

Graduate **Student Association**

University of South Carolina Student Life

Annual Report 2017-2018



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President's Farewell

Dear Graduate and Professional Students,

It was a great honor to serve as the President of the Graduate Student Association this past year. After being accepted at Carolina to continue my graduate studies, I was not even thinking that the next year I would be representing the graduate student body and advocating on its behalf. It was an important milestone in my academic and professional career development.

During this past year, we stayed engaged with graduate students and made sure their voices were heard on campus. Our accomplishments are shared in this report. I cannot cover all the events we did this year or the issues we worked , but here's a summary of the 2017-2018 year:

1. Increased our engagement with the graduate student body by planning many gatherings throughout the year. These gatherings had good turnouts and we were able to learn about students' accomplishments and concerns.
2. Increased collaboration with the Graduate School on many levels, and especially on the professional development level by organizing the Graduate Student Appreciation Week and working on many blogs and videos for Carolina Leadership Week.
3. Increased collaboration with the Department of Student Life and Student Government, in order to address issues that are of concern for the whole student body. Furthermore, we moved back into an office in Russell House.
4. Allocated more than \$27,000 back to graduate student organizations.
5. Worked with many entities on campus in order to make sure the mental health and well-being of graduate student is improved.

**Allocated more than
\$27,000 back to graduate
student organizations.**

I would like to thank everyone who helped me move the GSA forward, especially my executive board and cabinet. I look forward to work with the GSA next year as the graduate council representative under the leadership of our next president, Jennifer Mandelbaum. I am sure that she will keep pushing graduate issues to the front!

Sincerely,



Clint Saidy
President, Graduate Student Association

A Word from the University President, Dr. Harris Pastides



Our graduate students represent the coming generation of 21st century researchers and innovators. Our students are recognized for their talent, hard work and commitment to their fields. I've been proud to support the leadership of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) over the past year in advancing the development of our students work and experience at USC. I commend the Association and its executive team for their steadfast advocacy, support and enrichment of our students, as well as their leadership in addressing difficult issues and events. Clint Saidy has been an effective leader and I look forward to working with Jennifer Mandelbaum.

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A Word from the GSA Adviser and AVP for Student Affairs, Dr. Anna Edwards



The Graduate Student Association has had a productive year in identifying needs and priorities of graduate students and developing a plan to address them. The association was led by strong student leaders who were clear in their purpose and priorities. The students initiated meetings with university administrators that had purpose and a focus related to their goals. They were diligent in follow up and bringing concerns of graduate students to the appropriate university staff person. Appropriate office space was identified as a need for the GSA officers and we worked to locate temporary, then more permanent space in the Russell House. This space was significant because it brought undergraduate and graduate student leaders together to collaborate on needs of all Carolina students. The officers this year have been present and persistent – working tirelessly to advocate and improve the experiences for graduate students at Carolina. I have enjoyed getting to know the students and look forward to the years to come with GSA.

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A Word from the Dean of the Graduate School, Dr. Cheryl Addy



For my entire career at the University of South Carolina, my involvement with our educational mission has been largely graduate education, through various faculty roles in the Arnold School of Public Health, two earlier terms on Graduate Council, and now finishing my second year as Dean of the Graduate School. Across various positions, a highlight has always been working with student groups, seeing the passion our students demonstrate not just for academic studies but also for enrichment activities, community engagement, fellowship and support for fellow students. Working with the Graduate Student Association this year has epitomized this. I have had the privilege to work directly with GSA leadership on issues of student health insurance and access to campus services and activities. The group has partnered with the Graduate School to enhance opportunities for the April Graduate Student Appreciation Week along with other professional development activities. From my perspective, GSA has become a stronger organization this year, proactively building relationships with campus leaders and a partnership with the Student Government Association. As the year comes to an end, I look forward to working with next year's leadership team to continue this positive momentum and to promote additional opportunities for graduate students.



Who We Are

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the voice of the graduate student community at the University of South Carolina.

The GSA:

- is dedicated to the advancement and development of graduate and professional students at USC.
- serves to advocate on behalf of the interests of more than 7,000 graduate and professional students.
- works closely with administrators, faculty and staff to achieve its goals.

2017-2018 Executive Board



President
Clint Saidy
*Ph.D. student,
Mechanical Engineering*



Vice President
Jennifer Mandelbaum
*Ph.D. student,
Public Health*



Treasurer
Tony Brown
*Ph.D. student,
Public Health*



Graduate Council Rep.
Matthew Owens
*Masters student,
Social Work*

2017-2018 President's Cabinet

Position	Name	School/College
Press Secretary	JaQor Goodwin	College of Information and Communications
<i>School of Medicine Liaison</i>	Ryan Montalvo	School of Medicine
<i>Secretary of Alumni Relations</i>	Rachel Lunsford	Darla Moore School of Business
<i>Secretary of Community Outreach</i>	Nick Vera	College of Information and Communications
<i>Secretary of Graduate Assistantships</i>	Kat Edmond	College of Education
<i>Secretary of Graduate Student Organizations</i>	Gloria Esoimeme	Arnold School of Public Health
<i>Secretary of GSA Affairs</i>	Sarah Truesdale	Interdisciplinary Programs
<i>Secretary of Health</i>	Anna Cofie	Arnold School of Public Health
<i>Secretary of International Student Affairs</i>	Akshita Narang (2017) Justin Mellish (2018)	Darla Moore School of Business College of Education
<i>Secretary of Multicultural Student Affairs</i>	Victor Kidd	College of Hospitality, Retail & Sport Mgmt.
<i>Secretary of Professional Development</i>	Omonefe Omofuma	Arnold School of Public Health
<i>Secretary of Veteran Affairs</i>	Barbara Bujak (2017) Andrew Kirkland (2018)	Arnold School of Public Health Darla Moore School of Business

