

UC Berkeley Graduate Assembly unanimously supports Prop. 16, defunding UCPD

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Body

On Thursday, the UC Berkeley Graduate Assembly, or GA, joined the ASUC in unanimously supporting Proposition 16, which would restore affirmative action for race and gender in public universities and public sector jobs in California if passed.

The meeting was the Graduate Assembly's first of the academic year, and delegates were joined by Lisa García Bedolla, UC Berkeley's vice provost for graduate studies and dean of the graduate division. She spoke about how COVID-19 has affected her office and answered questions from delegates.

García Bedolla denied a rumor that there has been a ban on hiring international students for GSI positions.

According to García Bedolla, currently, students in all countries except for those sanctioned by the United States are able to be GSIs, but this could change for the spring semester due to complications with international tax laws.

She also addressed concerns over departments halting admissions because of COVID-19. According to García Bedolla, most departments have not completely stopped admitting graduate students, but some have reduced the number of students they accept due to financial and emotional constraints.

After a budget update, the assembly began discussing and voting on resolutions. The first was in support of Prop. 16, authored by GA Legislative Affairs Director Alex Mabanta.

"I wanted to urge us as a graduate student community to come together and support what could be a righteous moment to really help advance and empower diversity, equity and inclusion," Mabanta said during the meeting.

The proposition was passed unanimously.

On the topic of racial justice, the assembly then discussed a resolution in support of defunding, disarming and divesting from UCPD, as introduced by GA delegates Xavier Durham, Lucy Andrews and Amalee Beattie.

Other delegates raised concerns about the potential lack of police presence on campus in the event of an active shooter and the potential rise in crime while community-rooted solutions are developed to replace the role of the police.

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Beattie, Durham and Andrews, however, offered responses to the concerns, citing the negative impacts police can have on Black individuals' health and safety.

"This is a chance to imagine the type of campus that we want to have, and for me, that imagination is about the conditions of flourishing that support Black, Indigenous, other scholars of color, queer folks without the threat of violence," Andrews said during the meeting. "(It's) also sort of life-affirming creative generation for the ways that we want to invest in each other, particularly our Black community members."

The UCPD resolution also passed unanimously.

The five-and-a-half-hour meeting ended with a discussion of priorities for the assembly's advocacy agenda, which will be addressed again at future meetings.

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