

Resolution Against the Proposed Plan to Implement a 'Program Premium Fee' for Masters' Students

WHEREAS, the Graduate Council shares CUNY's historic mission of providing access to higher education to low-income communities and communities of color in New York City and across the nation; and

WHEREAS, President Chase Robinson and Provost Joy Connolly have proposed a plan to effectively increase the tuition for masters' students at the Graduate Center by proposing a \$100/credit 'program premium fee' (previously an 'excellency fee'); and

WHEREAS, masters' students are required to take 9-12 credits for full-time status, and most masters' students take at least 6 credits per semester, which would amount to \$600-\$1,200 per semester effective increase in tuition; and

WHEREAS, on October 23rd, the CUNY Board of Trustees voted to increase tuition by up to \$200 /yr for full-time master's resident students, which, along with the 'program premium fee' would result in a total tuition increase of \$1,400 - \$2,600 /yr; and

WHEREAS, instead of advocating for funding from the state for increasing services, this proposed plan will shift the cost for needed services down to already cash-strapped students; and

WHEREAS, the total cost of attending an institution of higher learning is more than just tuition and fees; and

WHEREAS, the cost of living in New York City has risen about 23% from 2009 to 2014; and

WHEREAS, in the 2015-2016 academic year, CUNY estimated that students living at home would spend approximately \$9,592 in books, transportation, and living expenses, while students not living at home would spend approximately \$20,295 on such expenses¹; and

WHEREAS, the rising tuition and expenses, stagnant financial aid assistance, insufficient state funding, and the prevalence of low-wage jobs undermine the affordability and stymie the accessibility to higher education and the advancement of a highly-educated and skilled workforce; and

WHEREAS, both the Doctoral & Graduate Students' Council (DSC) and the GC chapter of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) have adopted resolutions to reject this proposed plan; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Graduate Council hereby expressly rejects the plan to levy a 'program premium fee' on masters' students; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Graduate Council rejects any and all future plans to implement tuition increases under the guise of additional fees; and, be it

RESOLVED, that the Graduate Council urges the GC administration to deploy its ample resources to lead a public campaign and lobbying effort for the full funding of the Graduate Center, and, be it

¹ CUNY, <http://www.cuny.edu/admissions/tuition-fees.html>

FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Graduate Council calls upon President Chase Robinson and Provost Joy Connolly to release a plan to fund services for masters' students without increasing tuition or fees.