



Graduate Student Council of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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62.gsc.7.1: Update to the Legislative Platform of the Graduate Student Council

Author: GSC Legislative Action Subcommittee (LASC)

Introduced: February 3, 2016

Whereas, graduate students at MIT are stakeholders in legislative issues both at a local and national level; and

Whereas, the Graduate Student Council actively promotes the interests of graduate students through the activities of the Legislative Action Subcommittee; and

Whereas, the Legislative Platform should reflect the current interests of the MIT graduate community as well as the current state of legislative affairs; now, therefore, be it hereby

Resolved, that the Graduate Student Council updates its Legislative Platform to the following:

LEGISLATIVE ACTION SUBCOMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

The GSC LASC has a threefold mission:

I. To advocate on behalf of the graduate student body to local, state, and federal governments in concert with other parts of the GSC, as appropriate;

II. To maintain awareness of legislative and regulatory developments affecting graduate students and disseminate information through the GSC;

III. To encourage graduate student participation and activism in the political and legislative process.

FOREWORD

The GSC Legislative Action Subcommittee is responsible for assisting the GSC in development of its legislative policy by annually submitting a proposed Federal Legislative Platform for consideration and approval by the membership. While the Federal Legislative Platform is not an exclusive expression of the federal legislative issues of concern to the GSC, this platform identifies the GSC's main public policy priorities. GSC seeks to work with the higher education community to formulate policies affecting GSC's membership that advance national goals and objectives.



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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. Access to affordable and comprehensive healthcare for all graduate students and their dependents.
4. Access to affordable childcare and parental leave for all graduate students.
5. Access to affordable housing for all graduate students and their dependents.
6. 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.
7. All efforts that encourage diversity at institutions of higher learning.

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

The GSC firmly supports:

8. Efforts to maintain and/or increase the amount of state and federal funding provided for colleges and universities in the United States.
9. The expansion of graduate fellowship and need-based scholarship programs, especially those that provide educational opportunities to traditionally underrepresented groups and underfunded disciplines.
10. Actions taken to promote affordable tuition and low student loan interest rates.
11. Broadening of tax exemptions and deductions for graduate education expenses and protecting all such existing exemptions and deductions.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

The GSC firmly supports:



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12. Policies that encourage public and private investments in innovation through research and development in order to improve the competitiveness of the United States.

13. Policies that promote the use of federal discretionary spending for research and development that supports grants and fellowships at institutions of higher education.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ISSUES

The GSC firmly supports:

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. Efforts to streamline the immigration processes relevant to undocumented students.

PROMOTING SCIENCE

The GSC firmly supports:

19. Federal initiatives to increase the public dissemination of scholarly research products.

20. Efforts supporting open access to publications resulting from federally funded research.

21. 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.

22. The GSC supports strengthening ties between policy makers and experts in science in order to take full advantage of the investments by the federal government in scientific research by using scientific findings to inform policy decision making.