

CANDIDATE'S PLATFORM:

please describe your overall vision and goals.

Our vision for graduate life at Notre Dame is simple: graduate students should have (1) strong and transparent funding pathways, (2) reliable structural support for basic needs, and (3) a connected community that amplifies both scholarship and wellbeing. Graduate education is the engine of Notre Dame's research mission. That should be reflected not only in rhetoric, but in policy, funding structures, and day-to-day institutional decisions.

We also aim to improve how the GSG functions as a representative body. The body currently suffers from the lack of a parliamentarian, a role that one of our vice-presidential candidates would happily fill. The GSG should adopt a more predictable method of bringing proposals, and keep student media and other stakeholders apprised of developments.

Priority 1: Expand Funding and Institutional Visibility

We will work to increase funding opportunities within departments and across interdisciplinary initiatives, including partnerships that bring visiting speakers, research exchanges, and joint events with peer institutions. We will coordinate directly with the Provost's Office to advocate for scalable graduate-focused investments across colleges.

We will also push for:

- Clearer and more equitable conference funding processes
- A transparent system to help students navigate funding negotiations
- A designated graduate section at existing career fairs with clear employer signaling for PhD/Masters roles

Priority 2: Build Structural Support for High-Demand Academic Moments

Graduate school includes predictable stress points: qualifying exams, candidacy exams, defenses, heavy teaching semesters.

We will advocate for:

- Automatic short-term meal support during exams and defenses
- A "Grad Food Alert" system to reduce waste and redistribute event catering
- A Teaching Emergency Support pool so illness, conferences, or emergencies do not force impossible tradeoffs

Priority 3: Strengthen Community, Mentorship, and Practical Knowledge

We will create Graduate "Playbooks" that demystify authorship norms, funding navigation, exam preparation, lab expectations, and professional communication. We will expand a secondary mentor network so students have access to guidance beyond their primary advisor.

We will also advocate for recurring health clinics (CPR certification, immunization drives, preventative health education) and immigration support clinics for visa and citizenship guidance.

Finally, we will strengthen coordination across graduate organizations and Undergraduate Student Government (USG) to align advocacy and unlock collaborative programming. Undergraduate Student Government maintains consistent, structured contact with the Provost's Office, ensuring undergraduate priorities are represented in high-level university conversations. Graduate students deserve the same consistency and institutional visibility.

We will work to formalize regular meetings between Graduate Student Government leadership and the Provost's Office, creating a predictable channel for graduate-focused advocacy. Rather than relying on

occasional outreach, this establishes graduate concerns: funding, research support, career infrastructure, and cost-of-living pressures as part of ongoing university planning conversations.

Stronger communication with USG further increases leverage. When graduate and undergraduate leaders align around shared concerns, advocacy becomes unified and more effective. This collaboration is not about duplication, but coordination: sharing institutional knowledge, amplifying priorities, and ensuring graduate students are represented at the same level of administrative engagement as undergraduates.

Together, this vision supports graduate students as whole people, financially, professionally, and socially.

Please list the top 3 needs you see for ND grad students.

Notre Dame's graduate students are driven, capable individuals who are dedicated to the growth of knowledge through research and teaching. Graduate students serve themselves, their students, and the university best when they feel included and supported. We therefore regard (1) community with fellow students, (2) representation at university-level decision-making bodies, and (3) material support for research, teaching, and career planning as the most significant needs of the graduate student body.

Graduate students need more consistent support during the highest-pressure moments of graduate life. Many of the most difficult parts of graduate school are also the most predictable: qualifying exams, candidacy exams, dissertation defenses, conference travel, periods of intense teaching, and research setbacks. These moments often create financial, logistical, and emotional strain all at once. Graduate students should not have to scramble for meals during exams, worry about replacing essential technology, or choose between academic obligations and personal wellbeing. We aim to build a strong graduate community by recognizing recurring pain points and building durable solutions that help students overcome them.

Graduate students also need the university to more fully recognize the value of their labor and institutional role. Graduate students are not only earning degrees; they are helping sustain Notre Dame's teaching and research mission every day. They teach discussion sections, grade assignments, mentor undergraduates, run experiments, write papers, support labs, and contribute to the university's scholarly reputation. Yet graduate concerns can still feel peripheral in broader institutional decision-making. Students need clearer representation in conversations with university leadership, and they need material policies that reflect the fact that their work is essential. Recognition should not be merely symbolic.

