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3-25-2020

## **SB65-19/20: Resolution Supporting Wage Increases for Teacher Assistantships and Base Stipend Research Assistantships**

Cierra Anderson

Jordan Jimmie

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1                                   **The Associated Students of the University of Montana**  
2                                   **Resolution Supporting Wage Increases for Teacher Assistantships and Base**  
3                                   **Stipend Research Assistantships**  
4                                   **March 12th, 2020**  
5                                   **SB65-19/20**

6                   ~~Authored by: Cierra Anderson, ASUM Senator; Jordan Jimmie, ASUM Senator;~~

7  
8       Whereas, The Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) is the official student  
9       government for the University of Montana;

10  
11       Whereas, One of ASUM's purposes on campus is to advocate for student needs and interests;

12  
13       Whereas, The University of Montana has 2,761 graduate and professional students enrolled  
14       according to the Spring 2020 Census Data<sup>1</sup>;

15  
16       Whereas, Over 530 of those students are employed through a research or teaching contract  
17       with the University<sup>2</sup>;

18  
19       Whereas, Graduate teaching assistants in Montana reportedly make the least amount of money  
20       across the country at an annual mean wage of \$18,850 a year<sup>3</sup> while the national mean wage is  
21       \$36,340<sup>4</sup>;

22  
23       ~~Whereas, The base salaries for teacher and researcher assistantships at the University hasn't~~  
24       ~~changed since the mid-1990's;~~

25  
26       Whereas, Many graduate students cannot afford to pay their bills due to the low pay, lack of  
27       healthcare coverage and rising cost of living in cities like Missoula<sup>5</sup>;

28  
29       Whereas, Making the choice to admit additional graduate students without proper compensation  
30       or benefits is negligent on the part of the University;

31  
32       Whereas, The University's mission is to provide "high-quality and accessible education" and the  
33       mission of the Graduate School is to "cultivate the talent and ability of a new generation of  
34       scholars and professionals...";

35  
36       Whereas, The wages and benefits offered to graduate students do not reflect an accessible  
37       education because graduate students are in financially precarious situations which also impacts  
38       their ability to provide "high-quality" teaching and/or research;

39  
40       Whereas, An increase in the base salary for teaching and research assistantships of at least \$3000  
41       ~~and/or providing system-wide full coverage health insurance and/or benefits would allow the~~  
42       graduate students to lower their financial stress and allow the University to compete nationally  
43       for students;

44  
45       Therefore, Let It Be Resolved, That ASUM support the increase of teacher and research  
46       assistantship base salaries by at least \$3000;

47  
48 Therefore, Let It Be Further Resolved, That ASUM support system-wide full coverage health  
49 insurance and/or benefits for graduate student teacher and research assistantships;  
50

51 Therefore, Let It Be Further Resolved, That this resolution be sent to: Seth Bodnar, President;  
52 ~~Jon Harbor, Provost and Executive Vice-President; Scott Whittenberg, Dean of the Graduate~~  
53 School; Ashby Kinch, Associate Dean of the Graduate School; Dr. Mark Pershouse, Chair of  
54 Faculty Senate; Dr. Chris Palmer, Chair-Elect of Faculty Senate; Dr. Cara Nelson, Chair of  
55 Graduate Council; Dr. Sara Rinfret, Co-Chair of Graduate Council.  
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57  
58 Passed by Committee: \_\_\_\_\_, 2020  
59

60 Passed by ASUM Senate: March 25, 2020  
61

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63  
64 \_\_\_\_\_ Ethan Hanley,  
65 Noah Durnell, Chair of the Relations and Affairs Committee Chair of the Senate  
66

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69 \_\_\_\_\_  
70 Cierra Anderson, Co-Chair of the Graduate and Professional Student Committee  
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72  
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74 \_\_\_\_\_  
75 Hallee Kansman, Co-Chair of the Graduate and Professional Student Committee  
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77  
78 Resolution unanimously approved