

GRADUATE ASSEMBLY

The following letter was sent to the University of Utah's Academic Senate. Individuals wishing to show their support for a Graduate Assembly at the U can add their names to the petition by clicking this link. (<http://gradschool.utah.edu/add-your-name-to-the-graduate-assembly-petition/>)

Graduate Assembly Petition

Re: Petition for the formation of an ad hoc Academic Senate Committee to define University policies for formation, management, and shared governance role of Graduate Assembly

We are writing you to petition the Academic Senate for the formation of an ad hoc committee to develop University policies for the formation and management of a Graduate Assembly to bring graduate student perspective into the shared governance of the University of Utah.

During the past year, the pressing need for a Graduate Assembly at the University of Utah has become clear. Graduate and professional students account for more than 25% of the student community at the U, yet their unique needs and concerns are not formally addressed by any University-wide assembly. Although ASUU is a formally approved, campus-wide forum for student participation in shared governance, it is almost exclusively focused on undergraduate issues and does not provide a representative forum for addressing the unique concerns and needs of the graduate and professional student body. Consequently, a substantial fraction of the student community is not consulted or kept aware of the implications of policy and financial decisions at the University. In the same vein, graduate and professional students do not have a forum for initiating campus-wide advocacy of graduate and professional student needs. For example, during 2017 students encountered difficulty in establishing campus-wide dialogues regarding potential changes in federal income tax law and immigration policies. We further note that the University of Utah is the only PAC-12 University which does not have a graduate representation in university governance through a formal body such as a Graduate Assembly.

The formation of a Graduate Assembly at the University will provide graduate and professional students at the University with opportunities for the development of broader skills, including effective verbal and written communication skills, collaborative work skills, team-building and team management skills, and policy analysis and policy writing skills; further, it will provide students with public outreach, public education, and leadership experience. The National Science Foundation and the Council of Graduate Schools have established the development of these types of broader skills as essential learning outcomes in graduate and professional education.

We seek the assistance of the Academic Senate in the formation of a campus-wide Graduate Assembly to provide a formal mechanism for consultation with faculty and administration on ongoing policy and financial decisions. We also seek to establish the Graduate Assembly as a forum for graduate students to advocate for the unique needs of graduate and professional students and to participate in the shared governance of the University. The Graduate Assembly should also incorporate the possibility for additional service to graduate students, such as building social networking and mentoring support for graduate students across campus. It should also serve as an open forum to engage in discussion of statewide and national issues regarding the importance of graduate education in the local, national, and international communities. The Graduate Assembly will advocate for continuous improvement of graduate and professional education at the U, and will work with faculty and administration to fulfill the University's mission.

We propose the formal definition of the Graduate Assembly, including membership, structure, and mission be incorporated into University policy.

Additionally, to ensure that the committee is representing a diverse set of needs and solutions, we propose that the committee should be composed of the following.

1. A designee of The Graduate School;
2. A designee from the Office for Equity and Diversity;
3. A designee from the International Student and Scholar Services office;
4. Two (2) Directors of Graduate Studies from two different colleges, at least one of which must come from outside of the Law, Medical, or Dental schools (ideally one from a STEM department and one that is not STEM);
5. Four (4) currently enrolled and attending graduate students from four different colleges, at least two of which must come from outside of the Law, Medical, or Dental schools (ideally evenly balanced between STEM and non-STEM)
6. Additional members as the committee or Academic Senate sees fit.

We ask that the ad hoc committee review similar Graduate Assemblies at PAC-12 and Big-10 Universities, and establish an Graduate Assembly at the University of Utah which is responsive to the unique needs and diversity of our graduate and professional student community. We anticipate that with the approval of this petition, the Graduate Student community will self-organize to select a representative body of students who will participate in establishing the vision and policy of the Graduate Assembly in consultation with the Academic Senate and with administration.

We ask that the ad hoc committee be formed immediately so that the definition and establishment of the Graduate Assembly proceed as soon as possible. We request that the committee should publish and present its recommendations to the Academic Senate no later than December 31, 2018 in order for the

Assembly to be fully running for the 2019-2020 academic year.

We, the undersigned faculty and students, endorse the above petition and look forward to working with the Academic Senate to form a Graduate Assembly at the University of Utah.

Devon Cantwell, Graduate Student

Thomas Brussel, Graduate Student

Paul Bergeron, Graduate Student

David Kieda, Graduate School Dean & Astronomy Professor

The Graduate Council

Zach Berger, ASUU Student Body President

To show your support for this petition, add your name to the list of those endorsing the creation of a Graduate Assembly at the University of Utah. The petition can be found by clicking this link.

(<http://gradschool.utah.edu/add-your-name-to-the-graduate-assembly-petition/>)

Signers

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