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Graduate Student Council
of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Policy Platform of the Graduate Student Council

Passed by General Council: August 7th, 2019

FOREWORD

The following policy platform contains the views and positions of the MIT Graduate Student Council (GSC). This document acts as a guide and summary which may be used by committees of the GSC to pass position statements. The GSC will update and reaffirm these positions on an annual basis.

RIGHTS AND DIVERSITY

The GSC firmly supports:

1. Protecting the rights of students 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, political affiliation, or immigration status.
3. All efforts that encourage diversity at institutions of higher education.
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 records and personal information and prevent disclosure to any third party without the student's consent, regardless of whether any previous disclosure has occurred.
6. Policies that forbid university faculty and staff from demanding information from students that could be used against the student in any university process, including the university disciplinary process.
7. Policies that ensure students are always given appropriate credit for their work.
8. Protecting open and equal access to the internet.

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 but not limited to mental health care and dental coverage, for all graduate students and their dependents without bias based on protected classes. 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. Access to gender neutral paid parental leave for all graduate students.
14. Access to affordable, quality childcare both on and off campus for all graduate students.
15. Access to affordable, quality housing, accessible from MIT, for all members of graduate student households.
16. Policies and developments that increase the availability, quality, affordability, and safety of transportation services and infrastructure used by students.
17. Access to affordable, quality options for shopping, dining, and basic services both on and off campus.
18. 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.
19. Policies that effectively prevent sexual misconduct, provide resources and support for survivors, and result in fair and timely investigations with appropriate consequences for perpetrators.
20. Provision of convenient, fair, and safe restrooms for graduate students of all gender identities.
21. Policies, programs, and activities that improve the relationship between MIT and the local community.
22. Efforts to protect the environment.
23. Measures that enable the MIT community and all individual members to decrease their carbon footprints.
24. Efforts and policies to achieve equality in the legal system, especially as it pertains to vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.
25. Efforts that reduce, or compensate for, barriers to education for all students, especially underrepresented populations in higher education.
26. Policies that encourage effective and high quality academic and professional mentorship, advising, and development
27. Policies that allow students to explore and pursue diverse career paths, including those in academia, industry, government, entrepreneurship, and elsewhere.
28. Policies that foster general well-being and a healthy and productive work-life balance for graduate students.

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29. Policies that provide support for graduate students in adverse situations involving advisors or administrators that negatively impact the student experience or outcomes.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND VOTING RIGHTS

The GSC firmly supports:

30. Policies and programs that increase the civic engagement of the MIT community.
31. Policies and programs that protect and promote the voting rights of students.
32. Policies and programs that maximize access to the polls for students eligible to vote.
33. Allowing international students to vote in municipal elections.
34. Adoption of voting methods that more accurately reflect the preferences of voters.
35. Policies that strengthen student voices in politics.

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

The GSC firmly supports:

36. Efforts to maintain or increase college and university funding.
37. The expansion of graduate fellowship and need-based scholarship programs, especially those that provide educational opportunities to traditionally underrepresented groups and underfunded disciplines.
38. Policies and programs that ensure higher education is affordable for all.
39. 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:

40. Policies that encourage public and private investments in research and development.
41. 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:

42. All measures that enable international students enrolled at accredited US universities to obtain visas and study in the US.
43. 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.
44. Policies that allow international students to participate in the same extracurricular, educational, training, and on-campus employment opportunities during their studies that are available to domestic students.
45. All measures that make more employment opportunities and more employment-based visas available to international students who obtain their graduate degrees in the US.
46. Measures that enable international students' families to pursue employment opportunities in the United States.
47. Policies that encourage entrepreneurship and enable international students and graduates of US universities to found companies in the US.
48. Expanding pathways to legal permanent resident status for international students.
49. Pathways to legal status for undocumented students.

The GSC firmly *opposes*:

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

PROMOTING RESEARCH

The GSC firmly supports:

51. Federal initiatives to increase the public dissemination of scholarly research products.
52. Open access to publications resulting from federally funded research.
53. Taking action on issues raised by the scientific and academic communities.
54. Research on issues crucial to society's well-being.
55. Strengthening ties between policy makers and experts in the academic and scientific communities.
56. Using research findings to inform policy decision making.
57. Efforts to promote the study and monitoring of climate change and its effects.
58. Proactive efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, including but not limited to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
59. Protecting and expanding the legal rights of students to disseminate scholarly work.
60. The use of ethical research methods.
61. Ethical application of scientific results and developments.