

Delores G. Kelley, Chair  
Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

SB 521  
Supporting

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Finance Committee,

As a graduate student at UMD, I am expected to work, research, and write full time; however, I earn far below a livable wage in the DMV area. Not only are graduate students massively underpaid, but we are also often dependent upon outside work, competitive fellowships, and outside funding just to afford basic living expenses. These additional jobs take away from our ability to do our best and most effective work at UMD - from teaching to researching.

Graduate students are treated as staff when it's financially expedient and we are treated as students when it can save time and hassle. For example, Prince George's County claims anyone working in higher ed in the county is eligible for the covid vaccine in phase 1b; however, when graduate students (who teach undergraduates) arrived for their vaccine, they were denied because they aren't "faculty," they're "students." This is just one example of how graduate students' status is dependent on what's most convenient for the University.

As graduate students, we deserve to advocate for our rights - not to have an administrator far removed from the trials of graduate school decide what's best for us. Graduate students deserve to have the agency to make these choices for ourselves.

Sincerely,

Alexis Walston  
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