Resolution Opposing Graduate School Tuition Waiver Task Force Reduced Semester Proposal

Whereas, the Graduate Professional Council’s position is to protect and preserve graduate and professional students’ positions in the University of Missouri (MU); and

Whereas, the current tuition waiver system allows for MU to be competitive with other tuition waiver offerings, both nationally and in the Big 12; and

Whereas, the preliminary proposal suggested by the Tuition Waiver Task Force on November 3, 2009 would reduce the number of semesters graduate and professional students would be eligible to receive tuition waivers to Masters, 5; Dual masters, 7; PhD, after relevant masters, 8; PhD, no relevant masters, 12; and, PhD, relevant masters en route, 13; and

Whereas, current policy specifies that the number of semesters that students are eligible for tuition waivers is as follows: Masters, 6; dual masters, 6; PhD, after relevant master, 10; PhD, no relevant masters, 14; and PhD, relevant masters en route, 16; and

Whereas, this policy change would be detrimental to graduate and professional education at MU; and

Whereas, MU’s counterpart schools in the Big 12 have less stringent tuition waiver timeline policies than MU’s current policy (For instance, the University of Texas allows 14 semesters for a PhD, after relevant Masters, Kansas State University leaves the decision to the discretion of individual departments, and the University of Nebraska offers tuition waivers equaling the amount of time by individual assistantships.); and

Whereas, this policy change could harm MU's graduation statistics in the PhD Completion Project (http://phdcompletion.org); and

Whereas, smaller graduate and professional departments already struggle to offer advanced courses on a regular basis, slowing some students’ ability to graduate; and

Whereas, students are concerned that faculty will be unable accommodate student requests to work on prominent research projects due to their limited time at the University; and

Whereas, the caliber of students enrolling at MU, as well as the work produced by those enrolled, will be adversely affected by such a proposal; and

Whereas, it is in MU’s best interest to protect the caliber of work produced by Master, Doctoral, and Professional students in order to stay competitive amongst counterparts in the AAU and Big 12; and
Whereas, assistantships could be reduced in concert with the proposed tuition waiver limits, the professionalization and employment of graduate and professional students at MU would be negatively affected; and

Whereas, students’ health insurance subsidies are tied to assistantships, decreasing the number of semesters students are eligible for tuition waivers could have the chain effect of assistantship reduction followed by health insurance subsidy reductions, which would unduly limit students’ ability to obtain health insurance during the completion of their degrees.

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Graduate Professional Council does not support the preliminary proposal put forth by the Graduate School Tuition Waiver Task Force on November 3, 2009; and

Therefore, Be It further Resolved that the Graduate Professional Council urges the Graduate School Tuition Waiver Task Force to recommend no reductions be made in the number of semesters graduate and professional students are eligible to receive tuition waivers; and

[Therefore, Be It further Resolved, that the Graduate Professional Council urges the Graduate School, the Graduate Faculty Senate, and the Office of the Provost to reject said proposal and reconsider ways to empower, enhance, and encourage successful completion of graduate and professional education.]