2017-2018 Finance Committee

Name	School/College
<i>Tony Brown, Chair</i>	Arnold School of Public Health
<i>Shelby Butz</i>	Arnold School of Public Health
<i>Elizabeth Caulder</i>	College of Arts and Sciences
<i>Samantha McNeal</i>	Arnold School of Public Health
<i>Walker Ross</i>	College of Hospitality, Retail & Sport Mgmt.
<i>Shyamkumar Sriram</i>	Arnold School of Public Health
<i>William Quinlan</i>	College of Arts and Sciences

GSA Representation in University Committees

Committee	Name	School/College
<i>Excellence Initiative Committee</i>	Jennifer Mandelbaum	Arnold School of Public Health
<i>FS¹ Committee on Curricula and Courses</i>	Jennifer Mandelbaum	Arnold School of Public Health
<i>FS Committee on Honorary Degrees</i>	Clint Saidy	College of Engineering and Computing
<i>FS Committee on Instructional Development</i>	Kevin Tabury	College of Engineering and Computing
<i>FS Committee on Scholastic Standards and Petitions</i>	Justin Mellish	College of Education
<i>FS Information Technology Committee</i>	Clint Saidy	College of Engineering and Computing
<i>FS University Athletics Advisory Committee</i>	Luis Bahamonde	College of Engineering and Computing
<i>Health Services Advisory Committee</i>	Tony Brown	Arnold School of Public Health
<i>Healthy Carolina Steering Committee</i>	Anna Cofie	Arnold School of Public Health
<i>M.J.M. Distinguished Professor of the Year Award Committee</i>	Caleb Pupo	College of Engineering and Computing
<i>Non-Campus Safety Committee</i>	Nick Vera Clint Saidy	College of Information and Communications College of Engineering and Computing
<i>University 101 Academic Advisory Committee</i>	Justin Mellish	College of Education
<i>University Safety Committee</i>	Kaishu Xia	College of Engineering and Computing
<i>Grad. Prof. Development Advisory Committee</i>	Omonefe Omofuma	Arnold School of Public Health
<i>University Libraries' Student Advisory Council</i>	Omonefe Omofuma Nick Vera Clint Saidy	Arnold School of Public Health College of Information and Communications College of Engineering and Computing

¹ Faculty Senate

GSA Engagement on Campus

Engagement with USC Administration

- President Clint Saidy spoke on behalf of the graduate student body to the Board of Trustees on Nov. 10, 2017. He expressed graduate concerns and updated the board on GSA achievements.
- The GSA increased its collaboration and communication with many entities on campus, including President Pastides, the Graduate School, Student Life, and Student Government:
 - The GSA president met many times with President Pastides to update him on the GSA's work and issues.
 - The GSA Executive Board met for lunch with the Graduate School Deans and shared with them concerns and plans for the year. In addition, the GSA President met with Dr. Cheryl Addy, dean of the Graduate School, many times to discuss graduate concerns and updates.
 - The GSA reconnected with the Department of Student Life, and they provided us with a temporary office in Russell's House (RH0037) until we moved into the Leadership and Service Center.
 - The GSA president met monthly with Dr. Anna Edwards, the associate vice president for student life, and Ross Lordo, the student body president, in order to enhance communication and collaboration between GSA and Student Government.
 - The GSA president made a presentation to the Student Government Senate proposing the merger of Student Government and the GSA.
- The GSA moved back into an office in Russell House after many years away. This step will help us to collaborate more with the department of student life and the student government.

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A word from the SG/GSA Coordinator, Theresa Sexton



Along with the Student Government, GSA leaders developed a stronger foundation of shared commitment to serving the students at the University of South Carolina. Through well-defined goals and aspirations, the GSA worked hard this year to increase communication among graduate and professional students from different disciplines, increase graduate student participation in student and university governance, and increase the number of graduate students serving on university committees. They continue

to address the current landscape of the graduate and professional student experience while considering the changing population and issues students face on campus. GSA leaders receive high commendations for their ability to build partnerships that serve the interest of all graduate and professional students. Most importantly, I believe they have set a new standard for strengthening relationships between students and administrators. We all look forward to advancing the graduate and professional student experience at the University of South Carolina. The progress GSA made this year is impressive and paves the way for future success.

GSA leaders receive high commendations for their ability to build partnerships that serve the interest of all graduate and professional students.



Candlelight Vigil in Remembrance of Students Who Have Died by Suicide – November 9, 2017



In collaboration with the Student Government and Active Minds, the GSA organized a Candlelight vigil in memory of students who have died by suicide. The event took place at Rutledge Chapel on the Horseshoe.

"President Pastides has mental health at the forefront of his agenda, and it is our duty as members of the Graduate Student Association and Student Government to help move this agenda forward. Let's work together to live up to the Carolinian Creed and make our campus an inclusive and caring place for everyone."

