



National Association of Graduate-Professional Students

Legislative Platform

Approved at the 2010 NAGPS National Conference in Cambridge, MA on November 12th 2010

NAGPS Mission Statement

NAGPS has a threefold mission for the graduate and professional student community in the United States of America:

1. Develop and sustain a member network to connect graduate and professional students and their associations
2. Provide resources and support to empower members
3. Advocate at local and national levels on their behalf

FOREWORD

Under NAGPS' bylaws, the NAGPS Legislative Concerns Committee is responsible for assisting NAGPS in development of its legislative policy by submitting a proposed Annual Federal Legislative Platform for consideration and approval by the membership at the general business meeting of the national conference. While the Legislative Platform is not an exclusive expression of the federal legislative issues of concern to the Association, it sets out NAGPS' main public policy priorities for the coming year. NAGPS encourages local graduate and professional student governments to incorporate this Federal Legislative Platform in the creation of their own local legislative agendas and to formally endorse this NAGPS Legislative Platform. Further, NAGPS seeks to work with the higher education community to formulate policies affecting NAGPS' membership that advance national goals and objectives.

STUDENT RIGHTS

1. NAGPS firmly opposes any attempt to infringe on the First Amendment rights of students and their elected representatives to establish and fund their own programs, to publish scholarly work without fear of reprisal, and to engage in advocacy, lobbying, or debate.
2. NAGPS supports access to affordable health care for all graduate and professional students and their dependents, including international students.
3. NAGPS supports access to affordable childcare for all graduate and professional students including international students.
4. NAGPS supports extension of benefits to graduate and professional students that are currently exclusively offered to undergraduate students to the extent to which those benefits are relevant to the graduate and professional student population.
5. NAGPS supports open communication between students and administrators about the rights and responsibilities of graduate and professional students.

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HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

6. NAGPS supports federal income-based loan repayment programs.
7. NAGPS urges the Administration and Congress to maintain or increase the amount of federal funding provided for America's colleges and universities.
8. NAGPS urges lawmakers to adjust federal loan programs to match graduate student time to degree and expenses.
9. NAGPS urges lawmakers to increase borrowing limits for federal student loans and to periodically adjust for inflation and the rising cost of tuition.
10. NAGPS urges increasing tax deductibility of student loan interest. Additionally, NAGPS urges Congress to index the income limitation on student loan interest deductions to the rate of inflation.
11. NAGPS supports the maintenance and continued funding of both the Federal Direct Student Loan Program (FDSLP) in order to offer students the maximum spectrum of choices to suit their individual needs.
12. NAGPS supports loan forgiveness/forbearance policies for workers in nonprofit fields, public service, and underserved communities such as programs like Teach for America.
13. NAGPS opposes any efforts to cut funding from the Federal student loan programs.
14. NAGPS also opposes any measure that would result in increased loan costs to students.
15. NAGPS calls for the resetting of loan grace periods after completion of any full academic year to ensure that student with breaks in their education status are not prevented from completing their educations.
16. NAGPS urges support for education programs in financial literacy for higher education.
17. NAGPS supports legislation that discourages predatory lending practices.
18. NAGPS supports federal loan consolidation programs, and seeks more options in these programs, including additional fixed or variable interest rate choices and the ability to reconsolidate loans.
19. NAGPS supports graduate fellowship programs as a means of training tomorrow's scholars, scientists and leaders of industry, government and education.
20. NAGPS urges the Administration and Congress to provide, wherever possible, additional sources of grant funding for graduate and professional students. Specifically, NAGPS supports increased funding for the graduate fellowship programs included in the Higher Education Act.



21. NAGPS also supports graduate and professional fellowship programs that are portable and that provide educational opportunities to traditionally underrepresented groups as well as to traditionally underfunded disciplines.
22. NAGPS supports cultural and intellectual diversity and suggests the expansion of federal fellowships for international students.
23. NAGPS does not support across-the-board denial of access to financial aid based on a student's convictions for a drug related offense, nor should any criminal offense prevent access to federal student loans.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ISSUES

24. NAGPS urges policymakers, law enforcement, and school administrators to respect international students' civil and human rights and to uphold their rights to due process.
25. NAGPS urges university officials and higher education organizations to work for fairer student visa policies and actively advocate for their students whose visas have been unfairly denied or delayed.
26. NAGPS urges lawmakers to make more visas (particularly H-1B) available to foreign students who obtain their graduate degrees in the U.S.
27. NAGPS does not support blanket bans on international student entry based on their country of origin and/or field of study.
28. NAGPS supports all reasonable efforts to shorten student visa and security check processing.
29. NAGPS urges that all student visas, regardless of the student's country of origin and/or field of study, should be multiple-entry and of a duration consistent with that of the student's educational program.
30. NAGPS supports the right of legal immigrants to pursue a graduate or professional education without impediment and to participate in federal student aid programs.
31. NAGPS supports any legislative efforts that encourage U.S. permanent residency, citizenship and civic participation among graduates from institutions of higher learning.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY

32. NAGPS urges the administration and congress to adopt policies related to open access for published scholarly material.
33. NAGPS supports legislative efforts that encourage diversity at institutions of higher learning.
34. NAGPS supports policies that encourage investments in innovation through education and research.



35. NAGPS encourages the establishment of a Graduate and Professional Education Advisory Committee in the Department of Education comprised of university and student representatives.
36. NAGPS encourages the appointment of a graduate and professional education coordinator within the Office of Postsecondary Education in the Department of Education specifically charged with development of national strategies designed to encourage the pursuit of a graduate and professional education and to serve the nation's growing population of graduate and professional students.
37. NAGPS supports federal recognition of the first week of April as an annual celebration of Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week.

TAX POLICY

38. NAGPS supports measures which reduce the tax burden on graduate and professional students, such as the broadening of tax exemptions and deductions for graduate and professional student expenses.