

# Global Student Government Policies



*Adopted at the 1st GSG Legislative Assembly  
November 27, 2022*

## **Issues Policies**

*These policies represent the GSG's formal position on a topic.*

### **Issues Policy 1: Student Democracy**

Student democracy is a necessary part of education. When structured and implemented well, it is the best way for students to make their voice heard.

#### The GSG Supports

1. Democratic student governments at sub-campus, campus, regional, national, continental, and global levels
2. Students having structural power within education systems sufficient to adequately advance student causes and hold other education stakeholders accountable

#### The GSG Opposes

1. Educational leaders and policymakers relying on small groups of appointed students to represent the student voice
2. The over-glorification of ad hoc, often undemocratic student movements in which students risk their lives in violent confrontations with state authorities
3. Students holding insufficient structural power to make change, leaving their voice tokenized

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### **Issues Policy 2: Housing**

For many students around the world, living space can directly impact their academic performance; which is considered the most important aspect of the university experience. According to the 2019 International Student Survey by QS, 60% of international students expressed that accommodation information was most influential in their decision-making. It is important to note for Universities to have adequate accommodation spaces for students and for students to have accessible affordable housing options.

#### The GSG Supports

1. Housing cooperatives that are run by students solely for the purpose of non for profit
2. Inclusive housing initiatives for students
3. Affordable housing schemes for students
4. Campaigns that call for universities to adjust their cost of rent to fairer rates for the purpose of inclusive housing for all students

#### The GSG Opposes

1. Disruptive building work and inhumane housing practices for students
2. Exploitative rental rates for student housing

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**Issues Policy 3: Health**

Students should be offered a Health Plan for prescription drugs, dental benefits and accident benefits. Students battle misdiagnoses and inaccessible care in certain colleges around the world. Many campuses have experienced challenges with the COVID-19 and the ability to safeguard their students as they return to campus. Health care facilities should be accessible to all students with proper accreditation, quality, safety, affordability, and appropriateness of care provided.

**The GSG Supports**

1. The need of accessible health care plans for students
2. Campaigns for affordable, quality, safety and appropriateness of care provided

**The GSG Opposes**

1. Dismissive health clinics with inappropriate wait times and high costly health care plans and services for students

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### Issues Policy 4: Immigration

International students have experienced issues in accessing essential resources and information about immigration services and requirements to study in a foreign country. International students have faced challenges on account of their visa status, for instance In 2020, the federal government of United States increased this pressure by issuing a number of short-sighted and xenophobic policies, from requiring international students to attend classes in person during the COVID-19 crisis or risk deportation, to restricting H1B visas, to the Muslim travel ban, to restrictions on Chinese international student visas, and more International students that join student unions will not have any impact on their immigration status. Unionizing does not affect international student status or visa.

#### GSG Supports

1. The need of providing essential services to international students from information on student/study visas to health plans for international students
2. Campaigns for the support of international students and the need to eliminate xenophobic policies for international students
3. Equal treatment for international students
4. To write letters on behalf of international students to elected officials to overturn xenophobic policies.
5. Host immigration sessions with immigration lawyers

#### GSG Opposes

1. Xenophobic immigration policies that limit international student rights

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### **Issues Policy 5: Equity**

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is an important aspect of campus. It is important to create safe, inclusive and engaging learning environments within the education system, we all must be committed to equity and inclusion for all students. Diversity in leadership, human rights and equity focused professional development will increase fairness amongst educators by removing barriers for underrepresented communities. Research indicates that students reflect with their learning environment when there is a sense of belonging and well-being.

#### **GSG Supports**

1. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in every aspect for each student
2. Student groups with a strong commitment to equity, safety, and the creation of safe(r) spaces for its membership
3. Efforts to challenge all forms of discrimination and oppression on campuses
4. To identify, remove and prevent systemic barriers and discriminatory practices to help students reach their full potential and improve student achievement

#### **GSG Opposes**

1. Any form of inequity and discrimination in regards to its members and their students

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### **Issues Policy 6: Education Funding**

Through student governments, members have a say in setting the policies and direction towards education funding. This would include ways to defray the cost of educational and extracurricular activities for students. Across the world, some students have faced difficulties with accessing education funding options due to international student status or other factors.

The GSG supports:

1. Affordable, if not free, education for all students.
2. Student-led campaigns on accessible educational funding for vulnerable students.
3. Strategies to manage funding in cases of government mandates and policies such as opt in/out student government fee structures.

The GSG Opposes:

1. High education costs that prevent all students from receiving an education
2. Students being financially exploited by education institutions, other education stakeholders, and governments during their education experience.
3. Inaccessible education funding options

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### **Issues Policy 7: Environmental Justice**

Across the world there are ongoing movements and struggles to resist policies, resource extraction and development projects that would impact the environment negatively.

Environmental justice mobilizes environmental rights, civil rights, anti-racist, anti-poverty, aboriginal rights and feminist agendas to challenge the unequal distribution of environmental burdens and benefits in society. This can be applied to students and their education through sustainable initiatives that involve the pursuit of ecological integrity, social equity and economic prosperity within the biophysical constraints of local and planetary ecosystems.

#### The GSG Supports

1. Movements for the support of sustainable initiatives on campus to reduce environmental degradations.
2. Initiatives that call for a climate emergency

#### The GSG Opposes

1. Colonial laws, policies, and resource extraction and development projects on unceded Indigenous lands and waters.

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### Issues Policy 8: Student Journalism

Student journalism is integral to a healthy student democracy. It serves as an important line of communication between student governments and their constituents. It allows student representatives and other relevant education and societal stakeholders to be held accountable. It is vital for student journalists to be given access to the operations of student government in order to ensure that the greater student body is given transparent information about the organization's inner workings. Furthermore, it is crucial that student journalism organizations themselves are equitable organizations that avoid any bias or agenda beyond providing good news coverage; student journalists should have the ability to cover stories that will be important to the student body, even if they are controversial. There should be no conflict of interest that prevents stories from being covered properly and in their entirety. It is ideal for student journalism organizations to be independent of the school in order to ensure freer and more accurate coverage.

#### The GSG Supports

1. Student journalists being able to report on student government activities at all levels
2. Investigative student journalism that holds those with power accountable
3. Student government officials being transparent and cooperative with student journalists
4. Student journalism organizations that serve as independent news outlets that are free of bias or conflict of interest.
5. Student journalism outlets collaborating across campus and borders

#### The GSG Opposes

1. Student journalists being denied access to consequential student government activities and governance processes
2. Student government members, representatives, employees, and volunteers being prohibited from or heavily restricted in communicating with student journalists
3. Student government processes being hidden in any way from student journalists
4. Student journalism organizations that are restrictive and hinder the ability of student journalists to cover the news.
5. Conflicts of interest within student journalism or student government organizations that affect the way the news is reported or the extent to which stories are covered.

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