

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Senate Resolutions, 2007-Present

ASUM Student Government

Spring 2009

SB56-08/09: Graduate Student Tuition Waiver Policy

Cayla Jo Watson

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/asum_resolutions

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Watson, Cayla Jo, "SB56-08/09: Graduate Student Tuition Waiver Policy" (2009). *Senate Resolutions, 2007-Present*. 322.

https://scholarworks.umt.edu/asum_resolutions/322

This Institutional Document is brought to you for free and open access by the ASUM Student Government at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senate Resolutions, 2007-Present by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

**The Associated Students of The University of Montana
Resolution regarding Graduate Student Tuition Waiver Policy**

April 13, 2009

Senate Bill Number SB56-08/09

Authored by: Cayla Jo Watson

Sponsored by: Vice President Siri Smillie

1 WHEREAS, The University of Montana (UM) has dedicated itself to make a high quality, affordable higher
2 education experience, to identify and seek creating funding alternatives that will expand public and private resources,
3 to expedite student progress toward degree objectives in order to reduce time to degree (and related costs), and
4 maintain affordability for the widest range of students, and to operate as a unified system of higher education and
5 increase productivity through effective planning, assessment collaboration, and resource sharing;

6
7 WHEREAS, on April 6, 2008 an Intra-campus Memorandum was sent to the Graduate Campus Community via
8 email regarding Graduate Student Tuition Waivers;

9
10 WHEREAS, this email stated that beginning in Fall Semester 2009, the tuition waivers accompanying the Graduate
11 School's Teaching Assistantships will be limited to registration for nine credits per semester and students will only
12 receive a waiver for up to nine credits;

13
14 WHEREAS, the creation and implementation of this policy occurred without consultation from interested and
15 affected campus groups (i.e., College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate Council, Faculty Senate) due to time
16 constraints;

17
18 WHEREAS, the graduate students of UM have expressed concern regarding the April 6, 2008 Graduate Student
19 Tuition Waiver Memorandum;

20
21 WHEREAS, the main concerns of graduate students include credit differentials, financial strain, student
22 attrition/degeneration, workload compensation, academic quality/competitiveness, policy language, and the policy
23 change process;

24
25 WHEREAS, this new policy will put graduate students in a compromised decision-making position irrespective of
26 whether they opt to take nine credits, or twelve or more credits;

27
28 WHEREAS, for programs that are not fully funded (likely the majority on campus) and programs that have credit
29 standards for accreditation and professional purposes that are above nine credits, this policy is troubling;

30
31 WHEREAS, students have expressed concern regarding student attrition and a hindered progress toward completion,
32 or degeneration;

33
34 WHEREAS, several graduate student groups will face the possibility of taking a longer amount of time to complete
35 their degrees by limiting their course load to nine credits;

36
37 WHEREAS, in seeking advanced degrees, students are often expected and/or required to uphold advanced and
38 motivational abilities, including managing above-average workloads;

39
40 WHEREAS, for some graduate students, it is likely that this policy change will result in a loss of funds for an
41 equivalent amount of work, as dropping to nine credits might not be an option;

42
43 WHEREAS, for students applying to programs, this policy will put students in the position to make a decision
44 between finances and enhancing their knowledge base, and may be a part of their decision-making process when
45 deciding where to pursue their education;

46

47 WHEREAS, programs at UM will lose part of their competitive edge with other programs, the ability to attract new
48 students will be hindered, and the quality of students that apply may be reduced;

49
50 THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Senate of The Associated Students of The University of Montana
51 (ASUM) support the Graduate Student Association (GSA) in its efforts to postpone the effective date of this new
52 policy for one year until proper discussion and consideration can be given to the concerns of the graduate students
53 and faculty at UM;

54
55 LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that ASUM support the GSA in its communication of graduate student
56 concerns to UM faculty, administration, and graduate students in the hope that the Graduate School can understand
57 not only the impact of this policy change on students but also how essential good communication and a formal
58 process for policy making can be;

