

GSS Resolution 13/14-11

ON THE MATTER OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO GRADUATE ASSISTANT BENEFITS

WHEREAS, graduate assistants provide critical work to the University of Connecticut through excellent teaching of thousands of undergraduate students and innovative research that helps to win more than \$150 million per year in grants and contracts;

WHEREAS, the ability of the University of Connecticut to recruit and retain the best and brightest graduate assistants depends on the ability to maintain competitive and stable funding and benefits; and

WHEREAS, the University of Connecticut made significant cuts to graduate assistant health benefits in 2013; and

WHEREAS, the University of Connecticut increased the cost of student fees not covered by graduate assistant tuition waivers in 2013; and

WHEREAS, the graduate assistants are subject to the 10th highest mandatory fees among peer and peer-aspirant institutions nationwide; and

WHEREAS, excessive University fees reduce graduate assistants' income to below the cost of living; and

WHEREAS, the university administration is again considering reducing funding for graduate assistant healthcare; and

WHEREAS, the University of Connecticut has asked this body to choose among a number of unacceptable healthcare options, each of which reduces funding for graduate assistant healthcare by more than 2 million dollars and would disproportionately affect women, families, international graduate assistants, and others; and

WHEREAS, University administrators received in excess of \$1.3 million in compensation increases in 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Graduate Student Senate, not having the authority to collectively bargain on behalf of graduate assistants with the administration of the University of Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, this body has previously expressed its support for the organization of a graduate student union at the University of Connecticut with the passage of GSS 13/14-8 on November 13th, 2013; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Graduate Student Senate requests that the University of Connecticut make no further cuts to graduate assistant benefits; and

RESOLVED, that the Graduate Student Senate opposes the implementation of all proposals to reduce financial support for graduate assistant healthcare; and

RESOLVED, that the Graduate Student Senate encourages the administration to seek cost- cutting measures elsewhere; and

RESOLVED, that the Graduate Student Senate finds the recognition by the University administration of the right of graduate assistants to collectively bargain with the University as the only viable recourse for negotiating the terms of graduate assistants' employment and for ensuring the well-being of graduate assistants, the Graduate School, and the University of Connecticut.