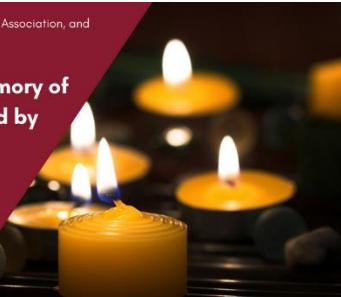
– Clint Saidy, GSA President

Student Government, The Graduate Student Association, and Active Minds are partnering to present:

Candlelight Vigil in Memory of Students Who Have Died by Suicide

Thursday, November 9th, 2017
5:30pm
Rutledge Chapel

Find more information online at www.stigmafreeusc.com



Curtsey of Ethan Lam (The Daily Gamecock)

"Let me say that all of us are wounded in some way ... and it is our goal to let everybody know that when we are wounded, and feel wounded, and feel alarmed, and feel anxious, and feel depressed that there is somewhere to go."

– Harris Pastides, USC President

Source: The Daily Gamecock ([link](#))

Carolina Leadership Week – Jan. 29 to Feb. 2, 2018

In collaboration with the Graduate School, the Graduate Student Association (GSA) prepared a series of blog posts and videos about leadership.

Blog Posts



"Several years ago I discovered the type of leadership the residents at Healy Towers have taught me. Servant leadership—and it has become my preferred perspective on leadership. Servant leadership means serving others by putting their needs ahead of your own."

Life Lessons in Leadership: Leading by Example, Rachel Lunsford – GSA Secretary of Alumni Relations ([link](#))

"Leadership to me is the ability to find comfort in the most uncomfortable situations. Being a great listener, having the patience and endurance to understand people, treating others with respect, following the lead of others, understanding that just because it failed once does not mean it is not worth a second try and knowing your strengths and weaknesses."

What Leadership Means to Me, Anna Cofie – GSA Health Secretary ([link](#))



"The great thing about leadership is that it is not exclusive. Anyone can become a leader if they want. Leadership also comes in many forms, whether it is leading a class dialogue or organizing a community service event that serves others, this is leadership."

On Becoming a Leader: Maybe You Already Are, Nick Vera – GSA Secretary of Community Outreach ([link](#))

"Transformational leaders engage all members of the group to most efficiently reach their common goal. The benefits of this leadership style are plenty and by employing this bottom-up approach you cannot only inspire the individual, but you seek to work outside the confines of the current system in hopes of creating a better one."

Four Steps of Transformational Leadership, Sarah Truesdale – Secretary of GSA Affairs ([link](#))





"The first step on the leadership ladder is to believe in yourself and to believe that you can be an effective leader. Never tell yourself that you are bad at something before giving it a try. You might fail the first time, but if you are persistent enough, you will achieve your goal."

Climbing the Leadership Ladder: One Step at a Time, Clint Saidy – GSA President ([link](#))

"Being a leader is less about a title and more about what you contribute. You don't have to be the president of a student organization to be a leader. Titles can help define roles, but they shouldn't limit what you contribute to a group. See where you could use your skillset to meet an unmet need."

Developing Your Leadership Skills, Jennifer Mandelbaum – GSA Vice President ([link](#))



"An impactful leader, to me, is someone who deeply and authentically provides and advocates for the well-being of those they are called to serve. Respected leaders also live their word and lead by example, not fearing what others might have to say. Compassionate leaders show empathy for others who face circumstances unbeknownst to them."

The Leaders among Us: My Older Sister, Matthew Owens – GSA Graduate Council Representative ([link](#))

Video Blogs

Carolina Leadership Week 2018: Graduate Students on Leadership

Jennifer Mandelbaum, Anna Cofie, and Tony Brown discuss what they think makes a leader and leaders they admire ([link](#)).

Carolina Leadership Week 2018: Get Involved in the GSA

Jennifer Mandelbaum, Anna Cofie, and Tony Brown on why graduate students should get involved in the Graduate Student Association ([link](#)).

Carolina Leadership Week 2018: Omonefe Omofuma Discusses Leadership

Omonefe Omofuma, doctoral student in the School of Public Health, discusses leadership with Dr. Heather Brandt, Associate Dean for Professional Development in the Graduate School ([link](#)).

Carolina Leadership Week 2018: What is a Leader?

Doctoral students Clint Saidy and Victor Kidd talk leadership with Dr. Heather Brandt, Associate Dean for Professional Development in the Graduate School during Carolina Leadership Week ([link](#)).

For more videos, check the USC Graduate School page on YouTube ([link](#)).

Graduate Student Appreciation Week – April 2 to April 6, 2018

This year, we worked with the Graduate School to plan and offer a variety of events during the Graduate Student Appreciation Week. Following is an overview of the events we prepared.

- **April 2:**
 - Cake and Punch with Dean Addy
- **April 3:**
 - Freeze Frame! Free, professional head shots for graduate students,
 - Start Smart: Financial Literacy Workshop (organized with the Student Success Center)
- **April 4:**
 - Getting Started with Imagine PhD for Career Exploration and Planning
- **April 5:**
 - Chair massages for graduate students
 - How to Get the Mentoring You Need as a Graduate Student with Dr. Fatimah Williams
- **April 6:**
 - Your Mental Health Matters (organized with the Provost's Advisory Committee on Women's Issues)
 - Bowl & Mingle

APRIL 6
YOUR MENTAL
HEALTH
MATTERS

We invite you to join us for a discussion led by April Scott, Associate Director of Campus Mental Health Initiatives, on graduate student mental health and resources available to students here at USC.

