



Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

G R A D U A T E S T U D E N T C O U N C I L

May 7th, 2013

STATEMENT FROM THE GRADUATE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD

This statement is a response to an online petition, started by the recently-founded Graduate Students for a Better UVA (GSBUVA), expressing no confidence in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Council's ability to advocate on the behalf of graduate students.

Grad Council welcomes dialogue with any party regarding how we may better serve our constituents. However, we feel compelled to point out that **the GSBUVA petition contains false statements regarding the actions that Grad Council has taken** in response to graduate tuition changes.

First, the claim that Grad Council did not hold a single open meeting to discuss the tuition change is **False**. Every Grad Council meeting is open to its constituents, and we discussed these tuition changes in our meetings in December, February, March, and April. The meeting minutes on our website, www.gradcouncil.com, attest to these discussions. Beyond our meetings, we disseminated information regarding these tuition changes via email to Grad Council department representatives and to individual constituents directly.

Second, the claim that Grad Council knew that tuition changes were coming for over a year is **False**. As documented by the "December 2012 Meeting with Dean Zelikow" tab under the Minutes section of our website, we received this information in December 2012. After that meeting, we immediately took action to meet with key administrators and communicate our concerns about the policy.

In fact, Grad Council representatives have taken significant action to advocate on behalf of graduate students regarding this tuition issue. We have made it abundantly clear to administrators that our number one concern was protecting graduate students from out-of-pocket expenditure increases. The administration acknowledged that potential hardship to current graduate students was a major concern. In order to address that concern, the administration has made significant commitments to increase financial support to graduate students. We are currently in the process of verifying that these commitments are being appropriately allocated at the department level.

We have also reached out to representatives of GSBUVA in an effort to better understand their concerns. We hope they will accept our invitation to meet in person soon.

Grad Council agrees with GSBUVA's belief that graduate students are of critical importance to the University of Virginia. We share their desire for greater recognition of graduate student efforts and appropriate transparency regarding administrative decisions that affect graduate students. However, **we strongly reject the false statements presented in the GSBUVA petition** discussed above.