

**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
SACUA Resolution 011812-1**

**GSRA Letter to President Coleman**

(Approved Electronically by SACUA  
on January 18, 2012 – 8 for, 1 abstention)

We on SACUA, who are active faculty members from many different academic fields, in our roles as researchers and teachers, concur entirely with University of Michigan President Mary Sue Coleman's statement to the Regents of the University in our firm conviction that graduate students in their role as research assistants/associates are fully engaged academics in training and are students and not employees.

We further believe that the fundamental essence of a university as a bastion of both field-dependent and interdisciplinary study and research depends on this premise.

Our graduate students are scientists, engineers, economists, musicians, artists, architects, urban planners, policy makers, epidemiologists, classicists, mathematicians, linguists, historians, kinesiologists, philosophers and full participants in myriad fields IN TRAINING and highly valued members of research teams.

They are working on their own dissertation projects—making their unique contributions to the solution of over-reaching problems in which they and their colleagues are engaged in their disciplines.

Because they are involved as GSRA's in their dissertation research, they are engaged as full academic partners in knowledge-building who are in training. We support President Coleman's statement:

“I know I speak for Provost Hanlon as well when I express my concern about characterizing our research assistants as university employees. We believe it could fundamentally alter the relationship between faculty and graduate students. Decisions about who a student studies with must remain with the two people who care most about the outcome — the student and his or her mentor. At highly competitive research institutions such as Michigan, students seek out faculty based on specialized research that aligns with their interests, and they choose the institution based on that particular faculty member.”