

RESOLUTION 2425-SP-001: BEYOND ‘COMPLIANCE’ - A RESOLUTION ON THE INCLUSION OF (NOT JUST) GRADUATE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Sponsoring Committee: Health, Wellness, and Safety

1 WHEREAS the Council of Graduate Students (CGS) is the representative body of all graduate
2 students enrolled at The Ohio State University as established by Article II Section 1 of the CGS
3 Constitution¹; and
4

5 WHEREAS the Council of Graduate Students or its appointed representative(s) have the power to
6 act as an advisory agent on behalf of graduate students on all matters brought before personnel,
7 committees, or agencies of The Ohio State University involving the interest of graduate students
8 as established in Article III Section 3 of the CGS Constitution²; and
9

10 WHEREAS CGS affirms that the Americans with Disabilities Act (henceforth ADA)
11 Coordinator’s Office, Student Life Disability Services (henceforth SLDS), and Integrated Absence
12 Management and Vocational Services (henceforth IAMVS) administrative offices do vital work
13 and provide a variety of services that the Council values and appreciates; and
14

15 WHEREAS official university policy establishes a deep commitment to and celebration of persons
16 with disabilities, stating:

17 *“The Ohio State University understands that diversity, inclusion, and equity are*
18 *fundamental to achieving its mission. Therefore, the university is committed to building*
19 *and maintaining a community that reflects diversity and improves opportunities **for all***
20 *[emphasis here is CGS’s], including all qualified individuals with disabilities. As part of*
21 *this commitment, policies and procedures will ensure that persons with disabilities are not*
22 *subjected to discrimination or denied full and equal access to programs offered by the*
23 *university based on their disability. The university will ensure that persons with disabilities*
24 *are provided with reasonable accommodations. This commitment is an expectation of our*
25 *university’s shared values consistent with an intellectual community that celebrates*
26 *individual differences and diversity, and a matter of law”³; and*
27

28 WHEREAS official university policy defines a “reasonable accommodation” as:

¹ <https://cgs.osu.edu/about-us/governing-documents/cgs-constitution>

² <https://cgs.osu.edu/about-us/governing-documents/cgs-constitution>

³ <https://policies.osu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/09/Policy-Access-Individuals-Disabilities.pdf>

29 *“A modification to policy, practice, the environment, or the provision of an auxiliary aid*
30 *and service that mitigates the impact of the disability and does not cause a fundamental*
31 *alteration”*⁴; and

32
33 WHEREAS these aforementioned offices are currently constrained to a compliance approach⁵ (as
34 opposed to a more proactive approach) as set by the ADA of 1990⁶ and currently enforced
35 university policy⁷ stated above; and

36
37 WHEREAS graduate students have consistently made confidential reports about their medical
38 conditions to CGS concerning time-consuming and highly stressful difficulties obtaining said
39 “reasonable accommodations” at multiple levels of university organization (e.g., departmental,
40 college-level, university-level); and

41
42 WHEREAS Graduate Associates (Graduate Teaching Associates, Graduate Research Associates,
43 and Graduate Administrative Associates) have no specific office or staff member equipped with
44 the general resources and particular expertise and focus necessary to support the complex roles of
45 graduate students with disabilities; and

46
47 WHEREAS this includes situations unique to graduate students with disabilities (both disclosed
48 and undisclosed) such as advising and addressing cases of discrimination based on disability,
49 program requirements and timelines that create headwinds to the accommodation process, resisting
50 accommodations in program-specific research spaces, university-funded/sponsored and/or
51 program-required/recommended international travel, and difficulties obtaining accommodations
52 in graduate students’ roles as educators, as well as mediation in fulfillment of these access needs
53 due to the unique complexities of graduate students’ multiple intersecting and related roles as
54 simultaneous students and employees (faculty, staff, researcher); and

55
56 WHEREAS graduate students with conflicts like those aforementioned ones often either avoid
57 seeking resolution because of the excessive burden of navigating OSU resources or contact either
58 the ADA Coordinator’s Office, SLDS, and/or IAMVS for assistance, none of which are
59 specifically charged with and equipped to assist graduate students in these unique aforementioned
60 accommodations; and

61
62 WHEREAS the ADA Coordinator’s Office is charged with overseeing and implementing
63 accessibility guidelines as legally mandated by the ADA within its jurisdiction of university
64 programs, services, and benefits within a 5-mile US territorial limit; and

65
66 WHEREAS many access concerns occur outside of ADA jurisdiction for graduate students
67 specifically, which include (but are not limited to) international travel for university-sponsored
68 conferences, professional development, internships, service/study abroad opportunities⁸, and
69 program-sponsored/required lab/fieldwork; and

