Lauren Feldman, President

Hi, I’m Lauren, a 5th year Ph.D student in Psychology, and the current Vice President of GSG. My research focus on social inequality—and how inequality consequently shapes social norms, institutional climates, and individuals’ outcomes—underpins much of my service work. In my past 5 years of departmental and University service (first as a Psychology graduate representative, then as GSG Academic Affairs Chair, and this past year as VP), I’ve done advocacy work in the following areas:

- **Graduate labor issues and inequity**
  - Written multiple policy proposals addressing inequitable & unsustainable teaching loads for grad students, both across and within departments
  - During COVID, fought to ensure that grad students weren’t pressured into teaching in person or returning to lab if the conditions didn’t feel safe or comfortable

- **Physical and mental health & wellness**
  - Fought to expand medical insurance coverage for grads on medical leave
  - Fought to enable off-campus grads to opt into the university COVID testing protocol
  - Developed programming for Graduate Mental Health Month

- **Fostering community**
  - Created and moderate the GSG Global Slack, where 1300+ grad students connect to discuss their interests and exchange resources, advice, and memes (!)
  - Helped develop the peer buddy program pairing 1st year grad students with more senior grads

- **Diversity and inclusion**
  - Organized & served on many panels for underrepresented grad students (current and prospective)
  - Fought for protections for international and undocumented students in response to national policy changes & executive orders
  - Served on the Committee to Address Systemic Racism in Campus Life and the Public Safety Advisory Committee

- I’ve also served on the following: the Professional Development Working Group, Wintersession and Campus Engagement Committee, and Priorities Committee (the University budget committee). I also meet often with deans and administrators to address student concerns in real time (at times we have daily contact!)

Many of the above initiatives are still ongoing. In addition to continuing to work on these, other issues that I’m particularly passionate about working on next year are: transparency and standardization in program requirements; improving advisor accountability; and ensuring that grad students are supported as we transition back into non-remote work.

I want to ensure that our university’s policies and practices are more effective, equitable, and transparent for all our grad students. Please e-mail me with any ideas you have about how GSG can best achieve that!
Andrew Finn, Vice President

I am running for Vice President firmly guided by the idea that the GSG is, at its heart, a vital force for advocacy and innovation in all aspects of Princeton graduate student life. My efforts to support graduate students as the Academic Affairs Officer last year, during which all academic facets of graduate life were radically altered and in need of new modes of support, has solidified this conviction. That said, the principal impression I have taken away from my GSG work has been the sheer interconnectivity of each aspect of graduate student life: working with both the Executive Board and the inter-departmental Assembly to approach and work on resolving issues of housing, health, research, teaching, prejudice, isolation, and others with an unflagging and indomitable spirit has affirmed for me the high degree to which GSG can make a positive, wide-ranging impact on graduate students’ lives. Indeed, coming from the experiences of compiling a graduate student FAQ about COVID-19 from weekly meetings with the Deans of the Graduate School; growing the successful Slack channel; helping introduce increased library communications and accommodations for graduate students’ needs; starting the Grad Student Buddy Program, which has paired first-year students with upper-years to ease them into Princeton and meet new friends; providing a graduate student perspective on the Wintersession advisory committee; and helping to reinstate meal reimbursements for events, among others, have all made clear for me the beneficial, multivalent, central role that GSG has the potential to play in the graduate school.

I wish to serve the graduate school as GSG’s Vice President so that I can continue to further and expand this role. As Vice President, I will ensure that GSG meeting protocols will continue to be held to a high standard so as to best carry new ideas forward. What’s more, as was the case last year, this year in particular continues to present new challenges; but with these challenges come new ideals for us to strive for and realize. I will not only further the President’s endeavors and support his or her initiatives within Assembly meetings and beyond, but also will work more broadly to push the GSG’s collaborative approaches to resolving graduate student needs and concerns to new heights. These new horizons will encompass advocating for more robust departmental websites, opening up more opportunities for inter-departmental collaboration and sociality, and helping establish new academic support networks, just to begin!
Hi, I’m Allison and I am a second year PhD candidate in Chemical and Biological Engineering. If you’ve ever opened an email from GSG this past year, it was most likely from me, serving as your GSG Communications Director. Since I started back in March 2020, I’ve striven to ensure that our community is both informed and heard by the University, a goal that became an unexpected challenge this past year. To address that, our executive board created a Slack for the grad community, and in just under a year, we have a group of over 1300 people. This has become a two way street: for GSG and student orgs to share information and events, and for students to ask questions and give feedback.