Finally, graduate students need more structured access to career development and practical guidance for life beyond coursework. Too much important information is still passed along unevenly: how to secure conference funding, how authorship norms work, how to ask for recommendation letters, how to navigate immigration-related questions, how to prepare for careers, and how to manage the two-body problem. Graduate students deserve clear, visible, and graduate-specific career infrastructure that prepares them for a wide range of futures.

Ultimately, graduate students thrive when they are treated not as an afterthought, but as central to Notre Dame's identity as a research university. Our goal is to help build a graduate experience that is more supportive, more transparent, and more worthy of the people who sustain it.

Please describe 3 tangible actions you will take to improve the lives of ND grad students.

Notre Dame's graduate students are driven researchers, teachers, and leaders. They thrive when they feel included, represented, and materially supported. We believe the most urgent needs of the graduate student body fall into three areas: equitable academic support, recognition of graduate labor, and structured career access. If elected, we will implement the following tangible actions to address each.

1. Close the “Tech Equity” Gap

Graduate students are often caught in a hardware limbo: the University’s Emergency Fund excludes laptops, and some advisors lack the budget to replace essential technology. A single device failure can derail research progress for weeks during already high-pressure periods.

We will advocate to expand the Graduate Student Emergency Support Fund to explicitly include essential academic technology, proposing a two-year emergency cap of up to \$3,000 for critical replacements. Emergency support should protect a student’s ability to continue their work without interruption.

We will also advocate for temporary meal voucher support during Oral Comprehensive Exams, qualifying exams, and dissertation defenses. These milestone moments require long hours of preparation and presentation. Students should not have to worry about basic needs while completing high-stakes academic work.

The goal: Ensure that a broken laptop does not mean a broken dissertation — and that basic necessities do not become barriers to academic success.

2. Acknowledge Graduate Service with Parking Support

Graduate students serve as both scholars and essential university workers. While Teaching Assistants receive parking benefits during their rotation, that support often ends once the assignment concludes — even though students remain on campus daily for research and mentoring.

We will advocate for a “Service-Based Parking Extension,” providing a 50% subsidy on the following semester’s parking pass for any graduate student who has served as a TA. This policy would recognize teaching as meaningful institutional service.

The goal: Tangibly honor graduate students’ dual role as researchers and contributors to the undergraduate mission.

3. Future-Proof Skills and Career Access

Graduate students deserve structured access to career pathways — not informal navigation. We will advocate for a formal graduate presence within existing career fairs, including clear identification of employers recruiting Master’s and PhD students and advance communication distinguishing undergraduate-only roles from graduate-level opportunities.

Rather than building new systems from scratch, we will strengthen existing infrastructure so graduate students are not treated as an afterthought. We will also push for clearer conference funding processes that help students efficiently navigate research support.

With the University’s Udemy Business license set to expire in February 2026, we are at a critical moment for professional development. We will lead a task force to ensure its replacement strengthens skill-building access, advocating for a platform that includes certifications in AI, data science, and project management.

The goal: Equip Notre Dame graduate scholars with the tools and visibility necessary to compete in academic and private-sector careers.

Additional Information:

Together, these actions focus on practical equity, recognition, and opportunity — ensuring graduate students are supported not only in their scholarship, but in the lives they are building beyond it.

Our ticket combines institutional knowledge, executive leadership, and real-world governance experience to serve graduate students effectively from day one.

Sanchita brings continuity and execution. Having served as Professional Development Chair under 2 GSG presidents, she understands how to move initiatives from idea to implementation. She has managed large-scale programming, overseen five-figure budgets, and built working relationships with administrators across the Graduate School, Provost's and President's Office and campus partners.

Bless brings research-centered leadership and cross-departmental collaboration. As President of the ND Chapter of the Materials Research Society, he has built interdisciplinary partnerships, strengthened faculty engagement, and advanced professional development for graduate researchers. He understands how to navigate institutional systems while keeping student needs central.

Kyle brings governance insight and communication expertise. As a former reporter and editor, founder of a graduate student news site, and current Math representative, he understands how representative bodies function and how transparency builds trust.