

## Re: GSC Survey Healthcare Report

Panangaden, Jane M. <panangaden@caltech.edu>

Fri 2021-04-02 11:33 AM

To: Rothenberg, Ellen <evroth@its.caltech.edu>; gab@gps.caltech.edu <gab@gps.caltech.edu>; Effros, Michelle <effros@caltech.edu>; Atwater, Harry A. <haa@caltech.edu>; Batygin, Konstantin <kbatygin@caltech.edu>; Bhattacharya, Kaushik <bhatta@caltech.edu>; Chan, David C. <dchan@caltech.edu>; Daraio, Chiara (Chiara) <daraio@caltech.edu>; Dennison, Tracy K. <tkd@hss.caltech.edu>; Dickinson, Michael H. (Michael) <flyman@caltech.edu>; Dougherty, Dennis A. <dadoc@caltech.edu>; eiler@gps.caltech.edu <eiler@gps.caltech.edu>; Gilmartin, Kevin M. (Kevin) <kmg@hss.caltech.edu>; Gilmore, Dehn <dwg@hss.caltech.edu>; grotz@gps.caltech.edu <grotz@gps.caltech.edu>; Harrison, Fiona A. <fiona@srl.caltech.edu>; Hsieh-Wilson, Linda C. <lhw@caltech.edu>; jak@cheme.caltech.edu <jak@cheme.caltech.edu>; Marcolli, Matilde <matilde@caltech.edu>; Martin, Christopher <cmartin@srl.caltech.edu>

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Dear Members of the Faculty Board,

Thanks for your positive engagement with the GSC's healthcare report, the data, and recommendations within. I'm looking forward to answering further questions and continuing the discussion at an upcoming meeting. If you haven't had a chance to read the report yet, you can find it [here](#).

The GSC Health subcommittee wants to emphasize that inaccessible healthcare is a significant problem for the graduate student community. Prospective students are asking about the health benefits should they enroll at Caltech, and we are not able to give them a satisfying answer. If Caltech wants to attract and hold onto graduate students, it must prioritize the health of graduate students.

In fact, "[Caltech: Prioritize Our Health](#)" was the title of the healthcare petition circulated last spring, which was signed by 42% of graduate students, and which called for no further cuts to our health insurance plan. Cuts were passed through regardless, and we find ourselves with data for the second year in a row that suggests that one in three graduate students are not able to get the care they need, with disproportionate representation among women and nonbinary students and chronically ill students. Any further cuts to the health insurance benefits are certain to make this issue of healthcare access worse.

It seems to be standard operating procedure for insurance companies to offer reasonable rates on our group plan for a few years before beginning to ratchet up prices. This happened with our previous insurer Aetna, and is happening again now with UnitedHealth Care Student Resources who have apparently placed a bid with a 30% premium increase to maintain the current level of benefits. However, regardless of the behavior of the insurance company, Caltech administrators always have the option to maintain our level of benefits and subsidize any resulting premium increase imposed by the insurer. Instead, for the last two years in a row, Caltech has chosen to reduce our benefits to control the premium costs. This is not acceptable as it shifts the cost onto a marginalized subset of the graduate population instead of being shouldered by the institution, which is in a much better position to absorb the cost of the premium increase.

On March 15, we received an email on behalf of the Board of Trustees, expressing their appreciation of graduate students. We feel that a great way for Caltech to show appreciation of its graduate students is to offer a health insurance plan that works for all students.

