

UC **SANTA BARBARA**

Graduate Student Association

General Assembly Minutes

June 3 | 2025 | 6-8 PM

GSA Lounge

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

Roll Call (23 representatives present; simple majority quorum; some additional representatives joined later)

Approval of last meeting minutes – – MOTION APPROVED
UNANIMOUSLY

Approval of current agenda – – MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Administration Reports

Graduate Division (Dr. Robert Hamm)

- Graduate Division Commencement
 - Reminder to please take the Graduate Experience Survey. Currently around 13%, lower than many other UC campuses.

Graduate Division (Dr. Carlos Nash)

- Graduate Experience Survey
 - Reminder to please take the Graduate Experience Survey. Currently around 13%, lower than many other UC campuses. Need higher participation to make data useful and emphasize needs of UCSB grad students.

Awards

- Celebration of Winners and Honorable Mentions of Dixon-Levy Service Award: David Grabovsky, Madison Weise, Sean Denny, Troy Kling, Musa Malik, Kirstin Rollins, Shanna Killeen, Eunwoo Yoo, Soha Saghazadeh, Lindsay Miller, Hannah Overbye-Thompson, Alan Crawley, Ian Tayler, Luke Janes, Salvador Del Ramo, Monica Mendoza
- Celebration of Winners of Dixon-Levy Service Award: Kacie Ring, Anthony Galaviz, Ruby Harris-Gavin, Alice Nguyen, Jaber Daneshamooz
- Celebration and Honoring of Lounge Manager Nirupama Chandrasekhar

Special Election for VP of Communications

- Request for assembly approval of Special Election for VP of Communications, a position created in constitutional revisions approved in May GSA election. This is agreement to the GSA Executive Board's Interpretive Power to hold a Special Election at this GSA General Assembly, with short candidate statements written out as many candidates could not be present in person. Motion approved unanimously with 23 votes.
- Candidate Statements from six candidates read by Laura Snell, External Co-President:
 - Kris M Ali: I am running for the role of VP of Communications because it combines my extensive experience in communications and service to graduate students. I was a Communications Officer at a non-profit for two years in which I carried out a range of tasks not limited to social media management, copywriting, video editing, newsletters, minute-taking and report writing. In addition, I carried out communications responsibilities while being on the QTGSU board including creating graphics and reviving and expanding the Instagram account. In my research, I have extensive experience in building and maintaining digital archives. My service to grad students includes being Vice-President of APIGSA and QTGSU and later President of QTGSU, being a GSA rep to my department, a union point person, a volunteer for The Thriving Initiative and more. My service to grad students comes from a place of care and love for graduate students. Thank you for considering me!
 - Zihad Azad: International graduate students are woefully underrepresented in campus leadership roles. Furthermore, many opportunities are off-limits for us due to the 50% employment cap. The work culture here hardly encourages us to showcase our extra-curricular skills. That is why I chose to apply for this position. I am Zihad Azad, and I hail from Bangladesh. Since my college days, I have spearheaded different student bodies. I was the VP of both the debating as well as the quiz club. Last year, I also had the opportunity to engage in activism work in the US. I helped UAW issue an official statement denouncing government atrocities against protesting students in my home country.

From gathering student signatures to record-keeping meeting minutes to drafting the general statement, I played an active role throughout the process. To summarize, my communication skills coupled with my previous experience make me a solid candidate for the position. Thanks!

- Katerina Bischel: No statement provided.
- Celine Tsoi: Hello, I'm Celine, one of the GSA reps. When I first heard about the regular election, I was interested, but it seemed like an undertaking. But after getting involved in various committees, I really enjoyed the work, and am confident to take on more.

While I'm not very vocal, I've been listening to our discussions -- from our debates on fee increases to arguments about whether it is better to use Slack or WhatsApp -- I have updated my department about *some* of these conversations. We are a vibrant community, and I would love to play a bigger role in it.

I am also currently part of my departmental GSA and, at my last job, the social media committee. So I am comfortable with communications and maintaining our social media.

As a relatively junior student with availability, I am dedicated to fostering a connected graduate student community. Thank you for your consideration.

- Viviana Valle Gomez: Good evening. My name is Viviana Valle Gomez and I am a PhD candidate in the department of Feminist Studies. I believe I am the most qualified and competent candidate for the VP of Communication due to my extensive experience at UCSB serving graduate students in my position as a student affairs employee. As a past graduate student programmer and current Associate Director of Women, Gender, and Sexual Equity, I have been attending and collaborating with prominent grad resources such as the GSA and GSRC for the past four years.

