



1718-02
UB Graduate Student Association
310 Student Union
Buffalo, NY 14260

RESOLUTION 1718-02

TO: Members of the Senate

FROM: Ariana Nash, English

DATE: 7 March 2018

SUBJECT: UB Graduate Student Association Senate Resolution to Support a Living Stipend for Graduate Student Teaching, Graduate, and Research Assistants

WHEREAS the University at Buffalo (UB) Graduate Student Association (GSA) Senate may enact resolutions concerning issues of importance to the graduate student body in regards to issues of academic policy, student rights, and student welfare;

WHEREAS as of Fall 2017 UB had a total enrollment of 30,648 students, 7,113 of which were graduate students;¹

WHEREAS an estimated 1,429 graduate students held assistantships in the 2016–17 academic year;²

WHEREAS the average stipend across all departments was \$17,343 in the 2016–17 academic year;³

WHEREAS graduate students are charged fees of \$2,513.50 for the 2017–18 academic year,⁴ leaving graduate assistants an average pre-tax income of \$14,829.50;

WHEREAS the average stipend in Economics, Political Science, Linguistics, Comparative Literature, Classics, Anthropology, Romance Languages & Literatures, Philosophy, Music, Media Study, Art, Geography, Transnational Studies, History, and the School of Education was less than \$15,000 per annum in the 2016–17 academic year,⁵ leaving them less than \$12,500 in pre-tax income;

WHEREAS the estimated cost of living for a single adult in Buffalo/Erie County in 2018 is \$24,072 per annum;⁶

1 As stated by UB: http://www.buffalo.edu/about_ub/ub_at_a_glance.html, accessed 2/20/18.

2 “Average Assistantship Stipends,” Office of Institutional Analysis, UB.

3 “Average Assistantship Stipends,” Office of Institutional Analysis, UB.

4 As stated by UB: <http://studentaccounts.buffalo.edu/tuition/fall.php> and <http://studentaccounts.buffalo.edu/tuition/spring.php>, accessed 2/20/18.

5 “Average Assistantship Stipends,” Office of Institutional Analysis, UB.

6 MIT Living Wage Calculator, <http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/36029>, accessed 2/20/18.

WHEREAS this disparity leaves graduate assistants in a condition of financial and academic precarity that negatively affects their research and their academic duties, including duties as instructors of fundamental and required undergraduate courses;

WHEREAS many graduate assistants hold second, third, and fourth jobs to support themselves and their families or drop out of school due to financial hardship;

WHEREAS international students are particularly under stress due to the constraint that they may not hold off-campus jobs or work over 20 hours per week, the requirement that they show a \$22,000 minimum in their bank accounts, and burden of additional fees;

WHEREAS the discrepancy between UB Graduate Assistantship stipends and those of peer institutions hurts the prestige of our graduate programs and the reputation of our graduate schools;

WHEREAS the total revenue of UB and affiliated entities was \$1.6 billion in fiscal year 2016 and 17 of UB's administrators make over \$300,000 per annum, not including additional compensation from the SUNY Research Fund and the UB Foundation;⁷

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The graduate student body of UB strongly supports the efforts of the Living Stipend Movement led by Graduate Assistants at the University at Buffalo and calls on President Tripathi, Provost Zukoski, Vice Provost Hammill and the UB administration to take immediate action to raise graduate stipends to a level equivalent to a living wage and so directs the GSA to state this position to the UB administration;
2. The GSA requests that President Tripathi put together a committee to study competitive minimum stipend levels and make recommendations on this subject in the manner of the "Graduate Stipend Committee" convened by President Robert J. Jones at SUNY Albany;
3. The GSA directs our President to make GSA's position more widely known in the best interests of UB's Graduate Assistants including informing the leadership of the SUNY Student Assembly and UB's COAL;
4. The GSA send a letter of support to the leadership of the Graduate Student Employees Union;
5. The GSA will continue to stand in support of, and to call attention to, the issue of graduate student stipends until such time as they are raised to a level equivalent to a living wage.

⁷ For UB's annual revenue: http://www.buffalo.edu/about_ub/ub_at_a_glance.html, accessed 2/20/18; for annual salaries of upstate NY highest paid state employees: http://www.newyorkupstate.com/news/2018/02/meet_the_50_highest_paid_state_employees_in_upstate_ny_in_2017.html, accessed 2/20/18; for additional sources of income: <http://www.ubspectrum.com/article/2018/02/ub-admins-dominate-list-of-highest-paid-upstate-employees>.