⁴ <https://policies.osu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/09/Policy-Access-Individuals-Disabilities.pdf>

⁵ See models of disability: <https://www.disabled-world.com/definitions/disability-models>

⁶ <https://www.ada.gov/law-and-regs/ada/>

⁷ <https://policies.osu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/09/Policy-Access-Individuals-Disabilities.pdf>

⁸ <https://buckiserv.osu.edu/>

70
71 WHEREAS official University campuses also have consistent accessibility issues reported
72 concerning expensive infrastructure updates and maintenance needed on labs, buildings, parking
73 lots, and landscapes, including (but again not limited to) poor sidewalk and ramp conditions (both
74 during inclement weather and outside of inclement weather conditions), broken ADA door push
75 buttons, and lack of family or assisted-use restrooms in existing buildings⁹; and
76

77 WHEREAS the University allocates a limited budget to address the aforementioned access
78 concerns, dispersed among the ADA Coordinator's Office, SLDS, IAMVS, the University's
79 Accommodation Fund, and Facilities Operations and Development, leading to a lack of financial
80 clarity regarding addressments of accessibility issues and the disbursement of relevant funds,
81 raising additional concerns from CGS regarding the funding set aside for Framework 3.0 while
82 many access concerns remain on campus; and
83

84 WHEREAS SLDS defines student accommodations as:

85 *"Designed to eliminate disability-related barriers in the environment and curriculum so*
86 *that [students] have an equal opportunity for success "*¹⁰; and
87

88 WHEREAS SLDS provides students with disabilities:

89 *"Exam accommodations, notetaking support, attendance modifications, assistive*
90 *technology, accessible media, sign language interpreting/transcribing, consultation and*
91 *advocacy, housing/dining accommodations, disability parking/adaptive transportation,*
92 *accessible classroom furniture, adaptive recreation, Assistive Listening Devices, course*
93 *substitutions, reduced course loads, field work accommodations, graduate/professional*
94 *student accommodations (including dissertation, oral defense, thesis, field placements,*
95 *internships, clinicals, comprehensive, qualifying, and candidacy exams), lab assistants,*
96 *priority scheduling, study abroad accommodations, and Student Life accommodations*¹¹ ";
97 and
98

99 WHEREAS the SLDS office is not directly charged with advising graduate students on unique and
100 intersectional non-curricular issues such as navigating advisor, faculty, or staff ignorance of or
101 resistance to providing accommodations to graduate students, which are exacerbated by the power
102 imbalance between graduate students and faculty or staff, program requirements and timelines that
103 are incompatible with access needs such as medical leave, access needs while teaching, access
104 needs during university-funded program-required or recommended international travel for
105 conferences and professional development opportunities that are shorter than study abroad
106 opportunities, and more that directly impact a student's graduate career; and
107

108 WHEREAS SLDS's processes are often complex and time-consuming due to limited staffing and
109 budget constraints on hiring new staff coupled with the legal and logistical realities of collecting
110 and verifying the unique program or curricular requirements on a case-by-case basis in light of a
111 graduate student's disability and documentation; and
112

⁹<https://cgs.osu.edu/documents/resolution-2324-sp-001-final.pdf>

¹⁰<https://slds.osu.edu/what-we-do/student-accommodations>

¹¹<https://slds.osu.edu/what-we-do/student-accommodations>

WHEREAS IAMVS defines “workplace accommodations” as:

*“A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a position, an employment practice, or the work environment that makes it possible for a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of the position”*¹²; and

WHEREAS CGS acknowledges that there exists a natural tension at times between the policies governing accommodations and processes for the interlinked “student” and “employee” roles that Graduate Associates (Graduate Teaching Associates, Graduate Research Associates, and Graduate Administrative Associates) occupy simultaneously; and,

WHEREAS IAMVS manages services such as Family and Medical Leave Administration (FMLA), disability benefits, and certain workplace accommodations (including coordination of return-to-work and remain-at-work), graduate students at the university are denied access to these services because graduate students are classified primarily as “funded graduate students” (which are typically 25% or 50% “full-time employment” FTE), and not fully-fledged employees (100% FTE) as faculty and staff are¹³; and

WHEREAS there exists no current graduate school defined formal leave policy for graduate students that would accommodate shorter-term medical procedures/testing/surgeries, mental health treatment, bereavement or other family-related leave, etc; and

WHEREAS “each department or school may make its own rules relative to occasional absences by students from scheduled activities”¹⁴, graduate students need a clearly defined mechanism for obtaining mental health absences/leave as reports of advisors denying mental health absences from coursework and lab work continue to be received by CGS; and

