

Response Requested: Caltech for Affordable Healthcare's Petition

Patel, Ashay <appatel@caltech.edu>

Tue 2020-08-11 12:20 PM

To: President Thomas F. Rosenbaum <president@caltech.edu>; Tirrell, David A. <tirrell@caltech.edu>; Rees, Douglas C. (Doug) <dcrees@caltech.edu>; Shepherd, Joseph E. <joseph.e.shepherd@caltech.edu>; Gilmartin, Kevin M. (Kevin) <kmg@hss.caltech.edu>; Steurbaut, Margo <Margo.Steurbaut@caltech.edu>

Cc: Panangaden, Jane M. <panangaden@caltech.edu>; Bagherian, Dawna P. <dawna@caltech.edu>

Dear President Rosenbaum, Provost Tirrell, Dean Rees, VP Shepherd, VP Gilmartin and VP Steurbaut,

Per [our letter on May 1 2020](#), over 42.6% of the graduate student body, along with many alumni, faculty, and undergraduates, have signed [a petition](#) demanding both a health insurance plan that meets our basic needs, as well as changes to the process by which a plan is selected to involve more student input. As of today, we still have not received a direct response from you regarding this petition.

As you know, the pandemic has created significant stress for everyone within the Caltech community. Graduate students' compensation is insufficient to allow us to pay for emergency or chronic medical expenses in the best of times, as evidenced by the fact that even in 2018, one third of graduate students avoided necessary healthcare due to the anticipated cost. The GSC Advocacy Committee recommended a cost of living adjustment to the stipend of \$3000 for the upcoming academic year to keep pace with rising rents and other increasing costs. The Fall stipend increase of \$1500 is already less than this cost of living adjustment, and will not cover these new out-of-pocket medical costs - especially for chronically ill and disabled students. At this moment in particular, it is crucial for Caltech to commit to supporting the needs of graduate students. If the Institute is unwilling to do this, it is effectively closing off its graduate program to all but the most privileged among us.

Please respond to each point in the petition with either a commitment to meet the demand or a rejection of the demand along with the rationale for rejection by Monday 8/24/20. We would also like to know which office or person is responsible for the final decision on each point. We understand that this is a hectic time, so if you cannot meet that deadline, please give us a clear time when we can expect a response so that we can plan accordingly.

We eagerly await your response,
Ashay Patel, Jane Panangaden, and Dawna Bagherian
On behalf of Caltech for Affordable Healthcare