Part of Graduate Student Appreciation Week.

ORGANIZED BY
Provost's Advisory Committee on Women's Issues (PACWI)
Subcommittee on Women Graduate Students
Graduate Student Association
The Graduate School

FRIDAY, APRIL 6
2:00-4:00 P.M.
HAMILTON 124



Graduate
Student Association
University of South Carolina Student Life

A word from the Graduate School Associate Dean for Professional Development, Dr. Heather Brandt



Beginning in fall 2016, the University of South Carolina (UofSC) Graduate School began to scale up professional development offerings for graduate students coinciding with the hiring of a half-time associate dean for professional development (Heather M. Brandt, PhD, CHES). The scaled-up efforts are not intended to compete with offerings by degree programs, which are best suited to tailor to students' discipline-specific needs, but are instead designed to complement those offerings with high-quality, innovative professional development programming and to prepare graduate students for a variety of meaningful career options after degree. Professional development programming is delivered in multiple formats to encourage participation. To achieve the overall goal, **collaborative planning**, **collective implementation**, and **comprehensive evaluation** activities are employed.

- **Collaborative Planning:** Multiple sources of data and input from stakeholders, including graduate students, are used to inform programming, including convening an Advisory Committee co-led by a faculty member and graduate student, connecting to existing resources on campus, conducting a survey of current graduate students, and developing a conceptual model to guide efforts.
- **Collective Implementation:** Professional development programming is implemented using an array of existing and new resources to complement other offerings on campus and with other units, including offering programs using a variety of delivery formats in-person and online and engaging expertise of faculty, staff, graduate students, and graduate alumni.
- **Comprehensive Evaluation:** Process (implementation) evaluation and impact evaluation strategies are used to assess outcomes of professional development programming, including implementation monitoring to track participation, assessment of social media reach, and post-test only assessment of impact.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, the Graduate Student Association (GSA) has contributed to professional development offerings in the following ways:

- 1) Jennifer Mandelbaum, doctoral candidate in public health and Vice President of the GSA, co-leads the Advisory Committee on Professional Development for Graduate Students with Dr. Kellee White, associate professor of epidemiology. The purpose of the committee is to advise on and support the planning, implementation, and evaluation of high-quality, innovative professional development programming for graduate students to enhance their graduate education experience and prepare them for a variety of meaningful career options after degree. With Drs. Brandt and White, Jennifer plans and leads two meetings per semester. The committee is comprised of faculty, staff, and graduate students.

- 2) Nefe Omofuma, GSA Secretary of Professional Development, met with and communicated with Dr. Brandt to provide input on professional development programming as well as coordinate joint activities.
- 3) During Carolina Leadership Week 2018 (January 29-February 3, 2018), the Graduate School, with the GSA, featured written and video blogs by UofSC graduate student leaders as well as other content on leadership on social media. Following is a brief summary of evaluation data followed by a more in-depth explanation for each social media channel.
 - [Facebook](#): 35 posts were made on Facebook. During Carolina Leadership Week, the Graduate School's Facebook page had 1,307 engaged users, 10,468 total users, and 10,396 organic reach – and 149,030 weekly total impressions.
 - [Twitter](#): 44 tweets were posted on Twitter. During Carolina Leadership Week, tweets by the Graduate School had 17,439 impressions with user engagement of 470 and 79 retweets and 123 likes.
 - [LinkedIn](#): The LinkedIn account associated with the Graduate School was launched recently. During Carolina Leadership Week, six posts were made on LinkedIn to promote the YouTube videos and WordPress blogs.
 - [YouTube](#): Eleven video blogs were filmed featuring graduate student leaders and featured on the Graduate School YouTube site. During Carolina Leadership Week, the videos had 198 views.
 - [WordPress Blog](#) – 7 blogs written by graduate student leaders were featured on the Graduate School WordPress site. During Carolina Leadership Week, the blogs had 520 views by 344 visitors.
- 4) Graduate Student Appreciation Week (April 2-6, 2018) was planned and implemented with the GSA. Dr. Brandt consulted with the GSA on suggestions for offerings. The full week of offerings was co-organized with the GSA. The GSA led planning and conduct of a mental health round table and social event that was co-branded with the Graduate School's offerings.
- 5) The GSA submitted "professional journeys" of graduate alumni to be featured on Graduate School social media.
- 6) The Graduate School supported the GSA's communication efforts on social media by furthering dissemination of information to graduate students and the larger UofSC community.

The Graduate School looks forward to continued collaboration with the GSA on professional development programming efforts as well as other efforts to better meet the needs of graduate students.

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Student Engagement

GSA Pool Party – June 7, 2017



YOU'RE INVITED TO A

POOL PARTY

Bring your swimsuit for an afternoon of fun in the sun!

Wednesday, June 7th, 5pm-7pm
Strom Thurmond Wellness and Fitness Center
Outdoor Pool

Free food and cool games will be present!

Sponsored by

**Graduate
Student Association**

University of South Carolina Student Life



On Wednesday, June 7, the GSA organized a pool party for graduate students at the Strom Thurmond Wellness and Fitness Center – outdoor pool.

About 60 graduate students attended the party. Free food was offered, and students enjoyed the good weather while swimming and playing corn hole and volleyball.



