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November 16, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Willie Brown
Chair, Senate Human Relations Committee

FROM: Mary Giles *MG*
Executive Secretary and Director, University Senate

SUBJECT: Policy on Graduate Assistants' Access to Campus-Based Privileges
(Senate Document Number 07-08-18)

At its meeting on November 12, the Senate voted to return the Policy on Graduate Students' Access to Campus-Based Privileges to the Human Relations Committee. The Senate motion requested clarification of the issues raised at the meeting.

These issues ranged from questions about language in section 1 and section 6 of the policy to substantive concerns about the process for determining whether a member of a graduate assistant's household was eligible for privileges. The President of the Graduate Student Government also wanted to know why graduate students on fellowship were not included in the policy. Finally, the Assistant President asked for clarification of the language describing when privileges would not be available to a previously qualified member of a graduate assistant's household.

Since you were unable to attend the Senate meeting, I am attaching the record of the discussion to assist you in understanding the concerns at issue. Please share these concerns with the Senate Human Relations Committee and return an amended policy, along with responses to each question, to the Senate Executive Committee by Thursday, March 13, 2008. If I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at mgiles@umd.edu.

Attachments

**Record of the November 12, 2007 Senate Discussion
on the Policy on Graduate Assistants' Access to Campus-Based Privileges**

Senate Chair Montgomery opened the floor for discussion. Nick Hadley, senator from the Department of Physics, offered a friendly amendment. He pointed to errors in the policy. In section 1 "at least 18 years old" should read "at least 18 years old." In section 6 "an incident for their continued status" might read "an inducement for their continued status." The Parliamentarian allowed these friendly corrections to the policy.

Elise Miller-Hooks, senator from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, expressed concerns about the cost of extending benefits. She asked whether something more specific might be included in the policy about the designated sharer of the benefits than must "reside continuously with the graduate assistant." Graduate assistants frequently have several roommates and have no relationship other than living in the same quarters. Hooks felt that there should be more clarity on this point. Rieger observed that the policy does provide examples of those individuals who would be eligible for coverage in the second paragraph of section 1: "Examples of such individuals include spouses, domestic partners, and adult children of graduate assistants." This sentence does show that the relationship has to be something more than a roommate. Miller-Hooks asked for clarification on how claims of relationships might be handled.

Laura Moore, President of the Graduate Student Government, asked why this policy did not apply to students on graduate fellowships and only to those who are graduate assistants. She felt that those who are bringing in money from outside fellowships would lose out on services offered to other graduate students. Moore wanted a clarification on this issue. Ann Wylie, Assistant President, also asked for a clarification. The policy states that access to privileges for a designated individual would be available as long as the privileges are available to the graduate assistant. However, Wylie noted that the privileges are available to all graduate students, so whether they were available or not, the privileges would be available to the graduate assistant. Wylie concluded that it was unclear when these privileges would no longer be available.

Miller-Hooks moved to have the policy sent back to committee for clarification of the issues raised at the meeting. The motion was seconded. Hearing no discussion of this motion, Senate Chair Montgomery called for a vote. The motion to return the policy to committee was approved but not unanimously.