



GRADUATE
STUDENT LEGAL AID

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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GLAO's mission is to advise the University's diverse graduate student population of their legal rights in culturally competent, compassionate, and supportive setting.





A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

GLAO is in a very different place than we were one year ago, but we have successfully transitioned to a virtual office and are providing remote legal and advocacy consultations as well as online workshops. Though the timeline for returning to normal is unknown, we are now better equipped to meet students where they are and ensure their ability to focus on achieving academic success.

Sincerely,
William Zachariah Mundy
Director

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GLAO

GRADUATE STUDENT LEGAL AID OFFICE

WHY WE ARE HERE

We are here to help.

Each of the nearly 11,000 students enrolled in the University's 230 graduate programs attends the University of Maryland with a goal in mind. Whether it is to conduct groundbreaking research, advance their career, or satisfy their intellectual curiosity, we are here to help students focus on their goals and not be sidetracked when life gets in the way.

We are here to prevent and resolve legal problems (and reduce the associated stress) that confront graduate students by through education and by providing confidential legal counseling and assistance. Our mission is to advise the University's diverse graduate student population of their legal rights in culturally competent, compassionate, and supportive setting to allow graduate to do what they are here to do, focus on their academic pursuits

WHAT WE DO

200+ Legal Consultations

75+ University Charge Consultations

500+ Gradulting Workshop Attendees

3000+ Students Reached at Orientations

WHO WE ARE



WILLIAM ZACHARIAH MUNDY, ESQ.

Director & Attorney

DEBBIE MIKUTSKY

Coordinator of Programs & Services



TARA JOHNSTON

Graduate Student Advocate

Ph.D. Student, Education

SIMONE DURHAM

Graduate Student Advocate

Ph.D. Student, Sociology





"The attorney listened to my problem, understood the issue and provided effective suggestions. The issue got resolved following the attorney's guidelines. Thank you!"

HOW WE HELP

Legal Assistance

The primary focus of our office is to provide professional and confidential legal assistance to help graduate students navigate the US legal system and resolve their disputes. Students can schedule one-on-one consultations with our Director William Zachariah Mundy for advice on a number of legal topics, including: Contracts, Consumer Protection, Landlord & Tenant, Automobile Accidents, Traffic Citations, Domestic Violence & Harassment, Criminal Misdemeanors, Family Law and Divorce, Employment, and Insurance.

Immigration Consultations

In response to the needs of the University's large international graduate student population and the ever-changing nature of immigration law, we offer free consultations throughout the fall and spring semesters with an experienced immigration attorney to help meet student's critical legal needs.

University Charge Advocacy

Our Student Advocates, Tara Johnston and Simone Durham, help graduate students charged by the University's Office of Student Conduct (OSC) with a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity or the Code of Conduct. Student Advocate's help their fellow graduate students navigate the OSC process by providing advice and resources, helping students understand and evaluate their options, and acting as a representative for the students at interviews, conferences, and hearings.

Education & Outreach

We make significant efforts to reach students from every program across campus at orientations and with our programming throughout the academic year. Our Gradulting Workshop Series, coordinated by Debbie Mikutsky, offers twenty weekly workshops with experts from the community on a variety of topics important to graduate students, including: Immigration Law, Taxes, Employment Contracts, Investing, and Renter's Rights. We also maintain an extensive resource list on our website of on-campus offices, government agencies, and community-based organizations.

Notary Services

GLAO's Coordinator Debbie Mikutsky provides graduate students free notary services for both personal and education-related documents.

GLAO BY THE NUMBERS

Consultations

In FY20, we had 55 respondents to our survey who received legal consultations. Two of our questions are, “I found GLAO to be helpful to my situation” and “I understand what my next step is in resolving my issue.” In both circumstances, only 1 out of 55 (1.8%) of respondents indicated they disagreed. Similarly, 54 out of 55 students (98.2%) reported having a moderate or complete understanding of their legal situation after their appointment compared to 21 out of 55 (38.1%) prior to the appointment.

98%

The percent of students who reported understanding their legal rights after their consultation.