59
60 LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that ASUM support the GSA in its request that the Graduate School consider
61 the following criteria in any decision making process that directly affects graduate students and faculty:

- 62 • Per the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Governance and Administration Standard
63 3.B.2., the GSA respectfully asks that the UM Graduate School provides opportunities for students to
64 participate in institutional governance and that faculty are involved in the development of policies for
65 student programs and services.
- 66 • Per the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Governance and Administration Standard
67 3.B.5. and 3.1.A.3.h, the GSA respectfully asks that the UM Graduate School does not make policy
68 changes unless they are appropriately listed in the university's catalog and any other relevant university
69 publications.
- 70 • Per the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Governance and Administration Standard
71 3.B.6., the GSA respectfully asks that the UM Graduate School periodically and systematically
72 evaluates *not just the financial status of the institution, but also* the appropriateness, adequacy, and
73 utilization of student services and programs and uses the results of the evaluation as a basis for change.
- 74 • Per the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Governance and Administration Standard
75 3.D., the GSA respectfully asks that the UM Graduate School make an increased effort to foster a
76 supportive learning environment and provide services to support students' achievement of their
77 educational goals.
- 78 • Per the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Leadership and Management Standard
79 6.C.6., the GSA respectfully asks that the UM Graduate School facilitate cooperative working
80 relationships, promote coordination within and among organizational units, and encourage open
81 communication and goal attainment.
- 82 • Per the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Financial Planning Standard 7.A.2., the
83 GSA respectfully asks the UM Graduate School to demonstrate that new financial policies are based
84 upon a strategically guided process and that they reflect the institution's goals and objectives.
- 85 • Per the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Financial Planning Standard 7.B.1., the
86 GSA respectfully asks the UM Graduate School to provide evidence that it seeks and utilizes different
87 sources of funds adequate to support its programs and services. In turn, the commitment of those
88 resources among programs and services reflect appropriately the mission and goals and priorities of the
89 institution.
- 90 • Per The Montana University System Mission Statement, the GSA respectfully asks the UM Graduate
91 School to, whenever possible, adhere to its five goals and subordinate objectives. Most specifically:
 - 92 → to make a high quality, affordable higher education experience
 - 93 → to identify and seek creating funding alternatives that will expand public and private
94 resources
 - 95 → to expedite student progress toward degree objectives in order to reduce time to degree (and
96 related costs) and maintain affordability for the widest range of students
 - 97 → to operate as a unified system of higher education and increase productivity through
98 effective planning, assessment collaboration and resource sharing

99
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
107
108
109
110
111
112
113
114
115
116
117

- Per President G. M. Dennison’s Goals and Objectives for 2008-2009, the GSA respectfully asks the UM Graduate School to assist in advocacy of the budget request initiatives related to...increased doctoral enrollments and degrees awarded by the Missoula and Bozeman campuses with reliance on enhanced support for doctoral education.
- Per the President’s Offices Strategic Directions for the University of Montana, the GSA respectfully asks the UM Graduate School avoid, if possible, any actions that hinder academic goals and student goals.
 - Academic Goals include doubling the number of graduate assistants and doubling the stipend levels in regular increments by 2013 and developing graduate education, with renewed emphasis on the doctoral level, by FY 2010.
 - Student Goals include refining enrollment management to achieve enrollment goals by FY 2010, with attention to incremental reduction of number of first-time resident students and increased graduate and transfer students by FY 2011; and increasing graduate student enrollments to 3,500 by 2013.
- Per the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education Policy 940.13 – Tuition Waivers A. Board Policy 2.a., the GSA respectfully asks the UM Graduate School to assure a uniform and equitable administration of tuition waiver policies for students at the campuses of the Montana University System.

Passed by Committee: _____, 2009

Passed by Senate: _____, 2009

118
119
120

Andrew Dusek,
Relations and Affairs Chair

Siri Smillie,
Chair of the Senate