RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE UNIONIZATION OF UNM’S GRADUATE WORKERS

WHEREAS, the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) is the recognized student government body representing graduate and professional students at the University of New Mexico (UNM), with a mission to enhance the academic environment for the graduate and professional students at UNM and to “promote the rights, interests and professional development of graduate and professional students within the university community, through advocacy, education, and financial support”;

WHEREAS, the University of New Mexico is a Carnegie Tier I Research Institution1 that depends on the work of its numerous graduate assistants (GAs), teaching assistants (TAs), research assistants (RAs), and project assistants (PAs), who are integral to the University’s core mission as a center for education and research;

WHEREAS, the New Mexico Public Employee Bargaining Act (PEBA)2 guarantees the right of all public sector employees in the state to organize a union and bargain collectively for improvements in working conditions and compensation, free from coercion or restraint by their employer;

WHEREAS, the United Graduate Workers of UNM emerged from a collective grassroots of graduate workers across all schools and colleges at UNM, working together toward the goal of establishing a labor union to protect the rights of UNM’s graduate workers as public sector employees, including the right to collectively bargain for improvements in compensation and working conditions;

WHEREAS, the wages, benefits, and working conditions of graduate workers at UNM are of material importance to the ability of graduate and professional students to access a high-quality education, maintain good standing in their graduate programs, and complete their degrees in a reasonable timeframe;

WHEREAS, the estimated costs of attendance at UNM for graduate and professional students are no less than $23,8053 and these costs have been steadily increasing over the years, while the minimum stipend for graduate workers is $14,058.534, which has not increased in tandem with the costs of attendance and is calculated for a 10-month contract that is not guaranteed to the vast majority of UNM’s graduate workers;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that GPSA stands in solidarity with and supports the efforts of graduate workers at UNM to form a labor union (United Graduate Workers of UNM) and bargain collectively with our employer;

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that GPSA commits to supporting the graduate worker unionization effort at UNM, by (1) formally announcing via the GPSA listserv that GPSA endorses unionization and stands in solidarity with the efforts of the United Graduate Workers of UNM via separate special announcements as neccessary, (2) disseminating emails and marketing content to include at least a direct in-line link to the digital union card and messages from UGW to students across departments as part of GPSAs weekly email announcements and until the end of the Fall 2020 semester conditional on majority of cards being reached and until the end of Spring 2021 otherwise, (3) prominently posting a permanent link to the digital union card, the letter of support, and the resolution on the GPSA’s website’s main landing page, and (4) inviting and encouraging GPSA members to attend events organized by the United Graduate Workers of UNM.

1 Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (2018). The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2018 edition, Bloomington, IN: Author.

2 https://www.pelrb.state.nm.us/statute.php

3 Costs for AY2020-2021, as estimated by UNM: https://financialaid.unm.edu/coa/20-21/index.html

4 https://grad.unm.edu/funding/assistantships.html