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Graduate Student Council

of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Policy Platform of the Graduate Student Council

Author: GSC External Affairs Board (EAB)

Passed by General Council: October 5th, 2016

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. While the Policy Platform is not an exclusive expression of the issues of concern to the GSC, this platform identifies the GSC's main policy priorities.

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.

QUALITY OF LIFE

The GSC firmly supports:

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Medical leave policies for all students that ensure access to all services, rights, and privileges of active students, including medical insurance and stipend support.

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8. 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.
9. Access to gender neutral paid parental leave for all graduate students.
10. Access to affordable, quality childcare both on and off campus for all graduate students.
11. Access to affordable, quality housing, accessible from MIT, for all graduate students and their dependents.
12. Policies and developments that increase the availability, quality, and affordability of transportation services and infrastructure used by students.
13. Access to affordable, quality options for shopping, dining, and basic services both on and off campus.
14. 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.

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

The GSC firmly supports:

15. Efforts to maintain and/or increase the amount of state and federal funding provided for colleges and universities in the United States.
16. The expansion of graduate fellowship and need-based scholarship programs, especially those that provide educational opportunities to traditionally underrepresented groups and underfunded disciplines.
17. Actions taken to promote affordable tuition and low student loan interest rates.
18. 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:

19. Policies that encourage public and private investments in research and development in order to improve the competitiveness of the United States.
20. 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:

21. 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.
22. All measures that enable international students to renew their visas, renew or update their legal status, and enter and leave the US unimpeded during their studies.
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. Efforts to streamline the immigration processes relevant to undocumented students.

The GSC firmly *opposes*:

26. Any government actions that would result in the deportation of undocumented students enrolled at MIT.

PROMOTING RESEARCH

The GSC firmly supports:

27. Federal initiatives to increase the public dissemination of scholarly research products.
28. Efforts supporting open access to publications resulting from federally funded research.
29. 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.
30. 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.