Fall & Spring Welcome Back Events – August 30, 2017 & January 19, 2018



The GSA organized two welcome back events, one at the beginning of the fall semester, and another at the beginning of the spring semester. During these events, the GSA was able to interact with graduate students, hear about their issues, and recognize their accomplishments. Approximately 250 students attended these events.

Student Life
Graduate Student Association
University of South Carolina

Welcome Back Event

The Graduate Student Association invites you to start off the new school year right at Hickory Tavern with GREAT DRINKS, FREE FOOD and MUSIC!



WEDNESDAY 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
August 30
Hickory Tavern, 307 New State Hwy 1
Columbia, SC 29204
Please RSVP!
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA



Mental Health Resources on Campus

Mental Health Conditions and GRADUATE STUDENTS

Mental health conditions are real illnesses that affect a person's mood, thoughts, and behaviors. Studies indicate that students over 25 years old are at a higher risk for developing mental health conditions than younger students.* Some mental disorders include:



DEPRESSION

involves extended periods of feeling extremely low and disrupts a person's ability to enjoy life



ANXIETY

disorders are based on extreme fear which manifests itself both physically and emotionally



BIPOLAR DISORDER

involves extreme shifts of mood called mania and depression. Both mania and depression can severely impair function

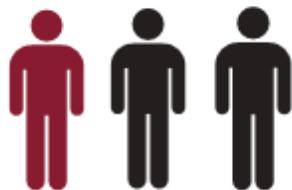


ALCOHOL USE DISORDER

occurs when the recurrent use of alcohol causes health problems, disability, or failure to meet major responsibilities

*Silverman, Meyer, Sloane, Raffel, & Pratt (1997) "The Big ID Suicide Study"

At the University of South Carolina,



Approximately 1 in 3 students have reported feeling **so depressed it was difficult to function** in the last 12 months*

*According to the National Collegiate Health Assessment in Spring of 2017

RESOURCES

For students who feel they may be struggling with their mental health

University Counseling Center

Make an appointment by calling (803) 777-5223

University Psychiatric Services

Make an appointment by calling (803) 777-1833

Therapist Assistance Online

If interested, visit selfhelp.taoconnect.org

Tips for Graduate Students to Increase Their Mental Wellness



Getting 7-9 hours of sleep every night will keep you well-rested and help you feel ready for the day



Get moving to get your body's feel-good chemicals flowing. Take a short walk, go up and down the stairs, or do some jumping jacks



Remind yourself of the good things in life by keeping a journal. Take some time each night to write down things you're grateful for



Use art, meditation, or religion to take care of your spirit. Spirituality can provide a personal understanding about the world



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/UofSCSG /USCGSA
 @UofSCSG @USCGSA

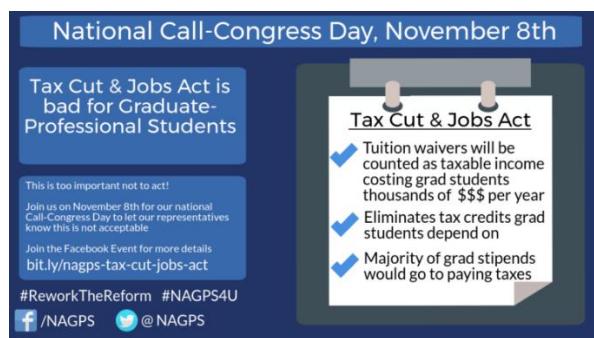
www.stigmafreeusc.com

GSA Advocacy

#ReworkTheReform Campaign – Fall 2017

On Thursday, Nov. 16, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 1, the Tax Cut and Jobs Act with a vote of 227-205. The Graduate Student Association (GSA) at the University of South Carolina was disappointed in the outcome of the vote and stood firmly opposed to the provisions in this legislation that are detrimental to higher education. There were many provisions within this bill that would make higher education significantly more expensive for graduate students. These provisions were:

- Eliminating the tax-free nature of tuition remission and counting “Qualified Tuition Reduction” or tuition waivers as taxable income, resulting in an increase of tax liability on graduate students
- Eliminating the student loan interest deduction.



If implemented, these provisions would have had a detrimental effect on graduate students and institutions of higher education.

In collaboration with the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS), and other graduate student associations across the country, the GSA worked on the [#ReworkTheReform](#) campaign to highlight the importance of graduate education by:

The Campaign was successful leading to the drop of the provisions affecting graduate students.

- Calling upon members of the Congress to reevaluate the consequences of these provisions, and recognize the devastating impact this will have on higher education,
- Publicly opposing these provisions of the bill that will negatively affect the entire higher education community ,
- Sharing how the reform will affect you as graduate student on social media using [#ReworkTheReform](#).
- Signing the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) [petition](#) calling for congress to remove provisions increasing the tax burden on graduate students and other students higher education from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.
- Letter to the Daily Gamecock editor: Tax Cuts and Jobs Act hinders higher education, by Clint Saidy ([link](#)).

