

## University of South Carolina Faculty Senate

### RECOMMENDATION FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA TO FULLY FUND THE COST OF HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENT WORKERS

**WHEREAS**, graduate student workers at the University of South Carolina perform essential research, teaching, and administrative work for the University; and

**WHEREAS**, graduate student workers experience severe stress due to the nature of their jobs and typically work more hours than their contracts require them to; and

**WHEREAS**, compensation for graduate student workers at the University of South Carolina is often below or near poverty levels in the United States of America<sup>i</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, a recent survey conducted by the University of South Carolina Graduate Student Association found that 45% of graduate students cannot cover half of their monthly expenses with their stipends; and

**WHEREAS**, the University of South Carolina's Provost's office has pointed out that the financial compensation in Graduate Fellowships at the University is "embarrassing"<sup>ii</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, most graduate student workers must pay approximately \$3,080<sup>iii</sup> out of their stipends for a 12-month student health insurance plan, not including deductibles, co-pays, and out-of-pocket expenses; and

**WHEREAS**, the student health insurance plan itself is often inadequate and offers less coverage than the South Carolina state health insurance plan that faculty and staff receive as a benefit of employment; and

**WHEREAS**, peer and peer aspirant public universities<sup>iv</sup> provide full or better subsidies for health insurance premiums relative to the University of South Carolina, making graduate health coverage a barrier to the recruitment and retention of talented graduate students.

**THEREFORE**, the University of South Carolina Faculty Senate recommends and requests the following:

- 1) That it become the official policy of the University of South Carolina to mandate the full payment of health insurance premiums for the existing student health insurance plan as a benefit for every graduate student worker; and
- 2) That President Robert L. Caslen Jr., Provost William Tate IV, and the Board of Trustees allocate University funds to this effect.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/faculty\\_senate/faculty-toolbox/documents/facsen\\_meetings/2020-10-07.minutes.pdf](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/faculty_senate/faculty-toolbox/documents/facsen_meetings/2020-10-07.minutes.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://sc.myahpcare.com/cost>

<sup>iv</sup> These include, but are not limited to: the University of Kentucky, the University of Tennessee, the University of Georgia, the University of Connecticut, Indiana University, the University of Maryland, and the University of Virginia