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Fall 10-21-2020

### **SB40-20/21: Resolution to Adjust Graduate Teaching and Research Assistanship Pay to Market Rate**

Grayson O'Reilly

Mariah McIntosh

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1                                   **The Associated Students of the University of Montana**  
2     **Resolution to Adjust Graduate Teaching and Research Assistantship Pay to Market Rate**  
3                                   **October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020**  
4                                   **SB 40-20/21**

5           **Authored by: Grayson O'Reilly, GPSA Executive Team Member; Mariah McIntosh,**  
6                                   **Graduate Council Student Representative;**  
7                                   **Sponsored by: Char Gatlin, ASUM Senator;**  
8

9     Whereas, Graduate Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Research Assistants (RAs) at the University  
10  of Montana (UM) currently earn a base salary that is lower than in any other state in the United  
11  States (US) and has not increased (at the Master's level) over the last 25 years;

12  
13  Whereas, Unlike many US universities, UM currently does not cover the costs of student fees  
14  (ca. \$2,000/yr) or healthcare (ca. \$4,750/yr) in TA stipends and does not require these costs to be  
15  paid as part of RA stipends;

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17  Whereas, These costs effectively reduce base-funded TA and RA annual salaries to \$2,250  
18  (\$2.68/hr) for Master's and \$8,050 (\$9.58/hr) for Doctoral students;

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20  Whereas, Current TA/RA salaries are well below the cost of living in Missoula and, when  
21  adjusted for healthcare costs and fees, for Master's students, well below the Montana state and  
22  federal minimum wage;

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24  Whereas, The UM Faculty Senate unanimously passed a Resolution on April 23, 2020 to: 1)  
25  increase TA and RA salaries to the national average of \$21,000 for Doctoral students and 80% of  
26  this national average for Master's students, 2) provide regular cost of living salary increases to  
27  TA and base-funded RA salaries on the same schedule as faculty and staff, and 3) have UM  
28  cover the costs of all student fees and health insurance;

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30  Whereas, The UM Graduate and Professional Student Association has also endorsed this ask to  
31  the UM administration;

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33  Therefore, Let It Be Resolved, That the Associated Students of the University of Montana  
34  respectfully ask the University of Montana to immediately commit to:

- 35  
36           (1)     *Providing an immediate cost of living adjustment to TA and base-funded RA salaries that*  
37                    *is commensurate to the adjustment being provided this year to faculty and staff;*  
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39           (2)     *Providing a salary increase of \$3,000 for TAs and base-funded RAs for AY21-22;*  
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41           (3)     *Providing annual increases in salary of not less than \$1,000 such that by AY2026-27 UM*  
42                    *TA and base-funded RAs are consistent with the national average:*  
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44                    - *MS/MA annual (2-semester) salary of \$18,500 (\$9,500 increase above current) + cost of living*  
45                    *adjustments;*  
46                    - *PhD annual (2-semester) salary of \$23,000 (\$8,200 increase above current) + cost of living*  
47                    *adjustments;*

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(4) *Providing a progressive plan as to how the University will address high graduate student fees and healthcare costs within the next 5 years;*

Therefore, Let It Be Further Resolved, That this resolution be sent to Seth Bodnar, President of the University of Montana; Reed Humphrey, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President; Paul Lassiter, Vice President for Operations and Finance; Scott Whittenburg, Dean of the Graduate School; and Ashby Kinch, Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

Passed by Committee: \_\_\_\_\_, 2020

Passed by ASUM Senate: October 21, 2020

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Noah Durnell,  
Chair of the Relations and Affairs Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patrick James Flanagan,  
Chair of the Senate