

<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	April 12, 2023
<b>Ruling:</b>	[To be completed by Parliamentarian]
<b>President, PGSG:</b>	Alex Seto
<b>Senate Chair, PGSS:</b>	Josiah Davidson

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**PURDUE GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE**

**RESOLUTION No. SP23-R014**



**“Resolution Empowering Graduate staff to use or be compensated for vacation time”**

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**Sponsor(s):** Stephanie Contreras, Educational Studies; Anael Kimble, Department of Food Science; Somosmita Mitra, School of Electrical and Computer Engineering; Mike Sserunjogi, Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering; Antonia Susnjar, School of Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences; Jacob White, Department of Computer Science; Solita Wilson, Department of Chemistry

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**WHEREAS,** Graduate students are three times more likely than the average person to experience mental health disorders and depression and are at increased risk for work-related mental health issues;<sup>1</sup> and

**WHEREAS,** Purdue graduate students are pressured by a competitive, overachiever culture in the campus community; and

**WHEREAS,** Graduate students spend more than 40 hours a week on their program, and some are found working for 70 hours per week or more;<sup>2</sup> and

**WHEREAS,** Graduate students dedicated over their contractual hours to research, coursework and various other contractual obligations; and

**WHEREAS,** Purdue graduate staff have a contracted time of 22 days of vacation/sick time, however there is a prevalent culture to not use this time; and

**WHEREAS,** Taking time off is essential to the mental health and well-being of all people; and

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<sup>1</sup> [https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/bolotnyy/files/bbb\\_mentalhealth\\_paper.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/bolotnyy/files/bbb_mentalhealth_paper.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-03394-0>

**WHEREAS,** When vacation or sick days are not used by the graduate staff employment community, they are not compensated in any other way in lieu of the unused time; and

**WHEREAS,** Graduate student employment manual states “If available, accrued vacation may be used to bridge employment and benefits, or if accrued vacation balance is unable to bridge the time between appointments, a termination and rehire is appropriate and accrued vacation is forfeited.” Therefore, graduate staff are not permitted to carry forward their holidays to the next academic year to be used at a later date;<sup>3</sup> and

**WHEREAS,** Other Big10 peer institutions include provisions for terminal leave payouts for graduate students, including UCLA, Indiana University, and University of Illinois.

**WHEREAS,** Purdue student competitive atmosphere pressures students to not take their needed time off which can lead to burnout. Graduate students have the right to be compensated for their time especially when lack of time off instigated by the student’s PI can greatly compromise the student’s mental health;

**WHEREAS,** The cost of living in the West Lafayette and Lafayette area is 33,474 yearly, and less than half of the Purdue graduate student population living in the West Lafayette and Lafayette area make less than 30,000 yearly:<sup>4</sup>

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** That PGSG calls for the unused vacation time for graduate employees eligible for employment benefits i.e. halftime employment at 20 hours equivalent to FTE 0.50 or two 0.25 appointments or anything greater at the value of the unused hours by employee wage rate, from the employment appointments with the respective FTE employment also representing employers responsibility for payout.<sup>3</sup>

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That every department supports graduate student employees who submit their request for paid vacation days in their employee success factor account and if it is imperative for them to distinctly indicate whether it is voluntary or involuntary so as to prevent the circumvention of taking leave.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That PGSG asks for the modification of graduate staff employment policy for inclusion of monetary compensations from immediate funding accounts for the students’ unused vacation days.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That this resolution on passage in the PGSS be placed with student affairs committee for appropriate action.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That Purdue institutes policies to encourage the usage of vacation time and support graduate student employees should conflicts arise on graduate student employees using vacation time.

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<sup>3</sup> Wall street: <https://247wallst.com/city/cost-of-living-in-lafayette-indiana/>

<sup>4</sup> Graduate Staff Employment Manual

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That PGSG shares this resolution with CSSAC for potential collaboration.

**PASSED, APPROVED, AND RESOLVED** *[INSERT DAY OF PASSAGE]*<sup>th</sup> day of *[INSERT MONTH OF PASSAGE]* 2023.

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President, PGSG

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Senate Chair, PGSS

**Certification**

I, Mary Brown, Senate Clerk of the Purdue Graduate Student Senate, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was regularly passed and adopted by the Purdue Graduate Student Senate of Purdue University, at a regular meeting thereof held on the *[INSERT DAY OF PASSAGE]*<sup>th</sup> day of *[INSERT MONTH OF PASSAGE]* 2023 by the following vote:

**AYES (0):**  
**NAYS (0):**  
**ABSENT (0):**  
**ABSTAINED (0):**

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand this *[INSERT DAY OF CERTIFICATION]*<sup>th</sup> day of *[INSERT MONTH OF CERTIFICATION]* 2023.

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Senate Clerk, PGSS