The Graduate Students Association (GSA) represents all members of the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Doctoral program community. In its membership and leadership appointment through popular election, it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation or physical handicap. The ELP Graduate Students Association, consisting of students, faculty and honorary members, holds regular open meetings and invites voting and non-voting member participation. The GSA’s purpose is:

- To promote critical dialogue, social justice, and transformative leadership in public education at the primary, secondary and post-secondary level in the greater South Coast region.
- To provide a forum for the open expression of student, faculty and community interests as pertinent to the afore mentioned objective.
- To endeavor to secure adequate funding for programs affecting curricular, extracurricular and educational partnerships.
- To coordinate the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program’s intellectual and political life with other student groups and organizations.
- To act as a liaison to the UMass community, the Commonwealth’s educational system and the government of the Commonwealth.
- To advance the platform of transformative leadership by recommending policy to the University, the UMass system, and the government of the Commonwealth.

Elizabeth Janson is the President of GSA, the chair of the November 2013 Critical Transformative Leadership and Policy Conference—Voices and Silences of Social and Cognitive Justice-, and a doctoral student in Educational Leadership and Policy program. She works as a high school English teacher with a research background in technology and standardization of curriculum. She hopes to continue to focus her research on analyzing how schools play a role in the development of identities, discourses, and hegemony within the context of privatization and globalization. She has presented at Critical Transformative Leadership and Policy Conference 2012 and will be a presenter at the 2013 NEERO Conference. (ejanson@umassd.edu)

Thad LaVallee is the Vice President of GSA and is currently a SEPPCE research assistant. He will also be a PhD dissertator in the Educational Leadership and Policy program this May. Previously, he worked for twelve years as a high school English and history teacher. His research focus is on a guerrilla social transformation tactics and education’s revolutionary capabilities. He has presented at conferences and forums for NYCORE, NEERO, Assault on Public Education, and Save Our Schools. He will also be a contributing author to several forthcoming books, including “The Curriculum. Decanonizing the Field”. (tlavallee@umassd.edu)

David Chandler is the Secretary of GSA, and a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Program. He has been employed by the Department of Youth Services for sixteen years, where he has worked in a variety of positions that allowed him to provide services and advocate for vulnerable populations within the Commonwealth. He is currently chair of the Data Development Team for the MA DYS Strategic Planning Initiative where he is responsible for the building of the agency’s data capacity and improving its data integrity. He holds a Masters in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth where his Applied Policy Research Project was used to implement Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative for the Commonwealth. He received the Department’s Commissioner’s Award in 2010 and 2011. David’s research interests involve the criminalization of youth, street level bureaucracy, social impact bonds, workforce/development issues for juvenile justice employees, Disproportional Minority Contact, and juvenile justice issues. He has presented on several panels and is currently in the process of publishing his first critical work titled The Criminalization of Youth in the Era of Neo-liberalism. (u_dchandler@umassd.edu)