Best wishes,  
Jane Mariam Panangaden

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**From:** Rothenberg, Ellen <evroth@its.caltech.edu>

**Sent:** March 12, 2021 7:08 PM

**To:** Panangaden, Jane M. <panangaden@caltech.edu>; gab@gps.caltech.edu <gab@gps.caltech.edu>; Effros, Michelle <effros@caltech.edu>; Atwater, Harry A. <haa@caltech.edu>; Batygin, Konstantin <kbatygin@caltech.edu>; Bhattacharya, Kaushik <bhatta@caltech.edu>; Chan, David C. <dchan@caltech.edu>; Daraio, Chiara (Chiara) <daraio@caltech.edu>; Dennison, Tracy K. <tkd@hss.caltech.edu>; Dickinson, Michael H. (Michael) <flyman@caltech.edu>; Dougherty, Dennis A. <dadoc@caltech.edu>; eiler@gps.caltech.edu <eiler@gps.caltech.edu>; Gilmartin, Kevin M. (Kevin) <kmg@hss.caltech.edu>; Gilmore, Dehn <dwg@hss.caltech.edu>; grotz@gps.caltech.edu <grotz@gps.caltech.edu>; Harrison, Fiona A. <fiona@srl.caltech.edu>; Hsieh-Wilson, Linda C. <lhw@caltech.edu>; jak@cheme.caltech.edu <jak@cheme.caltech.edu>; Marcolli, Matilde <matilde@caltech.edu>; Martin, Christopher <cmartin@srl.caltech.edu>; Meister, Markus <meister@caltech.edu>; Murray, Richard M. <murray@cds.caltech.edu>; Pellegrino, Sergio <sergiop@caltech.edu>; Porter, Frank C. <fcp@caltech.edu>; Qian, Lulu <luluqian@caltech.edu>; Ravichandran, Guruswami (Ravi) <ravi@caltech.edu>; Rosenbaum, Thomas F. <tfr@caltech.edu>; Rosenthal, Jean-Laurent <rosentha@caltech.edu>; grr@gps.caltech.edu <grr@gps.caltech.edu>; Shepherd, Joseph E. <joseph.e.shepherd@caltech.edu>; Stoltz, Brian M. <stoltz@caltech.edu>; Tirrell, David A. <tirrell@caltech.edu>; Weinstein, Cindy A. <caw@caltech.edu>; Wierman, Adam <adamw@caltech.edu>; Husic, Corey C. <chusic@caltech.edu>; Yan, Ellen <eyan@caltech.edu>; Wang, Yinghan (Megan) <yinghan@caltech.edu>

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**Subject:** Re: GSC Survey Healthcare Report

Dear Jane,

On behalf of all the Faculty Board, please let me thank you! It was a great, professional, eye-opening and deeply sobering presentation that you and Charles gave, and we really respect your work. I hope we do not let you down over the coming year. Thank you so much.

Best wishes

Ellen Rothenberg

(both hats: Vice Chair of the Faculty and Professor)

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**From:** Panangaden, Jane M. <panangaden@caltech.edu>

**Sent:** Friday, March 12, 2021 6:08 PM

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**Subject:** GSC Survey Healthcare Report

Dear Members of the Faculty Board,

Thank you for the opportunity to present data on the state of graduate student health at Caltech at the last Faculty Board meeting. We in the GSC Health Subcommittee have been hard at work studying this year's Quality of Life survey data, and have produced a full report containing our analysis and recommendations. Caltech's Institutional Research Office, which helps develop the survey and collects the data, has sent us both the aggregate data for all respondents, as well as several demographic breakdowns which have helped us deepen our analysis.

Please find the report (attached). We encourage you to look through the figures and trends, as well as the recommendations. Pay particular attention to the trends in the women and nonbinary demographic along with the chronically ill demographic. We also encourage you to read through the stories that students shared with us over the last year on [caltechgradhealth.com](http://caltechgradhealth.com)

Access to healthcare is a critical component of student wellbeing at Caltech, and we hope this report provides a comprehensive guide to the scope, nature, and depth of student healthcare-related issues. In particular, you as faculty can play a key role in advocating for a student health insurance plan that allows us to study at Caltech without compromising our own health.

Warm Regards,

Jane Mariam Panangaden, rep on the Faculty's Standing Health Committee

Ashay Naren Patel, GSC Health Subcommittee Co-Chair, alternate on the Faculty's Standing Health Committee