

2019 GSA Executive Board Elections

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PRESIDENT

- 1) **Yulia Gilichinskaya**, *Film and Digital Media*, 3rd year PhD
Tony Boardman, *Literature*, 3rd year PhD

We are running as a collective of organizers whose primary goal is to dramatically improve the material conditions of graduate students at UCSC. We recognize the precarity of our situation and see the GSA as a political body capable of bettering it. Our primary goal is to obtain a cost of living allowance (COLA) for graduate students to bring us up 1) to parity with UC Merced, adjusted for cost of rent, 2) to a living wage, and 3) out of rent burden.

Having already built trust and understanding among ourselves, we are running on the same platform on the premise that greater cohesion among the e-board will allow for quicker and more persuasive action. We will work to build solidarity between the e-board, the council and department reps to build community, have strong grad representation at all levels of the university, and support all graduate students.

As presidents, we want to continue and expand the work we are doing around housing, Non-Resident Tuition waivers, and childcare subsidies for student parents.

CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

1) **Radhika Prasad**, *Literature, 1st year PhD*

As Chair of the GSA Council in the year 2018-19 I have had the chance to facilitate some significant conversations amongst graduate students as well as between students and the University administration. In my term graduate students have fought several uphill battles; however, it is noteworthy that these conversations have taken place, that the University administration sees itself as answerable to graduate students, and that the GSA plays a role in facilitating these debates, which are central to graduate students' well being. The GSA has also played a crucial role in understanding the kinds of support that graduate students need, and developing systems to provide it, and I would like to continue to contribute to that in the ways that I can.

If elected to the position again in the upcoming year, I am interested in establishing a robust network of communication in which the resources provided by the GSA can be exploited to the fullest by graduate students. I hope to strengthen the department representative network by ensuring that all departments are represented in the GSA, and that representatives undertake regular correspondence with their constituencies. By doing so I hope to develop an understanding amongst graduate students of the kinds of discussions and decision-making that are taking place through the GSA Council, so that they may be better aware of the possibilities open to them. In keeping with the contacts developed between the GSA and the UC Student-Workers' Union over the past year by the International Graduate Student Committee Chairs, I also hope to encourage greater communication and coordination between the GSA and the Union, and invite at least one Union representative to join each GSA Council meeting to allow attendees to understand more than the University administration's perspective on matters.

2) **Abigail Walsh**, *Psychology, 4th year PhD*

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I am experienced at facilitating group meetings. I will push for representation of all departments, with the target goal of filling 75% of departments (we currently have less than 40% of departments represented). My and our goal is to tap into the power of the network of department reps to involve and engage the student body.

VICE PRESIDENT OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

- 1) **Veronica Hamilton**, *Psychology, 2nd year PhD*
Sarah Mason, *Sociology, 2nd year PhD*

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As Vice President of Shared Governance, we will make it our objective to get timely feedback from committees, but also to ensure that grad students are only placed on committees if it is beneficial to us, rather than as a token inclusion for the university. We will train and guide committee members to serve in these positions so that it benefits our student body.

EXTERNAL VICE PRESIDENT

1) **Rebecca Ora**, *Film and Digital Media*, 6th year PhD

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I am excited to enhance the GSA's external office, with the ultimate intention of assigning an Organizing Director and Government Relations Director similar to those in other GSAs and SUAs, to make real gains and forward movement for our grad students. I hope to continue my focus on Title IX and housing issues both statewide and locally, while also attempting to salvage graduate systemwide representation that has failed in recent years since the pull-out of GSAs from UCSA. I hope to work in close coalition with our regional campuses to address our common issues, to forge connections among our executive board and those that have good practices, and to recruit more UCSC grad students to present their experiences publicly before statewide administrative leadership.

SECRETARY/WEBMASTER

1) **Roy Sfadia**, *Physics, 3rd year PhD*

If I were to secure a second term as secretary/webmaster of the Graduate Student Association, I would strive towards two goals: first, to make the GSA a more well-known resource to graduate students, and secondly, to make it a more transparent institution.

To increase the GSA's standing, we should improve the way we interface with students, and the secretary position is uniquely positioned to do this. If we want graduate students to be involved with the GSA, we cannot just be another campus institution that sends out emails to be ignored. I would like to format our emails to be more of a newsletter-design, so that students can see it in their inbox and immediately know who it is from and what it is for.

The GSA website is the other way we interact with students, and keeping it up-to-date is important. Being the secretary of the GSA for the past 7 months, I've developed a taste for maintaining the back-end of gsa.ucsc.edu. I update resources, news, and other items to make the website a one-stop-shop for students seeking information. I have grown fond of Illustrator, using it to create online banners for GSA events, so that students can stop by the site and quickly find out what is going on.

Simple things, such as writing meeting minutes that actually reflect what was discussed, would help in the second goal; as the secretary of 2018-2019 year, I would include links, documents, and slides, making a meeting's minutes clear and transparent.

Besides being secretary for the GSA, I have also head a position on the Graduate Council, a committee overseeing changes in graduate programs. As secretary, I would main my role, advocating for program changes that are in the best interest of the student body.

