WHEREAS, UW international students and scholars are facing unprecedented anti-immigrant attacks that are creating an environment of anxiety, confusion and exhaustion; and

WHEREAS, UW international students and scholars are consistently being affected by dramatic, detrimental immigration policies instigated by the Trump Administration. These proposed policy changes include:

1. An [April 2020 Executive Proclamation](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-lifting-restrictions-on-temporary-work-visa-categories-opt-cpt-j1-h-1-b-specialty-worker-o1-h-2-temporary-workers/) that would have curtailed Optional Practical Training (OPT) and Curricular Practical Training (CPT), the J-1 exchange visitor program, the H-1 specialty worker program, and the O-1 program for international scholars.

2. A [May 2020 Presidential Proclamation](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-blocking-admission-certain-nonimmigrants-china-due-national-security-concerns/) suspended the entry of non-immigrant Chinese students and researchers into the US, with the xenophobic claim that they may be working on behalf of the Chinese military. More than 1,000 visas have already been revoked under this order.

3. A [July 2020 Immigrations and Customs Enforcement announcement](https://www.ice.gov/news-release/ice-news/ice-eastern-directions-commercial-airlines-grounding-flights-chinese-passengers-effectiveness-2019-covid-19) prohibiting international students from remaining in the US if they were taking only online classes amid the coronavirus pandemic. This rule in particular - while ultimately overturned - caused widespread confusion on the UW campus, with incoming graduate students regularly given incorrect and contradictory information from multiple campus sources, including faculty advisors, graduate enrollment management services and ISS/ISO.


In addition to these policy changes, the Department of Homeland Security recently...
pulled 1,100 Optional Practical Training (OPT) permits from international students accusing them of ‘fraud,’ which would involve students working in a position that is not directly related to their field of study, which the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reviews before granting OPT; and

WHEREAS, with the frequency of these incidents, existing inequities have been exacerbated that already disproportionately affect UW international scholars. UW international communities are reporting feelings of fear, despair and vulnerability that come with experiencing this continuous trauma; and

WHEREAS, these policies have led to numerous reports of UW’s International Students Services (ISS) and International Scholars Office (ISO) being overwhelmed and unavailable to answer questions, exacerbating a climate of confusion and anxiety; and

WHEREAS, there is an institutional gap at UW to respond to the needs of international undergraduate students, graduate students, and post-docs in their capacity not only as students but also as employees of UW. Existing campus entities concerned with issues specific to international students and scholars, such as the International Graduate Student Advisory Board (IGSAB), UW FIUTS, CIRCLE, and the recently proposed ASUW Office of International Student Advocacy and Engagement, provide services such as advising, community-building opportunities, and language support, which are critical, but do not address the afore-mentioned institutional blindspot at UW; and

WHEREAS, successfully resisting these policy proposals rely on quick information and strong communication networks to identify affected individuals, speak out against proposed rule changes, participate in litigation and policy making, organize direction actions and generally work with broader UW community - both US citizens and non-US citizens - to work together to preserve a safe and inclusive campus; and

WHEREAS, international students and scholars need a platform to directly communicate with UW entities such as the President’s Office, Labor Relations, the Graduate School, Office of State and Federal Relations, the Attorney General’s Office, and others, who have immense decision-making power in the lives of international students and scholars; and

WHEREAS, US citizens and non-US citizens across and beyond campus, including the GPSS Executive Committee, State Representative Javier Valdez, Senator Jamie Pedersen (43rd District), and Representative Frank Chopp (43rd District), have come together to express an urgent need for this platform by signing on to the Task Force Proposal Memorandum to the President’s Office first delivered in July 2020 amid the
onslaught of attacks against international students and scholars; and

WHEREAS, we want to demonstrate that we will take every step necessary to support international students and scholars in these volatile times. Now more than ever we need to signal to all academic communities - and the larger community of Washington state - how important international scholars are to a vibrant and diverse culture, and maintaining teaching and research excellence; and

WHEREAS, we fundamentally support a principle of equity and restorative justice that individuals most impacted by policy changes should be the people driving the discussion on how to fix these problems;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON:

THAT, the Graduate & Professional Student Senate supports the call on the University - originally proposed by the UAW 4121 International Solidarity Workgroup in their July 2020 Task Force Memorandum - to create a task force that is comprised of a majority non-citizen members inclusive of students, faculty and staff, who represent unions; student, staff and faculty governance organizations; employee associations; RSOs and other organizations whose constituents are largely non-citizens. The task force should take the following steps:

1. With the afore-mentioned campus groups, provide timely and coordinated communication with campus constituents, in order to minimize the uncertainty and alienation these announcements are intended to invoke.

2. Working closely with UW International Scholars Operations and International Student Services, provide communications resources, mobilization capacity, legal experience, and relationships with off-campus organizations and policy-makers who could help promote and support the needs of affected students, staff and faculty. Part of this objective could be to relieve some of the communications burden facing ISO and ISS representatives, who we understand have been overwhelmed by questions when these unexpected announcements are made.

3. Advise University Administration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

THAT, given the persistence of recent attacks and the urgent need to work in broad coalition to support non-citizen members of the UW community, the Graduate &
Professional Student Senate will address all issues of xenophobia during the 2020-2021 academic year; and

THAT, a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the University of Washington President, Board of Regents, Provost, Vice President of Student Life, Faculty Senate, ASUW Senate, FIUTS, CIRCLE, ISS, and ISO.

*Presented to GPSS for approval on: November 18th, 2020*
*Approved on: November 18th, 2020*