

## **Resolution in Support of Graduate Assistant Unionization**

Whereas, graduate assistants provide critical work to the University of Vermont through excellent teaching of thousands of undergraduate students and innovative research that helps to win more than \$191 million per year in grants and contracts [1].

Whereas, the ability of the University of Vermont to achieve R1 status depends on UVM's ability to recruit and retain the best and brightest graduate assistants, as well as provide competitive and stable funding and benefits.

Whereas, the minimum graduate assistant (PhD) stipend at the University of Vermont does not constitute a living wage [2] in Burlington; and the University of Vermont ranks in the bottom third among PhD granting institutions when cost of living is taken into account [3].

Whereas, the cost of the comprehensive fee charged to graduate assistants ranks among the highest when compared to University of Vermont's peer and peer-aspirant institutions [3].

Whereas, unionization can also bring the added value of legally established, contractually backed mechanisms of transparency and accountability—in terms of a contract—and via direct mechanisms for mediation in case of work-related issues such as designated hours or sexual harassment [5].

Therefore, be it RESOLVED, that the Graduate Student Senate supports Graduate Assistants (including Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants and Graduate Advisors) in their right to explore the formation of a union to represent them and their interests at the University of Vermont.

[1] <https://www.uvm.edu/news/story/uvm-research-sets-new-191m-record#:~:text=In%20the%20pandemic%2C%20University%20of,Vermont's%20economy%20during%20COVID%2D19.&text=It%20eclipses%20the%20previous%20record,%241.3%20billion%20annual%20economic%20impact.>

[2] <https://livingwage.mit.edu/>

[3] Analysis of Graduate Student Stipends and Fees: Future Directions in Funding Equity University of Vermont Graduate Student Senate 2020-2021 Stipend & Benefits Committee

[4] Food Insecurity at UVM, 2017

[5] <https://www.epi.org/publication/graduate-student-employee-unions/>