I see my role on GSG to stay up to date on University developments and communicate grad student concerns. I, along with the rest of the executive board, met with the Graduate School Deans every week to help students navigate rising issues with housing, testing, and campus reopening. These meetings were invaluable for students to have their concerns addressed in a timely fashion, especially in the constantly changing circumstances of the pandemic.

In addition, I have served on the Professional Development Working Group committee to advocate resources to aid grad students in finding their desired opportunities and careers. To me, sometimes it seems like many advertised events are geared for undergrads, so it’s been rewarding to structure programming specifically for grad students. I’ve also served on the executive committee for the Council of the Princeton University Community. In this role, I have helped shape the agenda for the community-wide meetings, making sure that concerns important to grad students are discussed, such as University efforts to address systemic racism, on-campus testing, and re-densification of campus.

As VP of Internal Affairs, I will continue to advocate for students while building transparency about what we do on GSG. One goal is to fill the empty positions in our assembly to increase student representation. Another goal is to make it easier for students to get involved with GSG, working with their schedules and time commitment. My experience on GSG has taught me that we are at our collective best when we anticipate, acknowledge, and act on student interests together.

Thanks for your time and taking part of the voting process!
Gyoonho Kong, Secretary

Dear friends,

My journey to get involved started while serving as a German department representative. At the assembly meeting, I saw officers and committee members interacting with the university to address student issues regarding housing, mentoring and mental health; I found myself also wanting to do something more.

I thus first worked in the Committee for Mental Health Awareness Month during 2019 to help set up a distress response workshop and a work-life balance discussion panel. I also served as a member of the Graduate Student Mentoring Task Force, which investigated mentoring practices across departments to ease the graduate student’s dependence on the power of individual faculty members.

In the year 2020, I eventually became Secretary for the GSG. I was incredibly lucky to have worked with the current GSG members who quickly recognized the importance of fluent communication between students and the graduate school to provide safe work environment for graduate students during the pandemic; as a member of the board, I helped with establishing the Slack global channel for graduate students, as well as placing the weekly saliva testing protocols. Through weekly meetings with the deans of the graduate school and housing facilities, I aided with the board negotiating safe move-in and housing practices. During this time, I also served in the Priorities Committee to review the Princeton university’s financial decisions that will take the pandemic situation into full consideration to student salary and benefits.

The year working as a secretary taught me two things: it is We—the graduate students and the board altogether—who were behind all the efforts and victorious moments of fighting against the pandemic, rather than handful of students; moreover, for us to successfully protect and represent our graduate student interest, direct and effective communication and negotiation with the graduate school are absolutely crucial. Now, with my experience of serving as a Secretary during the pandemic, I wish to serve the same role once again to continuously raise voice to represent graduate student interest. I believe my past year prepared me well to take on another year of service.

I also wish to use the statement as the opportunity to express gratitude to you for helping the board the previous year—it is you who made all of our lives better during the pandemic. Thank you very much for reading my statement.

Gyoonho Kong
Hi folks,

My name’s Michael. I’m a second-year in the Department of Molecular Biology, and I’m so excited to run for the position of Treasurer. I bring with me dedication to GSG, familiarity with university administrators, and experience managing a large budget.

Over the course of the past year, I’ve served as the MOL departmental representative in the GSG assembly, and I greatly enjoyed learning more about the manifold ways in which GSG advocates for student wellbeing. The energetic discussions, about everything from testing availability to academic expectations during an online semester, helped me to recognize the extent to which this pandemic has cast a harsher light on issues facing graduate students at Princeton. I haven’t missed a meeting, and I don’t intend to.

I’ve also had the chance to represent graduate students on the University-wide Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Climate, Culture, and Conduct. This is a diverse group, with representation from Princeton’s faculty, staff, administrators, and undergraduate/graduate students. This helped me to appreciate more fully the extent to which seemingly insignificant policy changes (often budgetary in nature) can have profound impacts on the welfare of students. Through this work, I’ve also grown comfortable engaging with university administrators and pressuring them to consider policy changes and progressive courses of action.

