A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ARKANSAS INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2015-139: ON THE IMPACT OF STUDENT DEBT IN ARKANSAS

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Interim Study Proposal (“ISP”) 2015-139 instructs the Arkansas Legislative Council and the Higher Education Subcommittee of the Arkansas Legislative Council to conduct a study of “student debt from higher education, including the amount of student debt, the impact of student debt on graduates, and possible solutions to reducing the student debt burden.”

Representative Greg Leding of District 86, who represents the area of Fayetteville including and surrounding the University of Arkansas, authored the study proposal. It describes the escalating problem of student debt nationwide, and specifically in Arkansas. The full text of ISP 2015-139 is included as in appendix.

According to The Institute for College Access and Success (“ICAS”), the average debt of a University of Arkansas student in 2013, the most current year for which data is available, is $25,838. This figure is greater than the state average of $25,375. According to the same source, 47% of graduates incurred student debt in 2013. These numbers, however, reflect the burden of debt to obtain a bachelor’s degree. Public data describing the burden of graduate student debt are unavailable at the time of this resolution.

While ISP 2015-139 does not specifically address graduate student debt, it is clear that more data is needed to describe the issue at large in Arkansas. Also, solutions resulting from this research can potentially benefit graduate students and any potential debt they may incur during their studies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GRADUATE STUDENT CONGRESS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, FAYETTEVILLE,

Supports Representative Leding in the pursuit of Interim Study Proposal 2015-139.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

That GSC encourages the inclusion of graduate student debt in these conversations regarding the impact of student debt in Arkansas. As such, Graduate Student Congress will help raise awareness of ISP 2015-139 by hosting a campus event in collaboration with Rep. Leding to take place in fall 2015, and through other reasonable means as they arise.
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Amendments: ________________________________

Vote Count:  Aye _______  Nay _______  Abstentions _______

Legislation Status:  Passed _____  Failed ______  Other ___________

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Scout Johnson, ASG GSC Speaker  Date

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Tanner Bone, ASG President  Date