Initiated by: Faculty Senate, 2010-2011

I. MOTION:

The money in the UWM Graduate Assistant Competitive Edge Fund be distributed equally to all graduate Teaching Assistants, Project Assistants, and Research Assistants who are eligible.
Purpose:
The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee relies on over 1,000 graduate assistants within a variety of disciplines for teaching, project and research assistance. UWM seeks to retain and attract the best and brightest for its Graduate Assistant Program. Increased funding resources are essential to achieve this goal. Unfortunately, funds available from traditional government resources to support graduate programs are diminishing. Therefore, the UWM University Committee wishes to establish a new fund to increase private support in an attempt to replace lost government funding and offer more competitive graduate assistant compensation packages. Without competitive funding resources, UWM could lose excellent academic professionals to other universities. In a global market, UWM needs to remain competitive, and this new fund is an important step to reach that goal.

Therefore, the **UWM Graduate Assistant Competitive Edge Fund** is established to help graduate assistants succeed in their various capacities on campus, with priority given to teaching assistants and assistants who do not already have other supplemental funding. Donors to this fund will have the satisfaction of knowing they are investing to help the university’s graduate assistants become leaders in their fields of study. In turn, the recipients of this funding support will help advance the mission of UWM as a destination campus for research and education in service to the greater Milwaukee community and beyond.

Fundraising Plan:
Potential Themes: “UWM Cares for its Graduate Assistants” or “Keeping UWM Competitive”

Direct Mail Appeals (personalized letter, pledge form, return envelope) or Telefund Programs –
Prospects include:
- All graduate degree alumni and individuals not assigned to a prospect manager
- All graduate awardees
- Retired Faculty Association (appeal could include presentation at association meeting)

UWM Gives to UWM Appeal
- Present new fund as a priority for 2011 Appeal
- Consider “second gift” appeal to appropriate faculty and staff who have already “qualified” as UWM Gives to UWM donors

Investigate potential for events/appeals to students in cooperation with Student Services
Submit proposals to appropriately identified corporations and private foundations
Publicity:
Publicity efforts will be coordinated through the Office of University Relations and Communications and will include the UWM Gives to UWM Campaign on campus and other measures to be determined.

Timeline:
The campaign will commence with the 2011 UWM Gives to UWM appeal. It is anticipated that this giving opportunity will be ongoing.

Amount:
The approved state budget “Repair Bill” will decrease funding for the Graduate Assistant Program by up to $800-thousand annually (approximately $800 each for 1000 Graduate Assistants) thus the need to establish new funding resources is vital. Ideally, $800-thousand would be raised annually to make all Graduate Assistants financially whole. Priority fundraising efforts, however, will be to support Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants who do not already have other supplemental funding.

Administration:
Awards shall be made primarily for graduate teaching, research and project assistantships, with priority given to Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants who do not already have other supplemental funding. A fund will be established at the UWM Foundation under the general administration of a Graduate Assistant Competitive Edge Fund Committee, the members of which shall be the three Graduate School Associate Deans; currently Michael Liston, Marija Gajdardziska-Josifovska, and Douglas Woods. The committee annually shall apportion the available funds to the executive committee for each college, school or unit according to the following formula: total amount available to be distributed multiplied by a fraction, the numerator of which is the number of teaching assistants within each executive committee’s school, college or unit, and the denominator the total number of teaching assistants at UWM. Each executive committee shall award its allocation to graduate assistants within its area of responsibility with priority given to teaching assistants and assistants who do not already have other supplemental funding. In making these awards, the executive committee shall take into consideration merit and a graduate assistant’s total compensation package.