



# Graduate Student Council

of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

## Officers

gsc-officers@mit.edu

### President

Madeleine Sutherland  
**Executive Committee**  
gsc-president@mit.edu

### Vice-President

Jerry Ng  
**Nominations Board**  
gsc-vp@mit.edu

### Secretary

Naveen Arunachalam  
**Publications &  
Publicity Board**  
gsc-secretary@mit.edu

### Treasurer

Steven Burcat  
**Funding Board**  
gsc-treasurer@mit.edu

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gsc-excomm@mit.edu

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Emre Ergeçen  
Simone Bruno  
gsc-arc@mit.edu

### Activities (AC)

Henry Tran  
Somayajulu Dhulipala  
gsc-ac@mit.edu

### Assoc. of Student Activities (ASA)

Becca Black  
gsc-asa@mit.edu

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Bianca Lepe  
gsc-diversity@mit.edu

### External Affairs (EAB)

Jordan Harrod  
gsc-eab@mit.edu

### Housing & Community Affairs (HCA)

Jonathan Behrens  
Lucio Milanese  
gsc-hca@mit.edu

### Muddy Charles Pub

Jennifer Kaczmarek  
gsc-muddy@mit.edu

### Orientation (OC)

Shashank Agarwal  
Maytee Chan  
gsc-oc@mit.edu

## Administrative Staff

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>

1. Introduction (5:30-5:40)
  - a. New faces
  - b. Quorum check\*
    - i. Passed
  - c. Approval of March minutes\*
    - i. Passed
2. GSC Officer Elections (5:40-6:40)\*
  - a. President
    - i. AJ Miller – nomination Seconded
      1. Uncontested
      2. Speech: view script [here](#)
      3. Q&A:
        - a. Q: What would you add to student insurance for “full and complete” mental health coverage?
        - b. A: Great recent work in raising covered sessions from 12 to 52 a year with copay reduced from \$25 to \$5 for additional. Heard from student leaders that previously insurance covered unlimited visits with no copay, we should work to get that back. Also want to improve referral process from MIT Medical that has been shoddy and appointment availability.
        - c. Q: If a union were to form, how would you see the GSC’s role with such an effort?
        - d. A: Many of the issues a union would advocate for overlap with a lot of our efforts, so I would see this as a complementary relationship. They would have more legal teeth to enforce student compensation and worker protections, and those issues could be addressed by united front of graduate students with the GSC. The GSC also oversees issues outside of the purview of union, so we do not completely overlap. I see my job in this position as doing the best possible for graduate students, so I am very open to the possibility of a union.
        - e. Q: If a union were to be established and students voted for it to absorb the GSC, what role do you see in advocating for students not



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covered by the union such as certain master's students or fellowship supported students?

- f. A: I think the GSC's role is to represent all graduate students, so if a union were to become the main representative body of graduate students there still needs to be a place for representing those students. The GSC has a wider umbrella of issues and students to cover than a union, but there would be substantial overlap. If this case were to become true, we would need to ensure all students are still represented in the new government.
- g. Q: If a union effort were to take place and administration would try to use the GSC against the union, how do you see yourself responding to that?
- h. A: My job as GSC president is to represent the graduate student body and do whatever I think is best for graduate students. I will obviously listen to anything administration ever has to say, but my sole purpose is for serving graduate students, and I am not beholden to any pressure from administration.
- i. Q: If administration asked you to attend a meeting about policy affecting international students with no international student representation, what would you do?
- j. A: First ask if we can bring appropriate representatives for the issues, in this case international students, and if they don't allow other students, don't attend the meeting to not give any guise of student input on an issue we're not the best representatives for.
- k. Q: What would you change about the GSC?
- l. A: Improve the efficiency of GCM meetings, interface more with departmental student governments and multicultural student groups, better coordinate student efforts with those groups, improve GSC messaging so students better understand our purpose, encourage more productive and efficient engagement with students, continually work on the website as our public face, utilize institute committees' members to be better equipped to represent students



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- m. Q: What role do you see for the GSC to play in working with dorm governments?
  - n. A: I see our role as creating coordination and communication between all student leaders on campus to help resolve whatever issues may be facing graduate students. The dorm governments obviously have their own purview, but not all issues can be solved by working with housing alone, so it is our job to elevate and escalate attention on unaddressed issues. The same is true for the departmental student governments. Our job as the GSC is to act as a center for graduate students in a decentralized campus.
  - o. Q: When was a time you made a leadership mistake and what did you learn from it?
  - p. A: As an undergrad, led Values Statement committee with intention of adding diversity as a core value. Failed to come to fruition from administrative resistance and lost momentum after a strong start. Needed to have act when the opportunity was right. Learned to strike faster and finish when student support is there.
- 4. [Move to closed-door session]
  - 5. Election confirmed. Congratulations conveyed from the Council.