My professional training is as an archivist which will complement the meticulousness of both maintaining GSA archives and adding to those archives through recording GSA meeting minutes. Additionally, I have a proclivity to ensure students are taking full advantage of the resources that the university has to offer us while we are here. Big or small. If we do not connect with each other or know that we can have so many tools at our fingertips, this place will suck us dry! I hope that I can continue being a conduit in this process as the VP of Communication for the GSA.

In Solidarity,
Viviana

- Giovanni Vimercati: My name is Giovanni Vimercati, I'm a fourth year PhD survivor in the Film & Media department. I have extensive experience in communications having worked as a journalist and film critic for over a

decade. I care deeply about both international and domestic students and the importance of community among graduate students. While I'm sure the other candidates are worthy of consideration, it is a matter of historical course that I will be your next VP of Communications. Long live Lenin!

- Ranked-Choice vote via [rankedvote.co](https://app.rankedvote.co). Viviana Valle Gomez elected GSA VP of Communications for 2025-26. Full results available at <https://app.rankedvote.co/rv/kokdf5j1c5av9g2emb/results>

Emergency Grant Expansion

- Proposal by GSA Executive Board to help students affected by 1) visa uncertainty and 2) reductions in summer TAs: Allocate a significant amount of our rollover funds (total of approximately \$150,000) to expanding the Emergency Grant program. These rollover funds are higher than we would like, and cannot be used for regular operating expenses, so spending them would be good for the GSA too.
- Thorough explanation by Bedlam Oak, VP of Financial Affairs, of Emergency Grant Program: application process, approval process, and disbursement process. This process would be maintained were expansion to be approved, meaning that no new mechanisms would need to be implemented. Emphasis that this program is usually funded with \$50,000 per year, awarded in grants of \$1,000; disbursing last regular grant for 2024-5 academic year this week.
- Proposal of three options for levels of funding expansion, which would maintain same structure and disbursement amount: \$40,000; \$50,000; and \$75,000. The Exec Board recommended the \$75,000 option so that we can help as many grad students as possible. Since domestic students need to take out FAFSA loans before being eligible for the Emergency Grant, international students will benefit more. Any money not used over the summer would return to roll-over fund.
- Motion put to approve \$75,000 for expansion of emergency grant program. Motion approved unanimously (26 present).
- Executive Board to update GSA GA reps mid-summer on status of Emergency Grants (how many have been applied for and disbursed).

GSA Grad Advisor/Director, Grad Diversity Programs Letter

- Discussion of ending of current grant funding Dr. Carlos Nash's position as Director of Grad Diversity Programs and GSA Advisor. Discussion of executive board writing a letter of support on Carlos's behalf.

Executive Board Update: Sarah Bacon, VP of External Affairs

- UCGPC DC “Day on the Hill” Advocacy Trip
 - May 20-22, 2025
 - 10x UC represented with 1-3 grads from each school
 - Advocating for research funding, graduate student loans, PSLF, and more
 - 2+ Senate/House committee hearings
 - 15+ individual meetings with Senate/House staffers
 - Key takeaways: how to navigate federal advocacy; how to do advocacy effectively (stories, context, questions); relationship building with federal lawmakers and their staff

Executive Board Update: Laura Snell, External Co-President

- UCOP Transition Meeting: following up to make sure promised meeting happens.
- Continued conversations with Graduate Council around funding, Laura emphasizing urgency of clarifying and confirming funding with 50% TAs.
- Trying to schedule follow up meeting with Chancellor Yang (promised at previous meeting).
- Appointed to Committee on Islamophobia and Anti-Palestinian Bias
- Chancellor’s Coordinating Committee on Budget Strategy
- Search Advisory Committee for Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs: request for interest from GA reps.
- Summer Social Events: hoping to plan some events over summer, as more grad students than usual will be in town.
- Summer TAs *may* still exist in Psych, Sociology, and History

Summer Priorities

- Request for GA reps to indicate priorities for what Executive Board should do over summer and fall. In general, request for GA reps to follow up via email.

Tiffany Ta: A Call to Expand UCSB’s Core Curriculum

- Call to make Critical Thinking part of UCSB core curriculum, as it is at CSUs and California community colleges. Particularly urgent in time of democratic crisis. Request for interested grad students to talk to Tiffany after GA to take next steps.

Adjournment