Reports of the GSA Executive Board and President's Cabinet

Report of the GSA Vice President, Jennifer Mandebaum

As vice president of the Graduate Student Association (GSA), my focus has been on expanding professional development offerings and opportunities for graduate students to socialize with one another. In 2017-2018, the GSA increased its collaboration with the Graduate School, working closely with Heather Brandt, associate dean for professional development. As co-chair of the Advisory Committee on Professional Development for Graduate Students since 2016, I have been actively involved in increasing GSA's engagement with the Graduate School on professional development initiatives, including the second annual Carolina Leadership Week (Jan. 29-Feb. 3). During this week-long celebration highlighting leadership for all USC students, faculty and staff, the GSA contributed 11 video blogs featuring graduate student leaders on the Graduate School YouTube site, generating 198 total views. The videos featuring me included "Who is a leader you admire?" "Get involved in the Graduate Student Association," and "Graduate Students on Leadership." GSA members also wrote seven blogs for the Graduate School WordPress site, generating 520 views by 344 visitors. My blog post, entitled, "Developing Your Leadership Skills," focused on how students can identify and build on the leadership skills they may already have. I have also worked with Dr. Brandt and GSA's secretary of professional development, Omonefe Omofuma, to organize Graduate Student Appreciation Week (April 2-6). A sample of this week's events includes Cake and Punch with Dean Addy, head shots for graduate students, and a Start Smart salary negotiation workshop.

The GSA also hosted more social events for students to connect with other students from across the university. This year, we hosted four major events, including a pool party at the Strom Thurmond Wellness and Fitness Center, welcome back events at Hickory Tavern at the beginning of each semester, and a bowling event to celebrate the end of Graduate Student Appreciation Week. I also led the GSA in hosting a cookie decorating study break in the Thomas Cooper Library's Graduate Student Study Room at the end of the fall semester. Both the GSA and Student Government (SG) have tried to make mental health a greater focus this year. I worked with Anna Cofie, secretary of health, to organize a candlelight vigil in memory of students who have died by suicide (co-sponsored by the GSA, SG, and Active Minds). I have also worked with the Provost's Advisory Committee on Women's Issues Subcommittee on Women Graduate Students (of which I am also a representative), to organize "Your Mental Health Matters," a program on graduate student mental health during Graduate Student Appreciation Week. I also represent the GSA as a member of the Committee on Curricula and Courses and the Excellence Initiative (EI). As the sole graduate student representative on the EI Committee, I have assisted in reviewing 130 proposals to enhance and transform the university, totaling about \$70 million in funding requests for year one. This year, I also authored a post on the Graduate School blog on my experience taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment. I have been impressed and inspired by all that we have accomplished this year, and I look forward to continuing to serve the graduate student body as GSA President next year.

Both the GSA and Student Government (SG) have tried to make mental health a greater focus this year.

Report of the GSA Treasurer, Tony Brown

This report provides a description of the activities and events that were sponsored by the Graduate Student Association (GSA) in 2017-2018. This report also includes the GSA Operations Budget for 2017-2018. These events were envisioned by Graduate Student Organizations (GSOs) and submitted to the GSA Finance Committee to approve, decline, or modify their requests. The GSA Operational budget was used to support the mission of the GSA Executive Board in being actively involved in graduate student life and wellbeing at the University of South Carolina (USC). This report draws attention to the fact that GSOs are actively engaged in creating events to support the learning experience at USC. This report also shows the need for an increase in funding in the future out of the Student Activity Fees. The original amount budgeted to the GSA is \$32,773.00, less \$6,554.00 which forms the Operations Budget for GSA. The remaining \$26,219 is directly allocated to GSO events, conferences, and competitions. As of the date of this report, \$1,131.00 is remaining in the allocation budget, but many more requests are being completed. Unfortunately, the Finance Committee will have to decline some events simply from the lack of funds to allocate; events that are educational, informational, and culturally important to the university. We hope that an increase of funding for the next fiscal year, would increase activities and engagement on campus by GSOs.

The Treasurer and the Finance Committee continue to promote future financial planning for the organizations, as we also continue to support the mission of the GSA Executive Board and the visions of all GSOs.

GSA Operational Spending

Organization Event	Event Date	Allocated
<i>GSA FY18 OPERATIONS BUDGET</i>	7/1/2017	\$6,554.00
<i>GSA Meet and Greet event</i>	7/28/2017	-\$43.45
<i>GSA Nametags</i>	8/8/2017	-\$128.41
<i>GSA Card Brochures (printing cost)</i>	8/16/2017	-\$82.10
<i>GSA Welcome Back Event</i>	8/30/2017	-\$894.12
<i>GSA T-shirts</i>	9/27/2017	-\$138.79
<i>IIT for SG Ball/Formal</i>	11/29/2017	-\$35.00
<i>GSA Study Break event</i>	12/7/2017	-\$34.52
<i>GSA Welcome back event</i>	1/19/2018	-\$818.52
<i>GSA Graduate Student Appreciation Event</i>	04/06/2018	-\$1150.00
<i>GSA Leadership Conference - NAGPS</i>	04/20-04/22	-\$1000.00
<i>GSA Promotional Items</i>	TBA	-\$1100.00
<i>GSA Officer Frames</i>	TBA	-\$200.00
<i>GSA New Officer Portrait</i>	TBA	-\$200.00
Total Remaining		\$729.09

