RESOLUTION 2021-003
A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE PRIORITIZATION OF GRADUATE STUDENT COMPENSATION

Authors: Kathryn Holt, Chair, Arts and Culture; Katie Conner, Chair, External Collaborations
Sponsor: 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 2020-2021 academic year marks the first year since 2016 that Ohio State has not increased the minimum Graduate Associate stipend; and

WHEREAS in June 2020, the Graduate Benefits and Compensation Committee recommended a minimum stipend increase of $1,500 for the 2020-2021 academic year and $1,000 per year for the two following years in order to keep pace with the cost of living and graduate student compensation at Ohio State’s benchmark institutions\(^1\); and

WHEREAS the current minimum stipend of $17,280 does not meet the living wage standard for Columbus, Ohio\(^2\); and

WHEREAS the current minimum stipend of $17,280 does not meet the goal of providing compensation competitive with those provided at our benchmark institutions\(^3\); and

WHEREAS failure to pay graduate students a living wage disproportionately harms the most marginalized students, including low-income, first generation, BIPOC, international, disabled, and pregnant and parenting students\(^4\); and

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has placed additional financial strain on students and their families due to loss of income, such as paid summer employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS Ohio State graduate students are experiencing increased levels of anxiety and depression as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and these mental health concerns are likely to be further exacerbated by financial strain; and

WHEREAS per Ohio State Human Resources, graduate students are exempt from the pause on compensation increases instituted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic\(^5\); and

WHEREAS despite the freeze on pay increases and bonuses, Ohio State approved a bonus of $133,792 for former president Michael V. Drake\(^6\); and

\(^2\) [https://livingwage.mit.edu/metros/18140](https://livingwage.mit.edu/metros/18140)
\(^3\) [GCBC Report page 5](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fSqYsFf5v3CNN2mEmYlIElKTNla-24LfdwqyCnpOiDs/edit)
WHEREAS senior administrators at Ohio University⁷, Kent State University⁸, University of Akron⁸, University of Michigan⁹, Michigan State University⁹, Oakland University¹⁰, Rutgers University¹¹, University of Oregon¹², Stanford University¹¹, University of Southern California¹², the University of California system¹³, Harvard University¹⁴, and others¹⁵ have voluntarily taken pay cuts in order to share the sacrifice of budget cuts; and

WHEREAS Ohio State faculty and graduate students have previously called for a similar shared sacrifice in the form of cuts to the salaries of the highest paid employees rather than graduate student employees and staff¹⁶; and

WHEREAS based on publicly available 2019 salary and budgetary data¹⁷,¹⁸, a pay cut of 5% from all employees with base salary of at least $200,000 would yield roughly $5,793,673.58 in savings; and

WHEREAS based on this same 2019 salary and budgetary data¹⁷,¹⁸, a pay cut of 20% from all employees with base salary of at least $500,000 would yield roughly $1,205,884.18 in savings; and

WHEREAS based on this same 2019 salary data¹⁷,¹⁸, the combined salaries of those making a base salary of at least $200k annually (432 people) is $115,873,471.68, and the combined salaries of those with a base salary of at least $500k annually (9 people) is $6,029,420.88; and

WHEREAS these aforementioned figures do not include any additional bonuses or other earnings in these calculations, which would raise the estimated saving figures substantially; and

WHEREAS Ohio State administrators have not taken any pay cuts - voluntary or otherwise - and Senior Vice President Susan Basso has repeatedly stated that cuts to administrator salaries are not necessary, while attributing the lack of graduate pay raises to a budget crisis.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students calls on Ohio State to immediately institute the minimum stipend increases recommended by the Graduate Benefits and Compensation Committee, including back pay for August and September.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students directs the Graduate Benefits and Compensation Committee to formulate a University Senate resolution in support of implementing the recommended minimum stipend increase.

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⁷ https://www.athensmessenger.com/spotlight/on-faculty-renew-efforts-to-protect-their-ranks-president-and-provost-take-pay-cuts/article_2a31ce4e-2287-527e-a7de-6e1e70d4daeb.html#:~:text=Ohio%20University%20President%20M.,%2Dwide%20budget%2Dsaving%20measure
¹⁶ https://medium.com/@osufacultysolidarity/trim-the-branches-not-the-roots-ac871e6ea51b
¹⁷ https://www.osu.edu/osutoday/stuinfo.php#payroll
¹⁸ https://apps.hr.osu.edu/salaries/
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students urges Ohio State to prioritize fair graduate student compensation in all future budget planning during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students officially calls on the President, Provost, Vice Presidents, Deans, and other administrators making $200,000 or more to immediately take voluntary cuts to their salaries where necessary to support the implementation of graduate student stipend increases.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students advocates that all future budget cuts should be made from the top down, beginning with the salaries of those making $200,000 or more, in order to establish a system of truly equitable shared sacrifice.

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: __10/2/20__
Stephen J. Post, President