

Officers

gsc-officers@mit.edu

President

Sarah Goodman

Executive Committee

gsc-president@mit.edu

Vice-President

Lisa Guay

Nominations Board

gsc-vp@mit.edu

Secretary

Orpheus Chatzivasilieiou

Publications & Publicity Board

gsc-secretary@mit.edu

Treasurer

Krithika Ramchander

Funding Board

gsc-treasurer@mit.edu

Committees

gsc-excomm@mit.edu

Academics, Research, & Careers (ARC)

Patrick O' Shea

Richard Zhang

gsc-arc@mit.edu

Activities (AC)

Karthik Akkiraju

Yijin Wei

gsc-ac@mit.edu

Assoc. of Student Activities (ASA)

Sabina Chen

gsc-asa@mit.edu

External Affairs (EAB)

Peter Su

gsc-eab@mit.edu

Housing & Community Affairs (HCA)

Malvika Verma

Nicholas Triantafillou

gsc-hca@mit.edu

Muddy Charles Pub

Alex Genshaft

gsc-muddy-chair@mit.edu

Orientation (OC)

Akshata Krishnamurthy

German Parada

gsc-oc@mit.edu

Staff

Administrative

Lauren McLean

Elizabeth (Betsy) Granese

gsc-admin@mit.edu

GSC Office

77 Massachusetts Avenue

Room 50-220

Cambridge, MA 02139

Phone: 617-253-2195

<http://gsc.mit.edu>



Graduate Student Council

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A Resolution To Update the Policy 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 submitting proposed Policy Platform updates for consideration and approval by the membership; and

Whereas, the External Affairs Board approved the text included in Appendix 1 at its December 14th 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.

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 and expression, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, employment status, marital status, national or ethnic origin, or immigration status.
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.
9. Protecting open and equal access to the internet.

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The GSC firmly *opposes*:

10. Policies that disrupt students' work or studies.

QUALITY OF LIFE

The GSC firmly supports:

11. 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.
12. 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.
13. Medical leave policies for all students that ensure access to all services, rights, and privileges of active students, including medical insurance and stipend support.
14. Policies that effectively prevent sexual misconduct, provide resources and support for survivors, and result in fair and timely investigations with appropriate consequences for perpetrators.
15. Access to gender neutral paid parental leave for all graduate students.
16. Access to affordable, quality childcare both on and off campus for all graduate students.
17. Access to affordable, quality housing, accessible from MIT, for all members of graduate student households.
18. Policies and developments that increase the availability, quality, affordability, and safety of transportation services and infrastructure used by students.
19. Access to affordable, quality options for shopping, dining, and basic services both on and off campus.
20. 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.
21. Provision of convenient, fair, and safe restrooms for graduate students of all gender identities.
22. Policies, programs, and activities that improve the relationship between MIT and the local community.

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23. Efforts to protect the environment.

24. Measures that enable the MIT community and all individual members to decrease their carbon footprints.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND VOTING RIGHTS

The GSC firmly supports:

25. Policies and programs that increase the civic engagement of the MIT community.

26. Policies and programs that protect and promote the voting rights of students.

27. Policies and programs that maximize access to the polls for students eligible to vote.

28. Allowing international students to vote in municipal elections.

29. Adoption of voting methods that more accurately reflect the preferences of voters.

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

The GSC firmly supports:

30. Efforts to increase the amount of funding provided for colleges and universities.

31. The expansion of graduate fellowship and need-based scholarship programs, especially those that provide educational opportunities to traditionally underrepresented groups and underfunded disciplines.

32. Policies and programs that ensure higher education is affordable for all.

33. 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:

34. Policies that encourage public and private investments in research and development.

35. 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:

36. 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.
37. All measures that enable international students, research staff, faculty, and their families to renew their visas, renew or update their legal status, and enter and leave the US unimpeded.
38. 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.
39. All measures that make more employment opportunities and more employment-based visas available to international students who obtain their graduate degrees in the US.
40. Policies that encourage entrepreneurship and enable international students and graduates of US universities to found companies in the US.
41. Expanding pathways to legal permanent resident status for international students.
42. Pathways to legal status for undocumented students.

The GSC firmly *opposes*:

43. 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.

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PROMOTING RESEARCH

The GSC firmly supports:

44. Federal initiatives to increase the public dissemination of scholarly research products.
45. Open access to publications resulting from federally funded research.
46. Taking action on issues raised by the scientific and academic communities.
47. Research on issues crucial to society's well-being.
48. Strengthening ties between policy makers and experts in the academic and scientific communities.
49. Using research findings to inform policy decision making.
50. Efforts to promote the study and monitoring of climate change and its effects.
51. Proactive efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, including but not limited to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.