WHEREAS some emergency funding technically exists to help accommodate graduate students, (e.g., the Mental Health Care Grant¹⁵) these emergency funds are often reimbursement-based, require the student to be actively receiving mental health care support, and in good academic standing despite mental health needs oftentimes directly impacting academic performance (especially in cases of hospitalization); and

WHEREAS additionally, on-campus mental health care is difficult to obtain due to graduate students’ demanding schedules as students, faculty, and researchers (who frequently travel outside the state of Ohio, meaning they cannot receive care based from the state of Ohio while outside its borders), Counseling and Consultation Services (henceforth CCS) has limited graduate student-specific resources and group counseling opportunities beyond brief, short-term, solution-focused therapy¹⁶, and off-campus mental health care is time-consuming and costly (often with limited

¹² <https://hr.osu.edu/services/disability-benefits-leave-services/workplace-accommodations/>

¹³ <https://gradsch.osu.edu/all/graduate-school-handbook-gsh#book-section-20>

¹⁴ <https://trustees.osu.edu/bylaws-and-rules/3335-9>

¹⁵ <https://advocacy.osu.edu/emergency-financial-assistance/mental-health-care-grant>

¹⁶ <https://ccs.osu.edu/supporting-your-student/community-providers-and-partners>

availability among providers covered by Ohio State Student Health Insurance¹⁷, and therefore frequently inaccessible to graduate students); and

WHEREAS the ADA Coordinator's Office,

"Conducts ADA training and technical assistance workshops for OSU units upon request¹⁸ ",

and in much the same way SLDS,

"Provides trainings upon request that offer different types of presentations regarding an overview of their services, creating access for students across campus, and disability rights, and disability as an aspect of diversity¹⁹ "

And, again, in much the same way IAMVS,

"Provides training regarding disability etiquette, workplace accommodations, workers' compensation, Family and Medical Leave Act, and short and long-term disability benefits upon request²⁰ "; and

WHEREAS none of these aforementioned trainings are required for all faculty, especially faculty employing or advising graduate students with disclosed disabilities, resulting in frequent confusion, mishandling of individual cases, and miscommunication and misinformation about students with disabilities and their rights and legal entitlement/required access to "reasonable accommodations" based on their verified disabilities; and

WHEREAS the publicly available and current adopted version of The Ohio State University's Shared Values dictate that -

"Together, we work toward creative, collaborative solutions, intentionally foster a sense of belonging where all are valued, acknowledge and address individual and systemic effects of bias and discrimination, are compassionate and meet people where they are, support each other's physical and mental health, and nurture a community of kindness and gratitude"²¹ ; and

FINALLY, WHEREAS every semester graduate students from across the University report to CGS having undergone physical, emotional, and mental health hardships due to a lack of a clear path to receiving accommodations that fully encapsulate their dual student and employee statuses and their specific nuances, coupled with the lack of clear and explicitly defined processes and meaningful repercussions/consequences for those (student, faculty, staff) who violate the above Shared Values by refusing to acknowledge and honor graduate students' legally protected rights to obtain relevant and appropriate accommodations.

¹⁷ <https://ccs.osu.edu/cpd/>

¹⁸ <https://ada.osu.edu/resources/faq>

¹⁹ <https://ada.osu.edu/resources/faq>

²⁰ <https://ada.osu.edu/resources/faq>

²¹ <https://www.osu.edu/shared-values>

188 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CGS believes that The Ohio State University should update
189 the charges of the ADA Coordinator's Office and SLDS to ensure that they oversee the full extent
190 of all accommodations of graduate students with disabilities (both disclosed and undisclosed), both
191 including the aforementioned cases (advisor abuse and discrimination based on disability, program
192 requirements and timelines, obtaining accommodations in inaccessible research spaces, university-
193 funded program-required or recommended international travel accommodations, teaching
194 responsibilities and access conflicts, and mediation in obtaining these needs) and additionally those
195 that might arise from new graduate learning, teaching, research, and other program-specific duties
196 across the entire university.

