

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1439

**TITLE: Graduate, Union, and Institutional Development Enhancement (GUIDE):
Section 2, Volume I: Addressing Graduate Stipends and Overwork**

AUTHOR(S): Senator Austin Britton, Senator Cassandra Urbenz

**SPONSOR(S): Minority Party Leader Anamika Naidu, Senator Hunter Monson,
Senator Adriana Sela**

WHEREAS, the University of Florida is a top public university [1] ; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida has a lower minimum stipend than seven peers' schools within the top ten, even when adjusted for cost of living [2-7]; and,

WHEREAS, TAs account for 16% of all FTE dedicated to instruction at UF [8]; and,

WHEREAS, RAs account for 37.4% of all FTE dedicated to instruction at UF [8]; and,

WHEREAS, the average salary per .5 FTE for Assistant Professors at UF as of 2022 is \$85,000, and \$43,000 for lecturers [9]; and,

WHEREAS, the current minimum stipend for a 12 month graduate assistant (GA) at .5 FTE is \$25,600 [10]; and,

WHEREAS, while .5 FTE translates to 20 hours/week, this is the federal maximum number of hours possible for international GAs [11]; and,

WHEREAS, until early 2024, UF retained the right to ban any GA from working outside of the university [10]; and,

WHEREAS, .5 FTE remains standard across UF, with no GA being on 1.0 FTE [10]; and,

WHEREAS, while paid part time, GAs across the university are routinely mandated to work more hours, with the GAU demanding UF address overworking by GAs [10]; and,

WHEREAS, while GAs also receive tuition waivers, these waivers include only slightly more credit hours than faculty waivers, and GAs must pay \$56.71 in fees per credit hour [10]; and,

WHEREAS, even after completing class requirements for degrees, GAs are all required to sign up for the maximum number of credits per semester to maintain student and GA status, to little benefit for the GA [10]; and,

WHEREAS, since 2017, two full union contract cycles ago, the total national inflation rate has been 29.2% [12]; and,

WHEREAS, since 2017 the consumer price index for urban customers in the Southeast US has increased 34% [13]; and,

WHEREAS, since 2017 minimum graduate assistant pay at the University of Florida has only increased 20% [10]; and,

WHEREAS, the real minimum stipend for graduate assistants has therefore decreased since 2017 when adjusted for inflation; and,

WHEREAS, the minimum stipend for graduate assistants remains 40% below the calculated living wage for Alachua County of \$42,576 [14], which is set as the value an individual needs to make to cover basic needs; and,

WHEREAS, the net position of the University of Florida increased by 74.7% from 2018 to 2023, and has increased by a nominal value of \$597 million from 2022-2023 alone [15]; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate supports graduate assistants; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate supports a minimum stipend equivalent to a living wage; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate calls upon the University of Florida to raise the minimum stipend of graduate assistants to the living wage, and to release regular updates on progress to that effect; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate calls upon the University of Florida to tie future minimum stipend increases to a living wage; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate calls upon the University of Florida to waive fee costs for all graduate assistants; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate calls upon the University of Florida to address overwork by graduate assistants.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to UF-GAU Co-Presidents Eva Garcia-Ferres and Cassandra "Cassie" Urbenz, UFF-UF President Meera Sitharam, and Chief Bargainer Patrick Keegan.

