

UC **SANTA BARBARA**

Graduate Student Association

General Assembly Minutes

February 15 |2025| 6-8 PM

GSA Lounge

Quorum achieved (27/41 present for voting; additional attendees later)

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

Co-Sponsorships

1. Social Justice Book Club

Book club that amplifies underrepresented voices. Request \$600 for book and food and drink costs.

Motion approved unanimously.

2. LISO 2025 (Annual Conference on Language, Interaction, and Social Organization)

Graduate student-led conference, hosted in alternating years by UCSB (departments of Linguistics, Sociology, and Education) and UCLA. This year's theme emphasizes the sociopolitical impacts of language and interaction. Request \$1400 for travel, lodging, honoraria, meals, and supplies such as posters.

Motion approved unanimously.

3. Anthropology Graduate Student Coffee and Craft Socials

Anthropology-focused, but open to and will be advertised to students beyond the department. Request for \$600 for coffee, snacks, and craft supplies.

Motion approved unanimously.

4. EEMB Undergraduate Research Symposium

Undergrads presenting EEMB research. Request for \$1400 for room rental, food, poster printing, media.

Motion approved for \$600 unanimously.

5. Surviving and Thriving as a Philosophy Graduate Student

Series of three talks aimed to help students navigate grad school. Hosted in philosophy department but talks 1 and 3 aimed at broader audience. Request for \$600 for food and drinks.

Motion approved unanimously.

6. Soft Matter Lunch Seminar

Weekly lunch seminar series for Bio engineering, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, Materials, and Physics. Usually, people bring their own lunches. For some lunches, aim to provide food to increase attendance. Request for \$600 for food and drinks.

Motion approved unanimously.

7. ReproducibiliTea Journal Club

Journal club to discuss Open Science. Request for \$600 for drinks and refreshments.

Motion approved unanimously.

Graduate Division Report

- Reminder of Grad Slam deadline for Spring 2025: February 14.

GSA Restructuring Update

Gustavo gave an update on the proposed changes to GSA Executive Board and Staff positions: under VP of Campus Affairs would now be a staff position of Healthcare and Wellness Director.

GSA Constitutional Rewrite Summary

Gustavo introduced proposed changes to the GSA constitution.

- Changing “Executive Committee” to “Executive Board”
 - Rationale: We serve on many committees, but the Executive Board (Presidents and Vice-Presidents) is qualitatively different in its purpose.
 - Affected articles: All articles
- Publicizing Special Meetings and Special Elections at least 5 days rather than 3 days in advance
 - Rationale: Three days doesn’t seem like enough time for Assembly Members to clear schedules for special meetings, or for candidates to declare for special elections.
 - Affected articles: Article II: General Assembly; Article III: GSA Officers
- Adding 1-month paid “shadow period” to 12-month Executive Board term
 - Rationale: Creating overlap between successors; June to serve as one-month, paid “shadow period” for new board members to learn the ropes.
 - Affected Articles: Article III, GSA Officers
- Clarifying that GSA Internal Co-President is in charge of Assembly meetings
 - Rationale: Constitution currently has internal and external co-presidents jointly in charge of Assemblies. This is not how we have done things in practice, and it will allow the external co-president to participate (and vote) in the Assembly when needed.
 - Affected articles: Article III, GSA Officers
- Clarifying that GSA Internal Co-President is in charge of Committee assignments.
 - Rationale: Committee assignments currently listed under VP of Financial Affairs. This is not aligned with other VPFA tasks, and is consistent with the rest of Internal Co-President’s job.
 - Affected articles: Article III, GSA Officers
- Changing “VP of Budget, Finance, and Committees” to “VP of Financial Affairs.”
 - Rationale: Running financial affairs takes up a full GSA job, and in practice committee assignments have not been part of this position’s workload. Aligns constitution with colloquial usage.
 - Affected articles: Article III, GSA Officers
- Addition of an Officer (split the VP of Communication and Events into the VP of Communication and the VP of Events)
 - Rationale: These are two separate responsibilities and skill sets, and each deserve additional support and resources.
 - Affected articles: Article III, GSA Officers
- Renaming of VP of Graduate Student Affairs (VPGSA) to VP of Campus Affairs (VPCA)
 - Rationale: Having VPGSA within the GSA is unwieldy, and

- expertise/responsibility are not clearly defined.
 - Affected articles: Article III, GSA Officers
- Changing interim succession to Co-President positions from VPFA for both to: VP of Campus Affairs succeeds Internal Co-President; VP of External Affairs succeeds External Co-President.
 - Rationale: Currently, in case of a vacancy, VP of Financial Affairs would fill both Internal and External Co-President roles on an interim basis. VPFA is an essential job to remain filled. VP of Campus Affairs has most expertise related to Internal Co-President; VP of External Affairs has most expertise related to External Co-President.
 - Affected articles: Article III, GSA Officers
- Clarifying funds in case of dissolution
 - Rationale: Clarifying that, if GSA were to be dissolved, the Graduate Division could only hold funds in trust for a successor organization (rather than taking funds and disbursing as they see fit).
 - Affected Articles: Article IV, GSA Finances
- Announcement and nomination for committee vacancies
 - Rationale: Bringing transparency to committee appointments: we will announce vacancies at General Assemblies, and GA members can nominate or self-nominate. Appointment still ultimately comes from Executive Board. Once appointed, committee members will be listed on GSA website for greater transparency.
 - Affected articles: Article IV, GSA Finances; Article V, GSA Committees
- Committee members to fill out post-committee meeting form
 - Rationale: Increase information flow from committees to GSA.
 - Affected Articles: Article V, GSA Committee
- Addition of Articles IX and X
 - Rationale: Non-discrimination language required by UCOP and approved at previous GSA General Assembly.
 - Affected Articles: Articles IX and X

