

## **Graduate Assistant Advisory Committee Spring 2024 Meeting #2**

May 8th, 10:00am-11:30pm

GAAC Attendance: Taiwo Alawode, Joshua Lucker, Joseph O'Leary, Ivy Lyons

UMD Administration Attendance: Provost Rice, Dean Roth, Carlo Colella

1. Topics not brought up at either meeting
  - a. Graduate Students surveys and other topics
    - i. ENGR - A good amount of money from government and military agencies, but not beneficial for some graduate students, especially international students; are there accommodations for students who are against working in these projects?
    - ii. What accommodations are being implemented for minorities during these troubling times?
2. Follow-up topics from Spring 2023 meet and confer:
  - a. Statement of Mutual Expectations template forms available on Workday? What template is being used and can we make sure GAAC is involved with this? Is November still reasonable?
  - b. Remote teleworking policy follow-up: Reports of lack of parity in teleworking policy for tasks that can be just as or more efficiently performed remotely, e.g. not having a remote-work day that staff currently gets doing the same work—in Spring 2024 you mentioned you'd discuss in a meeting with graduate coordinators, any updates?
  - c. Parental leave—Family and Medical Leave Act. Updates on what the Graduate School has done to comply with federal law.
  - d. Housing - what is the status of affordable grad-student housing (Old Leonardtown? Revisions/review of partnership with Southern Management?)
  - e. Updates from Rice's working groups on improving ADS accommodations for graduate students (ask Laura DeMarco if she'd like to attend to further discuss this). How is the third party review going?
3. Follow up from Spring 2024 GAAC Meeting #1
  - a. Stipends
    - i. What is currently being done to ensure stipends continue to increase?
    - ii. Lack of campus-wide guaranteed summer funding
    - iii. Health insurance - streamlining the process of getting employee health insurance and communication between The Graduate School, HR, and the graduate employees

- iv. Perhaps the university could benefit from a more centralized process for conducting assistantships and stipends and more transparency with The Graduate School and individual departments.
  - b. Difficulty for graduate assistants to find TA-ships
    - i. CMNS – shifting to undergrad TAs or increasing TA loads and decreasing hours
    - ii. Transparency and centralized process (as per above)
  - c. International graduate assistant issues
    - i. International grad fee/visa fees (should be considered a key part of their working conditions that the program hosting these students pay for)
    - ii. more transparency around use of ISSS fees
    - iii. Computer science and geography pays for an international fee – can that become a standard?
    - iv. Check in on what has been conducted since the last meet and confer
  - d. Graduate affordable housing
    - i. University administration has not implemented plans for affordable (defined as no rent burden at our stipend rates) graduate housing in College Park. When will administration be able to?
    - ii. The nature of the southern management partnership/oversight by UMD?
    - iii. We have the new Leonardtown buildings, but are they affordable? What about those that can't afford it (750 new places for 3500+ GAs; \$1200 rent is not nearly enough; international students might have difficulties, is there enough housing for them).
  - e. Abuse of power from professors/advisors
    - i. Theater example – speaking up in the department has led to retaliation (paraphrasing)
    - ii. Information Studies – disparaging grad workers, abusive behavior from advisors, no mechanism to deal with these issues
    - iii. Follow-up from ARCH last year – department cut TA-ships and doubled work of remaining TAs. What investigations can graduate school do in these situations, what processes can be developed for grad workers to report?
    - iv. Can we make the statements of mutual expectations mandatory and have sufficient middle ground arbitration.
- 4. One additional topic
  - a. Streamlining communication between GAAC and The Graduate School in terms of an updated email chain (every semester preferred) and also providing a list of GAAC members to The Graduate School