GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION
GPSA EXECUTIVE BOARD – DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY (APPLICATION)
MAY 2021 - MAY 2022

CANDIDATE INFORMATION:

Candidate Name: Sidath Kapukotuwa

College/School: Integrated Health Sciences

Department: Health Physics & Diagnostic Sciences

Elected Position of Interest: Vice President

The GPSA supports graduate and professional students’ academic endeavors. Providing an environment conducive to student scholarship, research, and overall success is our primary goal. The GPSA strives to engender a sense of community among the graduate and professional students by offering financial support and fellowship.

The GPSA Council meets the first Monday of each month with the exception of January and holidays. All GPSA Council meetings are open to the public.

The Graduate & Professional Student Association is the student government for all currently enrolled graduate and professional students at UNLV. The GPSA is managed by the GPSA Council consisting of four elected officers and department-appointed representatives, and the GPSA Manager (administrative faculty). The four elected officers are the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary which constitute the Executive Board. The GPSA represents UNLV graduate and professional students at meetings of the Board of Regents, Nevada Student Alliance, and on campus-wide committees.
Voting will begin on April 5, 2021 at 3:30pm and close April 9, 2021 at 11:59pm.
Each candidate is expected to make a speech to the GPSA Council at the meeting on Monday, April 5, 2021 at 2:00pm. The meeting will take place virtually in the GPSA’s WebEx Personal Meeting Room: https://unlv.webex.com/meet/gpsa. The voting results will be announced and posted by Wednesday, April 14, 2021. Contact the GPSA at gpsa@unlv.edu or 702-895-2261 with questions.

Please explain why you are interested in serving in this position:

I am re-running for the GPSA Student Body Vice President 2021 – 2022 with the hope that my previous leadership experience in the GPSA executive board as the Student Body Treasurer (2019 – 2020) and Student Body Vice President (2020 – 2021) would allow me to extend and further improve the quality of services and activities offered to the UNLV graduate and professional student community. In my position as the Vice President and the Chair of the GPSA Sponsorship committee, I was able to implement several initiatives I had proposed during my candidacy for the 2020 – 2021 academic year regarding improving the transparency and efficiency of the sponsorship review process. These include; administering a clear rubric and evaluation system, conveying the cumulative feedback of the sponsorship committee to applicants who were not approved for funding at the time so they may improve on their future grant applications, maintaining prompt communication for inquiries about the application process, and conducting the evaluation of applications on a timely manner. Due to the current pandemic, we were faced with the challenge of hosting the GPSA annual research forum virtually and as the chair of the committee organizing the event, I have put forth my best efforts to make the event a success. I would be able to build upon this experience when preparing for the next forum. In addition to my duties as Vice President, I had to step into the role of Acting President for GPSA during the 2020 – 2021 academic year. In this capacity, I have been involved in both the NSHE Chancellor as well as UNLV President search committee, which allowed me the opportunity to establish a good relationship with Chancellor Dr. Melody Rose and UNLV President Dr. Keith Whitfield both of whom are sincerely and actively interested in improving the education and quality of life for graduate and professional students. If I am able to continue in the position as GPSA Vice President, I hope to strengthen these relations and work to bring forth many adversities our graduate and professional student community face, to their attention. I have sincerely welcomed the leadership and learning experience I obtained during the last two years as a GPSA executive board member and I would love the opportunity to continue to work together with the UNLV graduate and professional student community to make GPSA a key contributor to our academic success.
Please list any relevant experience/qualifications for the position:
(GPSA experience, student government, extracurricular activities, or other interests)

1. Student Body Acting President 2020 – 2021, GPSA
2. Student Body Vice President 2020 – 2021, GPSA
3. Student Body Treasurer 2019 – 2020, GPSA
4. Volunteer – GPSA Research Forum 2020
   Preparing all name tags, score sheets and clip boards for judges, oversaw volunteer assignments on the day of the forum, oversaw the check-in tables and handled finalizing scores from judges.
5. Grad Rebel Ambassador 2019 – 2020, Graduate College, UNLV
6. Student Coordinator – Summer 2019, GPSA Graduate Commons, Lied Library, UNLV
7. Graduate Assistant – Fall 2018 – Present, Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, UNLV
8. Council Representative for Department of Health Physics and Diagnostics Sciences 2018 – 2019, GPSA
9. Sponsorship Committee Member 2018 – 2019, GPSA
10. Research Forum Committee Member 2018 – 2019, GPSA
11. Summer Council Representative for School of Allied Health Sciences 2018, GPSA
12. Summer Sponsorship Committee Member 2018, GPSA
13. Student Coordinator 2017 – 2018, GPSA Graduate Commons, Lied Library, UNLV
POSITION DESCRIPTIONS:

President

President is the chairperson of the GPSA Council and Executive Board. This position is responsible for guiding the organization on general issues such as goals of the Council. The President also represents the GPSA at the Board of Regents meetings and travels to other locations when the meetings are held outside Las Vegas (travel expenses paid by GPSA).

