

**Jacksonville State University Faculty Senate**

**Resolution on Alabama House Bill (HB-12) 2016**

**February 23, 2016**

WHEREAS, Jacksonville State University's Mission "strives to challenge students academically in a responsive environment, meeting students' educational, career and personal goals", and

WHEREAS, Jacksonville State University's Core Values include the "support of intellectual and academic freedom, dialogue, and the free exchange of ideas", and

WHEREAS, a majority of faculty believe that firearms on campus can impede open dialogue, debate, and the free exchange of ideas in a responsive, academic environment devoid of intimidation or coercion, whether actual or perceived, and

WHEREAS, Jacksonville State University Police Department's Mission seeks to "ensure that all faculty, staff, students, and guests are free from criminal, potentially criminal, or otherwise disturbing or threatening behavior that would prevent or discourage a safe and efficient work and study environment", and

WHEREAS, in an effort to provide a safe learning and working environment, Alabama colleges and universities, in conjunction with their respective campus law enforcement agencies, should have the freedom to create, analyze, and implement security strategies best suited to their unique campus environment and culture without dictation from state agencies or legislative bodies unfamiliar with that unique environment, and

WHEREAS, according to Fall 2014 JSU statistics, the average undergraduate student age is 22.9, and

WHEREAS, the age limit to apply for a concealed weapons permit in the State of Alabama is 18, and

WHEREAS, through vast experience in education, it has become known that students within the abovementioned age ranges, with an unknown array of previous life experiences, possess varying levels of maturity, impulse control, decision-making skills, and firearms training required to effectively carry and utilize firearms for personal or public protection, and

WHEREAS, the Alabama House Bill 12 2016 (HB-12) provision stating that “*the president or other chief executive officer of a public institution of higher education shall adopt reasonable rules regarding the carrying of concealed pistols by permit holders on the campus of the institution. The president or officer may not adopt rules that generally prohibit or have the effect of generally prohibiting permit holders from carrying concealed pistols on the campus of the institution*” is vague and open to future and uncertain interpretation, and

WHEREAS, the Alabama House Bill 12 2016 (HB-12) contains a provision that allows “*public or private institutions of higher education to establish rules concerning the storage of pistols in dormitories or other residential facilities*” and while the dormitories at Jacksonville State University are not designed nor contain the proper equipment or staff needed to safely and properly store firearms, and the installation of such storage equipment, needed for the safety of all students, will cause the university to incur significant costs, and thus, in essence, creates an unfunded mandate from the state.

THEREFORE, let it be resolved that the Jacksonville State University Faculty Senate, with an eye to faculty majoritarian sentiment, opposes Alabama House Bill 12 and any other legislation that would preempt a public educational institution's right to prohibit or regulate possession of firearms on campus.

*Suspension to  
M4 + Minni  
Committee  
M4*

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OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

March 16, 2016

University Council  
c/o Dr. Rebecca Turner  
Jacksonville State University  
700 Pelham Road North  
Jacksonville, Alabama 36236

Council Members,

Recently, graduate students spearheaded an effort to propose increases in compensation of graduate assistants and an expansion of graduate student tuition remission to the summer term. The faculty senate endorses this proposal and recommends that it be given serious consideration by the University Council and senior administration.

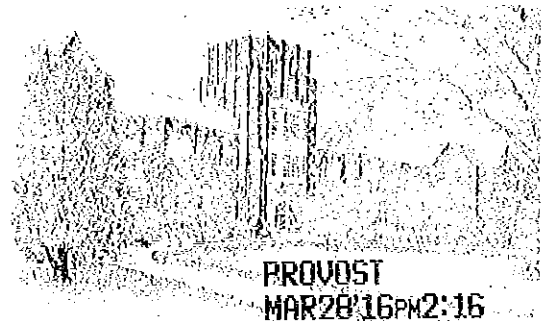
The Jacksonville State University Faculty Senate recommends the consideration of this proposal for the very reasons outlined in their recent document. Increasing the competitiveness of the graduate student compensation will allow enhanced recruitment and retention of graduate students along with a faster time to graduate.

Upon discussion and consideration, this recommendation was voted on and approved by the faculty senate on March 14, 2016 by a senate quorum.

Sincerely,

*Windon Edge DNP, RN*

Windon Edge, DNP, RN  
Faculty Senate President  
Jacksonville State University



## A consideration for the Reevaluation of Graduate Assistantships at Jacksonville State University

For this proposal, careful consideration has been taken for the situation with Graduate Assistants (GAs) at Jacksonville State University (JSU). These efforts stem from concern for the well being of the University, as well as the fair treatment of graduate students at JSU. The current living stipend given to graduate students is not sufficient for the work that is dedicated to the University, or comparable with the compensation given to graduate students of other advanced degree granting universities in the state. The following is proposed: increase the living stipend granted to GAs to \$12,240 a year, and extend tuition remission to summer terms.

