC Bylaws if deemed appropriate by the Task Force. The report will also include the Task Force's methodology and rationale behind the proposed changes.

Note that, according to the GSC Bylaws (Article II, Section G, Subsection 3), Funding Board is authorized to set funding guidelines and priorities. As such, Funding Board may opt to implement some or none of these changes at any time.