The President serves on the Graduate Council, the Executive Council, as well as on several campus-wide committees. The President speaks at various student orientations and campus engagements. Due to impromptu requests (speaking, serving on committees, etc.) from different entities on campus throughout the year, it is highly recommended that candidates for this position have a flexible schedule.

This position offers a graduate student tuition waiver of up to 9 credits a semester, a monthly stipend equal to that of a graduate assistant, a Graduate College Leadership Scholarship (academic year breakdown: Summer - $5,000; Fall - $2,000; Spring - $2,000) and a GPSA $550 stipend for each semester (Summer, Fall, Spring; paid monthly from May to April).

Candidates must be in good academic standing, admitted to a graduate and/or professional program at UNLV, and must have previous experience on the GPSA Council as a representative or as a previous executive board member.
**Vice President**

The VP chairs the Sponsorship Committee which evaluates applications and distributes GPSA funding allocations for students’ research and conference travel and serves on several campus-wide committees. The Vice President establishes priorities for the sponsorship funding in conjunction with the Committee and Executive Board. This position also conducts Sponsorship Funding Workshops in order to assist students on how to successfully apply for GPSA Sponsorship funding.

The Vice President also chairs the GPSA Annual Student Research Forum held in the spring semester. The Vice President attends the Board of Regents meeting in the President’s absence and acts as President if the office becomes vacant. The Vice President also sits on a Graduate College Committee and other campus-wide committees.

This position offers a Graduate College Leadership Scholarship (academic year breakdown: Summer - $3,000; Fall - $2,000; Spring - $2,000) and a GPSA $550 stipend for each semester (Summer, Fall, Spring; paid monthly from May to April).

In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall chair the Council.

Candidates must be in good academic standing, be admitted to a graduate and/or professional program at UNLV and must have previous experience on the GPSA Council.
Treasurer

The Treasurer presents a financial report at every monthly GPSA Council meeting. This position chairs the Government Relations Committee, Awards Committee, and serves on several campus-wide committees. The Treasurer also sits on a Graduate College Committee. During a legislative year, it is expected that the Treasurer travel to Carson City one or two times to meet with the governor, state legislators, etc.

This position offers a Graduate College Leadership Scholarship (academic year breakdown: Summer - $3,000; Fall - $1,000; Spring - $1,000) and a GPSA $350 stipend for each semester (Summer, Fall, Spring; paid monthly from May to April).

The Treasurer will fill the Vice President's office in the event of its vacancy.

Candidates must be in good academic standing and admitted to a graduate and/or professional program at UNLV.
Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for preparing and posting the agenda/minutes for each Council meeting, which is set by the Executive Board. The Secretary records the minutes of Council meetings and sends them to the Council Representatives. The Secretary is responsible for keeping roll call at the GPSA Council meetings, which determines the representative’s eligibility for their semester stipend. This position also chairs the Publication Committee, sits on a Graduate College Committee and several campus-wide committees.

This position offers a Graduate College Leadership Scholarship (academic year breakdown: Summer - $3,000; Fall - $1,000; Spring - $1,000) and a GPSA $350 stipend for each semester (Summer, Fall, Spring; paid monthly from May to April).

The Secretary will fill the Treasurer’s office in the event of its vacancy.

Candidates must be in good academic standing and admitted to a graduate and/or professional program at UNLV.
SIDATH KAPUKOTUWA

PhD Student
Graduate Assistant, Office of Vice Provost for Academic Programs
Student Body Acting President 2020 – 2021, GPSA
Student Body Vice President 2020 – 2021, GPSA
Student Body Treasurer 2019 – 2020, GPSA
Grad Rebel Ambassador 2019 – 2020

EDUCATION

PhD Student in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Fall 2018 – Spring 2022 (Anticipated)

Master's Degree in Medical Physics
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Fall 2014 – Spring 2018

Bachelor's Degree in Nuclear Medical Science
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
2007 – 2012

GPSA INVOLVEMENT

Student Body Acting President – GPSA
May 2020 – May 2021
- Serve as the Chairperson for GPSA council meetings and GPSA Executive Board Meetings
- Served in the NSHE Chancellor Search Advisory Committee and the UNLV President Search Advisory Committee
- Represent and serve as a voting member on behalf of GPSA at NSA (Nevada Student Alliance) meetings
- Represent the UNLV Graduate and Professional students at Nevada Board of Regents meetings
- Serve as a member of the President's Advisory Committee on behalf of the UNLV Graduate and Professional students

Student Body Vice President – GPSA
May 2020 – May 2021
- Serve as the Chair of the GPSA sponsorship committee, overseeing the evaluations of research and travel sponsorship applications and awards.
- Serving as the Chair of the GPSA sponsorship committee, established a new evaluation rubric to maintain consistency and transparency when scoring sponsorship applications for research and travel.
- Oversee the organization and execution of the Annual Graduate & Professional Student Research Forum in Spring 2021.

