

A Resolution on Graduate Assistantship Allocation Policies

The Provost announced in an October 2nd (2024) memorandum for the deans of all colleges that the Office of Graduate Studies will now require a new Graduate Assistant (GA) allocation “application,” which significantly changes the way that the number of GAs for each graduate program will be determined. Instead of receiving level funding, or the same number of GAs from year to year, each program will now have to apply for a certain proportion of their expected funding, which is now up for reallocation to other programs. These applications for GAs, which will be due by December 1st of this year, will be evaluated by a committee that will make decisions based on the following guidelines.

- Priority will be given to requests that:
 - Demonstrate a direct contribution to instructional capacity and effectiveness.
 - Provides GAs with explicit professional development, specialized skills training, and academic learning.
 - Prioritize support or doctoral students, while providing opportunities for Master’s students.
 - Demonstrate clear objectives, duties/responsibilities.
 - Demonstrate clear outcomes for the program and the GA.

Since this policy proposes to make significant changes to graduate education on this campus, we would like to propose the following resolution for the Faculty Council to adopt.

Whereas, the new Graduate Assistant (GA) allocation policy was determined without consultation with Graduate Program Directors (GPDs);

Whereas, the application for each GA will require an unreasonable amount of extra work to be done within an unreasonably short timeline;

Whereas, the successful application for a GA line by program/department faculty will not guarantee a GA position for students in the program/department;

Whereas, the timing of the application for this academic year will negatively affect the recruitment of new students and lead to an overall decrease in graduate program enrollment;

Whereas, this policy requires graduate programs to violate current agreements about multiple years of funding for students;

Whereas, without further evaluation of governance documents, this policy may revise specified GA support in graduate program proposals that were already approved through the process of academic governance;

Whereas, GPDs have not been given an explanation or evidence for why the previous allocation model needs to be changed and why it needs to be changed now;

Whereas, the priority for doctoral programs will likely shrink or shutter Master's programs, especially those that cannot support students through external grant funding;

Whereas, the priority for "instructional capacity" will likely reduce the number of Research Assistants (RAs), eliminating research support for faculty that will deny students opportunities to receive faculty mentorship, develop research skills that are critical for their education as graduate students, and participate in publication opportunities;

Whereas, without further evaluation of the consequences for diversity, equity, and inclusion, reallocation may cut GAs from programs and colleges that support students from historically underrepresented populations, particularly first generation, working class, and BIPOC students;

Whereas, this new policy will create competition between programs and colleges that will negatively affect our commitment to be an anti-racist and health-promoting public university:

Be it resolved, that the Provost and the Office of Graduate Studies put an immediate halt to the rollout of this new policy, convene a committee of GPDs from across all colleges to offer direct input in the development of any new GA allocation policy, and maintain level funding for all programs until any new policy is fully evaluated by all GPDs in all graduate programs.

This resolution is supported by the following GPDs:

Elizabeth Brown, Sociology

Avary J. Carhill-Poza, Applied Linguistics

Corinne Etienne, Applied Linguistics

John Fulton, English

Sarah A. Hayes-Skelton, Psychology

Richard G. Hunter, Psychology

Michael Johnson, Public Policy & Public Affairs

Harry Konstantinidis, Economics

Peter Barrios Lech, Classics & Religious Studies

Aaron Lecklider, American Studies

Alex Mueller, English

Laurie Nsiah-Jefferson, Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy

Amit Patel, Public Policy & Public Affairs

Karen Ross, Conflict Resolution, Human Security, and Global Governance

Cinzia Solari, Sociology

Courtenay Sprague, Conflict Resolution, Human Security, and Global Governance

Heather Trigg, Anthropology

Stacy VanDeveer, Conflict Resolution, Human Security, and Global Governance

Olivia Weisser, History

Cedric Woods, Critical Ethnic & Community Studies