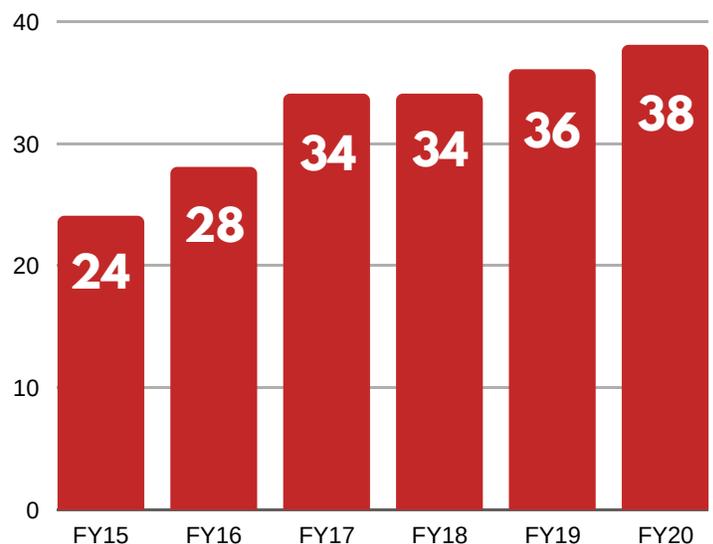
Graduating Workshop Series

97%

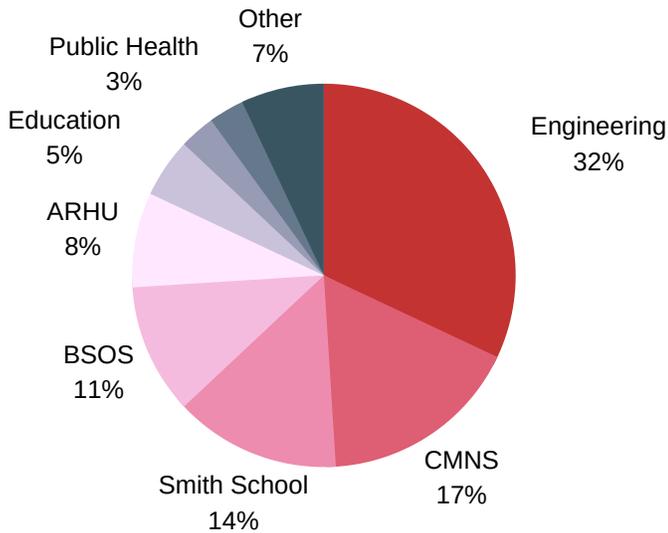
The percent of students who rated Graduating Workshops useful or extremely useful.

For our Graduating Workshops, 285 out of 295 (96.6%) respondents found the information presented in the workshops useful or extremely useful and 95% of respondents indicated "engagement and interest" in the presentation. Out of all of our respondents, only six (2.0%) disagreed with the statement, “My behavior will change as a result of the workshop.”

Average Attendance



Students come to GLAO from across campus...

