RESOLUTION 2021-001
A RESOLUTION FOR HAZARD PAY AND ADDITIONAL HOURLY COMPENSATION FOR IN-PERSON GRADUATE TEACHING AND COVERAGE

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Sponsors: Executive Committee

WHEREAS the Council of Graduate Students (CGS) is the representative body of all graduate students enrolled at The Ohio State University as established by Article II Section 1 of the CGS Constitution; and

WHEREAS the Council of Graduate Students or its appointed representative(s) have the power to act as an advisory agent on behalf of graduate students on all matters brought before personnel, committees, or agencies of The Ohio State University involving the interest of graduate students as established in Article III Section 3 of the CGS Constitution; and

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing public health crisis with more than one hundred thousand Ohioans infected¹ and hundreds of thousands more affected by state efforts to mitigate the health risks posed by the pandemic; and

WHEREAS Franklin County has the highest number of COVID-19 cases of any county in the state of Ohio¹ and the Ohio Department of Health describes Franklin County as being in a Level 2 Public Emergency² and advises residents to “exercise high degree of caution”; and

WHEREAS the first three days of September 2020 saw the highest daily increases in the state of Ohio since July 2020, with Governor Mike DeWine attributing such to the reopening of schools and colleges³; and

WHEREAS the burden of health risk has not been adequately mitigated or shared through public health distributive justice, thus leaving our most vulnerable populations at greatest risk, including our students with disabilities; and

WHEREAS the university has not created a consistent response across departments to adequately address extended Graduate Teaching Associate absences due to quarantine and isolation measures; and

WHEREAS instances where Graduate Teaching Associates are asked to cover additional sections beyond their contract for an extended period of time without increased compensation is in violation of Section 9.2.10 of the Graduate School Handbook which states, “Under no circumstances should graduate students serve as ‘volunteer’ GAs where they are expected to provide service...at a stipend not commensurate with the expected load”⁴; and

¹ https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/dashboards
⁴ https://gradsch.osu.edu/handbook/all
WHEREAS requiring, setting expectations, or placing administrative pressure on Graduate Teaching Associates to volunteer to cover for additional sections beyond their contract further increasing their risk of contracting COVID-19 via increased exposure; and

WHEREAS Graduate Teaching Associates are often weary of raising concerns with those in supervisory roles superior to them regarding additional hours or class coverage because their academic and financial standing are tethered to the qualifications of fulfilling their teaching responsibilities; and

WHEREAS Graduate Teaching Associates are encouraged to entrust their well-being, safety, and financial conditions within administrative decision-making, leaving them in a compromising position to vocalize health concerns related to COVID-19 due to fears of possible administrative backlash; and

WHEREAS the University of Iowa Campaign to Organize Graduate Students (Local 896), a student union representing University of Iowa graduate employees, has demanded hazard pay for all university workers⁵; and

WHEREAS the Texas State Employees Union (CWA Local 6186), a rank-and-file union representing university workers, has demanded $500/month in hazard pay to every university essential worker, included Graduate Teaching Associates⁶; and

WHEREAS North Carolina Central University housekeepers and student supports have demanded a 25% hazard premium pay amidst rising COVID-19 cases and disproportionate occupational exposure by housekeepers and graduate students to SARS-CoV-2⁷; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students is advocating with urgency that all graduate students in teaching positions for in-person classes through the university, its colleges, or academic departments receive hazard pay for in-person teaching, including the coverage of other faculty, staff or teaching assistants that must be quarantined or isolated as it relates to COVID-19; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students deems it necessary that all graduate students in teaching positions receive additional compensation on an hourly basis for every hour that is beyond the bounds of the assigned hours they committed to; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of Graduate Students defers the hazard pay amount as determined by the recommendation of the Graduate Benefits and Compensation Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students supports the academic missions of The Ohio State University but not at the cost of the health and safety of graduate students and risks that may be incurred by doing so through a global pandemic; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students looks to university administration at all levels of the institution to more actively prioritize the mental, physical, and psychological wellness of its students, especially under such conditions; and

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⁶ https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/protectutsystem

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students has previously and unanimously condoned the continuation of courses with greater effort to make them safer in-person and moved online where possible⁸; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of Graduate Students is understanding of the necessity for certain courses to be held in-person but condemn the lack of consideration for the health and wellbeing of its graduate students in these spaces without appropriate financial compensation.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Council of Graduate Students directs its President, Vice President, and Chief of Staff to distribute this resolution to all proper leadership and authorities of The Ohio State University and its partners.

Approved: Yes/No
Date: _9/11/2020_

Stephen J. Post, President