

GRADUATE EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION (GEO) NOMINEES FOR FALL 2021

Nominees are listed here in alphabetical order by first name. Headshots, emails, programs, short bios, and platform statements have been included.

Voting will occur on the 12th and 13th of October on digital format. To receive your online ballot, you need to register on or before October 8th at 5:00 p.m. EST. To see more details on how to register (click [here](#)) or contact us to geoumb.elections@gmail.com

NAME: Jonathan Vega Martinez
EMAIL: Jonathan.vegamart001@umb.edu
PROGRAM: Sociology, PhD



BIO: Jonathan is a doctoral student in the Sociology Ph.D. Program. Born in Puerto Rico, Jonathan has moved back and forth between the Archipelago and Massachusetts throughout his life, maintaining strong connections to both places. He obtained a degree in Communications before pursuing a Bachelor's and a Master's in Sociology at UMB. His research focuses on identity development in queer men of color and how it is impacted by the ability to form (or not form) social networks of other queer people of color. He is also fascinated by the intersection of food and race and how food spaces such as grocery stores and farmers' markets become racialized.

PLATFORM: As a UMass Boston graduate student these past three years, I have dedicated my time to building community within my Sociology department. It has been a challenging task, given that UMB graduate students come from all walks of life - and of course, COVID disruptions have not made it any easier! Some of us are traditional students, others are balancing graduate school, work, and family, while others are shifting their career tracks. Building community in my department required building rapport with my peers, including new cohorts. While I did it in an informal role at first, I eventually became part of the Graduate Sociology Student Association. During my time in the GSSA, I coordinated social events, collected information on the experiences of BA/MA students in the sociology department, presented them to our program's graduate committee, and organized our student research symposium.

The connections I crafted with my peers allowed me to understand their needs better. My time in the GSSA allowed me to develop the skills necessary to be a resource to my peers. And between them both, I became a trusted point of contact and an intermediary between them and faculty. In addition, I have volunteered as a GEO Program Representative for my program - acting as a bridge of communications between my graduate program and the GEO. Finally, I bring community-building, active listening, and organizing skills to the table, which is why I want to join the GEO Organizing Committee, so I may continue connecting with and advocating for our UMB graduate community.

NAME: Steve Loren

EMAIL: Stephen.loren001@umb.edu

PROGRAM: College of Management



BIO: Steve has been associated with the financial community in New York since the 1990s and has achieved both an MBA in Finance and Investments as well as the CFA Charter and Financial Risk Manager Designations. Prior to embarking on the path to Wall Street, Steve studied philosophy and psychology and developed a strong interest in social theory, which led him to take some doctoral classes in philosophy while still an undergraduate. Long active in environmental and consumer organizations, Steve has always thought and acted at the intersection of Business and

Society. Steve has worked to advance the use of Environmental, Social and Governance metrics and criteria into the investment management process, including asset selection and portfolio construction. In his role at NYSSA, Steve has organized conferences featuring world renowned financial practitioners and academics who are leading the way to creating a more just and sustainable society.

PLATFORM: I am concerned that despite some recent and significant GEO wins, that effectively greater cost burdens have shifted on to graduate student employees. A case in point is student Health insurance, where the current contract only covers 85% up to a maximum of \$1780. Given the current price tag of \$3075, the current GEO contract potentially leaves graduate students responsible for \$1295 of that cost. This is more than twice the amount Graduate students had to pay only a few years back!

The cost of the student health plan went from \$2180 in 2018 to \$2540 in 2019 and now it stands at \$3025! This is a 38% increase. Imagine a 38% stipend raise...well you don't need to imagine, you need to organize. The GEO contract must be drafted to be dynamic and not allow for the shifting of costs onto graduate student employees!

Although during the pandemic a memorandum of understanding between the GEO and University froze the student contribution, the language in future contracts must be drafted to preempt the risk shifting costs on to the backs of student employees. Further, graduate compensation rates since the contract expired over 1 and a half years ago. This is unacceptable. The financial markets may not believe in inflation, but anyone going to the grocery store KNOWS that basic costs have gone up significantly.

I will make sure that we have a contract in place that will protect our collective interests and ensure that provisions are included that have automatic cost of living-plus increases when negotiations fail to deliver a contract when the terms of an existing contract expire.