

Measure 33 (G): Graduate Student Government Fee Increase

QUESTION

Shall the graduate students of UCSC maintain existing levels of service offered by the Graduate Student Association (GSA), including research travel grants, statewide lobbying efforts, and networking activities annually sponsored by the GSA, by increasing the existing Graduate Student Government Fee of \$10.00 by \$4.50 per student, per quarter?

SUMMARY POINTS

- Increase of the existing Graduate Student Government Fee by \$4.50 per student, per quarter.
- Provides 33% Return-to-Aid (\$1.49 of fee) to assure that lower income students have financial aid assistance in paying the fee.
- Fee begins Fall Quarter 2007 and is permanent with no ending date.
- Fee will be assessed to all graduate students enrolled in the fall, winter and spring quarters, including state-supported summer session.
- This compulsory fee is not covered under the current Teaching Assistantship contract and is an out of pocket expense for graduate students in the current funding environment.
- Except for the newly inaugurated UC Merced, the UCSC GSA currently has the smallest budget compared to all other UC GSA's. This is both in terms of overall funds and per-capita student fees.
- Students were consulted regarding the need for this fee through the following mechanisms: Program priorities are established at the beginning of each year by soliciting feedback from graduate students in all departments through the Department Representatives and then discussing and aggregating preferences in a Council meeting. Council meetings are open to all graduate students. The need for the fee increase has been confirmed by members of the graduate student body

BALLOT STATEMENT

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) serves the collective interests of the graduate students of UCSC by promoting cooperation among graduate students, representing their interests to the faculty, administration and staff of both UCSC and the UC as a whole, by advocating graduate student rights to state legislature, and by providing services to the graduate student body that they cannot provide for themselves as individuals.

Beside political representation and advocacy, the GSA offers the following programs and services: travel grants to support graduate student research, co-sponsored events, outdoor events, quarterly networking events and an annual orientation event for new graduate students. We hope to continue to provide these services at the current level for the coming year.

Our goal is to extend our services in anticipation of the doubling in graduate student numbers over the next 5 to 10 years and to adapt the programs to changing needs of the graduate student population. We hope to do this by increasing the compulsory Student Government Fee from \$10 to \$14.50. 33% of this fee will go toward Return to Aid. The remaining portion will increase the Graduate Student Association budget by \$13,000 given current enrollment figures. This money will be used to improve our representation in the UC-wide Student Association and expand services we have offered to graduate students to accommodate current and expected demand.

ENDORSEMENTS

Susanne Altermann (EEB grad student and TAPS Advisory Board)
Ocean Sciences Department graduate students
Graduate Student Association

PRO/CON STATEMENTS

- This fee is specific to graduate students and will directly benefit graduate students through services offered by the Graduate Student Association, such as tax seminars, representation at the UC-wide level, travel grants and networking events.
- A third of the GSA budget funds travel grants for students to present their research at conferences.
- Graduate students will have full control over the funds by participating in open GSA meetings.
- Many graduate students have expressed the desire to become connected with students from other departments. Passing this fee increase will enable the GSA to serve as a platform for fostering interdisciplinary collaborations through networking events, increasing visibility and expanding existing efforts to defend graduate student rights to state legislature.

Author: Graduate Student Association