This proposal would allow JSU to be competitive at the graduate level with our peer institutions. JSU pays graduate students less than half the amount our peer institutions pay, which draws away prospective students. If JSU increased the living stipend to a competitive level, more students would look to JSU as a serious option and more academic literature and research will be published from the University. Anecdotally, some departments have expressed concern regarding the loss of very qualified graduate students due to the low stipend and tuition remission. A competitive graduate assistantship is a critically important recruitment tool. Also, with a larger stipend and summer tuition remission, graduate students would graduate faster. Thirty-six hours are required for a master's degree. If only six tuition hours are paid in the fall and spring under a GA contract, and the monthly stipend insufficient to pay the cost of living bills, then graduate students must obtain additional employment or student loans to make ends meet. Extending GA contracts to include summer tuition would allow for graduate students to take six consecutive semesters and graduate within two years without needing to take out student loans or bring in outside income. An increase in living stipend would also increase the quality of work from the graduate students. GAs would no longer struggle to pay bills and would be able to focus on coursework, research, and teaching the many students they are responsible for.

### Data: From University websites and Economic Policies Institute

#### Stipend and Tuition Remission from in state M.S. granting universities

- Jacksonville State University: \$520/month and \$2,382 tuition/semester (Spring & Fall)
- University of Alabama in Huntsville: \$1,000/month and \$3,472 tuition/semester (Spring, Fall, and Summer)
- Troy University: \$1,000/month and \$2,382 tuition/semester (Spring, Fall, and Summer)
- University of Alabama in Birmingham: \$1,750/month and \$2,521(+) tuition/semester (Spring, Fall, and Summer) and health insurance
- University of West Alabama: \$864/month and tuition remission is offered based on departmental needs
- University of West Florida: \$840/month and \$1,771/ semester (Spring, Fall, and Summer)

#### Average cost of living for one person in Jacksonville/Anniston AL

- Housing/Rent: \$494/month
- Food: \$271/month
- Transportation: \$200/month
- Health Insurance: \$256/month
- Necessities: \$369/month
- **Total without taxes: \$1,590/month**

**Whereas** the administrators, faculty, and staff of JSU have committed, through mutually agreed upon Core Values and Strategies ([http://www.jsu.edu/president/vision\\_mission.html](http://www.jsu.edu/president/vision_mission.html)), to provide “quality teaching” and “recruit and retain” qualified undergraduate and graduate students, and

**Whereas** these commitments require excellent teaching at all levels, and

**Whereas** graduate students, adjuncts, and instructors teach large numbers of undergraduates and are often the first teachers that incoming students encounter at JSU, and

**Whereas** graduate students, adjuncts, and instructors, like any other professionals, require the investment of time and money to help them develop their skills, and

**Whereas** such investment contributes to the greater good of our university community, including its financial health, through the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel, and

**Whereas** the recruitment and retention of qualified graduate students, adjuncts, and instructors requires that JSU respond to current market conditions and offer compensation and benefits competitive with other institutions of similar size, and

**Whereas** information has recently been presented to the University Council demonstrating that the compensation and benefits budgeted for graduate students is not competitive, and

**Whereas** anecdotal evidence suggests that adjunct pay is similarly noncompetitive with like-sized institutions, and

**Whereas** instructors are currently ineligible to receive University Travel and Self-Improvement Grants to support their professional development,

**Therefore**, the Faculty Senate recommends that the following three items be considered in the budgeting process, subject to the following restriction: That the three items that follow are strictly conditioned upon improved university funding that does not come at the expense of the next faculty pay increase or the reduction of departmental administrative budgets.

**Item 1: That** the living stipend be raised, and tuition remission be extended to summer terms, for Graduate Assistants;

**Item 2: That** adjunct pay and benefits be raised to a level competitive with other like-sized regional public universities in the Southeast;

**Item 3: That** eligibility for the University Travel and Self-Improvement Grant program be extended to Distinguished Lecturers, and that eligibility also be extended to faculty with a minimum of seven years at the rank of Instructor who have demonstrated in the objectives of their most recent Faculty Annual Review their commitment to accrue the instructional, scholarly, and service accomplishments to advance to the rank of Distinguished Lecturer within the next five years.

**Expression of Confidence in the Analysis by Dr. David G. Bronner Supporting the Continuation of the RSA Defined Benefit Pension Plan and Opposing Its Conversion to a Cash Balance Plan**

Whereas the Alabama Legislature's Joint Committee on Public Pensions (JCPP) voted on March 16, 2016, to endorse replacing the Retirement Systems of Alabama's Tier II *defined benefit* pension plan with a *cash balance* plan, and

Whereas Dr. David G. Bronner, CEO of Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA), opposes this change for reasons enumerated on the website of the RSA (<http://www.rsa-al.gov>),

The Faculty Senate of Jacksonville State University hereby expresses its confidence in Dr. Bronner's leadership of the RSA, supports retaining the defined benefit pension plan and opposes the endorsement by the JCPP of a cash balance pension plan, and

The Faculty Senate further encourages all Jacksonville State University employees whose retirement would be affected by this change to investigate the pros and cons of such a decision and make their opinions known to the members of the JCPP and to their state legislators.