

# Resolution

Whereas, all academic labor should be justly remunerated;

Whereas, those who contribute to the University of Arkansas's research and teaching mission should not have to depend on government programs, food banks, or loans in order to survive;

Whereas, a single person needs to earn \$22,339.20 to live independently—that is without assistance from SNAP or other government programs—in Washington County, according to researchers at MIT who have calculated the living wages for people in each county throughout the nation ([livingwage.mit.edu/counties/05143](http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/05143));

Whereas, the University of Arkansas Graduate School and International Education (GSIE) estimates that the typical graduate student at the University will incur monthly expenses of at least \$1,895 [ $\$1,895 \times 12 = \$22,740$ ]—\$600 for rent, \$425 for food, \$95 for utilities, \$60 for internet, \$320 for transportation, \$165 for medical insurance, and \$230 for personals and incidentals (<https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/graduate/costs-and-funding/tuition-living-costs.php>);

Whereas, the University of Arkansas GSIE's current minimum wage for graduate assistants—\$9,387 for those on 9-month contracts; \$12,516 for those on 12-month contracts—falls far short of providing what the data shows to be the income necessary to live independently in Washington County (email from GSIE dated March 4, 2021);

Whereas, at the start of the 2020-2021 academic year 226 (15%) of the University's 1529 graduate assistants earned less than \$1250 per month—\$11,250 total for those on 9-month contracts; \$15,000 for those on 12-month contracts (email from University dated July 17, 2020);

Whereas, University of Arkansas's most recent "Student Food Security Report" (2016) classified 34% of graduate students as having "Low Food Security" and 13% as "Very Low Food Security" ([service.uark.edu/services/pantry/foodinsecurityreport.pdf](http://service.uark.edu/services/pantry/foodinsecurityreport.pdf));

Whereas, graduate assistants can generate high levels of revenue for the University while contributing to the teaching and research mission of the University of Arkansas;

Whereas, Communication Department graduate teaching assistants make \$12,500 on a nine-month contract, and each one can bring in at least \$57,520 in tuition ( $4 \text{ classes} \times 19 \text{ students/class} \times 3 \text{ hours} = 228 \text{ hours}$ ;  $228 \text{ hours} @ \$252.28/\text{hour} [\text{in-state}] = \$57,520$ );

Whereas, a Math Department graduate teaching assistant makes \$14,600 on a nine-month contract and can bring in more than \$90,821 in tuition ( $2 \text{ classes} \times 60 \text{ students} \times 3 \text{ hours} [\text{n.b., some students, mostly in MATH 1203, have to pay for an extra two credit hours but that is not included in this calculation}] = 360 \text{ hours}$ ;  $360 \text{ hours} @ \$252.28 [\text{in-state}] = \$90,821$ );

Whereas, a History Department teaching graduate assistant makes \$12,700 on a nine-month contract and can bring in at least \$105,958 in tuition ( $4 \text{ classes} \times 35 \text{ students/class} \times 3 \text{ hours} = 420 \text{ hours}$ ;  $420 \text{ hours} @ \$252.28/\text{hour} [\text{in-state}] = \$105,958$ );

Whereas, the vast inequality of revenue-to-compensation exists among graduate assistants across the many colleges and divisions of the University of Arkansas;

Whereas, the low wages for graduate assistants and the high cost of living in Fayetteville is making it very difficult for some departments to attract the highest quality graduate students to put in classrooms or to conduct research;

Whereas, the University of Arkansas's peer institutions are offering higher stipends to induce the best and the brightest of the applicant pool to attend their institutions (the following schools offer graduate students in their creative writing programs both higher stipends and lower teaching loads—University of Alabama; Texas Tech University; University of Oklahoma; University of Kansas);

Whereas, the low wages paid to graduate assistants make it difficult for the University of Arkansas to achieve the Guiding Priorities' goal to "improve the quality and reputation of graduate programs and increase graduate enrollment and graduation rates" [[uark.edu/strategic-plan/index.php#guiding-priorities](http://uark.edu/strategic-plan/index.php#guiding-priorities)];

Whereas, the University of Arkansas needs to increase graduate assistant wages to stay competitive with aspirant institutions (for example, Ohio State University guarantees graduate assistants on nine-month contracts at least \$21,280 [[news.osu.edu/ohio-state-increases-minimum-graduate-stipends-by-4000-over-two-years/](http://news.osu.edu/ohio-state-increases-minimum-graduate-stipends-by-4000-over-two-years/)]);

Whereas, the University of Arkansas has historically paid its graduate teaching assistants well below the national averages, it has been investing resources into personnel who have no direct research or teaching responsibilities (the University pays 113 such people at least \$150,000/year [<https://www.arkansasonline.com/right2know/colleges/>]);

Be it resolved, that the University of Arkansas should provide a minimum wage of \$2,225 per month to each graduate assistant; this minimum wage should be indexed to inflation.

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