



**Resolution No. 1617-07**

**A Resolution Requesting Clarity on Surveillance of Graduate Student Social Media Content**

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BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HERE GATHERED THAT:

- WHEREAS,** It recently came to light via a Freedom of Information request that the MU News Bureau collected and retained screenshots of social media posts made by individual graduate-professional students in the context of a “closed” Facebook page; and
- WHEREAS,** Social media websites and applications have become the new standard media for professional, extra-curricular, and personal communications; and
- WHEREAS,** Graduate-professional students have complex and varied relationships with the university, including as students and as employees, in addition to a number of other roles related to mentorship, menteeship, professional development, and campus engagement; and
- WHEREAS,** The complexity of the numerous practical identities of graduate-professional students is compounded by the complexity, and flattening, of the contemporary use of social media; and
- WHEREAS,** In all roles played by graduate-professional students, they have varying levels of reasonable expectations privacy; and
- WHEREAS,** The Coalition of Graduate Workers (CGW) and GPC have contacted MU News Bureau regarding their use of screenshots of social media interactions, and both organizations feel that there exists space for the MU News Bureau to boldly step up to the challenge of developing policies that better navigate the new and dynamic arena of social media; and
- WHEREAS,** The MU News Bureau has an opportunity to be national leaders in developing an explicit policy on how to navigate the complex new reality of social media; and
- WHEREAS,** Surveilling, monitoring, or otherwise institutionally-retaining and processing the social media posts of individual graduate-professional students (as opposed to student organizations or governments) can have a chilling effect on the spirit of campus engagement when done in a way that violates the reasonableness standard appropriate to a given situation, as determined by the setting of the social media post and the nature of the monitoring; and
- WHEREAS,** The power asymmetry between university administrators and staff is relevant to the perception by graduate-professional students of monitoring-type activities by the university, particularly in the context of forums or groups created specifically for the



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purpose of graduate-professional students discussing issues surrounding their relationship with administration and the ways that administration could improve the university, as such forums provide a modest means by which graduate-professional students can reclaim their power in light of the aforementioned power asymmetry; and

**WHEREAS,** The university's commitment to knowledge generation, discovery, and excellence includes a commitment to accommodate a robust and civically engaged student body; therefore be it

**RESOLVED,** By majority vote of the General Assembly here gathered that the Graduate Professional Council requests that MU News Bureau become leaders in the national landscape by developing, publicizing, and implementing an appropriate policy navigating the complex new realities of social media and how those realities interact with the numerous roles played by members of the university community; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this resolution, accompanied by a reiterated request for clarity regarding the MU News Bureau's policies, will be distributed to the MU News Bureau and to the appropriate Chancellor's Staff and to the Coalition of Graduate Workers.

**SUBMITTED,**

Alex Howe

Treasurer