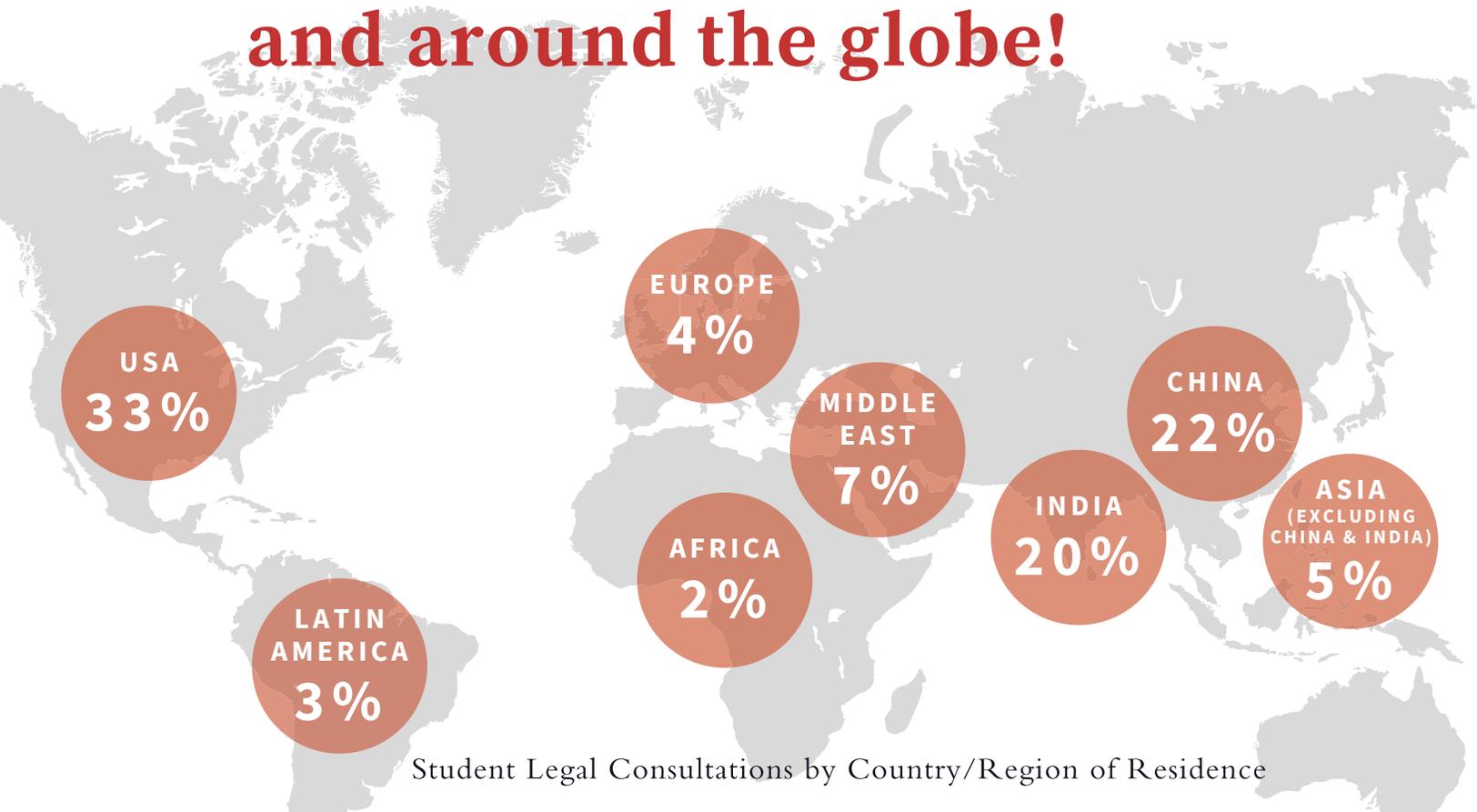


Student Legal Consultations by Academic College

CONSULTATION BREAKDOWN

- 35% Tenant/Landlord
- 13% Academic Integrity
- 9% Traffic Citations
- 7% Contract Review
- 6% Car Accidents
- 5% Consumer issues
- 3% Family Law
- 3% Scams & ID Theft

and around the globe!



Student Legal Consultations by Country/Region of Residence

FY2020 GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OUTREACH & MARKETING

- **Coordinate a new collaborative approach to the graduate student orientation process with GSG and Grad Student Life.**
 - GLAO led a team effort to connect with students at orientations across campus. As a package deal with the "3G Network," GLAO expanded participation for all three offices and reached 3,546 students on campus through presentations, tabling, and providing resources.

FY20 vs. FY19

94% Increase in Orientation Events Attended
1,300 Additional Students Reached

- **Create a new website to accommodate Stamp IT's transition off of the OrgSync platform, which previously hosted our website.**
 - With the assistance of Stamp IT, we successfully redesigned our website to transition to a new platform in the summer of 2019, just in time for the start of the fall semester. Throughout the year, we added new content and features to make it more accessible and visually appealing.
- **Expand GLAO's outreach programs to connect with students in their academic departments in the spring semester.**
 - To connect with students in the spring semester as well as market the Gradulding Workshop Series and our social media, we organized two Free Coffee Pop-Ups during the first week of classes in the lobby of the Kim Building & the Smith School's Van Munching Hall.
- **Increase the use of social media to raise awareness of GLAO's services and to connect with the UMD graduate student community.**
 - During the spring and fall semesters, we posted announcements twice a week on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. New this year, we worked with Stamp Marketing to develop marketing campaigns specifically for social media, like the one you see here.