Graduate Organizations Funding Requests

Graduate Student Organization	Event Name	Event Date	Allocated Amount (\$)
<i>Society for Advancement of the Chemical Sciences</i>	Welcome Picnic	8/18/2017	\$400.00
<i>Chinese Student's Christian Fellowship</i>	New Student Welcome Event	8/21/2017	\$1,200.00
<i>Students for Justice in Palestine</i>	Palestinian Cultural Night event	10/3/2017	\$1,728.00
<i>Indian Student Organization</i>	Jashn event	10/18/2017	\$3,077.00
<i>Students for Justice in Palestine</i>	The Exiled Palestinians: Stateless Palestinians from the Camps event	10/26/2017	\$500.00
<i>DMSB Doctoral Student Association</i>	Fall networking and social event	11/17/2017	\$220.00
<i>Students for Justice in Palestine</i>	Palestine: Food and Faith at the Crossroads event	1/28/2018	\$360.00
<i>Black Graduate Student Association</i>	Healthy Relationships event	2/13/2018	\$215.00
<i>Bangladesh Student Association</i>	International Mother Language Day event	2/17/2018	\$4,824.00
<i>Black Graduate Student Association</i>	Financial Startup: Black Owned Business event	2/23/2018	\$420.00
<i>Avant Grads</i>	College Art Association Annual Conference	2/25/2018	\$2,603.00
<i>Society for Advancement of the Chemical Sciences LLC GSA</i>	Lunch and learn event	3/2/2018	\$103.00
<i>Taiwanese Student Association</i>	LLCGSA Annual conference	3/3/2018	\$1,307.00
<i>Student Personnel Association (SPA)</i>	Southeast Region United Sports event	3/3/2018	\$625.00
<i>Iranian Student Association</i>	NASPA Conference	3/7/2018	\$2,390.00
<i>Masters of Public Administration Student Association</i>	Persian New Year event	3/18/2018	\$621.00
<i>Black Graduate Student Association</i>	Lunch and Learn event	3/29/2018	\$314.00
<i>Graduate Biology Student Association</i>	Self-Love: Health and Fitness event	4/1/2018	\$55.00
<i>Graduate Students in Linguistics</i>	Biology Research Symposium at Baruch	4/1/2018	\$586.00
<i>Collaborations in Contemporary Art (CICA)</i>	Student Research Symposium event	4/7/2018	\$550.00
<i>Graduate Organization of Earth, Ocean and Environment</i>	All of the Above concert event	4/15/2018	\$1,000.00
<i>Chemical Engineering Graduate Student Organization</i>	Chasing Coral documentary event	4/16/2018	\$777.00
<i>Sport and Entertainment Management GSA</i>	Chemical Engineering Graduate Students Symposium event	5/3/2018	\$1,000.00
	NASSM Conference	6/6/2018	\$2,475.00
	Total		\$27,350.00
	Remaining		\$1,131.00

Report of the GSA President's Cabinet

Report of the GSA Liaison to the Medical School, Ryan Montalvo

The primary difficulty as liaison to the medical school at USC was bridging the gap between the two campuses. The medical school boasts many professional degrees (doctorate & masters in biomedical sciences, certificate degrees, PREP program, medical doctorates, physicians assistant degrees etc.) and is self-sustained in its community and culture. However, the graduate student association desired to acknowledge that there were many graduate students at the medical school that were not being given the full advantages of what the GSA has to offer. Therefore, my challenge this year was to identify the desires of the medical school's graduate students and incorporate the GSA's opportunities.

My first pursuit was to provide the graduate students at the medical school, located on Garner's Ferry road, with access to main campus if they would like to participate in the events of main campus with transportation. However, the desires of the graduate students at the medical school were not to participate on the events of main campus but to stimulate and thrive within their own community, on their own campus. The graduate student at the medical school campus are of a slightly different breed than other graduate programs. They are dedicated and committed to their research and studies to an intense level and need a GSA that conforms to their unique needs.

My challenge this year was to identify the desires of the medical school's graduate students and incorporate the GSA's opportunities.

Therefore, the students of the medical school have begun their own Biomedical Science Graduate Student Association. This group will seek to enrich the community of the medical school and draw students who are passionate about biomedical science together through events and discussions based around their research and career goals. The BSGSA has already participated in several events including the American Heart Association walk and the medical school Black Tie Gala. In the coming year the hope of the BSGSA is to continue to grow relationships amongst graduate students that will enrich the community of the medical school to continuously prosper.

Report of the GSA Secretary of Veterans Affairs – Andrew Kirkland

The secretary of veteran affairs focused their efforts on opening communication channels with veteran organizations on campus including the Veterans Student Services Advisory Committee and the Registrar's Veteran Services Office. Several meetings were conducted with the heads of these organizations with the intent of learning about how graduate student veterans are currently being served and what needs still exist for this population of students. It is apparent that there is a deficiency in the communication of available education benefits to new graduate student veterans and how to utilize them. Therefore, the focus of the SVA leading up to the end of the school year will be on working with the Registrar's Veteran Services Office to develop new

It is apparent that there is a deficiency in the communication of available education benefits to new graduate student veterans and how to utilize them.

guidelines and products, which will be provided to incoming graduate student veterans upon their acceptance to their program. These products will help educate veterans on the benefits they have earned for their service to our country and clearly outline how to take advantage of them.

Report of the GSA Health Secretary – Anna Cofie

During my tenure as secretary of health for the Graduate Student Association (GSA), my main goal was to advocate for health rights for graduate students spanning from physical to mental health well-being. As the Secretary of Health, I led a GSA partnership with Stigma Free USC and the Student Government Association (SGA) to shed light on mental health whilst highlighting the many resources available to students on campus. This event was a success as we had the pleasure of having President Pastides share his thoughts and love for all students, particularly those that might be affected by mental health. Towards the end of my term, we worked closely with Graduate Council to create a survey to gauge the status of mental health on campus and innovative ways we can work to better mental health services offered at the university. In furthering our collaborative efforts across campus, during Graduate Student Appreciation Week, “Your Mental Health Matters” was organized by the Provost’s Advisory Committee on Women’s Issues, The Graduate School and GSA. This event was a discussion led by April Scott, Associate Director of Campus Mental Health Initiatives, on graduate student mental health and resources available to them. This forum also allowed for discussion between students and key mental health stakeholders.

