

To The Campus Community:

The Graduate Student Advisory Council supports both faculty and graduate students at Eastern Illinois University. In response to the current debate regarding graduate students teaching courses in their various forms at EIU, we are stating the following positions:

We support graduate students who are currently or will be Teaching Assistants at EIU in those departments that have chosen or will choose to implement such programs. We also support the faculty and the protection of their positions. It is not necessary to eliminate faculty positions, especially tenure positions, in order to have TA positions available for graduate students; however, we favor and support a healthy collaboration between faculty and TAs for the benefit of both parties and the undergraduate student population they have an educational responsibility for.

We support departmental governance and the right of each program to decide for themselves whether they will include Teaching Assistants, in what form they will be used, and the type of teaching instruction provided for those TAs. We believe that training should be administered for Teaching Assistants to further enhance their classroom instructional skills, but that it is the right and responsibility of each Department to decide precisely what that orientation will entail. We do not support a Department's efforts to make policies for other programs out of respect for each Department's right to self-governance. In any instance where a break down of proper departmental governance has occurred, we respect the faculty's right to appeal to a higher source for intervention within their Department, but not at the inclusion of other Departments at this University that was not originally part of the concern at hand. Each program is unique, their needs are specialized, and thus we feel it is an unwise course to pursue a generalized campus-wide position on whether EIU should allow Teaching Assistants. This has been a decision left to each Department and we support its continuation as such.

Because a growing number of students wish to pursue doctoral studies, classroom and lab experience is necessary. This has been a growing trend and is becoming policy at more and more Universities, especially those with a focus on research. In order to provide the most opportunities for its post graduate students, EIU's graduate programs will find themselves addressing the question of implementing a Teaching Assistant element. Out of consideration for the undergraduate population, courses and labs taught by a Teaching Assistant should be specified on the Banner System for Course Registration. We as the Graduate Student Advisory Council support and endorse the provisions provided by President Perry concerning supervised graduate teaching assistants at EIU. By supporting Teaching Assistants, we are supporting EIU as a First Choice University and its efforts to provide a competitive edge to its graduate student population.

Graduate Student Advisory Council, November 28, 2007.