

THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA 
FACULTY ASSEMBLY

September 27, 2018

President John Garvey
Provost Andrew Abela
The Catholic University of America
620 Michigan Ave., NE
Washington, DC 20064

Dear President Garvey and Provost Abela:

On Tuesday it came to the attention of many faculty across the University that graduate students had not been paid their merit stipends or their wages as teaching assistants, teaching fellows, or research assistants. It has become apparent that this is not a clerical problem arising from one department or one school: rather, it is a systemic, university-wide problem that has affected graduate students in the Schools of Arts & Sciences, Engineering, Music, Drama & Art, NCSSS, Architecture, and other schools as well. This marks a grave and unacceptable managerial failure.

We write to register our deep dismay, frustration and concern that such a situation has arisen on this campus. Graduate students are one of our most precious resources here at CUA. They are the next generation of scholars, who will be advancing new knowledge, making scientific discoveries, and contributing their talents to the world of the performing and fine arts. Without their work on campus as teaching assistants, lab assistants, tutors in the math and writing centers, and in the Center for Academic Success, the University *could not function*.

But graduate students, who must balance teaching, writing, and performing on their meager graduate stipends and paychecks, are also the most vulnerable among us. In many cases, they are supporting young families. The Catholic University of America, located in a city where the cost of living is high, is already well behind our aspirational peers with regard to the funding packages it offers our graduate students. Simply put, our graduate students cannot afford to be the victims of such a systemic failure on the part of the University. Many of them cannot afford to wait even one day for the system to right itself.

Paying graduate students (or any employees) on time is not optional; it is the contractual duty of The Catholic University of America. The Faculty Assembly, therefore, urges you to take the following steps:

1. Issue an apology to all the CUA graduate students before the full university community.
2. If needed, hire part-time workers in Human Resources and Payroll to work overtime to get the problem in the system fixed immediately.
3. Pay interest on the number of days Payroll was late.
4. Move the entire new hiring system into Human Resources itself and hire new employees who specialize in contracts. This should be the work of HR anyway, but now seems to have been out-sourced onto the academic units' support staff, whose job descriptions do not include such work in the first place.

The Faculty Assembly stands with the graduate students. If we are truly the global Catholic Research University we are claiming to be, we need to support and treat with human dignity the next generation of researchers, teachers, and performers in our midst.

Thank you for moving expeditiously on this very serious matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Linda Plitt Donaldson, Faculty Assembly Chair; National Catholic School of Social Service
Dr. Binh Tran, Faculty Assembly Vice-Chair; School of Engineering
Dr. William Barbieri, School of Theology and Religious Studies
Dr. Ann Cederna, School of Architecture and Planning
Dr. Katherine Jansen, School of Arts and Sciences, History
David Lipton, Esquire, Columbus School of Law
Dr. Michael Mack, School of Arts & Sciences, English
Dr. Stephen McKenna, Arts & Sciences, Media Studies
Dr. Venigalla Rao, Arts & Sciences, Biology
Dr. Andrew Weaver, Rome School of Music, Drama & Art
Dr. Julia Young, School of Arts & Sciences, History

On behalf of the Catholic University of America Faculty Assembly

cc: The Graduate Student Association