2019 GSA Executive Board Elections
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2) Abigail Walsh (Psychology)

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3) Michelle Gomez Parra (Sociology)
We are running as a collective of organizers whose primary goal is to dramatically improve the material conditions of graduate students at UCSC. We recognize the precarity of our situation and see the GSA as a political body capable of bettering it. Our primary goal is to obtain a cost of living allowance (COLA) for graduate students to bring us up 1) to parity with UC Merced, adjusted for cost of rent, 2) to a living wage, and 3) out of rent burden.

Having already built trust and understanding among ourselves, we are running on the same platform on the premise that greater cohesion among the e-board will allow for quicker and more persuasive action. We will work to build solidarity between the e-board, the council and department reps to build community, have strong grad representation at all levels of the university, and support all graduate students.

As presidents, we want to continue and expand the work we are doing around housing, Non-Resident Tuition waivers, and childcare subsidies for student parents.
CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

1) **Radhika Prasad, Literature, 1st year PhD**

As Chair of the GSA Council in the year 2018-19 I have had the chance to facilitate some significant conversations amongst graduate students as well as between students and the University administration. In my term graduate students have fought several uphill battles; however, it is noteworthy that these conversations have taken place, that the University administration sees itself as answerable to graduate students, and that the GSA plays a role in facilitating these debates, which are central to graduate students’ well being. The GSA has also played a crucial role in understanding the kinds of support that graduate students need, and developing systems to provide it, and I would like to continue to contribute to that in the ways that I can.

If elected to the position again in the upcoming year, I am interested in establishing a robust network of communication in which the resources provided by the GSA can be exploited to the fullest by graduate students. I hope to strengthen the department representative network by ensuring that all departments are represented in the GSA, and that representatives undertake regular correspondence with their constituencies. By doing so I hope to develop an understanding amongst graduate students of the kinds of discussions and decision-making that are taking place through the GSA Council, so that they may be better aware of the possibilities open to them. In keeping with the contacts developed between the GSA and the UC Student-Workers’ Union over the past year by the International Graduate Student Committee Chairs, I also hope to encourage greater communication and coordination between the GSA and the Union, and invite at least one Union representative to join each GSA Council meeting to allow attendees to understand more than the University administration’s perspective on matters.

2) **Abigail Walsh, Psychology, 4th year PhD**

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I am experienced at facilitating group meetings. I will push for representation of all departments, with the target goal of filling 75% of departments (we currently have less than 40% of departments represented). My and our goal is to tap into the power of the network of department reps to involve and engage the student body.
VICE PRESIDENT OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

1) Veronica Hamilton, Psychology, 2nd year PhD
   Sarah Mason, Sociology, 2nd year PhD

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As Vice President of Shared Governance, we will make it our objective to get timely feedback from committees, but also to ensure that grad students are only placed on committees if it is beneficial to us, rather than as a token inclusion for the university. We will train and guide committee members to serve in these positions so that it benefits our student body.
EXTERNAL VICE PRESIDENT

1) Rebecca Ora, Film and Digital Media, 6th year PhD

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I am excited to enhance the GSA’s external office, with the ultimate intention of assigning an Organizing Director and Government Relations Director similar to those in other GSAs and SUAs, to make real gains and forward movement for our grad students. I hope to continue my focus on Title IX and housing issues both statewide and locally, while also attempting to salvage graduate systemwide representation that has failed in recent years since the pull-out of GSAs from UCSA. I hope to work in close coalition with our regional campuses to address our common issues, to forge connections among our executive board and those that have good practices, and to recruit more UCSC grad students to present their experiences publicly before statewide administrative leadership.
SECRETARY/WEBMASTER

1) Roy Sfadia, *Physics, 3*rd *year PhD*

If I were to secure a second term as secretary/webmaster of the Graduate Student Association, I would strive towards two goals: first, to make the GSA a more well-known resource to graduate students, and secondly, to make it a more transparent institution.

To increase the GSA’s standing, we should improve the way we interface with students, and the secretary position is uniquely positioned to do this. If we want graduate students to be involved with the GSA, we cannot just be another campus institution that sends out emails to be ignored. I would like to format our emails to be more of a newsletter-design, so that students can see it in their inbox and immediately know who it is from and what it is for.

The GSA website is the other way we interact with students, and keeping it up-to-date is important. Being the secretary of the GSA for the past 7 months, I’ve developed a taste for maintaining the back-end of gsa.ucsc.edu. I update resources, news, and other items to make the website a one-stop-shop for students seeking information. I have grown fond of Illustrator, using it to create online banners for GSA events, so that students can stop by the site and quickly find out what is going on.

Simple things, such as writing meeting minutes that actually reflect what was discussed, would help in the second goal; as the secretary of 2018-2019 year, I would include links, documents, and slides, making a meeting’s minutes clear and transparent.

Besides being secretary for the GSA, I have also headed a position on the Graduate Council, a committee overseeing changes in graduate programs. As secretary, I would maintain my role, advocating for program changes that are in the best interest of the student body.

2) Paloma Medina, *Biomolecular Engineering (BME), 3*rd *year PhD*

I am excited to submit my application as the secretary/webmaster of the UCSC Graduate Student Association. I have experience in managing web pages and managing organizations as part of my graduate experience.