197
198 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that after extensive discussion beginning in Academic Year 23 -
199 24 with a variety of stakeholders from faculty, staff, students, and administration, CGS believes
200 that to mitigate the workload of such an effort, with the oversight from the ADA Coordinator's
201 Office and SLDS, the Graduate School should hire a dedicated graduate student-specific
202 accommodations position by the start of academic year 2026-27. Once this role has been filled,
203 each College, the ADA Coordinator's Office, SLDS, and IAMVS should identify local contacts
204 and liaisons in coordination to ensure all graduate student accommodations across the full
205 constellation of program, college, and field requirements are met. The Graduate School position
206 should be effectively communicated as soon as it is in place to all graduate students via the
207 Graduate School's communications and CGS's newsletter. This position should be mandated to
208 complete training provided by the ADA Coordinator's Office, SLDS, and IAMVS to succeed in
209 this role. Additionally, they should be mandated to complete annual studies of each unit under
210 their purview's accommodation needs/concerns in close collaboration with the Center for the
211 Study of Student Line (CSSL) and the CGS Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee (in addition
212 USG and IPC's counterparts to CGS HWS, should they wish to be included), and report all findings
213 to the ADA Coordinator's Office and SLDS for resolution. After a period of two years, the
214 Graduate School should consider hiring additional staff in this role, should this position need
215 additional staffing.

216
217 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University should disclose a listing of their expenditures
218 on aforementioned campus accessibility issues on a yearly basis to all student governments, the
219 ADA Coordinator's Office, SLDS, and IAMVS so they can provide feedback on the budget
220 allocations to address these concerns. Furthermore, to address these issues quickly so as to
221 continue the University's Mission²², the University should prioritize accessibility through the
222 allocation of a well-defined budget to address aforementioned accessibility issues (expensive
223 infrastructural updates on labs, buildings, parking lots, and landscapes, including (but not limited
224 to) poor sidewalk/ramp conditions, broken ADA door push buttons, and lack of family or assisted-
225 use restroom in existing buildings) such as a fixed barrier-removal budget, or a percentage of all
226 construction, renovation, and facilities maintenance budgets, independent of Framework 3.0 (these
227 are examples, and not necessarily explicit prescriptions at this time).

228
229 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a formal leave of absence policy for graduate students should
230 be implemented via the Graduate School that includes medical leave, mental health treatment,

²² <https://oaa.osu.edu/vision-mission-values>

bereavement, other family-related leave, and extended leaves of absence. Additionally, this leave policy should include Student Health Insurance Plan coverage for at least five months during the leave period to ensure both domestic and international students receive health insurance coverage during this timeframe.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, if the university truly values OSU graduate students' mental health and aims to "*support healthy community engagement and resolve the abundance of loneliness on campus*"²³, the University should provide mental health emergency funding for graduate students that is not reimbursement-based (as again this can prevent graduate students from being able to seek emergency care due to lack of up-front funds), tied to good academic standing, and currently receiving mental health care support due to aforementioned reasons pertaining to cost, time, travel restrictions, and lack of adequate graduate student resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University should express its commitment, both in written and oral forms, to the implementation of prevention practices and policies with regards to advisor and academic program abuse and discrimination based on disability, which includes but is not limited to resisting accommodations, creating headwinds to the accommodation process through program-specific policies, or bias associated with disability. CGS believes that the anticipated short- and long-term results will improve both morale and mental health within the graduate student population at Ohio State. CGS recommends the ADA Coordinator's Office, SLDS, IAMVS, and CGS work together to initiate a required, annual training for all faculty, staff, and graduate students on "reasonable accommodations" and the development of cultural competencies of the disability community, including the adoption of non-ableist attitudes when collaborating and communicating with graduate students with disabilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that after the implementation of mandated accessibility training, faculty or staff found denying "reasonable accommodations" as outlined by university policy should face repercussions as outlined in the Faculty Rules/Code of Conduct, with possible P-status or M-status revokement for tenured faculty.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the University's definition of "reasonable accommodation" should be updated to state the following to ensure all units are abiding by the University's Shared Values²⁴:

"A modification to policy, practice, the environment, or the provision of an auxiliary aid and service that ensures (to the best of its capabilities) equitable participation for students with disabilities by accommodating their access needs and including the student in the decision-making process of whether or not a fundamental alteration will be caused"

²³ <https://senate.osu.edu/senate-meeting-september-19-2024>

²⁴ <https://www.osu.edu/shared-values>

269 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Council of Graduate Students directs its President to
 270 distribute this resolution and express both its letter and spirit to all relevant and proper leadership
 271 and authorities of The Ohio State University and its partners including but not limited to the Dean
 272 of the Graduate School, the SVP of Student Life, The University Senate, The ADA's Office,
 273 SLDS, and IAMVS.