GSA Fee Increase Approval Request

Bedlam discussed proposed fee increases linked to constitutional changes. Alexander noted that, since major items such as constitutional changes have to be discussed at two GAs before being voted on, the constitutional changes presented above will be voted on at the next GSA GA.

- Travel Grant Fee Increase: now \$5.71/quarter; proposed: \$11.42/quarter. This is because conferences are expensive and, with new travel grant rules, we granted 80 students only \$153 in Fall
 - Goal: Allow graduate students to participate in conferences for research and professionalization
 - Currently: We take in ~\$49,000/year, which is divided up into \$12,250/quarter (Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer). The \$12,250 is divided up amongst all eligible applicants

- The Problem: We have 80+ students applying each quarter, meaning each student is only receiving ~\$150. Conference attendance can cost up to and past \$1000
 - Our Ask: By doubling the amount of money available for graduate students, we can alleviate some of the financial burden of conferences.
- New Grad Clubs Fee: now \$0; proposed \$5.94/quarter (\$4.50 fee plus \$1.13 RTA and \$0.31 AA): Community building costs money and paying grad students to build community has been effective
 - Goal: Help foster and support graduate student community.
 - Currently: For the first time this year, we launched Grad Clubs. Hobby and social space for grads with event funding and paid coordinator roles
 - The Problem: We do not have dedicated funding for this endeavor
 - Our Ask: We are looking to collect \$39,000 to fund Grad Clubs each year. 2 coordinators/club * \$600/year * 20 clubs = \$24,000; \$5000 in event funding per quarter = \$15,000
- GSA Lock-In Fee Increase: now \$19.83/quarter: proposed \$31.56/quarter as part of larger GSA Executive Board restructuring. We need new roles and positions to advocate for students, and an increase in funding to offset inflation
 - Goal: To advocate and provide resources for graduate students
 - Currently: We have 6 paid officers receiving between \$7,500-\$10,000 each year, as well as hourly staff roles
 - The Problem: We need more stipend positions as well as a buffer against inflation (particularly with lounge costs)
 - Our Ask: We are looking to collect \$80,000 more per year to add one more officer and six more stipend staff positions, as well as increase general funds to meet inflation. 1 additional officer: \$7,500; 6 stipend staff positions \$6,500 * 6 = \$39,000; Inflation increase: \$34,500
- Side note on RTA and AA: For each of the fees that we pass, we need to account for two fees that are imposed by UCSB on our fees.
 - Return-to-Aid (RTA). 25% surcharge on all fees (graduate and undergraduate). The surcharge is used by the campus to cover need-based financial aid for UCSB students whose financial aid awards would not otherwise cover student-imposed mandatory campus fees.
 - Administrative Assessment. 7% surcharge on all fees (graduate and undergraduate). The assessment is used by the campus to cover the administrative costs of collecting, accounting for, and disbursing the student-imposed mandatory campus fees.
- So what does this look like overall?
 - If all three fees are put on the ballot, are voted on in April by the graduate student body, and are passed, that would represent an increased cost of \$23.38/quarter for graduate students.
 - For most of the 2439 Doctoral Students at UCSB, their fees are paid by the department that employs them; this would not represent an increased cost for them. Some Doctoral Students receiving external grants or self-funded still need to pay fees.
 - For the 646 Masters Students at UCSB, many of them are paying tuition, fees, and living expenses out of pocket, meaning this will increase their

- fees to attend. Note: many Masters Students are employed by a department, in which case, they do receive a fee waiver.
- Note: UCSB is roughly in the middle of annual campus based fees across the UC system, one of the campuses with a smaller graduate population, and even with increases in fees we would not have the highest fees in the system

Discussion of fee increases. In particular, consideration of whether doubling Conference Travel Grant is sufficient. Decision for motion to put both doubling and tripling fee increase on April Ballot, if possible.

- Motion to approve placing Travel Grant Fee Increase on April ballot, with two options: 1) doubling Travel Grant to \$11.42/quarter; 2) tripling Travel Grant to \$17.13/quarter.

Motion approved unanimously, with three abstentions.

- Motion to approve placing new Grad Clubs Fee at \$5.94/quarter on April Ballot.

Motion approved unanimously.

- Motion to approve placing GSA Lock-In Fee Increase to \$31.56/quarter on April Ballot.

Motion approved unanimously.

Reminders/Asks to Reps

Please talk to your constituents about the constitutional amendments proposed, the fees, and remind them to take the Graduate Experience Survey!!

Adjournment