## b. Vice President

### i. Syed Shayan Zahid – nomination Seconded

#### 1. Speech

#### 2. Q&A:

- a. You mentioned wanting to destigmatize accessing mental health services. What are your thoughts on how to accomplish that IRL?
  - i. Have everyone do an initial appointment/form procedure with MIT Mental Health when they start their programs so that 1) they're all aware of the service and 2) accessing MIT Mental Health is just a normal thing



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- everyone does like their vaccination paperwork and physical exam
- ii. Increase/improve messaging to grad student body

### c. Secretary

#### i. Akshit Singla: Seconded

##### 1. Uncontested

##### 2. Speech

- a. Coming in with entrepreneurship background
- b. Increasing communication
- c. "Fun-guy" role

##### 3. Q&A:

- a. How to manage onslaught of party funding requests?
  - i. Different student groups = different identities and traits. How much overlap between groups, what affiliations? Setting budget limits harder to spread out more.
- b. What are your plans on publicizing events? Instagram etc are inactive.
  - i. Social media channels exist, not aware of uptake. First step is get more people to sign up. Use more physical communication channels with opening up (posters). Double down on physical hotspots where people hang out.

##### c. One more thing:

- i. Part of his program is about project management, avoiding straying from the topic is a strength. Meetings wont need to be too long, decision making more transparent and efficient. Look at things from the target audience (grad student) POV.

##### 4. Will send google form

### d. Treasurer

#### 3. GSC EAB Elections (6:40-7:00)

#### 4. Officer updates



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## a. President

### i. Research funding extensions

1. Programs with fixed-term funding already problematic. COVID = research delays.
2. Provost expressed commitment to funding extensions but departments haven't communicated this
3. GSC memo vetted by provost
4. Bad communication between admin and departments
5. Have a [survey](#) to talk about COVID impacts on research

## 5. Committee updates (7:00-7:15)

### a. ARC

- i. Events: PHD/MBA connector and monthly meeting April 29th (election)
- ii. No visiting students allowed Spring 2021 (VISTA hibernating)
- iii. Alumni relations subcommittee fireside chat
- iv. 20% of phd students responded to survey

### b. AC

- i. May: MIT Talent show
- ii. HarvardxMITxStanford game night April 16
- iii. MFA Basquiat April 15
- iv. Matt Burns Magnum Opus Tasting Concerts Week of April 26th
- v. Improv Asylum early May
- vi. Purcell Society Alehouse event mid May
- vii. Elections

### c. ASA

- i. ASA had elections on Monday (GSC Treasurer will be grad rep to ASA)
- ii. CP\* Midway on gather.town
- iii. Next year has a space cycle and a new space oversight board
- iv. Re-recognition starts soon
- v. Have formal transition meetings

### d. DEI

- i. First draft of DEI@MIT Strategic plan out
- ii. Community engagement sessions April 14th
- iii. Recruiting for the year

### e. EAB

- i. Statements passed:



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1. Graduate student mental health federal advocacy
  2. Code modification proposal regarding all-gender restrooms
  3. Opinion piece in support of Endless Frontier Act
  4. Reforming Policing and Public Safety Infrastructure
- ii. Recruiting for Board Leadership positions
  - iii. Events
    1. Student Wellbeing and Mental Health
    2. LGBTQ+ Issues
    3. Accessibility
    4. Climate Policy
    5. Tech Transfer/Commercialization
- f. HCA
- i. 301 Vassar
    1. Working way through city approval process (color of the building)
    2. Rents uncertain (preview in April)
  - ii. Strident recommendations
    1. Suggested 4.5% increase and improvement for grants for students with children, will hear back this month
  - iii. Health insurance enrollment
    1. Some students have had their health insurance cancelled
    2. Reach out to HCA
  - iv. Housing License Agreement Renewal
    1. Web portal isnt working
- g. Muddy
- i. Looking forward to reopen, need more grad student members
- h. OC
- i. Recruiting
6. Open Floor (7:15-7:30)
- o. Secretary
- Akshit Singla
    - Uncontested
    - Coming in with entrepreneurship background
    - Increasing communication
    - “Fun-guy” role



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- How to manage onslaught of party funding requests?
  - Different student groups = different identities and traits. How much overlap between groups, what affiliations? Setting budget limits harder to spread out more.
- What are your plans on publicizing events? Instagram etc are inactive.
  - Social media channels exist, not aware of uptake. First step is get more people to sign up. Use more physical communication channels with opening up (posters). Double down on physical hotspots where people hang out.
- One more thing:
  - Part of his program is about project management, avoiding straying from the topic is a strength. Meetings wont need to be too long, decision making more transparent and efficient. Look at things from the target audience (grad student) POV.

- Will send google form

- Treasurer

- Vincent Zu

- Uncontested
  - One major part of the role is to interact with student groups, need to start small and get momentum going. Especially true with transition back, as a lot of transitions arent working out. One way to resume these activities is to reconsider funding priorities. Update funding guidelines (current ones are self conflicting). Resume financial workshops.
  - Several specialized funds underutilized like family program and cultural diversity events, and collaboration of student groups. Set up higher funding for these types of events
  - Interest in personal finance. Encourage more student participation in housing costs and stipend. Ex dont have a masters student in the decision making process.
  - Better engage students
  - Q&A:
    - How to manage onslaught of party funding requests?



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- Rules that encourage greater student participation, more policies
- Make sure event organizers follow those rules
- Will send google form

### ○ EAB elections

#### ▪ Jordan Harrod

- Uncontested (chosen from EAB)
- Joined EAB as a first year, spent a lot of last year against Trump admin, like with international student issues and pushing back against fixed duration visas. Currently working with Biden admin. Continue working on those issues. State and local level outreach (Cambridge student organization).
- Q&A
  - Goals for recruitment?
    - Do more internal events. Historically it is external facing, so hold more events for people wanting to get involved in advocacy.
- Will send google form