# GSGA29-R8

## A Resolution Calling for the Creation of a Childbirth or Adoption Accommodation Fund to Offer Parental Leave Benefits to Graduate Students

**Summary:** A Resolution requesting the Graduate School create a Childbirth or Adoption Accommodation Fund to offer paid parental leave for Assistants and allow all graduate students to retain full time status.

**WHEREAS,** the Graduate School's policy for graduate students allows them to apply for a leave of absence of up to two semesters following childbirth or adoption, an absence which would not be counted towards time allotted for degree completion or advancement to candidacy; and

**WHEREAS,** the Graduate School's current leave policy for Graduate Assistants leaves decisions as to whether or not support will continue over the course of the leave entirely to the discretion of the head of the funding unit (or the Principle Investigator/grant administrator); and

**WHEREAS,** a leave of absence, under the current policy, could eliminate an Assistant's funding and access to University health insurance; and

**WHEREAS,** a leave of absence, under the current policy, could endanger students' loan deferrals; and

**WHEREAS,** a leave of absence, under the current policy, would eliminate the student's access to all University services, including libraries, buses, and the Health Center; and

**WHEREAS,** our peer institutions University of Michigan, University of California-Berkeley, and University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, have policies that provide at least 6 weeks of paid leave; and

**WHEREAS,** the current policy has the potential to harm the competitiveness and diversity of the University; and

**WHEREAS,** the current policy has the potential to negatively affect Ph.D. completion rates at the University; and

**WHEREAS,** advisors funded by federal research grants may not be allowed to provide parental leave; and

**WHEREAS,** the current policy places staffing pressure on departments who allow their Teaching Assistants to take paid leave; and

**WHEREAS,** the current policy forces graduate students to rely on the good will of their individual programs with regard to continued funding during a leave of absence,

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Graduate Student Government (GSG) calls on the University of Maryland and the Graduate School to create a Childbirth or Adoption Accommodation Fund to provide paid leave for Graduate Assistants that are primary caregivers; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Graduate School change its policy to allow all graduate students to retain their full time status during their leave period, in such circumstances.

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**Author(s):** Michael Scholten (PHYS)

**Sponsor(s):** Anupama Kothari, President (BMGT), Anna Bedford, Chief of Staff (CMLT)

**Date of Submission:** 15 December 2009

**Date of Presentation:** 29 January 2010

**Action(s) Taken:** Resolution was revised to replace “maternity” with “parental” on lines 4, 7, and 39; to replace “to deal with childbirth” with “following childbirth or adoption” on line 11; to replace "childbirth" with "childbirth or adoption" on lines 3, 6, and 48; and to insert “that are primary caregivers” on lines 50-51. Sponsors were added by unanimous consent.

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Signature of GSG President  Date