

Resolution #69-07

**The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)  
The Pennsylvania State University**



**of the 69th Assembly**  
December 4, 2019

*Be it decided by the Assembly of Elected Delegates,*

**Statement on Inclusion**  
**In support of a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse Penn State**  
(Decided: [ Y / N / A ])

1 **Nature of the Situation:**

2  
3 The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) strives to be diverse in membership  
4 and support diversity across the graduate and professional schools at Penn State. As outlined in  
5 our own constitution (Article IV, Section C), “The GPSA will not restrict membership based on  
6 characteristics of a student, which are intrinsic to the identity of that student. Penn State prohibits  
7 discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or  
8 handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or veteran  
9 status.” However, this statement is not enough; we do not want to simply be non-discriminatory,  
10 we want to be inclusive and promote equity. Our organization and sponsored activities may  
11 welcome all graduate and professional students, but that does not mean all graduate and  
12 professional students feel welcomed, which presents a problem when GPSA is tasked as the voice  
13 of the entire graduate and professional student body.

14  
15 We define diversity as the understanding that each individual is unique and celebrated for those  
16 individual differences. These differences can fall and intersect across race, ethnicity, ancestry,  
17 national origin, immigration status, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender

1 identity or expression, age, veteran status or disability. Additionally we define inclusion as the  
2 participation and engagement of diverse individuals in an organization. Initiatives around inclusion  
3 recognize the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals and work to include all into the  
4 organization's overall capacity and decision-making. Lastly, we define equity as all students  
5 having access to the resources necessary to succeed and enhance their quality of life. We recognize  
6 that equality does not necessarily equate to equity and as such we aim to promote equity among  
7 our student body.

8  
9 GPSA is a governing body that allows graduate and professional students to address a variety of  
10 issues that this population faces. As members of GPSA, we are committed to cultivating a culture  
11 that is driven by our organization's mission and values. In doing so, we ask that our members  
12 maintain a commitment to engage in efforts to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion to improve  
13 the experiences of graduate and professional students at Penn State.

14  
15 As the Penn State graduate and professional student body grows increasingly diverse, diversity  
16 among GPSA membership should represent the diversity found within the constituency. The  
17 values and attributes of a diversity and inclusion focused assembly strengthen the culture of Penn  
18 State, drives innovation, and positions our organization to succeed in its mission. However we  
19 realize that diversity and equity are futile efforts without an inclusion initiative. Therefore, as we  
20 are committed to diversity we must also commit to inclusion to ensure that all of our members and  
21 constituents feel welcomed, respected and included in any official business conducted by GPSA  
22 and the organizations it affiliates with.

23  
24 Many of Penn State's peer institutions graduate and professional student associations not only have  
25 devoted entire committees to diversity and inclusivity, as has GPSA, but have also adopted explicit  
26 diversity and inclusion statements. Ohio State's Council of Graduate Students placed emphasis on  
27 "promot[ing] equitable and fair treatment in every aspect of campus life and employment for all  
28 persons regardless of race, color, national or regional origin, sex, age, religion, veteran status,  
29 disability, and body shape or size." Nebraska's Graduate Student Association specifies a  
30 commitment to encouraging the participation and inclusion of LGBTQA+ and distance learning  
31 students in their graduate student association. GPSA can further strengthen our stance by adopting  
32 the statement on inclusivity proposed here and keeping our Constitution and Bylaws up-to-date  
33 with our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

34  
35 This resolution is not meant to stifle discussion or hinder ideas from being brought to the floor,  
36 but is meant to make potentially invisible issues of inclusivity and equity visible and emphasize  
37 the nuances related to inclusivity.

38  
39 **Recommended Course of Action:**

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41 To ensure that the GPSA provides and promotes an inclusive, equitable, and diverse environment,  
42 we recommend that GPSA:

- 43  
44 1. Prioritize diversity and inclusion in all bills.  
45 2. Ensure that our actions align with our mission to promote a sense of community and  
46 inclusion within and among the graduate and professional student body.

- 1 3. Ensure that our governing documents reflect the goals of inclusion, equity, and diversity.
- 2 4. Commit to fostering an environment that welcomes and celebrates diversity.

Respectfully submitted,

**Amanda Burton**

Delegate, College of Agricultural Sciences

**Santina Cruz**

Delegate, Eberly College of Science

**Litzy Galarza**

Delegate, Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications

**Adilson E. González Morales**

Delegate, At-Large

**Diego Hernandez**

Delegate, College of Liberal Arts

**Chloe McGuire**

Delegate, College of Liberal Arts

**Catherine Okafor**

Graduate Council Student Caucus Member

**Melanie Ouma**

Delegate, School of Law

**Emma Robertson**

Delegate, School of Law

**Katie Warczak**

Graduate Council Student Caucus Member

President \_\_\_\_\_

Affirm Veto

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The Graduate and Professional Student Association