

CAL POLY HUMBOLDT
University Senate

Sense of the Senate Resolution on
Resources for Graduate Students

26-24/25-University Senate Executive Committee — May 13, 2025

WHEREAS: Cal Poly Humboldt Graduate Programs are a source of pride and an economic and human resource incubator for the campus and Northern California communities;

WHEREAS: Graduate faculty and students have deep histories of serving and collaborating with communities including 11 federally recognized tribes whose ancestral homelands stretch across Humboldt County;

WHEREAS: Graduate education alternatives at this level are at least 200 miles from Arcata or accessible only through online modalities;

WHEREAS: In Fall 2024 Cal Poly Humboldt enrolled more than 400 master's students representing 7% of the campus total enrollment;

WHEREAS: Graduate Programs in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS), the College of Natural Resources and Sciences (CNRS), and the College of Professional Studies (CPS) provide much needed advanced research and applied training;

WHEREAS: Graduate Programs in CAHSS, CNRS and CPS are a campus hallmark of rich hands-on polytechnic training that attracts outstanding professionals to relocate to Humboldt to advance their careers as they learn and collaborate with Humboldt faculty;

WHEREAS: Graduate Programs in CAHSS, CNRS and CPS are a magnet for attracting and retaining faculty who are leading scholars in their fields and drive forward through their work the university vision and purpose to improve the global human condition and our relationship with the environment and who are committed to a just and sustainable world;

WHEREAS: Graduate Programs in CAHSS, CNRS and CPS train professionals who stay in this geographically remote area and infuse the campus and local communities with a steady resource of highly trained professionals committed to the values outlined in the Cal Poly Humboldt vision;

WHEREAS: Graduate Students in CAHSS, CNRS and CPS provide annually thousands of hours in professional labor that supports undergraduate students, university research and operations, local, county, and state agencies, as well as non-profit and other organizations;

WHEREAS: Graduate Students provide across campus skilled teaching, research, and students services labor at substantially lower costs than hiring full-time professionals;

WHEREAS: In AY 24-25, in Biology alone, 51 labs were taught by graduate students and in Fall 2025 more than 30 lab sections across Departments are slated to be taught by graduate students;

WHEREAS: In 2025 Federal Executive Orders and State Budget cuts have negatively impacted available resources for the California State University;

WHEREAS: Historically, the CSU Office of the Chancellor entrusted campuses with local decision making in setting eligibility criteria that best supported their specific student populations and related distribution of State University Grants (SUGS) grants that equalled cost of tuition;

WHEREAS: In April 2025 the CSU Office of the Chancellor directed campuses to make significant changes to standardize across all campuses the AY 25-26 financial aid formulas for awarding State University Grants (SUGS) to graduate and undergraduate students;

WHEREAS: All CSU Graduate students through FAFSA or CADAA filing must now evidence a Student Aid Index (SAI) score less than or equal to -1,500 to qualify for an AY 25-26 SUG, as compared to the AY 24-25 Cal Poly Humboldt established SAI eligibility score threshold of less than or equal to 9,000;

WHEREAS: As of April 2025 graduate coordinators across programs are reporting early volatility in newly admitted graduate students due to an absence of SUGS that would have covered the cost of tuition and no other available funding;

WHEREAS: The Office of Financial Aid estimated that 45 graduate students who in AY 24-25 qualified for a SUG did not qualify for the AY 25-26 grant and estimates are not available on the number of newly admitted students who would have qualified for a SUG in prior years;

WHEREAS: The President approved all requested waivers for AY 25-26 increasing the number of tuition waivers from 15 to 27 and supporting 25 Graduate Teaching Associates (TA) in CNRS, and two (2) in CAHSS;

WHEREAS: The increase in tuition waivers linked to TAs is significant for graduate student recruitment and retention in CNRS, but programs in CAHSS and CPS remain challenged for compensating for the loss of the SUG;

WHEREAS: The Office of Financial Aid doubled to \$100,000 the AY 25-26 graduate federal work study (GFWS) fund available to FAFSA eligible students;

WHEREAS: The additional Graduate Federal Work Study funds are critical, but are not comparable to the significant affordability impact of the state “grant” that was also available to undocumented students eligible through the CADDAs;

WHEREAS: These changes in aid seriously jeopardize our institutional commitment to upward mobility and equity to the extent that the changes will disproportionately impact first-generation and low-income graduate students who are also more likely to identify as BIPOC;

WHEREAS: The Senate is grateful for the rapid action of the President, Provost, Vice President of Enrollment Management, and Director of Financial Aid, and their staff in efforts to mitigate system decisions noted above; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate urges Executive Leadership and Deans to identify staffing opportunities across campus to be mitigated through the employment of Graduate Assistants (GAs) from programs in CAHSS and CPS doing hands-on applied scholarship that aligns with programmatic needs and who, if employed at least 15 hours/week, would be eligible for tuition waivers should more be made available;

RESOLVED, That the Senate encourages allocation of additional tuition waivers to support CAHSS and CPS graduate students in the above positions to support their recruitment and retention; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Senate requests a rapid deployment of these measures such that they may immediately impact admitted graduate student yield, as well as campus-wide staffing opportunities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Senate requests that the President and Provost continue to advocate for greater flexibility and some levels of local control in awarding state university grants, as well as greater system-wide attention to graduate education; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution be distributed to:

Associated Students
Labor Union Representatives for Graduate TAs and GAs
Staff Council
Cal Poly Humboldt Council of Chairs and Program Leaders
Academic Senate of the CSU,
Chancellor Mildred Garcia
CSU Board of Trustees