

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA STUDENT ASSOCIATION

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT CONGRESS
CONGRESSIONAL SESSION xxxxxxxx

GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
SENATE SESSION GS 09

SENATE BILL NO. GS09-33

AS INTRODUCED

A resolution regarding a protocol pathway for Graduate College Intermediary mediation of Graduate Student concerns.

- Whereas: A healthy learning environment is one of the essential factors affecting the quality of life and learning for Graduate Students at the University of Oklahoma.
- Whereas: The Graduate Student Senate recognizes that the goal of the University of Oklahoma's administration is to maintain a "no tolerance" policy when it comes to any form of threat or harassment on campus.
- Whereas: The Graduate Student Senate recognizes that, due to the sometimes ambiguous boundaries between a graduate student's roles as both student and graduate assistant, as well as the scholar-apprentice relationship between students and faculty, conflicts between the best interests of these roles can develop. Such conflicts may not have a clear pathway for resolution, leaving the student unsure of whether to voice his/her objections or issues.
- Whereas: The Graduate Student Senate recognizes that, in some cases, voicing a concern can compromise a student's academic career.
- Whereas: The Graduate Student Senate recognizes the cultural differences that some international students bring to the educational experience. It may be difficult for some international students to feel secure voicing disquiet in areas that pertain to their academic well-being.
- Whereas: The Graduate Student Senate acknowledges that the first venue for dialogue remains the student's academic department for most situations. However, a student may feel very uncomfortable beginning discussions with a departmental chair or a faculty member who works closely with that student on a day-to-day basis.
- Whereas: The Graduate Student Senate also acknowledges that some complaints from students initially may be discounted or ignored.
- Whereas: The Graduate College and the Graduate Student Senate through dialogue have recognized the serious problems that graduate students can encounter and have discussed a practical protocol for addressing student concerns.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE:

Section 1: The Graduate Student Senate requests that Graduate College appoint a senior administration/faculty person to the position of Graduate College Intermediary. The Intermediary will:

- a) As appropriate, provide a venue for a student to present problems that potentially may interfere with that student's academic success.
- b) Endeavor to differentiate between problems that can and cannot be addressed directly through the Graduate College.
- c) Determine whether the issue is covered under the existing Graduate Assistant Appeal or Academic Appeal process.
- d) Attempt to reach a reasonable solution to any problem so presented by a graduate student.

Section 2: The Graduate Student Senate acknowledges that it is understood that:

- a) Retaliation for reporting a problem is contrary to the policy and practice of the university.
- b) Any inquiry by the Intermediary is a peer inquiry, not a legal investigation.
- c) Students who wish assistance from the Intermediary must be willing to speak directly to the Intermediary and provide necessary information.
 - 1) The Intermediary cannot investigate:
 - i. anonymous complaints,
 - ii. complaints with incomplete information,
 - iii. complaints introduced by third parties.
 - 2) It should be understood that, consistent with the principles of fair play, the Intermediary has the ability to reveal:
 - i. the student's name and relevant details to those persons involved in the problem and/or potential solution
 - ii. and appropriate university staff;
 - iii. However, such disclosures should be on a strictly need-to-know basis and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- d) The Intermediary cannot solve every problem or satisfy every student. However, the Graduate College Intermediary will make a *bona fide* attempt, approaching every student's problem with kindness, understanding and an open mind.
- e) No solution offered by the Intermediary can take precedence over, supersede or contradict Regents' policies or other established policies of the university.
- f) The actions of the Intermediary may supplement, but do not supplant, the University Student Grievance Policy.

Section 3: The Graduate Student Senate acknowledges that:

- a) The University of Oklahoma has a policy of internal adjudication of student grievances.

- b) There are specific procedures for many grievances (e.g., academic appeals, alleged discrimination, etc.) that are set forth in The Student Code of Responsibilities and Conduct for the Norman Campus and Other University Policies available online through the website for the Office of Judicial Services at <http://judicial.ou.edu/>
- c) In cases where university policy designates no specific procedure, grievances regarding academic matters, financial aid, educational records or payment of tuition and fees should be addressed to the Senior Vice President and Provost; grievances regarding other aspects of student life should be addressed to the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Section 4: Copies of this Legislation shall be sent to the following:

President David L. Boren
 Dr. T.H. Lee Williams, Vice President for Research and Graduate College Dean
 Dr. Janis M. Paul, Assistant Dean of the Graduate College
 Clarke Stroud, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
 Nancy Mulder, Executive Financial Associate
 The Oklahoma Daily

Authors: Senator Cassidy Elms (Chair of Academic Affairs) Senator Nichole Grooms (Academic Affairs) , Susan Adams- Johnson, Chair of Graduate Student Senate

Submitted on a motion by:
 Action taken by Senate:

Verified by Chair of Senate: _____ Date: _____

UOSA President: _____ Date: _____

University President: _____ Date: _____

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