Student Body Treasurer – GPSA
May 2019 – May 2020
- Present GPSA financial report during Council Meetings
- Served in GPSA manager search committee
- Represent(ed) the GPSA at campus-wide committees
- Chaired the GPSA Awards committee, oversaw the awards application and evaluation process, presented awards during GPSA research forum 2020
- Lead the Student Researcher Award program in the absence of the GPSA President
- Largely contributed in the GPSA research forum 2020 by volunteering in organizing clipboard/score sheets for judges, preparing name tags for judges and presenters, assigning volunteer duties, overseeing score finalization
- Prepared and sent out feedback survey for research forum

Sponsorship Committee Member – GPSA
June 2018 – May 2019
- Assisted with the evaluation and scholarship award of > 100 grant applications

Council Representative for Department of Health Physics – GPSA
Sep 2018 – May 2019
- Received experience in GPSA council proceedings

Summer Council Representative for School of Allied Health Sciences – GPSA
June 2018 – Aug 2018
- Helped with preparing initiatives for

Research Forum Committee Member – GPSA
Feb 2019
- Assisted with the preparations for the annual GPSA research forum by preparing all name badges and volunteered for time keeping duties

WORK EXPERIENCE

Graduate Assistant – Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Accreditation, UNLV
Aug 2018–Present
- Assist in maintaining records of assessment coordinators on campus
- Maintain and update the academic assessment website
- Posting academic assessment plans and reports online
- Assist with the graduate senior exit survey for every semester and data analysis
- Assist with first year seminar survey and data analysis in Fall semester

Student Coordinator – GPSA Graduate Commons, Lied Library, UNLV
Aug 2017 – Aug 2018
- Responsible for maintaining the GPSA graduate commons facility to provide an optimal study space for graduate students
- Networking and rapport with graduate students from departments across the university

Student Worker – Bookstore, UNLV
Jan 2017 – July 2018

Graduate Research Assistant – Department of Health Physics and Diagnostic Sciences, UNLV
- Researched on developing an automated lung cancer detection system using MATLAB

Graduate Teaching Assistant – Department of Health Physics and Diagnostic Sciences, UNLV

Teaching Assistant – Department of Physics, Open University, Sri Lanka
June 2013 – July 2014

Teaching Assistant – Department of Nuclear Science, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
Dec 2011 – Dec 2012

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Excellent computer and application skills: Word/Excel/PowerPoint
- Proficient in Statistical analysis tools, Qualtrics and SPSS
- Experience in Adobe Lightroom and Dreamweaver
- Skilled in research software Matlab, GEANT4 DNA, Imaris, Neurolucida 360 and RITRACKS
RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Projects
Ph. D. in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences (Medical Physics) | Aug 2018 – present
Study of the DNA Saturation Repair Model.
Analysis of mice hippocampal neuronal cell images to identify structural abnormalities that occur in neuronal cells in response to radiation exposure.

M. Sc. In Medical Physics | 2014 – 2018
Developed a computational mathematical model to study hippocampal neurogenesis in rats following exposure to radiation using MATLAB Simulink. Future directions included extrapolating the rat data to predict radiation induced impact on hippocampus neurogenesis in humans. These findings will help optimize the radiation therapy procedures followed today.

B. Sc. In Nuclear Medical Science | 2007 – 2012
Developing an automated lung cancer detection system using MATLAB
Invented a portable instrument for radiation dose measurement using the scintillation process and microcontrollers. Programming of microcontrollers was followed using C/C++ and the interface was developed using Java.

Publications

Presentations
Modeling impaired hippocampal neurogenesis in rats after radiation exposure – Poster Presentation at GPSA Research Forum 2018

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

2020
Beal Bank High School Science Fair – Volunteer Judge

2019
DASH (Delivering and Serving Hope), UNLV – Prepare Sandwiches for Homeless
Beal Bank High School Science Fair – Volunteer Judge
Coral Academy Middle School Science Fair – Volunteer Judge
Golden Key UNLV Chapter New Member Recognition Event – Volunteer Photographer
Gracias Christmas Cantata, Las Vegas – Volunteer Photographer

2018
Gracias Christmas Cantata, Las Vegas – Volunteer Photographer
March 22, 2021

Dear GPSA Election Committee Members,

It is my pleasure to recommend Sidath Kapukotuwa for the position of GPSA Vice President. I have known Sidath since fall 2018, when I hired him as a graduate assistant in the Office of Academic Assessment. Sidath is professional, organized, efficient, and dedicated. Sidath is in good academic standing, with a current GPA of 3.79, and has been continuously enrolled in the time that I have known him. He has successfully completed one term as GPSA Vice President, and I wholeheartedly recommend him for re-election.

Sidath demonstrates the dispositions required of GPSA Vice President every day in his work for my office. He has strong communication skills, which he demonstrates through his emails to various UNLV stakeholders including faculty, staff, and students. He is a dedicated and valuable member of my team who consistently completes work ahead of schedule. Sidath adapted well to remote work and scholarship during the pandemic, remaining consistent and reliable throughout the past year.

Sidath is an exceptional graduate student who has demonstrated both his commitment to the GPSA, and his ability to serve well as Vice President. I recommend him with great enthusiasm for this role. Please do not hesitate to reach out if I can provide any more information.

Kind Regards,

Lindsay Couzens
Director of Academic Assessment and Accreditation
Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Programs