2) **Paloma Medina**, *Biomolecular Engineering (BME), 3rd year PhD*

I am excited to submit my application as the secretary/webmaster of the UCSC Graduate Student Association. I have experience in managing web pages and managing organizations as part of my graduate experience.

I have organized multiple organizations, namely the Queer Ecologies Research Cluster and Corbett-Detig lab web page. My involvement in the Queer Ecologies Research Cluster includes scheduling meetings, keeping minutes for each meeting, and communicating the activity of the organization through our webpage (https://users.soe.ucsc.edu/~pmedina/queer_ecology_reading_list.html and <https://qerc.github.io/>). I keep the Corbett-Detig lab website updated with the most recent news, publications, and also manage the lab's google email list (<https://corbett.sites.ucsc.edu/>). I write both html and am familiar with wordpress and github and am confident I can use these skills to create useful and creative mediums to communicate within the GSC and the broader graduate student body.

As a secretary specialist of GSA I would engage the graduate student body by soliciting feedback both before and after major GSA decisions. I am well situated in graduate student organizations and it is a pleasure to interact with the graduate student body. I would most

likely gather feedback from graduate students through online submission on a GSA web page.

As a secretary/webmaster of the GSA, I can contribute my organization skills, proactive leadership, and collaborative nature. Charged with the the responsibilities of this position, I can commit preparing and distributing the GSA concil meeting notes, attending the GSA meetings, record minutes for GSA meetings, and keep the GSA web page up to date. It would be a pleasure and an honor to serve the graduate community by contributing my experience to the GSA.

- 3) **Jane Komori**, *History of Consciousness*, 2nd year PhD
Jack Davies, *History of Consciousness*, 1st year PhD

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We will help work on timely statements when a GSA intervention is called for, as we have found that these statements put pressure on administration and circulate our message among the student body and wider community. We will work on information and materials to send to departments through department reps, making full use of the network available to us. We want to ensure that council meetings are well attended and all grads are represented, and to that end we will work to publicize GSA council meetings and other events.

TREASURER

- 1) **Isaac Karth**, *Computational Media, 2nd year PhD*
Rowan Powell, *Politics, 1st year PhD*

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Graduate students deserve to get paid in a timely manner. We will work towards continuing the existing strengths and improving the turnaround time on disbursements and financial support from the GSA.

SOLIDARITY OFFICER

- 1) **Natalie Ng**, *Anthropology, 2nd year PhD*
Clara Qin, *Environmental Studies, 1st year PhD*

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As the current co-Solidarity Officer, Natalie has organized the Annual Solidarity Orientation, a training on power and privilege, a panel on building solidarity in the graduate seminar, and a queer and trans dance party. Clara has facilitated praxis-based discussions on race, class, and gender for people of all identities and is an active member of the women of color and queer and trans graduate student communities. Together, we will work to build community among graduate students, facilitate connections between different graduate student groups, and address structural inequalities and precarity in graduate school.

- 2) **Karla E. Reyes**, *Latin America and Latino Studies, 2nd year PhD*
Michelle Gomez Parra, *Sociology, 2nd year PhD*

We nominate ourselves for the co-chair positions of Solidarity Officer. As first-generation, working-class women of color it is our first-hand experiences of marginalization that give us unique insights about how to best advance solidarity and diversity at UC Santa Cruz. If elected, our solidarity efforts would center the needs of women of color and first-generation graduate students. Graduate students who experience marginalization through one of these categories, or lie in the intersections of multiple marginalized categories, get presumed as incompetent when it comes to teaching or navigating career milestones. UCSC is Hispanic Serving Institution with a graduate population of approximately 67% of international students and students of color.¹ Thus, it is imperative and crucial to improve diversity and inclusive efforts for these students specifically. To provide support we would implement the following three items of action: (1) work with faculty of color across multiple disciplines to put on a series of panels and workshops to discuss strategies for being presumed incompetent and to de-stigmatize the writing process by sharing tips on how to overcome common writing troubles; (2) develop writing tutoring services for first-generation college

¹ <https://mediafiles.ucsc.edu/iraps/student-characteristics/2018-19/enrolled-students/ug-and-g-students-by-gender-and-ethnicity.pdf>

students (3) create a mentoring program where advanced graduate students mentor who are women of color or first-generation incoming graduate students.

Michelle and Karla have worked together in developing programming and socials for graduate women of color. Together with four other graduate women, Michelle and Karla developed the Feminist Collective of Sisters in the Borderlands (FCSB). Our collective organized an International Women's Day mini-symposium alongside with the Research Center for the Americas, this past February. Our featured speaker discussed issues of critical themes of resistance, survival, and intersectionality. The event had a great undergraduate and graduate turnout. As co-officers we feel confident in our ability to work together and with other members of the e-board.

Michelle's experiences organizing large scale events (such as the Rethinking Gender Violence Symposium), previous experience mentoring students through the MINT and *Cultivamos Excelencia* program, and experience as a Center for Innovations in Teaching and Learning Graduate Pedagogy Fellow have equipped her with the necessary skills to organize these events and programs. As vice-president of Master Student Association at New York University (NYU) in the Media, Culture and Communication program, Karla has learned to work with various organizations and departments, has first-hand experience providing programmatic oversight and advocating for students' academic needs and challenges.