



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Graduate Professional Council increases support for Tiger Pantry with \$10,000 donation**

COLUMBIA, Mo. – The Graduate Professional Council (GPC) at the University of Missouri has reaffirmed its commitment to addressing student food insecurity by passing a resolution for a one-time donation of \$10,000 to the Tiger Pantry. This decision, made during the GPC General Assembly meeting on March 4, 2025, underscores the organization’s ongoing dedication to supporting graduate and professional students at Mizzou.

According to the MU Engage Survey conducted in fall 2024, approximately 84% of MU Tiger Pantry patrons are graduate and professional students. Recognizing the urgent need for increased contributions, GPC has long allocated funds to combat student food insecurity. With this recent donation, GPC’s total contribution to the Tiger Pantry for fiscal year 2025 (FY25) will amount to \$17,000, including the previously budgeted \$7,000.

“Tiger Pantry has been tremendously helpful to Mizzou’s graduate and professional students. Therefore, the GPC needs to provide more support,” said Onyedika Ani, GPC treasurer. “The GPC budget strategy is entirely based on allocating funds to programs that improve the overall well-being of Mizzou’s graduate and professional students, making the Tiger Pantry a priority.”

GPC President Jessica Osaze emphasized the broader significance of this contribution, stating, “This donation demonstrates that GPC is committed to addressing food insecurity by prioritizing the basic needs of graduate and professional students and linking academic success to overall well-being.”

Food insecurity poses a significant challenge to students, often impacting their ability to succeed academically. “Food insecurity undermines academic performance and personal well-being by impairing concentration, increasing stress, and forcing difficult choices between essential needs,” Osaze added. “GPC prioritizes addressing food insecurity because it directly impacts students’ academic success, is exacerbated by unique financial challenges, and is often overlooked by traditional support programs.”

The GPC is already looking ahead to the fiscal year 2026 (FY26) budget to further institutionalize support for the Tiger Pantry. “Moving forward, GPC will create a separate category for the Tiger Pantry contribution in the FY26 budget and designate a specific percentage of the total budget for it,” Ani said. “This allocation will relate to all other GPC programs and the number of graduate and professional students who benefit from the pantry.”

GPC’s commitment extends beyond financial contributions. “Our future advocacy efforts may include regular needs assessments, strengthening university support systems, partnering with local organizations, and advocating for fair wages and sustainable funding for student assistance,” Osaze said.

GPC calls on the university community to join the fight against student food insecurity. “We encourage the university community to destigmatize food assistance, recognize the academic and personal impacts of hunger, and prioritize basic needs in policy and resource allocation,” Osaze said. “Every contribution makes a difference in ensuring that no student at Mizzou goes to bed hungry.”

For more information on how to support the Tiger Pantry, visit <https://tigerpantry.missouri.edu/> or contact the Graduate Professional Council at [gpc@missouri.edu](mailto:gpc@missouri.edu).

*Founded in 1983, the Graduate Professional Council (GPC) is the official student government for all graduate, professional, post-baccalaureate, and post-doctoral students at the University of Missouri.*