GRADULTING WORKSHOP SERIES

- **Record at least one Gradulting workshop to post on the website.**
 - In FY2020, two workshops were recorded, posted on GLAO’s website, and YouTube page: "COVID-19 & Your Lease" and "How do I Create a Business Plan for my Startup?" GLAO also coordinated with The Graduate School and TerpTax to have two international and domestic student tax workshops recorded in February, which are hosted on The Graduate School’s website.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OUTSIDE OF FY20 STATED GOALS

- *Redesigning our Marketing Campaigns*
 - The Gradulting Workshop Series provides a platform for GLAO to proactively advise students of their legal rights but also to connect with students and inform them of our other services. To capitalize on this opportunity, we worked with Stamp Marketing to redesign Gradulting marketing and make it more robust than previous years. A complete campaign was developed to maximize exposure through an eye-catching and consistent message – Adulting is Hard, Gradulting is Easy.
- *Supporting Graduate Student Programs*
 - GLAO staff regularly assist Stamp & GSL’s events including fall Kickoff and sponsoring study breaks (with pizza!) each semester in the GSL lounge.
- *Staying Connected*
 - GLAO distributes a weekly newsletter during the fall and spring semesters to over 1,100 students, staff, and offices through its Google Groups listserv. The announcement typically includes information about the upcoming workshop, legal aid and advocacy services as well as announcements from other offices that pertain to graduate students.

ADULTING IS HARD.

GRADULTING IS EASY.

Life doesn't come with instructions. Get some guidance from Gradulting workshops, a series of free one-hour workshops for GradTerps that address common real-world questions. Enjoy expert advice and free food.

Learn more and sign up to attend a Gradulting workshop at gradlegalaid.umd.edu

FALL 2019 GRADULTING WORKSHOP SERIES

September 10, 12:30pm - 1:30pm
Do I need to get a Maryland driver's license?

September 17, 12:30pm - 1:30pm
Things I Wish I Knew: Tales from UMD Grad Students

September 24, 12:30pm - 1:30pm
How do I buy a car and get the best deal?

October 1, 12:30pm - 1:30pm
How do I avoid plagiarizing someone else's work?

October 8, 4:30pm - 5:30pm
How much auto and renters insurance do I need?

October 22, 12:30pm - 1:30pm
Can I claim the intellectual property rights to my work?

October 29, 12:30pm - 1:30pm
How do I get a self-sponsored green card?

November 5, 12:30pm - 1:30pm
How do I build a good credit score?

November 12, 4:30pm - 5:30pm
What type of health insurance plan is best for me?

November 19, 12:30pm - 1:30pm
What should I do if I get stopped by the police?

All Gradulting workshops are held in STAMP. Sessions are free. To learn more and sign up for a Gradulting workshop, visit gradlegalaid.umd.edu

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Staying Connected Our voluntary listserv reaches over 1,100 students, faculty, & departments, and we now have over 350 followers on Instagram & Twitter.

- *Expanding Resources*
 - This year we expanded our the Ask the Attorney articles and introduced an Ask the Advocates feature to convey timely, helpful information to the graduate student community. Over the course of the year, articles covered numerous leasing issues as well as legal developments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ask the Advocates articles provided tips to avoid academic integrity violations & plagiarism, including in the new virtual learning environment.

SERVICES

- **Continue to foster positive working relationships with the Graduate School, ISSS, OSC, Off-Campus Housing Services, and other departments to ensure that students are appropriately supported across departments when necessary.**
 - We continue to build and strengthen relationships with all of the staff and departments across campus. These relationships are key to connecting with students and making students feel comfortable in obtaining our services. Some examples include:
 - We maintain a strong relationship with The Graduate School staff to address student issues such as: taxes, salary negotiations, plagiarism prevention, and more. Dr. Linda Macri and Dr. Susan Martin served as workshop speakers, and we began working with the new Academic Counselor, Simone Warrick-Bell, to coordinate referrals and plan events.
 - We have an active relationship with ISSS staff where we confer with them on a variety of issues, and we are committed to working together to prevent international students from falling through the cracks. ISSS cosponsor our Maryland driver's licenses and immigration related workshops, and we promote each other's events and services in our newsletters.
 - We continue to work with other campus partners including the Engineering School's Career Services Office on an employment contracts workshop and MICA and the LGBT Equity Center on a new workshop on changing your legal name or gender marker.
- **Continue to offer a variety of workshops in terms of topics, speakers, and event time.**
 - Over the course of the school year, GLAO offered 18 workshops with the average attendance of 38 students and total attendance of 678 students.
 - While many of our workshops are offered annually, we always look for opportunities to improve. This year, three new workshops were introduced, including: "Things I Wish I Knew: Tales from UMD Grad Students," "How do I Legally Change my Name or Gender Marker?" and "Buying your First Home."
- **Explore the possible expansion of legal consultations for students in the areas of employment contracts and estate planning.**
 - Unfortunately, our plans to expand specialized consultations in the spring for employment contracts were deprioritized due to the pandemic.

