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UNC Charlotte Faculty Council and Graduate Council:

The following Resolution has been drafted by Monica Rasmussen, current Research Assistant and PhD student. The Resolution was presented to the UNC Charlotte Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) and ratified on 10/04/2022

This Resolution addresses graduate student concerns regarding compensation packages. The new University Policy 50.5, implemented summer 2022, allows more flexible compensation guidelines to be established per department. The roll-out of changes is underway, with some departments making significant and meaningful efforts to improve their financial packages. The graduate student body is aware of the complicated financial and legal conditions that departments are navigating, and sincerely appreciates the efforts put forward by faculty and staff. Thank you for the work you have done and continue to do on our behalf.

However, not all departments have implemented changes. I propose that it is in the mutual best interest of students, faculty, and the University at large for all departments to leverage the new Policy 50.5 to acquire external funds to competitively recruit skilled graduate students. As the UNC Charlotte undergraduate student population expands, the demands on Teaching Assistants (TAs) increase, stretching thin their research capacity. Providing reasonable compensation for all Graduate Assistants, including TAs, will allow departments to better recruit skilled students to increase instructor-to-student ratios and improve teaching outcomes.

Policy 50.5 can be utilized to bring in significant research funding from external sources. The additional research capabilities and additional funding that this policy allows are necessary for Charlotte to achieve R1 status. With the additional research grant funds brought in, the University can then progress towards increasing wages for the internally-funded graduate students as well. The poor implementation of the old policy in 2021 has had negative consequences on students' finances, morale, and the reputation of the University. For many students, these damages will continue into the future. This needs to be rectified as soon as possible to minimize long-term impacts.

Finally, the emotional impact of Policy 50.5 stripping funding from students cannot be overstated. Per a recent GPSG survey, students found the policy "unforgivable" and they "lost trust in the University". Visiting prospective students have been told by current students not to attend Charlotte because of the way the policy impacted their lab. At least one professor will not recruit graduate students via federal grants until this situation is ratified. The fear of retaliation and deportation by international students has driven me to tirelessly work on their behalf to right these wrongs. To this end, I now present to you our Resolution on Backpay and Future Implementation of Policy 50.5.

**Resolution on Backpay and Future Implementation of UNC Charlotte's Policy 50.5  
proposed through Graduate & Professional Student Government**

**In 2021 the University administered Policy 50.5 as an interpretation of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR 200). Financial caps were implemented for Graduate Assistants, resulting in many graduate students losing financial support promised to them during a period of time where society was navigating the post-COVID-19 recession and inflation. This policy was revisited and modified in summer 2022.**

Whereas Policy 50.5 has been modified for the entire University dictating that departments may implement multiple standard levels of compensation for graduate students;

Whereas graduate students had funding commitments revoked for the 2021-2022 academic year and future years;

Hereby it is resolved that the University shall:

1. Honor existing contracts or written confirmations of various financial commitments between faculty and students; including retroactive, present, and future funding corrections. Written confirmation includes: emails, text messages, and/or hand written notes; to/from student and/or faculty/supervisor; or inclusion or allocation of said funds for an unnamed graduate student in the grant application. This request is in line with employment law requirements, i.e. promissory estoppel cases or breach of employment contracts.
2. Establish Departmental committees to develop the new payment tier system, defining levels of stipends, fees, tuition payment, and/or other financial assistance appropriate to different experience requirements for the assistantship, workload, employment type, and/or stages of academic progress. Departmental committees should include at least one graduate student representative. Implementation shall be within the Fall 2022 semester.
3. Develop Departmental reports on existing students and the tiers they will fall into after implementation, and work with the Graduate School to transition to the new funding policy.
4. Establish channels within Departments to share with students any changes in policy, and act in good faith towards assisting students to advocate for themselves with faculty/supervisors. Faculty/supervisor retaliation towards any graduate student or graduate student organization advocating for themselves regarding Policy 50.5 will not be tolerated.
5. Develop a University-level plan to integrate the new 50.5 Policy into grant application processes for faculty and PI's.

The GPSG Senate hereby ratifies this proposal on 10/04/2022

Signed

  
10.04.2022

GPSG President

**Simon Sami**