Since the 1960s, the Council of Graduate Schools (CSG) has published the resolution regarding the rights of graduate applicants. The mission of the CSG is to serve as the national voice for the graduate dean community. Deans from nearly 400 institutions support the date of April 15 for the acceptance of an offer of financial support to graduate students. A copy of the resolution and background information can be found at this link.

In working with CSG resolution regarding the rights of graduate applicants and April 15th Deadline many questions have arisen over the years. The answers to these questions have been debated by graduate preparation faculty in the field of student affairs. This document seeks to explain both the resolution and the spirit of that resolution, which is articulated in the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education guidelines for Master’s Level Student Affairs Professional Preparation Programs.

As a faculty member/program coordinator of a student affairs focused graduate program this document also serves to provide context to faculty advising prospective students on accepting financial support for their graduate study.

**Spirit of the Resolution**

The general spirit of the resolution is that students should have an opportunity to consider all offers for assistantships, fellowships, or scholarships, and have until April 15 to accept. Likewise, both institutions and students should consider acceptances before or after April 15 as binding agreements, which both are expected to honor and which protects both the student and the institution. The CGS Resolution is important because it strengthens the significance of encouraging well-informed choices, understanding rules, and honoring agreements in the graduate school decision process. No penalty exists through CGS for not following the resolution.

**Prospective Student Feels Pressured to Accept An Offer**

It is possible that the representative from an institution has encouraged a student to accept an offer prior to April 15. A search process requires professionals to be engaged with multiple candidates and to consistently check with candidates who have offers about their status in the pool. When advising students who feel pressured to accept an offer, they should be encouraged to articulate both what the institutional representative shared and what they articulated as their position in the candidate pool. Frequently, institutions are seeking transparency in the communication related to when a prospective student will be able to make a final decision on an employment offer.

**Working with Assistantship Providers On Campus**

Frequently, the assistantship offer is not controlled through the academic unit. The strength of our preparation programs is the relationship with our student affairs professionals who employ, mentor and provide meaningful experiences for them throughout their graduate career. We encourage program faculty to talk with providers about the April 15 resolution and giving students time to make informed decisions.

**My Institution Is Not Listed**

The spirit of the guide is to create conditions that support graduate students. Ideally, we want to work together to help prospective students explore their opportunities and make an informed decision on where to study and engage in paraprofessional work. If your institution is not listed, we ask that you work with your students to encourage them to explore their options and respectfully give them time to make an informed decision.

---

1 Original document written by Dr. Deb Liddell (The University of Iowa) in 2003, rev. 2010; Approved by ACPA Commission for Professional Preparation Directorate and NASPA Faculty Council October 2016.