



## GRADUATE ASSEMBLY 2019-2020 ADVOCACY AGENDA

**The GA's primary advocacy areas for 2019-2020 will be: 1) Affordable Housing, 2) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 3) Wellness and Mental Health, and 4) SVSH Prevention.<sup>1</sup>**

U.C. Berkeley's academic and professional graduate students have repeatedly identified these issue areas as of primary and most urgent concern.<sup>2</sup> This year, therefore, we are requesting that campus administration begin to articulate short- and long-term strategic plans for each of these issues - to explain to the graduate student body how the campus intends to make progress in each area this year, and in the years ahead.

### **Advocacy Area 1) Affordable Housing**

**Long-term goals:** All graduate students should be able to locate safe and affordable housing within reasonable commuting distance of campus. Graduate student pay and funding should account for the increasing cost of living around campus.

### **2019-2020 GA Agenda:**

- The GA will insist that campus set specific, measurable goals for graduate student housing, work to achieve those goals, and regularly communicate its progress to the student body.

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<sup>1</sup> This advocacy agenda was compiled by the GA Executive Board based on input from graduate student survey respondents and breakout workgroup discussions by the Graduate Assembly Delegates. These agenda items are not exclusive, and the categories used are not intended to alter the GA's past commitments to, for example, basic needs, campus climate, professional development, or SVSH compliance (each of which is a component of this agenda as well). This document was presented to the GA Delegate Body for discussion and approval at the October 3, 2019 Delegate Assembly.

<sup>2</sup> These issues are also of primary concern to graduate students across the U.C. system, and this advocacy agenda is intended to support, and echo, the advocacy agenda recently discussed by the [U.C. Graduate and Professional Council \(UCGPC\)](#).

- The GA will work with campus to review and improve campus data collection policies to ensure that graduate student housing decisions and discussions are well supported.
- The GA will advocate for substantially increased graduate student housing in the school's Long Range Development Plan and Campus Master Plan, and will advocate for incorporating student parent needs, including proximity to childcare resources, into campus housing development discussions.
- The GA will work with campus to improve Cal Rentals or to develop an alternative online resource to assist graduate students seeking housing to connect to find roommates and affordable housing opportunities.
- The GA will continue to advocate for affordable housing in the City of Berkeley.
- The GA will work with UAW and other statewide graduate advocacy organizations to support legislation related to housing affordability.<sup>3</sup>
- The GA will develop a standing policy on minimum funding necessary to constitute "full funding" when cost of living (including local housing costs) are factored in.<sup>4</sup>
- The GA will continue to review and provide comments on the campus's increasing reliance on Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition and Self-Sustaining Graduate and Professional Degree Programs.
- The GA will conduct meetings with the Chancellor's Office, Student Affairs and Graduate Division leadership and data professionals, LRDP/CMP development leadership, Student Affairs housing specialists, and City of Berkeley decision makers to promote this agenda.

## **Advocacy Area 2) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

**Long-term goals:** U.C. Berkeley's graduate programs should be accessible to all qualified applicants, regardless of the advantages or disadvantages of their backgrounds. Once admitted, every graduate student should have the support they need to finish their degree programs. No graduate student should be made to feel as if they do not belong here. Campus faculty must lead on the development, adoption, and implementation of equitable admissions and student support policies, and the creation of inclusive academic departments.

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<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., [UAW UC FOR ALL](#).

<sup>4</sup> Berkeley has the highest cost of attendance in the U.C. system and graduate students struggle to meet basic needs. See generally [Findings from the Graduate and Professional Student Cost of Attendance Survey 2016-17](#) (Nov. 2017); [Findings from the Graduate Student Support Survey: Trends in the Comparability of Graduate Student Stipends](#) (Nov. 2014); [Competitive Graduate Student Financial Support Advisory Committee, Final Committee Report and Recommendations to the Provost](#) (June 2006).

## 2019-2020 GA Agenda:

- The GA will support the Chancellor's [Graduate Student Diversity Task Force](#), and work to ensure that it receives maximum input from graduate students, and develops specific, measurable definitions and goals for graduate diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- The GA will continue to advocate for state and campus support for undocumented students, including considering expressions of support for pending legislation.<sup>5</sup>
- The GA will continue to advocate for state and campus support for international students, and consider further recommendations to be developed by the GA's new International and Undocumented Student Project Director.<sup>6</sup>
- The GA will continue to staff and advise the Independent Advisory Board on Policing.
- The GA will advocate for creating and management of academic departmental metrics intended to assess equity and inclusion, based on available data about completion rates, advancement to candidacy, and funding availability.<sup>7</sup>
- The GA will track the survey results from the final year of the Ph.D. Career Pathways Survey, and advocate for taking account of financial aid and debt as a measurement of outcome.<sup>8</sup>
- The GA will create an assessment of campus's resources for supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion within graduate academic programs and graduate program administration, including the availability and use of:
  - Departmental DEI committees
  - Faculty training resources, including in faculty hiring, graduate admissions, and graduate support contexts
  - Graduate student training resources
  - Third-party liaisons for discussion and reporting of climate issues
  - Graduate-only resources and events and resources
  - Diversity statistics collection and management
- The GA will determine next steps based on the findings of this assessment.
- The GA will support the ongoing 10-year review of the Division of Equity & Inclusion, and advocate for additional attention to graduate students throughout the Division.
- The GA will meet with the Chancellor's Office, diversity, equity, and inclusion specialists across campus, and graduate student group leaders, and conduct surveys of graduate student departments, to promote this agenda.

