



April 25, 2016

A Resolution for A Living Wage

Resolution Summary

The United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS) at the University of Colorado Boulder hereby affirms its support for an increase in graduate student compensation to a level consistent with the cost of living in Boulder and surrounding areas. UGGS requests that the University raise the minimum stipend for fully-funded (50% FTE) appointments to a living wage and guarantee adjustments based on the cost of living in the Denver-Boulder area.

Whereas, graduate students, in their dual role as researchers and educators, are necessary to fulfill the University of Colorado's statutory mission of providing quality research and education; and

Whereas, graduate students who work as fully-funded teaching assistants, research assistants, and graduate student instructors typically earn stipends less than \$20,000 per nine-month academic year¹, while in Denver County the living wage is \$26,589 per year for a single adult and \$53,799 if that adult has one dependent; worse, the living wage in Boulder County is \$29,665 per year for a single adult and \$56,837 if that adult has one dependent²; and

Whereas, costs associated with living in the Boulder area have risen faster than recent cost of living adjustments, which are not guaranteed, causing the real value of some classes of graduate stipends to decline for years; and

¹Summer funding is not routinely guaranteed, and is particularly scarce in some departments.

² [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#). Accessed April 2016. Includes required fees and estimated book and supply expenses according to the CU-Boulder Bursar's Office.

Whereas, the adverse financial climate for graduate students directly contravenes the Core Initiatives of the University of Colorado's Flagship 2030 Strategic Plan by harming recruitment and retention^{3,4}; and

Whereas, the University must maintain a stipend package that is appropriate for the cost of living in order to compete with other leading research institutions in recruiting top candidates for prospective graduate student positions, and discrepancy between stipend and cost of living has been reported as a reason that top candidates turn down offers from CU Boulder in recent years; and

Whereas, the present discrepancy between compensation and cost of living causes some graduate students to take on second and third jobs in order to support themselves and their families, which decreases retention rates and increases the time to graduate.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

by the United Government of Graduate Students of the University of Colorado Boulder, that:

Section 1: The administrators and Regents of the University of Colorado ought to treat the cost of living burden on graduate students as a top priority to remedy.

Section 2: We urge the University to alleviate this burden without delay, by means including but not limited to: raising the minimum pay to a living wage and adjusting said pay annually based on regional cost of living estimates.

Section 3: This resolution shall take effect upon passage by the United Government of Graduate Students Assembly under special order and will expire one calendar year from passage.

³ Financial difficulty has been implicated in differentially harming recruitment and retention efforts for underrepresented populations.

⁴ The Core Initiatives. Flagship 2030 Strategic Plan. University of Colorado Boulder.

<<http://www.colorado.edu/flagship2030/key-deliverables/core-initiatives>>. Accessed April 2016.