Prior to Princeton, I served as the Business Manager for the creatively named Penn Singers Light Opera Company. In this function, I fiercely advocated on the company’s behalf for budget increases, successfully lobbying the university to allocate thousands of more dollars to the group than in the previous year. I managed a tens-of-thousands-of-dollar budget, coordinated with administrators to license rights to musicals and to book performance venues, and helped the other members of my board to finance their projects. To that end, I think that I am the only one running for GSG who has purchased both a timpani and bale of Spanish moss!

Given this experience, I know that I will be a generous and fair head of the events board, and I look forward to helping graduate student groups finance their events. This includes virtual events, which have held together our community throughout the pandemic, and the future in-person ones, which will celebrate the welcome end thereof.

In short, I cannot wait to serve as your Treasurer!

All the best,
Michael
Guanhua He, *Treasurer*

2020 has been a difficult year for everyone, especially those graduate students at Princeton. As the treasurer of the GSG, I managed to maintain a healthy financial situation for the GSG. We have a total income of $128,361, total budgeted expense $70,250, with $58,111 as leftover. This strong financial position would allow the GSG to support various student events including virtual cheese & wine party, mental health month and etc. in the upcoming year.

It’s been a great pleasure for me to serve as the treasurer this past year. Although the work is sometimes tedious, I feel that my job is essential for normal operation of the GSG. Besides, it’s so much fun to work with other colleagues at the GSG. I would like to continue serving the graduate students community in my final year at Princeton. And I hope you can support me.
Christopher Ushay, Communications Director

My name is Christopher Ushay (he/him) and I am a G3 in Chemical and Biological Engineering. This year I’m excited to be running for the position of Communications Director in the GSG.

Coming to graduate school almost three years ago I was excited for the prospect of not only working on research but also spending several years surrounded by passionate and interesting individuals. While the graduate school’s size might work against its favor at times, it provides even more opportunities to be an active member of the community and interact with people across a wide array of disciplines.

I had always planned to get more involved with GSG as a senior grad student, and the past year has made an even greater case. Living around campus through the pandemic has been profoundly difficult and isolating for everyone, and it has highlighted the fact that grad school is about far more than the sum of our research; it’s clear that the social and community-based aspects of student life are critical towards our success and well-being. With that in mind, I’ve admired the current GSG officers for stepping up with their advocacy and outreach during a time when graduate students might have otherwise been overlooked. Looking toward the future, it’s the kind of work that I want the chance to be a part of while I’m at Princeton.

The next calendar year is going to be one of great change, especially with the optimism that school could potentially return to a more familiar state once vaccinations are more widely distributed - I’m personally looking forward to the prospect of bartending at DBar again and attending fewer webinars - but in the meantime I know that GSG is going to be working hard to make sure that we can still have fulfilling experiences as grad students. I hope that I can be a part of it and contribute towards effecting positive change in our community at such an important crossroads.
Rachel Barocio, *Communications Director*

