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Committee on Rights and Compensation

To whom it may concern:

This white paper was written to reiterate what graduate students have been stating for years through the efforts of the Committee on Rights and Compensation (CRC). The CRC has spoken to the Regents, educated the graduate student body, met with University leaders, and conducted extremely thorough research on our own. What we've found is simple: we need a living wage.

Everyone who is critical to the continued success of CU – from janitors to adjunct professors to cooks to graduate student employees – needs to be paid a living wage. The people who teach our students, clean up after them, organize their labs, and otherwise maintain the quality of their CU experience, need to be treated with dignity. They must be able to afford to live in the city in which they work. They must be able to afford reasonable healthcare. They must not have to choose between crippling debts and a safe roof over their head. CU must take care of its own.

This paper concerns graduate students in particular. Graduate students teach many (possibly most, based on the research of the CRC), of the undergraduate courses in the University. Our research contributions help earn the University billions of dollars in funding. What we ask for is a living wage and reasonably-priced, accessible healthcare. Our demands are not extravagant. We believe them to be realistic and within the University's budget based on the data available. Here's a scenario: if the University paid an estimated 3,500 graduate students at CU Boulder \$28,209 a year (based on the most recent available Boulder self-sufficiency standard from the Colorado Center on Law and Policy), it would only constitute .06% of CU Boulder's annual revenue (from CU's 2017-2018 Current Funds Budget, Boulder Campus). Considering this estimate, we think the University can find a way to prioritize graduate students in the near future.

We acknowledge and are thankful for the stipend raises thus far, but we urge the University to accept reality: these do not constitute a living wage. Graduate students are still falling deeper into debt, struggling to find housing, unable to get medical coverage outside of Wardenburg hours, putting off starting a family, seeking outside employment to make ends meet...and we're wondering why things are still this way.

CU does not exist without its dedicated employees, whether they're adjuncts, janitors, librarians, or graduate students. It's time for CU to recognize this and start treating its employees with the dignity they deserve.

Sincerely,

Carly and Alex

[Representing the views of the Committee on Rights and Compensation]