

**SASGov Resolution: Graduate Student Dismissal Procedures**

WHEREAS The School of Arts and Sciences Graduate Student Government (SASgov) believes that graduate students in all departments and programs deserve to be treated equally, and have the right to a fair trial, and deserve prior warning, as well as a chance to improve, if they are to be dismissed from their degree, and

WHEREAS, unlike at other peer institutions, the current version of the *Academic Rules for PhDs and Research Master's Degrees* at the University of Pennsylvania lists no official dismissal procedure for graduate students, and

WHEREAS the School of Arts and Sciences Academic Grievance Committee currently does not function with enough efficiency to allow for graduate students to appeal a call for dismissal which is brought against them in a timely manner, and before either their financial or their legal status is placed in jeopardy, now therefore be it

RESOLVED that SASgov should petition the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences to develop, with the advice and consent of graduate students, an official dismissal procedure common to programs and departments across the School of Arts and Sciences, which would include but not be limited to: outlining a dismissal timeline, instituting a probationary period, ensuring an accessible and timely appeals process, and asserting the need for transparency. Also be it

RESOLVED that SASgov should petition the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences to pledge that the financial situation and legal status of a student will not be altered before that student has had the opportunity to hear the case for dismissal brought against them, and to appeal it. Also be it

RESOLVED that SASgov should nominate an individual to submit, on behalf of SASgov and with their full backing, the following statement to the Office of the University Secretary before November 28th 2017, in order that it may be raised at the University Council Open Forum on December 6th 2017:

“To the Office of the Secretary, for discussion at the University Council Open Forum,

In the current *Academic Rules for PhDs and Research Master's Degrees* there is no official dismissal procedure listed for PhDs and Research Master's Degrees. In comparison to other peer institutions, such as Harvard for example, the University of Pennsylvania has no standardized policy for any of the following:

1. The time and structure of dismissal procedures for graduate students.
2. The precise method for evaluating the legitimacy of a dismissal and establishing the burden of proof.
3. The method for ensuring that a case is heard by an unbiased and independent third-party.
4. The procedure for placing graduate students under probation, or review, and affording them adequate opportunity to return to good standing.
5. The method for ensuring that graduate students, whose financial and legal status is often precarious, have an efficient and effective way of appealing decisions before they suffer loss of funding or visa status.
6. The method for ensuring graduate students are receiving effective advisory support as they progress through their degree.
7. The method for ensuring that students have adequate representation and a forum to offer their side of the story
8. The method for ensuring that students are given regular updates on their standing in the university whenever they are reviewed.

The absence of an official policy prevents graduate students from ascertaining their exact rights, and places them in an extremely precarious position. Each student is placed at the mercy of their individual departments, department chairs, and faculties, and risks remaining unaware of their precarious standing until the very moment they are dismissed from their degree. There is also no impartial system for reviewing cases of dismissal. I would therefore like to ask the University:

1. To call on its committees or working groups to create, with the help, advice, and consent of graduate students, an official Graduate Student Dismissal Procedure to be added to the current *Academic Rules for PhDs and Master's Degrees*.
2. To incorporate within this procedure details which would include but not be limited to: the timeline for dismissals, the definition of the burden of proof, the process for placing students on probation and allowing them to return to good standing, the procedure for conducting effective and timely appeals, and the method for updating students on their current standing.
3. Finally to pledge that a student's financial situation and legal status will not be altered before that student has had the opportunity for the dismissal brought against them to be heard, and for them to appeal it.

Yours sincerely,

NAME"

Also be it RESOLVED that SASgov invite members of the general body to circulate this text among the students of their respective departments, and invite them to submit it to the Office of the University Secretary before November 28th 2017, in order to increase the likelihood of it being raised at the University Council Open Forum on December 6th 2017. And be it

RESOLVED that SASgov should empower the Vice President for Public Affairs to publish summaries of this resolution on the SASgov website, and to advertise it through its social media pages in the weeks leading up to the University Council Open Forum on December 6th 2017. And be it

RESOLVED that SASgov should empower the Vice President for Policy to bring this resolution to the attention of the Research Council of the Graduate And Professional Student Assembly, and Graduate Employees Together - University of Pennsylvania, in order to co-ordinate responses to this issue.