Date of Vote: January 10th, 2025

Yea Votes: 55

Nay Votes: 0

Abstentions: 0

Adopted: Yes/No



Sabrina Durso, President

Resolution 2425-SP-001 Voting Results

Voting Member Name	Voting Member Position	Official Vote
Mimi Adjei.39	Delegate (Educational Studies & Technologies)	YAY
Katelyn Amstutz.87	Delegate (Molecular, Cellular, & Developmental Biology – MCDB)	YAY
Brittany MulterHopkins.1	Delegate (Environment & Natural Resources) & Chair (Sustainability & Environmental Responsibility Committee)	YAY
Reilly McDowell.310	Delegate (Physics & Chemical Physics)	YAY
Johnathan Chisam.1	Delegate (Chemistry & Biochemistry)	YAY
Blue Lerner.111	Delegate (Communication)	YAY
Alyssa Allen.2334	Delegate (Linguistics)	YAY
Christopher Leger.21	Delegate (History)	YAY
Deanna Holroyd.12	Delegate (Comparative Studies)	YAY
Vaasavi Unnava.4	Delegate (Economics)	YAY
Tinu Oduloye.1	Delegate (Psychology)	YAY
Adam Tjoelker.4	Delegate (Geography & Atmospheric Sciences)	YAY
Veeramani Karuppuchamy.1	Delegate (Food Science & Technology)	YAY
Mia Kordowski.1	Delegate (Biophysics)	YAY
Gabriela Trigo-McIntyre.1	Delegate (Theatre)	YAY

Vignesh Karunakaran.10	Delegate (Material Science & Welding Engineering)	YAY
Alan Nair.155	Delegate (Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program - BSGP)	YAY
Kaveri Sarkar.115	Delegate (Political Science)	YAY
Michaela Rogers.1843	Delegate (Evolution, Ecology, & Organismal Biology – EEOB)	YAY
Abbi Houser.273	Delegate (Chemistry & Biochemistry)	YAY
Ashutosh Soni.117	Delegate (Electrical & Computer Engineering)	YAY
Aryn Robinson.2283	Delegate (Speech & Hearing Sciences) & Chair (Membership Wellness Committee)	YAY
Deb Pathak.89	Delegate (Astronomy) & CoChair (Health, Wellness, & Safety Committee)	YAY
Charlie Mace.	Delegate (Physics & Chemical Physics)	YAY
Braydon Lazzara.14	Delegate (Health & Rehabilitation Sciences)	YAY
Casey Ortbahn.1	Delegate (Environment & Natural Resources)	YAY
Gianni Giarrano.1	Delegate (Ohio State Biochemistry Program - OSBP)	YAY
Madeline Carrola.1	Delegate (Sociology) & Chair (Government Affairs)	YAY
Joey Oteng.12	Delegate (Educational Studies & Technologies)	YAY
Jake Huryn.5	Delegate (Mathematics)	YAY
Thomas Elton.21	Delegate (Public Health)	YAY
Trevor Lee.9595	Delegate (Classics)	YAY
Connor Griffith.1104	Delegate (Philosophy)	YAY
Corinne Marfori-Nazarea.1	Delegate (Horticulture & Crop Science)	YAY
Nicholas Mauro.60	Delegate (Anthropology)	YAY
Tony Annerino.2	(Material Science & Welding Engineering)	YAY
Peter Carrera.55	Chair (Graduate Student Caucus)	YAY
Patrick Smith.15196	Delegate (Earth & Geosciences)	YAY
Shiddhartha Ramprakash.4	Delegate (Materials Science & Welding Engineering)	YAY

Purva Damale.1	Delegate (Chemistry & Biochemistry)	YAY
Nicholas Booker.200	Delegate (Music) & CoChair (Arts & Culture Committee)	YAY
Holly Engel.210	Delegate (French & Italian) & CoChair (Arts & Culture Committee)	YAY
Prabhjot Singh.1374	Delegate (Environmental Science)	YAY
Kaustubh Kumar.889	Delegate (Wooster & Extension Sites) & Chair (International Student Affairs)	YAY
Anna Zaitseva.1	Delegate (Teaching & Learning)	YAY
Tawanna Williams.8816	Delegate (African American & African Studies)	YAY
Luke Van Niel.5	Delegate (English) & CoChair (Health, Wellness, & Safety Committee)	YAY
Zeynep ArslanOzkaynak.1	Delegate (Teaching & Learning)	YAY
Ryan Huston.185	Delegate (Microbiology)	YAY
Pedro Antonio OrtizRamirez.1	Delegate (Spanish & Portuguese - SPPO)	YAY
Stephanie Almquist.14	Delegate (Food Science & Technology)	YAY
Lauren Levesque.31	Delegate (Molecular Genetics)	YAY
Syed Murtaza Arshad.32	Delegate (Electrical & Computer Engineering) & Chair (Housing & Family Affairs Committee)	YAY
Bikas Shah.2007	Delegate (Animal Sciences)	YAY
Ethan Combs.467	Delegate (Public Affairs)	YAY

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