As the Secretary of Health, I led a GSA partnership with Stigma Free USC and the Student Government Association (SGA) to shed light on mental health whilst highlighting the many resources available to students on campus.

Furthermore, there were many opportunities where we collaborated with the Graduate School and participated in many professional development initiatives throughout the week. These included writing blogs on “Leadership” and being featured on many videos addressing “Leaders We Admire”. This week was a success as it allowed other graduate students to see what GSA is about and an opportunity to get involved.

During my term, I also served on various committees including the Mental Health Initiative Committee, Healthy Carolina Steering Committee and the liaison between the Deans Student Advisory Committee and GSA. In all these capacities, I made sure that graduate students were at the center of attention. Most resources on campus are geared towards undergraduate students, thus, it was very important for me to come up with ideas that could help with graduate student outreach, so they too, can benefit from the many resources presented. As a cabinet member, I made it a priority to attend all GSA social events and volunteered with the Secretary of International Student Affairs during “International Bazaar” held by the university.

I am so fortunate to have had an opportunity to work on behalf of all graduate students this past year. I am looking forward with continuing the quest of pushing GSA forward in my new role as the next Vice President of GSA (2018-2019). I am very happy with what GSA accomplished this

year and I am hoping with help from my team, we can take it to new heights. Thank you greatly University of South Carolina, for giving me the opportunity to serve you.

Report of the GSA Secretary of Alumni Relations – Rachel Lunsford

This past academic year, the GSA has hosted numerous events and has worked to advocate on behalf of our fellow graduate students. My work as the secretary of alumni relations has involved our blog series and support for Graduate Student Appreciation Week. I worked with several USC graduates to find candidates willing to submit a blog post for our Professional Development Series. Breen Weir, a graduate of our Master of International Business (MIB) program, wrote an article on how USC helped serve as a springboard in her career. Weir's article was published on our blog on March 23 (<https://gradschoolatusc.wordpress.com/>).

I also wrote an article on my experiences with leadership during Carolina Leadership Week (<https://gradschoolatusc.wordpress.com/2018/01/29/life-lessons-in-leadership-leading-by-example/>). I have also been working closely with Nefe to brainstorm and organize events during our Graduate Student Appreciate Week, specifically our Bowl and Mingle Event at AMF Bowling.

I believe it is very important that GSA continue to host and create forums for graduate students to come together. As we are located throughout the university, different programs can feel segmented from others at times. Having the GSA allows the participants and other students the opportunity to come together and promote common goals for the betterment of our university. In the future, I believe we need to find new avenues to promote awareness of the GSA and how we can help advocate on behalf of our fellow graduate students. Thank you for a great year!

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Report of the GSA Secretary of Professional Development – Omonefe Omufuma

As my role secretary of professional development the GSA cabinet, I worked closely with the graduate school's associate dean of professional development to develop programs and offerings to meet the professional needs of graduate students. They included and not limited to being a member of the library advisory council, advisory committee on professional development for graduate students, attending biweekly GSA meetings to discuss pertinent ideas, facilitating articles and video recording from GSA cabinet during Carolina leadership, working with the secretary of alumni affairs to facilitate involvement in the professional journey blog, develop programmings during the graduate students appreciation week and including offerings for graduate students in the monthly newsletters and on social media pages.

Report of the GSA Secretary of Community Outreach – Nick Vera

During my term at GSA I held the position of secretary of community outreach. I tasked myself with trying to gather graduate students together at events to gain better insight on their

experiences at USC as a graduate student. With some success I was able to reach a fair number of grad students by posting community service events through service opportunities on campus like CRE. Some of my other duties with the position consisted of sitting in on various committees around campus that incorporate student life. The committees I participated in were off campus safety, library advisory, and academic integrity. Lastly, I was tasked with coming up with social events for students to take part in like the bowling, cookie decorating, and eat and mingle events. I greatly enjoyed my time serving this year's cabinet and hope to do it again next year!



Graduate Student Spotlight

This year, GSA decided to use the hashtag [#GraduateStudentSpotlight](#) on twitter in order to highlight the achievements of graduate students at Carolina.



Michael B. Bailey, second year Ph.D. Student in Political Science:

On Feb. 6, Columbia's Richland County Council voted unanimously to appoint Michael B. Bailey to the Palmetto Health Richland Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees.



Kimberly Gaughan, Second-year M.F.A. candidate:

Kimberly Gaughan explores the problems with classic Hollywood glamour in her original solo show.

Source: Daily Gamecock ([link](#))



Zachary Cannizzo, Graduate Student in Marine Science:

Zachary Cannizzo came to USC for graduate school to answer one question: Why are mangrove tree crabs on man-made docks bigger than crabs in the salt marsh?

Source: Daily Gamecock ([link](#))



Xiaopeng Li, Ph.D. Candidate in Computer Science & Engineering:

*A phone that says "no" to little kid fingers.
An algorithm for detecting who's swiping the screen could help make phones child-proof.*

Sources: MIT Technology Review ([link](#)), The Tribune ([link](#))

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