



Resolution No. 1617-16

A Resolution to Advocate for a Parental Policy for All Students and a Parental Leave Policy for Graduate and Professional Students on Assistantship and/ or Fellowship

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HERE GATHERED THAT:

- WHEREAS,** the University of Missouri does not currently have a policy in place to provide protections for students in the event of pregnancy, the birth of a child, or adoption of a child, except for the option to apply for a general medical leave; and
- WHEREAS,** the lack of policy leaves a gray area regarding rights for all students in the event of pregnancy, birth, adoption and other caregiver-related absences, which leaves student-parents to seek their own plans for accommodating these significant life events; and
- WHEREAS,** for graduate-professional students who inhabit dual roles as students and as employees, the lack of a policy leaves their status in both cases unprotected in the event of the birth or adoption of a child, or if they need to care for a family member or partner; and
- WHEREAS,** the average age of graduate-professional students is 34 years old, and most are above the age of 22; and
- WHEREAS,** according to data collected from AETNA for the years 2013-2016, the Student Health Insurance plan provider, approximately 40-45 maternity claims are made each year by a student or by a dependent on the university's student plan; and
- WHEREAS,** many of these are graduate-professional students who are forced to arrange their own accommodations for class and work responsibilities such as taking time off of class and forgoing paid assistantship and fellowship appointments and even returning to work and their studies just days after the birth or adoption of a child; and
- WHEREAS,** national funding agencies such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), among others, have adopted policies to promote career-life balance--a practice that has also been pursued in relation to faculty and postdoctoral grantees; and
- WHEREAS,** these policies (e.g., of NSF and NIH) allow for the funding recipient's host institution to request funds to assist in the granting of a paid leave to a student



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receiving a fellowship if and only if the host institution has an official family leave policy for students; and

WHEREAS, the University of Missouri does not have a clear paid leave policy or program concerning parental or caregiver leave for graduate and professional students who perform the roles of graduate assistant, teaching assistant, and/or research assistant on an assistantship and/or fellowship, which renders graduate-professional students at Mizzou ineligible for family leave protections and accommodations that would otherwise be accessible from agencies such as NSF and NIH; and

WHEREAS, for the past three fiscal years, the Office of Graduate Studies has advocated for funds from the university's central operating budget to cover a plan for paid parental and caregiver leave program for graduate employees; and

WHEREAS, this proposed plan would allow the graduate or professional student to request a paid semester leave due to the birth or adoption of a child, regardless of gender and would provide a semester of pay at the minimum stipend level in accordance with their FTE appointment; and

WHEREAS, this proposed plan would also allow graduate-professional students on NIH or NSF (or other) grants to access the family leave accommodations offered by those agencies which they do not currently have access to if they are hosted by Mizzou; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Graduate Professional Council advocates for the implementation of a gender neutral policy for all students that concerning the rights of students in cases of pregnancy, adoption, or caregiver-related absences; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a Task Force or Ad Hoc committee be created with the goal of drafting such a student parent and caregiver policy for inclusion in the Collected Rules and Regulations, where this committee shall be comprised of campus stakeholders, including the Office of Graduate Studies, Office of Title IX, and relevant existing committees therein; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the University of Missouri develop a paid parental leave program for graduate and professional who are employed by assistantships and/or fellowships



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with the university, where this program shall be approved by the Office of Graduate Studies and should be either a direct implementation of the existing proposal made by the Office of Graduate Studies or a very similar model; and be it further

RESOLVED, that pursuant to Resolution 1516-16, a representative of the Graduate Professional Council will communicate significant developments, when appropriate, on the specific matter of a parental leave program for graduate employees in a timely manner to a representative of the Coalition of Graduate Workers, so that the latter's advocacy efforts on the topic avoid redundancy and therefore best serve graduate workers.

SUBMITTED,

Ms. Rachel E. Bauer
President