I have organized multiple organizations, namely the Queer Ecologies Research Cluster and Corbett-Detig lab webpage. My involvement in the Queer Ecologies Research Cluster includes scheduling meetings, keeping minutes for each meeting, and communicating the activity of the organization through our webpage ([https://users.soe.ucsc.edu/~pmedina/queer_ecology_reading_list.html](https://users.soe.ucsc.edu/~pmedina/queer_ecology_reading_list.html) and [https://qerc.github.io/](https://qerc.github.io/)). I keep the Corbett-Detig lab website updated with the most recent news, publications, and also manage the lab's google email list ([https://corbett.sites.ucsc.edu/](https://corbett.sites.ucsc.edu/)). I write both html and am familiar with wordpress and github and am confident I can use these skills to create useful and creative mediums to communicate with the GSC and the broader graduate student body.

As a secretary specialist of GSA I would engage the graduate student body by soliciting feedback both before and after major GSA decisions. I am well situated in graduate student organizations and it is a pleasure to interact with the graduate student body. I would most
likely gather feedback from graduate students through online submission on a GSA web page.

As a secretary/webmaster of the GSA, I can contribute my organization skills, proactive leadership, and collaborative nature. Charged with the the responsibilities of this position, I can commit preparing and distributing the GSA concil meeting notes, attending the GSA meetings, record minutes for GSA meetings, and keep the GSA web page up to date. It would be a pleasure and an honor to serve the graduate community by contributing my experience to the GSA.

3) Jane Komori, History of Consciousness, 2nd year PhD
   Jack Davies, History of Consciousness, 1st year PhD

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   We will help work on timely statements when a GSA intervention is called for, as we have found that these statements put pressure on administration and circulate our message among the student body and wider community. We will work on information and materials to send to departments through department reps, making full use of the network available to us. We want to ensure that council meetings are well attended and all grads are represented, and to that end we will work to publicize GSA council meetings and other events.
TREASURER

1) Isaac Karth, Computational Media, 2nd year PhD
Rowan Powell, Politics, 1st year PhD

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Graduate students deserve to get paid in a timely manner. We will work towards continuing the existing strengths and improving the turnaround time on disbursements and financial support from the GSA.
SOLIDARITY OFFICER

1) Natalie Ng, Anthropology, 2nd year PhD
   Clara Qin, Environmental Studies, 1st year PhD

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As the current co-Solidarity Officer, Natalie has organized the Annual Solidarity Orientation, a training on power and privilege, a panel on building solidarity in the graduate seminar, and a queer and trans dance party. Clara has facilitated praxis-based discussions on race, class, and gender for people of all identities and is an active member of the women of color and queer and trans graduate student communities. Together, we will work to build community among graduate students, facilitate connections between different graduate student groups, and address structural inequalities and precarity in graduate school.

2) Karla E. Reyes, Latin America and Latino Studies, 2nd year PhD

I am applying for a co-officer Solidarity position. As a first-generation graduate student whose second language is English, I am interested in fostering a writing community for graduate students with similar backgrounds. My first goal would be to develop a panel on the experience of writing at a graduate level and conducting research. The panel would consist of faculty and postdocs whose second language is English or are first-generation themselves. With this, I hope to create a conversation around the struggles that one might encounter, de-stigmatize the writing process and share tips on how to overcome common writing troubles and concerns. Second, I will hold writing office hours. Specifically, I’d like to bring a writing tutor to provide editing and feedback to graduate students throughout the academic year. I see this working similar to the “Writing together” series but with a focus exclusively on workshopping and editing papers.

I helped develop a similar program when I was vice-president of the Master Student Association at New York University in the Media, Culture and Communication (MCC) program. In one of our town halls, my international and my first-generation cohort members expressed frustration around writing at an academic level. Together with the Director of Graduate Studies, staff and the executive board, we brainstormed different initiatives to provide writing support. We concluded that one immediate way we could provide support was to hire a writing coach specifically for MCC’S master’s students. The writing coach was an MCC alumnus and thus had the first-hand experience with clarifying one's argument.
and knowledge on common writing mistakes at the academic level. The writing tour was
tremendously successful that MCC’s Ph.D. students and candidates expressed interested and
it was renewed for another year.

3) **Michelle Gomez Parra, Sociology, 2nd year PhD**

My name is Michelle Gomez Parra and I am a second year doctoral student in the Sociology
Department, and I am running for the position of Solidarity Officer. I have often been the
only poor, first-generation, woman of color in academic settings; these experiences of being
underrepresented have caused me a deep sense of isolation and pain. It is precisely my first-
hand experiences of marginalization that give me unique insights about how to best advance
solidarity and diversity at UC Santa Cruz. If I were elected to be solidarity officer, I would
focus on building solidarity efforts that center the needs of graduate students who are
women of color, first-generation, and/or queer. Graduate students who experience
marginalization through one of these categories, or lie in the intersections of multiple
marginalized categories, often get presumed as incompetent. To provide these students with
support I would implement the following three items of action: (1) I would simultaneously
collaborate with different resources centers, such as the Ethnic Resource Centers (ERCs)
and the Cantú Queer Center, to create social events where graduate students can network
with other graduate students who share similar identity categories and experiences; (2) work
with faculty of color across multiple disciplines to put on a series of panels and workshops
to discuss strategies for being presumed incompetent; (3) create a mentoring program where
advanced graduate students mentor incoming graduate students navigate their first year of
graduate school. I believe that my experiences organizing large scale events (such as the
Rethinking Gender Violence Symposium), my previous experience mentoring students
through the MINT and Cultivamos Excelencia program, and experience as a Center for
Innovations in Teaching and Learning Graduate Pedagogy Fellow have equipped me with
the necessary skills to organize these events and programs.