STAFFING

- **Increase professional development opportunities for staff.**
 - GLAO Staff increased our professional development by attending: Student Affairs Conference – February 2020; STAMP Retreat – August 2019 & January 2020; L.E.A.D Retreats – October 2019 & January 2020; Stamp IT Webinars – Throughout the year; & COVID-19 Related Training on transitioning to a virtual office – March & April 2020
- **Evaluate the benefits of re-instating the undergraduate internship program.**
 - When fully staffed, the undergraduate internship program was deemed unnecessary.

NEW GOALS FOR FY2021

In addition to continuing to meet FY2020 goals, GLAO will:

OUTREACH & MARKETING

- Complete and implement a detailed plan to update the website with new features to insure it is user-friendly and expand content to include frequently requested legal resources and new legal developments.
- Develop a more robust social media presence through a campaign that involves sharing weekly updates and tips on a variety of legal topics and integrate social media posts into our website.
- Collaborate with GSG and GSL as well as The Graduate School and academic programs to offer virtual orientations for new students in August 2020 and January 2021.
- Record at least 50% of Graduating Workshops (assuming speaker consent) and incorporate recordings into our website.

SERVICES

- Work with state and local bar associations to establish a robust referral list of law firms, organizations, and attorneys from a variety of practice areas that provide legal representation on matters that commonly confront the graduate student community
- Expand professional development and networking opportunities for staff with a focus on developing relationships with local attorneys and organizations to establish a network of legal service providers willing to assist graduate students on pro bono basis.
- Research and implement best practices for providing virtual legal services, including secure scheduling software, and track legal developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the graduate student community.

STAFFING

- Evaluate the benefits of an undergraduate internship program if required to reduce graduate student employee hours or to offset potential furloughs.