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<sup>5</sup> E.g., SB354: Dreamers Loan Program (Sept. 12, 2019) (expanded Dream Loan eligibility to include students enrolled in programs that lead to graduate and professional degrees).

<sup>6</sup> See also [UCOP Survey of Graduate Applications, Admissions, and Enrollment Issues](#) (May 2005) (discussing systemic equity issues related to international students).

<sup>7</sup> UCOP, [Doctoral Persistence and Completion Rates: Fall 2000-2002 Entry Cohorts](#) (Mar. 2014).

<sup>8</sup> More than half of U.C. doctoral students graduate without debt. Doctoral students in the physical and life sciences have seen smaller increases in debt since 2003-04, and graduate with less average loan debt than those in the social sciences and arts and humanities. (4.2.3 2019 [Accountability report](#)). Further, Graduates with the highest debt levels come from professional schools that charge higher supplemental tuition.

### **Advocacy 3) Health and Wellness**

**Long-term goals:** All graduate students should have access to sufficient medical and mental health support resources, and abundant opportunities to develop skills to promote mental, emotional, and physical wellness. No graduate student should feel stigmatized for seeking out these resources.

#### **2019-2020 GA Agenda:**

- The GA will continue to promote and, to the maximum extent possible, expand the GA Wellness Center’s services, staff, and support, by:
  - Submitting requests for campus funding for student staff positions to assist Wellness Center management and coordination, and
  - Assisting Wellness Center staff in assessing the long-term needs for campus resources for graduate student wellness.
- The GA will create a Disabled Students Advocacy Project that will, among other initiatives, monitor disproportionate barriers to success faced by students with disabilities.
- The GA will advocate for maintenance of and improvement to campus information systems that facilitate access to wellness and mental health resources.
- The GA will continue to promote the development of wellness resources tailored for graduate departments and graduate student groups.
- The GA will create an assessment of the mental health coverage and support available to both graduate students and their dependents, including access to referrals.
- The GA will continue to support the development of mentoring best practices, resources, and workshops tailored to both faculty in graduate student departments and graduate student groups. This will include development of best practices for professional relationships and models of enforcement.
- The GA will advocate for policy about excused absences and implementation of mental health days, in part by supporting the development of “Mental Health Days” on the system-wide level.<sup>9</sup>
- The GA will conduct meetings with GA Wellness Center staff, campus finance bodies, student organizers, campus data specialists, and Graduate Division to promote this agenda.

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<sup>9</sup> Initiative from [Student Mental Health Oversight Committee](#) to amend attendance policies to allow up to [five unexcused absences](#).

## **Advocacy Area 4) SVSH Prevention**

**Long-term goals:** No graduate student should suffer sexual violence or sexual harassment. SVSH survivors should have access to resources necessary to support their recovery. Compliance is not an alternative to prevention.

### **2019-2020 GA Agenda:**

- The GA will advocate for increased funding for the [PATH to Care Center](#).<sup>10</sup>
- The GA will create an assessment of the current SVSH training and prevention programs available to and used by graduate academic departments. The GA will advocate for the increased development of SVSH prevention training resources tailored for and appropriate to graduate academic departments. These trainings will include but are not limited to: Mandatory reporting practices and protection against professional retaliation.
- The GA will continue to participate in the [Student Advisory Board on Systemwide Title IX issues](#) at the UCOP office in Oakland, CA.
- The GA will support the increased dissemination of information about resources related to SVSH, by compiling these resources on its website and including information in the Delegates Digest.
- The GA will invite [Respect Is Part Of Research](#) founders to present on their work at the Delegate Assembly.
- The GA will provide significant feedback on the new proposed “[Hearing model](#)” for SVSH cases.<sup>11</sup>
- The GA will conduct meetings with the Chancellor’s Office, PATH to Care, Student Affairs, University Health Services, campus finance bodies, and graduate student training specialists to promote this agenda.

Adopted by the Graduate Assembly on October 3, 2019.

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<sup>10</sup> See more information about recent efforts in [Defunding CARE centers](#).

<sup>11</sup> In January 2019, a California appellate court ruled that colleges and universities in the state must hold live hearings to resolve certain sexual misconduct cases. Because the University had been resolving SVSH cases using an investigative model rather than a hearing model, we had to immediately revise our student framework to comply with the ruling. This resulted in an interim version of the framework (“Interim Appendix E”), issued March 1, 2019.