

**2024-2025**

**Graduate Student Union Executive Board**

President: Lauren Harewood

Vice President: Shravan Kumar Sharma

Vice President: Aditya Biswas

**GSG Exec Board PLATFORM**

Our team's guiding principle will focus on building a more inclusive community with a priority on sharing information, resources, and experience amongst students. Research is our primary focus but graduate life is also a process of growth both personally and professionally, and we aim to present graduate students with more opportunities and resources so each student can become the best version of themselves.

Serving students from all populations means understanding the critical needs of everyone. We will work actively with student groups to support in planning and funding cultural exchange and social events. We would like to help by providing more permanent support to exceptional events that meet the goals of the graduate school in helping to create more culturally well-rounded graduates. Work with diverse student groups and organizations like ISSA (International Student and Scholar Affairs) to host more social events where both international and domestic students can connect with their peers from their home or country so that new students can better understand the cultural differences between the US and their home country and learn how to overcome them from their seniors. This will help both international and domestic students settle easily into their graduate life.

Our administration firmly believes that graduate school does not have to be lonely! We plan to advocate for novel Grad student mental health initiatives aggressively. We will partner with McWell and lobby the administration for more intentional mental health programming and policies for graduate students. We would like to come up with 'instituted student companionship'.

1. Ease the financial burden on students so they can focus more on their research and enjoy a better quality of life. To that end, we are advocating for
  - Reduced parking rates for graduate students (currently it is 260 USD per 21 semester).
  - Access to at least one meal in the dining hall at the staff rate for graduate students.
  - Access to a premium subscription for homework for all graduate students. Research can be hectic and Duncan Gym works at full capacity with undergrads. Grad students should be able to avail some facilities to help them work out at their convenience.
  - Dental health care is a necessity for graduate students and should be included in the healthcare benefits already offered by the University.

2. Encourage the administration to set up
  - More campus-based graduate student spaces (we only have Duncan Lounge and Hesburgh space for now). The graduate student lounge at Duncan needs to be expanded and set up with basic amenities like coffee or soft drinks).A dedicated space where students of all faiths can come to pray, share, and experience diversity.
  - Small gym and community room with 24-hour access in The Landings.
3. Implement 'institute student companionship'- a kind of mentoring program for new students where they will be assigned and guided by a mentor from preferably the same department, who can share their advice and experience on both academic and social matters. Students come to grad school from diverse backgrounds and each of them faces challenges, which will hopefully become a bit easier to cope with and settle if someone with experience and more information about resources can team up with them and help them in the beginning couple of months.
4. A lot of students have pets here and they are excellent companions (a big mental and emotional support) but it becomes an issue when students have to travel or avail veterinary care when their pets get sick. To that end, we hope to build a community of like-minded people who can get to know each other and their pets and take care of the pets when students travel.
5. Work with ISSA to host more social events where international students can connect with their peers from their home country so that new students can better understand the cultural differences between the US and their home country and learn how to overcome them from their seniors. This will help international students settle easily into their grad life.

#### Lauren Harewood Biography:

Lauren, an NYC native, is a 4th-year doctoral student in the Department of Physics and Astronomy studying the origins of the heaviest chemical elements. She lived in Shanghai for two years and speaks some Mandarin and has a passion for Chinese history. She currently serves as a chair of the social committee of the Graduate Student Government. In addition, she also serves on the Student Advisory Committee on Race Relations. She is largely responsible for planning the 2023 Jingle Bell Ball, GSG's largest event of the year. She has also planned all First Friday dinners for the 2023-2024 academic year and provided organizational and financial support for the Dia De Los Muertos event as a GSG chai during Hispanic Heritage month. She also created the university's first official suite of events for Black history month, with at least one event per week during the month aimed at educating the student body in a gamified environment. As the outreach co-chair for the Graduate Physics society she organized the physics department's first department wide open house for underrepresented minority high school students in the South Bend area. Lauren is passionate about socially responsive,

educational, and cultural exchange experiences and events. In her spare time, Lauren enjoys makeup artistry, painting, dancing to hip-hop, R&B, afrobeat, and soca music. She is also a huge Beyonce fan and is known as a 'karaoke queen' among her friends. Lauren is also very outdoorsy, enjoying cycling, camping, long hikes, and cross-country skiing.

#### Shravan Kumar Sharma Biography:

Shravan is a 2nd-year graduate student in the Chemistry and Biochemistry department at the University of Notre Dame. He is a current member of the Theta research group which focuses on finding theoretical and computational solutions to problems in the quantum dynamics field. His commitment to advancing scientific knowledge is further demonstrated through his role in the organizing committee for the COMSEL (Computational Molecular Science and Engineering Laboratory) symposium. Shravan earned his two-year Master of Science degree in Chemistry from the prestigious IIT Bombay, India. During the first year of his master's, he served as an Internship Coordinator on the Placement Team, significantly contributing to the enhancement of internship opportunities for fellow students. His proactive approach involved establishing connections with industries and various universities, facilitating valuable networking for aspiring professionals. The following year, Shravan took on the role of Chemistry Department Coordinator in the Institute Student Companion Program. Here, he led a dedicated team of mentors, fostering an environment that provided new students with enhanced mentorship and resources. His leadership skills were pivotal in ensuring a smooth transition for newcomers and facilitating a supportive academic community. Beyond his academic and professional commitments, Shravan is recognized for his amiable and social nature. He thrives on connecting with individuals from diverse backgrounds and believes in the power of collaboration and shared knowledge. In his free time, he likes to watch Sci-fiction movies and read spiritual scriptures.

#### Aditya Biswas

Aditya is a 2nd year graduate student in the Biology department of the University of Notre Dame. His research focuses on stem cells and regenerative medicine. Apart from work, he has also been a part of the Graduate Orientation(GO team) from his very first year and worked on organizing orientation with Mimi Beck, Julaine, and the rest of the team. He has also helped the biology department coordinator Daniella Cortez with helping in graduate recruitment multiple times. Apart from that, he is also an active member of the Outing Club and organizes hikes and trips for students. He is passionate about pet animals, painting, and poetry. Overall, making graduate students feel more welcome and more homely here at Notre Dame, and building up a good community with people looking out for each other so that grad life gets a bit smoother is the goal that he is striving for.