Graduate Student Legal Aid Office											
FY 2021 Revised Budget Proposal	FY2020 Budget		FY2021 Budget		FY2021 Budget		FY2021 Budget		FY2021 Budget		
	GSG Approved		No Reduction		10% Reduction		25% Reduction		25% Reduction v2		
	FY20 Approved Budget	Funding From Spend Down	FY21 Projected Budget	Funding From Spend Down	FY21 Projected Budget	Funding From Spend Down	FY21 Projected Budget	Funding From Spend Down	FY21 Projected Budget	Funding From Spend Down	
Salaries											
Director/Attorney [22 hrs/wk]	72,421		73,145		4	73,145		73,145		65,831	15
Coordinator of Programs & Services [24 hrs/wk]	35,846		36,204		4	36,204		36,204	16,775	32,584	15
Graduate Student Advocates [2 positions @ 10 hrs/wk]	17,500		17,500			15,000	7,600	11	12,750	12,750	
Office Assistant [9 month @ 10 hrs/wk]	5,700	5,700	5,700	5,700		-	-	12	-	-	
Total Salaries	131,467	5,700	132,550	5,700		124,349	7,600		122,099	29,525	
Mandatory Contributions / Contractual Benefits											
FICA / Social Security	8,125										
Unemployment	297										
Health Insurance, Director & Coordinator	24,720										
Retirement, Director & Coordinator	12,004										
Staff Benefits (Fringe Rate of 35.4%)			38,710		5	38,710			38,710		
Student (Fringe Rate of 5.4%)			1,253		5	810			689		
Tuition Remission	-	-	-	-	6	-	-		-	-	
Total Mandatory Contributions/Benefits	45,146	-	39,963	-		39,520	-		39,398	-	
Total Salaries, Contributions and Benefits	176,613		172,512			163,869			161,497	150,562	
Operating Expenses											
Phone & Computer Lines	3,100		3,100			3,100	875		3,100	3,100	
STAMP Contractual Services (IT, Copier, etc.)	2,250	1,750	2,250			2,250	2,250		2,250	2,250	
STAMP Marketing (Design & Printing)	750		750			500	500		500	500	
Office Supplies	1,600	1,600	600			600	600		600	600	
Office Equipment & Furniture	1,000	1,000	375			375	375		375	375	
Professional Development / Office Resources	2,500	2,500	2,500	900		500	500		500	500	
Discretionary	350	350	-	-		-	-		-	-	
Total Operating Expenses	11,550	7,200	9,575	900		7,325	5,100		7,325	7,325	
Programming											
Food Services (Workshops & Events)	4,600	4,600	3,000	3,000	7	3,000	3,000		-	-	
Workshops (Room Rental, Speakers, Parking, etc.)	950	950	1,000	1,000	7	1,000	1,000		-	-	
Marketing (Promotional items, etc.)	1,750	1,750	750	750		750	750		-	-	
Immigration Attorney	5,300	5,300	5,600	5,600	8	5,600	5,600		5,600	5,600	
Specialized Legal Services	1,000	1,000	4,575	4,575	9	4,575	4,575		-	-	
Sponsorships	-	2	-	-		-	-		-	-	
Total Programming	13,600	13,600	14,925	14,925		14,925	14,925		5,600	5,600	
TOTAL	201,763		197,012			186,119			174,422	163,487	
Portion of Budget funded by Student Fees	175,263		175,500			158,500	10		132,000	13	132,000
Portion of Budget funded by Spend Down	26,500		21,512			27,625			42,450		31,450
Notes & Assumptions:											
1 GLAO has revised their initial budget proposal based on discussions with GSG President Annie Rappaport & VP Finance Xu Han.											
2 Funding for sponsorships of external programs was not included in GLAO's FY20 budget to help absorb the costs associated with the coordinator position receiving health insurance benefits without a associated graduate student fee increase.											
3 As of June 1st, the University has not neither formalized budget cuts, salary reductions, or furloughs for FY21 nor announced specific guidance or policies on how to incorporate them in FY21 projected budgets. Though it is very likely there will be a decrease in graduate student enrollment and thus, revenue collected from the graduate student activity fee, the "No Fee Reduction" budget framework represents a <i>status quo</i> budget to provide allow easier comparison to the FY20 budget and to highlight where the potential cuts would occur.											
4 The University revised the projected COLA to a 1% increase from FY20 salaries. GLAO employee salaries would be subject to any University-wide or statewide salary reductions or furloughs shall they be implemented.											
5 In 2020, as part of the Budget Model Redesign project, the University began allocating fringe benefit costs using pooled fringe rates rather than actual expenditures. [Luckily, this saves GLAO money.]											
6 We received confirmation that any tuition remission benefits granted to GLAO director or coordinator would be funded centrally by UMD and not out of GLAO's budget.											
7 We are currently budgeting for some form of in-person workshops, but we will continue to review feasibility, both due to health concerns and potential financial limitations.											
8 Though not guaranteed, GLAO is preparing an application to formally request funding from the International Student Fees after receiving confirmation from the Office of the Provost.											
9 After discussions with GSG, this money is being allocated to use when graduate students, particularly groups of graduate students, need advice & counsel on specialized legal issues.											
10 This represents an approximate 10% reduction in total revenue collected from the graduate student fee. While the University has not issued guidance at this time, we are planning for the possibility of decreased enrollment.											
11 Depending on the scope of the budget cuts, we would reduce Graduate Student Advocates' hours during breaks and, if necessary, during the semester.											
12 If budget cuts are required and/or the hiring freeze remains into FY21, GLAO would leave this position vacant.											
13 GLAO would continue to hold their weekly workshops, but would either do so completely virtual or only provide food when able to secure external sponsorship funding.											
14 This represents an approximate 25% reduction in total revenue collected from the graduate student fee. While the University has not issued guidance at this time, we are planning for the possibility of decreased enrollment.											
15 As university and state employees, GLAO is subject to any university-wide or statewide salary reduction or furlough. This reflects hypothetical university or state decision to institute a furlough plan equivalent to one day per pay period (i.e. 1 out of every 10 working days).											