

UC **SANTA BARBARA**

Graduate Student Association

General Assembly Minutes

January 15 |2025| 6-8 PM

GSA Lounge

Quorum achieved (27/41 present for voting)

Meeting called by GSA Internal Co-President Gustavo Prado Sampaio

Minutes recorded by Alexander Luckmann, VP of Communication & Events

Introduction and sign-in

Community Agreements

Approval of last meeting minutes – – MOTION APPROVED

Approval of current agenda – – MOTION APPROVED

Gauchos for Recovery Presentation

- Gauchos for Recovery presented their work, specifically the grad- and non-traditional-student focused opportunities

Voting Items

1. COSSA Scholarship

Lindsay Miller, PhD candidate in the Department of Communication, presented the Consortium of Social Science Associations, which holds an annual meeting in Washington, D.C. She attended last year and is proposing that the GSA support UCSB grad students who want to attend, with a budget of \$1200. Carlos Nash also noted that this is a professionalization activity that the Graduate Division might be able to support financially.

Motion approved.

2. Grant Application for Electric Car Chargers for Family Student Housing

GSA has been asked to write a Letter of Endorsement for a grant application by UCSB Basic Needs and Student Sustainability to provide electric car chargers for family student housing.

Motion approved.

3. Increasing Co-Sponsorships

Bedlam Oak, GSA VPFA, presented on co-sponsorships. Current maximum request amount for co-sponsorships is \$300, with only one co-sponsorship/quarter/organization and two co-sponsorships/year/organization. This year, GSA has only spent \$2,000 out of \$15,000 allocated. Proposal to increase co-sponsorships to \$600, up to four co-sponsorships/year/organization, with large events like conferences allowed a one-time total request of \$1400, through the end of 2024-25 academic year.

Motion approved.

Co-Sponsorships

1. Grub - Informal Talk Series

Initiative to allow grad students to speak informally about their interests, hosted by Earth Science but also advertised to adjacent departments like Geography and Marine Science. Request for \$600.

Motion approved.

2. Idea Exchange

Night of studio visits for art historians and researchers and artists to exchange ideas. Request for \$600.

Motion approved.

3. Gauchos for Recovery

Recovery program, with weekly meetings tailored to graduate and non-traditional students. Request for \$600.

Motion approved.

Administration Reports

- Announcement of Grad Slam for Spring 2025.
- Graduate Student Experience Survey 2025 to launch March 31 and close June 27. Carlos emphasized the importance of this survey in providing data to make case for various grad student programs and support toward administration.

GSA Restructuring

Alexander Luckmann, VPCE, gave an introduction to Executive Board's plans to restructure the GSA, followed by a question-and-answer session with the Executive Board and GA reps.

- What does the GSA not do as well as we could?
 - We don't advocate for grad students enough
 - The executive board is overworked and lacks continuity
 - We don't impact grad students' lives clearly enough
 - We lack transparency about how the GSA works and what it does!
- How can we change this?
 - Revamp our advocacy wing (and add new positions)
 - Add new positions and add one month paid training period
 - Open up GAs to all grad students and Exec Board meetings to all GA reps
 - Create an identity separate from the university
- Structural suggestions
 - Split VPCE position into VP of Communications and VP of Events
 - Rename VPGSA VP of Campus Affairs
 - Add layer of paid staff positions underneath Exec Board that would take charge of many of the daily tasks. Current proposal: Chief of Staff, Social Director, Finance Director, Community Organizing Director, Legislative Director
- What do we need to do to make this happen?
 - Rewrite the GSA Constitution (to be presented at next GA, aiming to put on spring ballot)
 - Rewrite the bylaws
 - New fees (current fees are lowest in UC) to fund positions
 - Increase GA rep engagement

Question-and-answer period

- Concern that we need to be very specific in showing the benefits of restructuring. What, specifically, would advocacy look like? What kind of direct benefits would it bring UCSB grad students? Tying these changes back to the specific issues grad students face will be essential.
- General need to increase GA rep engagement, beyond restructuring/constitution rewrite

- Questions about the specific timeline for constitutional changes. A: needs to be approved by 66% in GA, then win a simple majority of student body (with at least 20% voting)
 - Questions about specific fee increases. Specific numbers to be presented at next GA; additionally, note that most grad students' fees are paid by departments and MA students' fees are under \$20/quarter
 - Question about whether the university can decide fees. A: No, but UC does check that fees are "reasonable"
 - Concern that there be checks and balances so new positions have clear deliverables. Also ask for specific descriptions of how other campuses' GSAs positions function.
 - Desire to see advocacy and other GSA work more clearly via social media.
 - Questions around how this will be presented to grad students beyond the GA.
- Suggestions:
- "Summary sheet" or fact sheet: a one-page document with key information and stories
 - Video or picture stories talking about the work done by this group to highlight the behind-the-scenes work that people might not know about
 - A "vision board" of sorts that paint a picture of what we would *want* to do as a GSA
 - An analysis of current positions and responsibilities and future positions and responsibilities to make sure that there are checks and balances in place to ensure that there is accountability in the power in these new roles!
 - An analysis of what other UC campuses do in terms of their own GSA and graduate student fees...so that we can help UCSB students contextualize our work within the broader campus system and see how much "bang for their buck" they get with their elected GSA officials
 - Division- or campus-wide town halls.

Adjournment