

UC Santa Cruz 2023 Campus Elections

Vice President of Shared Governance

Candidate: Bala Raghavan

Candidate Statement:

I am Balakrishnan Raghavan, a second-year Ph.D. student in the cross-cultural musicology program at the music department at UC Santa Cruz. It brings me great joy to announce my candidacy for the position of Vice President of Shared Governance in the Graduate Student Association. As a former GSA secretary, I have honed my organizational skills, meticulous attention to detail, and proficiency in navigating complex administrative tasks. I understand the importance of maintaining accurate meeting minutes, facilitating productive discussions, and promptly addressing student inquiries. My prior experience equips me with the necessary expertise to effectively navigate the administrative aspects of the Graduate Student Association.

As an international student, I am intimately familiar with the unique challenges we encounter while pursuing our academic goals. From grappling with immigration regulations to adapting to a new culture, we face distinct obstacles that can significantly influence our overall experience. I am dedicated to forging close collaborations with campus governance to address these issues and advocate for policies that cater to the needs of international graduate students. In addition, I am passionate about queer advocacy and firmly believe in fostering a campus environment that respects and celebrates the diversity of all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Furthermore, my active participation in the recent strikes has invigorated me with a profound sense of purpose and a wealth of experiences that have shaped our collective journey. The strikes have showcased the strength of solidarity, uniting students from diverse backgrounds and academic disciplines. I firmly believe in creating inclusive spaces that not only acknowledge and appreciate our diversity but also actively foster inclusivity. I will diligently work towards initiatives that celebrate our multifaceted identities and promote an environment where every individual feels valued and supported.

Building upon my consulting background, I will leverage my strong communication skills to facilitate constructive dialogue and ensure that student concerns are effectively communicated to campus governance. I am committed to actively engaging with students and administrators, addressing pertinent issues, proposing innovative solutions, and cultivating a nurturing and inclusive academic environment.

I am committed to serving our graduate student community and being a steadfast advocate for our rights and well-being. I kindly request your support and the opportunity to serve as the Vice President of Shared Governance in the Graduate Student Association. Together, let us continue to build a vibrant and inclusive academic community that embraces diversity, encourages collaboration, and empowers each graduate student to thrive.

External Vice President

Candidate: Ontario Alexander

Candidate Statement:

I am the current External Vice President of the Graduate Student Association (GSA). I am running for re-election. This past year I worked to reestablish a relationship between the UC Santa Cruz GSA and the University of California Graduate and Professional Council (UCGPC). My main goal for this coming year is to continue to ensure that the UC Santa Cruz GSA has a voice, presence, and full participation at all UCGPC meetings and votes. Prior to my taking office, UC Santa Cruz GSA, was not actively participating with UCGPC. My other goals include working with UC Santa Cruz graduate students to bring their issues to the UCGPC, ensure that the needs of UC Santa Cruz students appear on the agenda and goals of UCGPC, and continue to speak on the issues of housing, cost of living, earnings, childcare, international student concerns, and equity in TA ship workload so that the UC Santa Cruz voice will be heard in all discussions and voting privileges pertaining to the UCGPC, Board of Regents and all UC system-wide student organizations and administrative efforts including National Advocacy day in Washington D.C. and State Advocacy state at the California state capitol.

Candidate: Stephanie Herrera

Candidate Statement:

My name is Stephanie Herrera, and I am a 3rd year Ph.D. student in the Electrical and Computer Engineering department. I want to nominate myself for GSA External Vice President. I have been the Graduate Student Association Treasurer for the past two terms, and I would like to continue helping the GSA advocate for graduate needs. Being the Treasurer has taught me much about how the University and administration operate with student organizations. I have also been on the Student Fees Advisory Committee and The Envisioning Graduate Education Strategic Planning Committee. This insight will facilitate my transition into targeting system wide issues and acting as a liaison for the GSA.

Candidate: Zhutong Daniel Zhang

Candidate Statement:

Dear Graduate Students,

I am excited to be running for the position of External Vice President for the UCSC Graduate Students Association. With my experience as a PR representative at CSSA while an undergraduate at UCSC and State Lead for the Nevada Forward Party, I have gained valuable leadership and organizing skills, making me an ideal candidate for this position.

As the liaison between the system-wide bodies of student government and the UCSC GSA, I will attend meetings, update the GSA on system-wide happenings, and bring UCSC grad needs forward to system-wide spaces. Additionally, I will prioritize improving graduate student housing, working with campus, system-wide, and community partners to advocate for better housing options.

I believe that affordable and quality housing is essential to support graduate students' academic success and overall well-being. With the lack of on-campus and near-campus housing options, it is more important than ever to address the challenges graduate students face in finding affordable housing. I will work tirelessly to advocate for better housing options and address the challenges graduate students face in finding affordable housing.

My ultimate goal is to become an elected official and serve the people with fiscally competent leadership. However, before I embark on that journey, I want to give back to the community that has given me so much. I believe that the position of External Vice President provides a unique opportunity to serve the UCSC graduate student community and work towards making the university a better place.

Thank you for considering me as the next External Vice President of the UCSC Graduate Students Association. I look forward to the opportunity to serve you and work towards creating a better future for all UCSC graduate students.

Treasurer

Candidate: Zhutong Daniel Zhang

Candidate Statement:

Dear Graduate Students,

I am excited to announce my candidacy for the position of Treasurer for the UCSC Graduate Student Association. I am confident that my experience, skills, and passion for serving the graduate student community make me the ideal candidate for this role.

As a former undergraduate at UCSC and a current graduate student, I understand the unique challenges that graduate students face. If elected, I will work diligently to ensure that the GSA's finances are managed efficiently and transparently.

As Treasurer, my top priority will be to ensure that the annual budget is proposed and approved in a timely manner. I will also work to streamline the reimbursement and stipend process for funding recipients, ensuring that all necessary paperwork is complete and funds are dispersed in a timely manner. Additionally, I will work with Grad Div and FAR to manage the GSA's financial affairs and provide support for grant writing and project budgeting.

I am committed to being a responsible and accessible Treasurer, and I will work closely with the Chair to coordinate food orders and payments for all GSA meetings. I will attend GSA and E-Board meetings, as well as the annual power and privilege training and trainings recommended by Cruzbuy and FAR. I am also eager to serve as a graduate representative on the Student Fee Advisory Committee.

I am deeply committed to the success of graduate students at UCSC and believe that my experience and dedication make me the ideal candidate for Treasurer. I look forward to the opportunity to serve the GSA and the graduate student community.

Thank you for your consideration.