

Bios

Niraja Suresh is a PhD student in the Biological Sciences department, studying the mechanisms behind drug resistance, specifically artemisinin, in *Plasmodium falciparum* malarial infections. Niraja has served as a Quality of Life Co-Chair for the GSU, where she has worked on engaging with the community and providing programming such as a GSU-organized grocery car-pool for the FOG and University Village resident communities. She is also part of several committees, such as the Council for Sexual Assault Prevention, Grad Life, as well as a working group under the Sustainability Strategy Committee. She is also working closely with the Parking Committee to identify the feasibility of a Bike-sharing program on campus. Through the Association of Women in Science (AWIS), Niraja is also a mentor to two undergraduate students in the STEM field, where her responsibilities are to coach and provide assistance to the undergraduate students through their educational and professional careers at Notre Dame. Niraja believes that communication across groups is key, and hopes to continue her relationships with faculty and administration to ensure that the voices of the graduate students are heard.

Marjorie Housley is a PhD Candidate in the Department of English, completing concurrent grad minors in Gender Studies and Irish Studies. Her interests and research are interdisciplinary, examining medieval English, Celtic, and Scandinavian literatures. She has served two years on the GSU, one as English department representative and one as Quality-of-Life Co-Chair. As a Co-Chair, Margie organized a series of discussions and roundtables called "Queer in Academia," which examine various aspects of being queer both at Notre Dame as well as in the academy more broadly. She is also interested in mental health & wellness in the academy, and has organized an upcoming discussion about the impacts of mental illness on grad life. She is also the English Graduate Student Association's current Professionalization Chair, creating a new series of events for humanities students to learn about and prepare for non-faculty job opportunities. Margie is committed to graduate student success and care across the disciplines, and is dedicated to open dialogue about issues that affect graduate students and other members of the Notre Dame community.

John Nelson is a PhD student in the History Department, studying the early American frontier and Native American history, with a focus on the Great Lakes region. Before coming to graduate school, John worked in higher education in student development and alumni relations. His background in administration has instilled an appreciation for building communication across bureaucratic channels, providing necessary resources for student intellectual and professional development, and ensuring that different voices are heard. This past year, John served as a Professional Development Co-Chair for the GSU, where he worked to build bonds between graduate students and the Notre Dame Alumni network, and provided resources for students through events such as the Professional Development Expo, 3MT, and the upcoming Research Slam series. John believes that in the current world of higher education, one of the top priorities of the GSU must be to make our graduate students as competitive as possible, both in academic and non-faculty job markets, through support for professional and intellectual development.

2017–2018 GSU Executive Board Petition
Niraja Suresh, President
Marjoric Housley, Vice President
John Nelson, Vice President
21 March, 2017

Goals & Objectives

Three of the primary goals of the Graduate Student Union, as listed in the GSU Constitution, are “[e]ffective representation of graduate student interests ... [i]mprovement of life for graduate students ... [and p]romotion of cooperation and interaction between graduate students and faculty, undergraduates, and all other members of the university community” (1). As President and Vice-Presidents of the GSU, we will be committed to upholding those goals and strengthening the GSU’s role in attaining those goals in specific ways. First, we want to centralize information that is currently available to students but hard to find: much information about administrative rules is extremely difficult to track down unless you know exactly where to look, and we would like to see a well-organized and well-publicized collection of resources for graduate students at Notre Dame through an updated website and improved social media management. This will lead to increased engagement across various campus departments, organizations, and divisions. Secondly, we hope that GSU meetings will become a place of useful and ongoing dialogues about all issues that are important to graduate students. We plan to work one-on-one with chairs as well as department reps to identify particular methods to open these dialogues. We also propose streamlining the agenda and structure of monthly GSU meetings to allow individual departments to report to the GSU about issues and concerns that affect them, which will encourage inter-departmental communication and more open discussion of issues that may affect wider populations of students than we realize. Finally, we wish to (re)open a dialogue with non-graduate members of the university community, particularly the undergraduate Student Government and Faculty Senate, to engage constructively with campus leaders about topics of concern to the entire campus community. We are committed to working with all graduate students to ensure graduate student interests are heard and addressed with clarity, transparency, and respect.