Hey there! I'm Rachel and I'd love to join GSG as communications director. I'm currently a 2nd year graduate student in molecular biology. However, what I'm really trying to do is engineer bacteria to be controlled with light and produce anti-cancer compounds. I've had the opportunity to both participate in events held by GSG and interact with the incredible people who are behind the fun. As communications director, I will value the collective voice of the graduate student community. Now more than ever, it's important for open communication and people to feel heard about what they want from the Graduate School. We are all striving to better connect in a socially distanced world and what better way than to come together in our collective Princeton community! Lastly, having a liaison to communicate between the needs of our peers and the opportunities our student government can provide is a role I highly value. Let's get to ittt!
Hello everyone, my name is Irving Miramontes, and I am a second year PhD candidate in Molecular Biology. I truly stand by the motto “work hard, play hard.” In my first year here at Princeton I really enjoyed going to all of the great events hosted by Graduate Student Government - so much that I wanted to share that happiness by throwing amazing special events for y’all as your Special Events Officer. I was elected as Special Events Officer this past term but sadly the world was struck with a pandemic. Previously I had been an assembly member for my department, and I saw how much advocating and hard work was involved in being an officer. During most of my past term my role as a GSG officer was heavily dedicated to advocate for graduate students and make our life better during these very trying times. We met with graduate deans, UHS services and also diversity deans – some on a weekly basis. I loved to work as a team player with all of my fellow hardworking executive officers as we tried to make this past year a little better. Due to safety regulations, I haven’t been able to throw an in-person events, but my time was well spent advocating for graduate students. Moreover, I was able to throw two virtual parties once safety protocols became better (and we fought for free food). After the first try at a zoom party I decided to do the second one as a GatherTown event and included more games and prizes and it was a great success. Being able to work with administration to get reimbursement for food and goodies has been a big part of my work that I am really proud of. As a model in New York City before graduate school, I partook in many fun events and gained a lot of experience on how to curate an interactive space. I tried putting my abilities and creativity to good use in this virtual world by inviting some cool and experienced DJs, some even from NYC and Miami - and also hosting Drag Queens. In the future I hope to throw more themed parties that will allow students to delve in their creative side or experience something new. In addition, as co-Social Chair for the Queer Graduate Caucus and Intersecting Queer Identities, it is important for me to create safe events for people from all backgrounds, identities, and interests to have fun and relax. But most of all, it is important for me to help you connect with your graduate community. I hope you guys re-elect me as I am eager to serve as your Special Events Officer again and hope to see you all in person soon. <3
Hi, I’m Rachel Richman (she/her), a 3rd year in Near Eastern Studies. I have been serving on GSG since my first year as department rep, and as a representative to the University Student Life Committee for the past year. I would be honored to serve as your Academic Affairs officer to continue my advocacy for university policies that treat graduate students as full human beings — not simply students or a labor force.

My proudest accomplishment on GSG so far has been achieving the extended health coverage for students on medical leave (policy announced 1/11/21). I became involved due to a friend’s needs: watching the medical leave procedure up close, I became incensed at the arbitrary rules and the sheer scale of bureaucracy students are forced to muddle through while ill. The six-month health coverage extension was necessary, but is not enough. I will continue to fight for sustained housing and for more accessible explanations and mechanisms to help students who are considering medical leave.

I am not running for housing priority. I live in Philadelphia and intend to stay here. I am running because I deeply care about the Princeton community and am excited about the changes I have helped create, and I want to extend positive and caring policies to more folks. I want to promote the voices of graduate students who are not necessarily located in New Jersey, whether due to archival work abroad, visa issues, family situations, or personal choice. University policy is not always made with us in mind, but we constitute an important group and deserve to be taken into account.

Issues I am interested in pursuing as Academic Affairs officer include: creating better protections for students during the General Exam process, determining which digital programs can continue to best serve students outside of Princeton, and finding solutions to your concerns.

Those who have served with me in GSG and my department know that I am not afraid to pose difficult questions to top administrators. I have an ear for b-s and am good at parsing bureaucratic speech. I believe change comes best from both the outside and the inside of institutions, so I ask you as my constituents to help inform me of the issues you are seeing and feeling on the ground. I promise to listen to you and advocate for you in the highest halls.
Saumyashree Ghosh, Academic Affairs
Hello! I am running for the Academic Affairs Officer as an advanced doctoral candidate. My long experience as a historian in this university, having additionally travelled and lived in 3 continents for research, foster the desire. Academia shapes our experience of the graduate school. Co-organising our graduate workshop on South Asia (that hosts events with scholars beyond Princeton) has opened my eyes to the logistics and realities of academic administration. Serving on the Housing Committee has further honed my insights into university administration. I am specifically exploring opportunities for professionalization, one that is designed for students embarking on doctoral field research. A lot of social science and humanities research thrive on research in the field, both at home and abroad. It brings challenges that nobody tells you about and figuring out which takes a lot of time from our research (some life-threatening challenges like facing imprisonment on false spying charges for working in archives, as we very well know now). These experiences are not too different across disciplines, and I want to arrange workshops for post-Generals students that bring together advanced candidates to discuss their experiences and lessons from their fields. I have heard the need for such sessions throughout my time in Princeton and I want to create a space for it. This is part of the interdisciplinarity that is critical to our intellectual development. This should operate both on-campus and involve cross-campus discussions.

