

Resolution 13: Additional Donation from the GPSA to the Access Fund to Support Graduate and Professional Students in Need Related to COVID-19 Pandemic

Abstract: This resolution approves the transfer of funds from the Graduate and Professional Student Programming Board (GPSPB) to the Access Fund to support students' urgent needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This resolution also calls on the University to look for additional funds to support financial relief to professional students and guarantee graduate student funding.

Sponsored by: Andy Leonel Barrientos-Gómez, President, GPSA; Alexa Cohn, Executive Vice President, GPSA; Victoria Kasonde, Vice President of Operations; Taylor Tejada, Vice President of Communications, GPSA; Alex Loiben, Counsel, GPSA; Kasey Laurent, Chair, Graduate and Professional Student Programming Board; Arielle Johnson, Chair, GPSA Finance Commission

Whereas, many graduate and professional students left campus to comply with University-wide restrictions and/or to protect their personal health and the health of the Cornell community during the COVID-19 pandemic, and

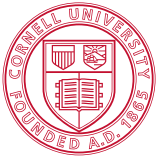
Whereas, many graduate and professional students have seen a drastic change in their financial situation due to these and other circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and

Whereas, the GPSA previously approved an allocation of \$50,000 to the Access Fund¹ to support the unforeseen financial burdens that graduate and professional students incurred, and

Whereas, the Cornell Graduate School donated \$50,000 to the Access Fund to match the GPSA contribution, and

Whereas, other contributors to the Access Fund on behalf of graduate and professional students include the Office of Inclusion and Student Engagement (OISE); Architecture, Art, and Planning (AAP); the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS); Computing and Information Science (CIS); Cornell Engineering; Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR); SC Johnson College of Business; Cornell Law School; Cornell School of Hotel Administration's Master of Management in Hospitality (MMH) and Baker Program in Real Estate; and generous individual donors, and

¹ https://assembly.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/resolution_10-_donation_from_the_gpsa_in_support_of_the_access_fund_to_support_graduate_and_professional_students_in_need_related_to_covid-19_pandemic.pdf



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31 **Whereas**, the GPSA applauds all of these generous contributions, which have greatly helped
32 graduate and professional students in need, and

33 **Whereas**, as of the most up-to-date estimates on 4/6/2020, the Access Fund had given over
34 \$145,000 to graduate and professional students in need, and

35 **Whereas**, as of the most up-to-date estimates on 4/6/2020, the total amount of donated funds was
36 over \$240,000, and

37 **Whereas**, there are many pending transactions that are not reflected by these amounts, and

38 **Whereas**, many graduate and professional students have applied to the Access Fund but have not
39 yet had their application processed, and students are continuing to apply at a high rate, and

40 **Whereas**, the Graduate and Professional Student Programming Board (GPSPB) will no longer be
41 hosting major events including Grad Ball, and

42 **Whereas**, the GPSPB therefore has \$10,000 available to contribute to the Access Fund, and

43 **Whereas**, the Access Fund can cover flights, moving, emergency medical expenses, rent, groceries,
44 and electronics repairs, all of which can be crucial to students in financial distress due to
45 circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and

46 **Whereas**, the cap of Access Fund aid is set at \$500 per student, but in limited situations low-income
47 students with severe need may be allowed a higher cap.

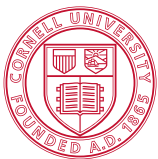
48 **Be it resolved**, that the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly shall make an additional
49 donation to the Access Fund in the amount of \$10,000 from the GPSPB, and

50 **Be it further resolved**, these additional funds shall be administered through the Office of the Dean
51 of Students in the same manner as the previously donated funds, and shall be used to financially
52 support graduate and professional students in need, and

53 **Be it further resolved**, that graduate and professional students in need shall be able to access the
54 funds by submitting an application at [https://scl.cornell.edu/identity-resources/first-generation-](https://scl.cornell.edu/identity-resources/first-generation-low-income-support/access-fund)
55 [low-income-support/access-fund](https://scl.cornell.edu/identity-resources/first-generation-low-income-support/access-fund), and the approval process shall be expedited so that students can
56 receive grants within a few days of applying, and

57 **Be it further resolved**, that the administrators of the Access Fund shall continue to raise the cap
58 above \$500 for graduate and professional students in circumstances of extreme need, and

59 **Be it further resolved**, that the COVID-19 pandemic is a time of unprecedented need for the
60 graduate and professional community, and this community's needs exceed what the GPSA,
61 Graduate School, Professional Schools, or Access Fund can provide; therefore the GPSA urges the
62 University, specifically President Martha Pollack, Provost Michael Kotlikoff, Executive Vice
63 President Joanne DeStefano, Vice President Paul Streeter, Vice President Ryan Lombardi, and the
64 Board of Trustees, to find additional funding to support the needs of the graduate and professional
65 community, and



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66 **Be it finally resolved**, that these additional funds from the University be used for financial relief
67 opportunities for professional students whose financial situation has changed due to the COVID-19
68 pandemic, extension of SHP Health Benefits for graduating graduate and professional students who
69 are unable to find employment due to the pandemic, and to ensure that all graduate students who
70 depend on the university for a stipend receive either fellowship funding or assistantships providing
71 full funding for both the 2020 Summer Session and 2020 Fall Semester.

72

73 Respectfully submitted,

74 Andy Leonel Barrientos-Gómez, President, GPSA

75 Alexa Cohn, Executive Vice President, GPSA

76 Victoria Kasonde, Vice President of Operations

77 Taylor Tejada, Vice President of Communications, GPSA

78 Alex Loiben, Counsel, GPSA

79 Kasey Laurent, Chair, Graduate and Professional Student Programming Board

80 Arielle Johnson, Chair, GPSA Finance Commission