

GRADUATE EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION (GEO) NOMINEES FOR SPRING 2024

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

Voting will occur on the 5 and 6 of March in digital format. Only active dues-paying members will be able to vote. To become an active GEO member and vote in this election, please fill out the dues authorization form [here](#) by March 6 at 8 pm EST at the latest. For more details on the election process (click [here](#)) or contact us at geo@umb.edu.

NAME: Kavita Venkataramani

EMAIL: k.venkataramani001@umb.edu

PROGRAM: Molecular, Organismal, and Cellular Biology, Ph.D.



BIO: I'm a fifth year PhD student in the Biology department working in the Siegfried Lab (our motto is we go nuts for gonads!). I am from India and lived in Germany for 5 years before moving to Boston in 2019. When not in the lab begging my fish to cooperate, I enjoy crocheting, playing with my cat Rukia, and being a big nerd. As a proud bearer of currently bright blue hair, I'm sure many of you must have seen about the ISC!

PLATFORM: I have been lucky enough to wear many metaphorical 'hats' as a grad student at UMass Boston: being a woman, person of color, queer, international student in STEM. I moved just before the pandemic and witnessed first-hand how little the administration cares for its graduate population even during times of crisis. As a Biology dept program representative, I have been to many bargaining meetings where we were told that 'it was a

privilege to not have summer contracts as we can travel' and '20,000 is a competitive salary in Boston.' If you have ever seen the posters in the ISC that talk about the abysmal state of affairs we face every day, I designed those. If elected, I promise to continue to be a vocal member to push the interests of our members.

NAME: Krystal-Gayle O'Neill

EMAIL: k.oneill001@umb.edu

PROGRAM: Global Governance and Human Security, Ph.D.



BIO: Krystal-Gayle O'Neill (She Series) is a PhD candidate in the Global Governance and Human Security Program. She is a past president of the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) now the Graduate Student Government (GSG). Krystal has tremendous passion for her research on LGBTQIA+ rights, social movements and organizations across the Caribbean region. Her passion for social, restorative and transformational justice landed her a membership on the university wide Restorative Justice Commission (RJC) and a member of the university's strategic planning committee. She was also a member of

the Black Faculty, Staff and Student Association (BFFSA) and the McCormack Graduate School's Racial Equity Taskforce (M-RET). For all her efforts that she puts into ensuring that her fellow students and campus community have the most positive experience at UMB, Krystal was awarded the Roni Lipton Student Mentor Award in 2020 and the graduate student government executive member of the year award (2022).

PLATFORM: During my time at UMass Boston, I have been involved in various campus activities, committees, and initiatives. In the past I have collaborated with the GEO, both as a member and as the GSA president, I felt like I was actually making a difference. I have long maintained that the GEO is the graduate student advocate, and they do a terrific job in advocating on our behalf. Working in conjunction with the GEO gave me a glimpse into how we as graduate students can leverage our collective strengths and make changes. I have always been an advocate and serving on the GEO Organizing Committee is the most logical next step for me here at UMB and to continue the advocacy that most fits me. As a graduate student who has worked closely with faculty and staff, and who has straddled multiple roles with this and other universities, I bring a unique skillset that can be useful for the GEO. As a former residential life area coordinator, I supervised over 30 students, managed a budget and coordinated the planning of events and trainings for over 120 students and professional staff members. At UMB, I served as the president of the GSA now the GSG and managed a significant budget that was used to support my fellow graduate students in their academic and professional lives. Hence, I am well versed in allocating research and scholarly funds. As a trained mediator, negotiator, and restorative practices coordinator, I am confident my skills can bolster the efforts of the GEO in its advocacy. As someone who has established relationships with various faculty, staff, and upper administration here at UMass Boston, I would like to work towards forging an alliance that places the unique needs of graduate students within the strategic plans of the university for years to come. I am very versed in university culture, as I have been a faculty member, student, administrator, frontline staff, and student leader. The needs of each constituency are very fresh in my mind, and it is from this distinctive lens that I navigate the university.

NAME: Wendy Humphreys

EMAIL: g.humphreys001@umb.edu

PROGRAM: English, M.A.



BIO & PLATFORM: I think participating in the GEO is one of the most important things any of us can do to support our graduate community. We're all overworked and underpaid, but together we are strong. Whether we are almost done with our graduate work or expecting to be here for years, the union can help each of us and we can work to make sure those students who follow us will get a better deal than we have.

In my first semester as a grad student, I discovered I needed expensive emergency dental work. I was able to pay because the union has an emergency support fund. We have that fund because we won it in contract negotiations. The GEO has already had an important and positive impact on me and I want to give back.

I take my duties as a union member very seriously and would be honored to continue to do so as a member of the Organizing Committee. I have always valued participation in the process very highly. I've been serving as a teller at town meeting in my hometown since I was 17—before I could actually vote! When it comes to the GEO, my philosophy is that someone needs to do this work and right now, that someone can be me. This is my way of paying it forward.