

GSAC Resolution 1.2009.01

Presented by the Graduate Student Advisory Council

A resolution requesting that Eastern Illinois University Student Accounts allow graduate students who accept graduate assistantships a deferment of student fees for a minimum of one billing cycle or until their first stipend payment for the semester is received.

Eastern Illinois University students registering for the fall semester prior to August receive their first billing statement requesting all tuition and fees be paid in full by the end of August, unless a payment plan option is chosen. Students registering for the fall semester in August receive their first billing statement requesting all tuition and fees be paid in full by the end of September, unless a payment plan option is chosen. These same policies apply to students registering in the spring; students registering on or prior to December owe payment in the beginning of January and those students registering in January owe payment at the end of February. If students wish to choose a payment option throughout the semester they may do so, having to pay the entire account by November 1st. However, although a student may choose a payment plan option throughout the semester, the 1% late finance charges are still applied to every billing cycle until the account is paid in full; causing additional and unnecessary financial hardships to graduate assistants.

Graduate students who accept graduate assistantships can experience additional financial hardship due to the short time between receipt of the first stipend payment and the due date by which all non-covered student fees and late finance charges are due to Student Accounts. This resolution requests deferment of student fees and elimination of any late finance charges that may be incurred until the first stipend payment of the semester to allow graduate assistants to remain in good financial standing while covering basic living expenses. This fee deferment would allow graduate students with assistantships the opportunity to defer payment of student fees after the first stipend payment of the semester.

Whereas, the Graduate Student Advisory Council believes that graduate assistants are furthering the causes of the university through their research, teaching efforts, and other duties; and

Whereas, other universities in the Midwest allow graduate assistants a deferment of student fees for a minimum of one billing cycle to remain in good financial standing; and

Whereas, graduate assistantships do not cover student fees and other campus expenses; and

Whereas, fall graduate assistants receive the first payment on the last business day in September and new graduate assistants beginning in the Spring semester receive the first payment on the last business day in February, resulting in a longer delay of payment on student fees and cost of living; and

Whereas, this can result in graduate assistants using a large lump sum of their first payment to cover this bill and remain in good financial standing with Student Accounts; and

Whereas, graduate assistants are discouraged from seeking employment elsewhere, or beyond the terms of their assistantship as other means to cover these costs; and

Whereas, such a large deduction from the initial stipend makes covering basic living expenses during these billing cycles a hardship and unnecessary distraction for our Eastern Illinois University graduate assistants;

Therefore, be it resolved that GSAC urges the EIU Student Accounts to allow graduate assistants eliminate late finance charges, to defer payment of student fees and expenses not covered by the terms and conditions of an assistantship at no additional expense until the first stipend payment of the semester.