STUDENT SENATE RESOLUTION 2015-126

TITLE: Resolution Supporting Efforts of Graduate Assistants United

AUTHORS: Senator Douglas Innocent, Senator Kayla Malone, Senator Daniella Saetta, Senator Keith Saint

SPONSOR(S): Senator Preston Jones, Senator Alireza Paykazadi, Senator Michael Poplewko, Majority Party Leader Senator Charlie Brown, Graduate Assistants United Organizing Chair Alec Dinnin, Senator Uttam Gaulee

WHEREAS, Graduate Assistants United (GAU) represents more than 4,000 graduate students as teaching and research assistants\(^1\); and,

WHEREAS, according to Article II, Section 8 of the GAU Constitution, an objective of GAU is “to promote economic security and humane working conditions within the University”; and,

WHEREAS, GAU negotiates, with support from the local chapter of United Faculty of Florida (UFF), a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) which governs the terms of employment for graduate assistants with the University of Florida every three years; and,

WHEREAS, the final contract for the 2014–2017 CBA included: an increase in regards to the minimum yearly stipend to $13,000 for a 0.5 full time equivalent employee, a 3.25 percent raise for continuing graduate assistants, the establishment of a formal disciplinary procedure to protect graduate assistants to prevent cases of unfair termination or punishment, improvements to the grievance procedure, and a one-time $40 fee rebate for all graduate assistants\(^2\); and,

WHEREAS, over a quarter of graduate assistants receive an annual stipend lower than $13,000 per year, 19 percent of all graduate assistants at the University of Florida earn wages that fall below the federal poverty level\(^2\); and,

WHEREAS, GAU continues to strive to improve the working conditions for graduate assistants; and,

WHEREAS, in 2015, a year of non-contract ratification, UF and GAU have mutually agreed to reopen specific provisions of the CBA for revisions; and,

WHEREAS, GAU plans to advocate for higher minimum stipends, more comprehensive health care packages for graduate assistants and their dependents, and elimination of fees for graduate assistants; and,

WHEREAS, support of the GAU’s efforts will improve the quality of life of graduate assistants at the University of Florida, increase the competitiveness of the University’s graduate programs, and improve

\(^1\) http://ufgau.org/wp/about/

The Foundation for The Gator Nation

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the quality of undergraduate courses, in accordance with the University of Florida’s top ten initiative; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate supports Graduate Assistants United as they strive to improve the working environment for graduate assistants at the University of Florida.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution should be sent to University of Florida President Kent Fuchs, Graduate School Dean Henry T. Frierson, Graduate School Senior Associate Dean R. Paul Duncan, University of Florida Chief Bargainer William Connellan, and University of Florida Board of Trustees Chairman Steven M. Scott.


[Signature]
Davis Bean
Senate President
Date 8-6-15