

**The Graduate Student Assembly
The University of Texas at Austin**

Sponsors: Jennifer Follen, GSA Academic Affairs Director
Courtney Broderick, GSA Representative
Ashley Garcia, GSA Representative
Kathryn Abercrombie, GSA Legislative Affairs Director
Rohit Satija, GSA Representative

Resolution: G.R. 19 (S) 4 – A Resolution in Support of Expanding the Scope of GSA Travel Awards

Executive Summary: The Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) awards academic travel funding to Graduate Students at UT Austin each semester. These travel awards are limited to conference travel related to a student’s area of study and the awards are distributed on a reimbursement basis. This is exclusionary to students who travel for other academic reasons. While there are other sources of travel funding for UT Austin Graduate Students, the demand exceeds the supply across campus. Expanding the eligibility for GSA Travel Awards and amount of funding available would help Graduate Students access more travel opportunities associated with their studies.

FAQ:

1. Where does GSA’s funding come from to allocate monies for the travel awards?

GSA is allocated funding from the Student Services Budget Committee. . The core of GSA’s budget must address the following expenses: stipends, operations, programming, appropriations, agencies and travel awards. The budget is created by the GSA Financial Director, with input from the executive board and financial advisors, and subsequently recommended to the Assembly for approval. Accordingly, an executive board member must make a request for the travel award funds.

2. What are the other funding sources on campus to support students’ academic-related travel?

The UT College of Liberal Arts offers scholarships and awards to students but out of the 37 scholarships and awards available, graduate students are only eligible for 7.¹ Additionally, the majority of those scholarships are for study abroad trips or teaching trips. While this example only references the College of Liberal Arts, there is a common sentiment that funding for student travel related to research and conferences, specifically,

¹ <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/student-affairs/Scholarships-and-Awards/index.php>.

is scarce across campus. Therefore, GSA would like to expand the opportunities available to graduate students in all disciplines.

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Natural Resources

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WHEREAS (1): Graduate Students at the University of Texas at Austin (UT) travel for a variety of academic reasons including, but not limited to, research, general professional development, presenting research at conferences, and collaborating with professors and students at other institutions of higher education; and,

WHEREAS (2): Graduate Students at UT often have difficulty finding funding sources for their university- and degree-affiliated travel, especially if their department operates on a tight budget; and,

WHEREAS (3): The GSA Travel award is limited to conference travel, excluding students who need additional funding for research or other academic travel; now,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT (1): GSA will reform its travel award application scope to include applications for funds for travel due to research; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (2): For the 2019-2020 academic year, a member of the GSA Executive Board will request an amount higher for travel awards than was allocated in the 2018-2019 academic year; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (3): GSA will edit the award application submission instructions to represent any changes to previous years' procedures and explicitly state that international students are eligible for the award to ensure it is clear that all graduate students are eligible for GSA Travel Awards; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (4): This legislation and updates will be submitted to the Office of the Dean of Students, the International Office, and The Graduate School at UT Austin.

PASSED by the GSA Assembly on April 10, 2019.

Signature of the GSA President: *SJ*