Besides, amidst the coronavirus pandemic, I wish to advocate for ways that make library resources available to students at a faster and better way than is currently happening. More generally, international students feel overwhelmed by various matters and there is need for relevant spaces that offer support and transparency about mentorship and funding; this can help avoid/lessen the stress of students who may face unfair mentoring in any way. And, of course, central to any such initiative and graduate life is the availability of funding and fellowships. My experience is that most often graduate students are not fully aware of the opportunities that Princeton itself has to offer from various centres, schools, and councils. Forums that lay out the many options for every graduate student—both inside and outside of Princeton—is critical moving forward. As an advanced graduate student who has been through most of the stages (except completion and defense), I hope to advocate, expand, and ease the academic experience in Princeton.
Hello! I am a fifth year graduate student in the department of Operations Research and Financial Engineering. My motivation for the facilities officer position is simple: I believe that the best solutions come from people who have experienced the same struggles. During the five years I have spent in Princeton, I have gained a lot of experience on the issues related to housing, transportation, and dining. As facilities officer, I would like to work to improve housing and transportation on campus and to make changes according to the needs of graduate students. I will be happily performing advocacy for graduate student parking and transportation needs, as well as on the issues related to graduate student housing, rents, maintenance, and campus dining. I have been living on campus for five years now and I know very well that housing is one of the main issues that graduate students are facing every year. We all know that feeling of uncertainty about housing that visits us every February-March. I would like to actively take part in projects that would assist graduate students in finding convenient housing, and I am willing to conduct my duties and responsibilities in a way that would help relieve some of the housing stress for the upcoming graduate students.
I am a third-year Ph.D. student in Psychology. I joined the Graduate Mental Health Initiative and the Mental Health Awareness Month (MHAM) organizing committee since its conception in 2018. I was one of three organizers for the first-ever Graduate Mental Health Week in 2018. The next year, I continued to serve on the committee to organize the first MHAM in November 2019. This year, as the vice president of the committee, I helped expand MHAM to nearly 50 virtual events plus several self-paced activities. I also led the graphic design in advertising events. I helped collect, illustrate and share anonymous graduate student anecdotes to increase awareness and demonstrate that no one is alone in their challenges. I also helped organize an online mental health-awareness-themed art exhibit and designed a printed catalogue of the artwork. More information about MHAM can be found on our website:

https://mentalhealth.princeton.edu/

Plans are under way to incorporate feedback we received this year in the next MHAM. Over the past three years, we have increased the accessibility of our initiatives by creating a video archive. I will collaborate with campus partners to expand our programming for specific identity groups on campus and provide more parent-child friendly events. I am currently working with CPS and the McGraw Center to increase faculty’s awareness of graduate mental health struggles and to empower them to support graduate students through difficult times and create an advising environment that promotes wellbeing. We hope to create workshops and panels discussing advising skills and resources to support graduate wellbeing, and to incorporate this training as part of the mandatory new faculty training. Last, but not least, I hope to continue the GSG’s efforts to advocate for systemic changes in graduate student access to healthcare, mental health resources and medical leave.

I am eager to continue the tradition of MHAM and spread the message of support in our academic community as your next Health & Life officer. I am uniquely positioned to do so with my experience on the committee in the past three years. My involvement in the TigerWell Grant Selection Committee and applying for grants that funded MHAM in the past two years, will help me ensure our programming continues. Plans are already underway for securing funding for next year, and I am excited to expand faculty engagement and continue to grow the conversation around mental health. Please vote for me to support these initiatives!
Graeme Baker, Social

This past year, I have been pleased to serve as your social officer and to work with the other splendid GSG executives to advocate for all graduate students. I hope my programming at-a-distance has brought you some connection and joy. With the sourdough discussion group, we have grown our baking expertise and baked thousands of loaves. I thank everyone who suggested a film for the "Movies with GSG" canvas page, where we have had over 9000 viewings since September!

As your social officer in 2021, I plan to resume recurrent in-person events in a safe manner. I have met with members of the university's "Gatherings Team" and we already have some small gatherings in the planning pipeline. I look forward to the time when I can hand out free pizza and beverages to you at weekly GSG happy hours.

Finally, the graduate school has indicated that this year will see the roll-out of the CampusGroups event scheduling system for graduate student groups. This system will help groups connect to their intended audience and will put all graduate events on one easily accessible platform. The introduction of CampusGroups may not be without difficulty. As both your social officer and the prime minister of an international student group (the Canadian Graduate Student Association/Association des étudiant(e)s canadien(ne)s aux études supérieures), I will pressure the graduate school to make this process agreeable for all graduate student groups.