UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT GOVERNMENT

17th Session – February 24, 2025
GPSG
D.B. #9

Sponsor: Nanle Gusen, Grants Director

GPSG Action: FAILED

AN ACT

The GPSG Grants Committee revised and updated the outdated Grants Rubrics to score applications for travel, research and service projects.

Section 1: Short Title

This update may be titled as the "Submission for Approval: Revised Grants Scoring Rubric"

Section 2: Discussion

 WHEREAS, the scoring rubric for this fiscal year is outdated, with 2017-2018 for travel and service grants and 2022-2023 for research grants. The funding recommendation category of the rubric is a 5-point score rating without a sufficient description of rationale. The category has been dormant, that is, reviewers do not use it to score applicants. Recommendation letters were previously optional, and after applicants got recommendation letters, they were not used as a scoring criterion on the rubric. Hence, all efforts and time spent obtaining a recommendation letter or letter of support are wasted.

WHEREAS, the rubric on the GPSG website has a hidden component (DEI) with a 5-point scoring criterion for all applicants. GPSG grants program has received numerous complaints from applicants about the hidden rubric, which impacts their scores without their knowledge, and

it is not on the website. The hidden rubric demonstrates a lack of transparency in the scoring criteria and severely impacts many applicants' Travel, Research, and Service Grants scores.

WHEREAS, removing the hidden rubric will give every applicant an equal opportunity to be funded by the GPSG grant. Applications are finally ranked based on the applicant's scores. Every qualified application will have the advantage of getting the score they deserve. The rubric will remain transparent without questioning the integrity of the scoring criteria. A student who has worked hard on their dissertation project and scored low based on the hidden rubric will be at a disadvantage. Removing the hidden rubric will remove bias in scoring applications.

WHEREAS, updating the scoring criteria will improve transparency, clarity, and fairness, reduce bias and avoid confusion, remove discrimination against qualified candidates, and promote merit and high-quality projects by Graduate & Professional Students at the University.

WHEREAS, providing a letter of support template on the website is a guide for applicants to utilize. Describing the funding recommendation category will also make it easier for applicants to understand what is expected of them to obtain a high score for submitting recommendation letters and/or letters of support from Faculty and/or Advisor.

WHEREAS, the majority (63%) of responses from a grant committee survey suggested that the hidden rubric should be removed, 18% said the hidden rubric should remain as is, and 18% were undecided. These are accompanied by comments to support the responses.

Section 3: Action

Resolved, the revised scoring rubric by the GPSG grants committee shall serve as the updated scoring rubric for travel, research, and service grants. Therefore, the funding recommendation category of the rubric will not remain dormant but will be used to score applicants, considering letters of recommendation and/or letters of support. The revised and updated rubric on the website will be used transparently to score applicants.

Therefore, *be it Resolved*, the Grants Director shall work with the grants committee to utilize the scoring rubric on the website to score applicants as aligned with the approved submission.

Section 4: Enactment

THERFORE, be it enacted by the University of Iowa Graduate and Professional Student Government upon the signature of the President.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF:

Airiana Mohr

Cabinet Director, Airiana Mohr
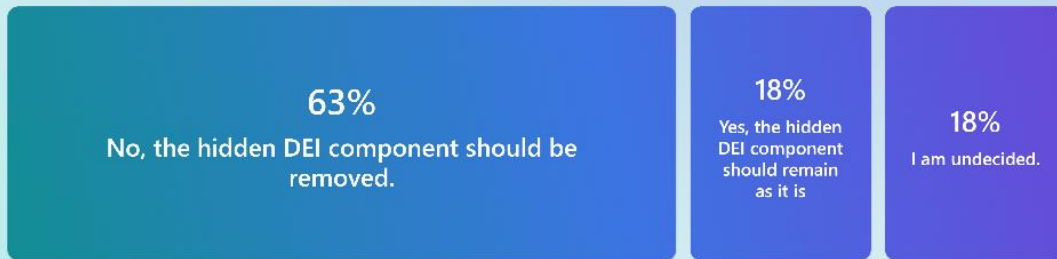

APPROVED:

FAILED
President, Khyathi Gadag

2/25/2025

Date

Do you believe the DEI component should remain a part of the grant scoring rubric?

63%	18%	18%
No, the hidden DEI component should be removed.	Yes, the hidden DEI component should remain as it is	I am undecided.

Treemap / Bar

< 1 of 3 >

Any other suggestions to improve the current scoring Rubric?

better indication — impactability section — Undergrad students
research findings — applicants — DEI is very subjective — rubric
research or work
research grant — DEI component
graduate students — inclusive rubric
target group — research — GSPG site — travel grants — overall impact
categories such as social — areas of impact — component in their application

Wordcloud / All responses

< 3 of 3 >

Any other suggestions to improve the current scoring Rubric?

"may be we can just remove it and add in research grant how the research findings can be disseminate among the target group. For travel grant we can ask about how the conference can help disseminate the work among the target group"

"The DEI component should just be listed on the rubric. The rubric on the GSPG site is from 2017-2018 by the way and should be updated. "

"I think so just the DEI is very subjective. I believe there should also be a preference set up on whom we are funding. Undergrad students or graduate students, especially for travel grants."

"I think instead of DEI, I would add in an impactability section like how much does attending x affect their research or work and I think that is a better indication to whether or not a candidate gets their funding so that we don't have applicants who are submitting applications last minute"

"None"

"NA"

"I suggest that the weight (score) attached to the DEI component can be improved by replacing it with a broader, more comprehensive, and inclusive rubric that evaluates projects based on their overall impact. This could include categories such as social, legal, technical, health, technological, economic, sustainability, and other areas of impact. As we know, DEI will naturally and indirectly fall under these categories."

"no"

"I think it will be more fair if applicants know that they should include DEI component in their application. Even if they are not told the full extent of what is expected in the rubric."