RESOLUTION 1920-AU-003

A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE CREATION OF THE POSITION OF GRADUATE STUDENT OMBUDSPERSON AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Author(s): Mark Pauley (Pauley.66), Chair – Graduate Student Affairs
Sponsor: Executive Committee

WHEREAS, the Council of Graduate Students is vested with authority to voice graduate student concerns and needs to the University; and

WHEREAS, the Council of Graduate Students is tasked with the responsibility to act in the best interest of the graduate student population at the University; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the Council of Graduate Students asked the Graduate School to explore the creation of a new ombudsperson position with a special focus on supporting graduate students at the University; and

WHEREAS, the Graduate School returned a letter to the Council of Graduate Students on September 24, 2019 expressing support for the creation of a graduate ombudsperson position at the University; and

WHEREAS, the Graduate School has asked the Council of Graduate Students and University Senate in this letter to give their “full and thoughtful consideration to [their] proposed position”; and

WHEREAS, the graduate student population at the University is not currently being served by an ombudsperson; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of Graduate Students supports the Graduate School’s stated position and is calling for the creation of a graduate ombudsperson position at the University; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the graduate ombudsperson position will maintain neutrality, free from any ties to students’ academic programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the graduate ombudsperson position will maintain confidentiality and independence to ensure fair objectivity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the graduate ombudsperson position will receive the necessary institutional support and training from the University to ensure its success; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the graduate ombudsperson position will reside outside the authority of the Graduate School, and will instead reside within the Office of Academic Affairs, reporting directly to the Executive Vice President and Provost; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the graduate ombudsperson shall be a tenured faculty member, a tenure-track faculty member, or a full-time staff member currently employed at the University. Appointments shall be made on the basis of recommendations made by a search committee consisting of members appointed by the Graduate School and the Council of Graduate Students. Both the Graduate School and the Council of Graduate Students will be responsible for selecting their own respective appointees to the committee. Committee seats shall be allocated according to the model established by the Graduate Compensation and Benefits Committee, in which the graduate student appointees from the Council of Graduate Students will comprise the largest number of seats on the committee. The term of office shall be for one year, and is renewable. Additional responsibilities for the ombudsperson position, including the formal job description and time commitment, will be decided by the aforementioned search committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the graduate ombudsperson shall be someone with experience in university governance, shall be familiar with university rules and policies, prevalent cultural norms within the institution, precedent, and established university policies and operating procedures; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the responsibilities of the graduate ombudsperson will be to:

a) Serve as an advisor to graduate students and assist them in determining the viability of their complaints and issues, as they relate to university rules and policies.

b) Direct graduate students to appropriate offices, committees, and resources, and make them aware of relevant university rules and policies.

c) Serve when appropriate as an informal impartial mediator of early-stage complaints, rather than as an advocate for graduate students involved in complaints.

d) Present an annual report early in the autumn term of each academic year on his or her activities to the Graduate School that will then be publicly distributed to the graduate student body at-large.

e) Make available the visibility of the office of the ombudsperson to graduate students through venues such as web pages, oral presentations by the ombudsperson at Graduate School events, and through an introduction at the first meetings of University Senate and the Council of Graduate Students each year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that recourse with the ombudsperson is voluntary and not a prerequisite for consideration of any dispute by the Graduate School, the Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility, the Office of Academic Affairs, or the Office of Human Resources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of Graduate Students charges its President to communicate to the Ohio State University President, Executive Vice President and Provost, Vice President of Student Life, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, Deans and Faculty of all University colleges and programs employing graduate students, and all others to advance the Council of Graduate Students’ position as established by this resolution; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Ohio State University President, Executive Vice President and Provost, Vice President of Student Life, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, Deans and Faculty of all University colleges and programs employing graduate students, and all others to advance the Council of Graduate Students’ position as established by this resolution.

Approved: Yes/No

Date: ___10/4/19___

Stephen J. Post, President

Council of Graduate Students at The Ohio State University