



RACKHAM

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Board Resolution BR 2025-02

Presented to the Board on March 27th, 2025

Final Vote: Unanimous on Date: 05/04/2025

Constitutional Amendment I

Resolution regarding Graduate Student Caregiver Needs: Advocating for Accessibility to Childcare and Flexibility to Support Positive Student Outcomes¹

WHEREAS, Ann Arbor has been classified as a child care “desert”, which means many students are left without childcare options². In a pilot study by Rackham Student Government (RSG), limited space or availability was the leading challenge associated with accessing on-campus caregiving services (Appendix A).

WHEREAS, childcare cost in the Ann Arbor area has been ranked the 6th most expensive in the country³, which makes most childcare options inaccessible to students, even when students access and receive childcare subsidies. These do not always sufficiently cover the cost of childcare, pushing many students into precarious financial situations and food insecurity. In the same pilot study by RSG, high cost was the leading challenge for accessing off-campus caregiving services. Additionally, a majority of student caregivers reported that affording caregiving services is either a financial strain or that they do not have access to affordable options (Appendix A).

¹ This resolution was originally written on Thursday Nov. 6, 2024. This resolution was then presented to the Winter 2025 Rackham Student Government Board on March 27, 2025. The Board then passed the resolution by unanimous consent on May 5th, 2025.

² Lopez, W. D., Kling, K.A., & Nothaft, A. (2022). The child development and care subsidy: challenges and opportunities. University of Michigan Poverty Solutions.
<https://sites.fordschool.umich.edu/poverty2021/files/2023/03/Child-Care-Lopez-et-al.pdf>

³ <https://smartasset.com/data-studies/cost-raise-child-2023>

WHEREAS, qualifying for certain childcare subsidies may present an insurmountable challenge. “Many parents describe being caught in a “catch-22” in which they need a job before applying for childcare assistance, but can’t obtain, begin, or maintain that job unless they have childcare – which requires financial support” (Lopez et al, 2022).

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in 2016, suggested that families should pay no more than 7% of their household income⁴. A new rule published in 2024 establishes 7% as the maximum co-payment⁵. However, the majority of student caregivers reported spending over one thousand dollars each month on caregiving services (Appendix A). This means most students spend over a third of the current Ph.D. stipend offered at the University of Michigan⁶.

WHEREAS, the lack of affordable childcare options creates significant challenges and barriers to student success, through reduced time available for studies, research, among other activities and through having no option but to miss classes or other events when alternative care cannot be secured. On average, student caregivers reported spending nearly twice as much time on caregiving responsibilities than on academic responsibilities each week (Appendix A).

WHEREAS, student caregivers need greater flexibility to negotiate deadlines and generate alternatives when class or other in-person activities must be missed due to caregiving responsibilities. However, nearly all student caregivers indicated a lack of explicit course policies supporting student caregivers (Appendix A).

WHEREAS, the creation of affordable child care options for student caregivers and providing institution-wide guidelines to support student caregivers who, due to caregiving responsibilities, must miss certain academic and/or research activities would create a more supportive and positive environment for student caregivers and promote improved student outcomes.

NOW, THEREFORE, ON BEHALF OF THE STUDENT BODY OF THE HORACE H. RACKHAM GRADUATE SCHOOL AND ARTICULATED BY ITS ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, IT IS THE SENSE OF THE BOARD THAT IN THEIR NAME, BE IT:

⁴ Improving child care access affordability and stability in the child care and development fund.

⁵ “This final rule requires States and Territories to establish co-payment policies for families receiving CCDF assistance to be no more than 7 percent of family income to help ensure family co-payments are not a barrier to accessing child care.” 45 CFR Part 98 RIN 0970-AD02, March 1, 2024. U.S. Department of Health and Human services. Improving Child Care Access, Affordability, and Stability in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).

⁶ Student Payments Cheat Sheet - By Type of Award

RESOLVED, RSG calls for the University to provide childcare subsidies such that all students pay no more than 7% of their household income in alignment with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' new rule; **AND**

FURTHER RESOLVED, RSG calls for said subsidy to be universally applied to reduce administrative burden and eliminate barriers to access; **AND**

FURTHER RESOLVED, RSG urges the University to create new childcare centers to address the scarcity of available spots; **AND**

FURTHER RESOLVED, RSG advocates for the University to generate a committee with the purpose of developing institutional guidelines concerning greater flexibility for student caregivers and ensuring all required class and research activities occur during the school day; **AND**

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, RSG encourages the University to explore additional measures to support accessibility to childcare and greater flexibility for student caregivers, to promote positive student outcomes.

AUTHOR

Jennifer M. Trigger, Member Academic Affairs Committee

ATTEST

By Signing below, I certify that this resolution was dispatched by the Rackham Student Government Board under the rules as prescribed in section IX of the bylaws and that the vote count appearing at the top of this resolution is accurate.



Curtiss W. Engstrom
Vice President, Rackham Graduate Student Body

PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

I, Angelica Previero, President of the Rackham Student Body, do hereby approve this resolution on June 21st, 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink. The first letter 'A' is large and stylized with a loop. The rest of the name 'Previero' is written in a cursive script.

Angelica Previero
President, Rackham Graduate Student Body

Appendix A

This appendix includes preliminary results from a pilot study conducted by Rackham Student Government on Student Caregivers at the University of Michigan. The study had 48 total responses of which only 16 were complete responses by students who indicated that they are caregivers⁷. The following results are based on these N=16 responses.

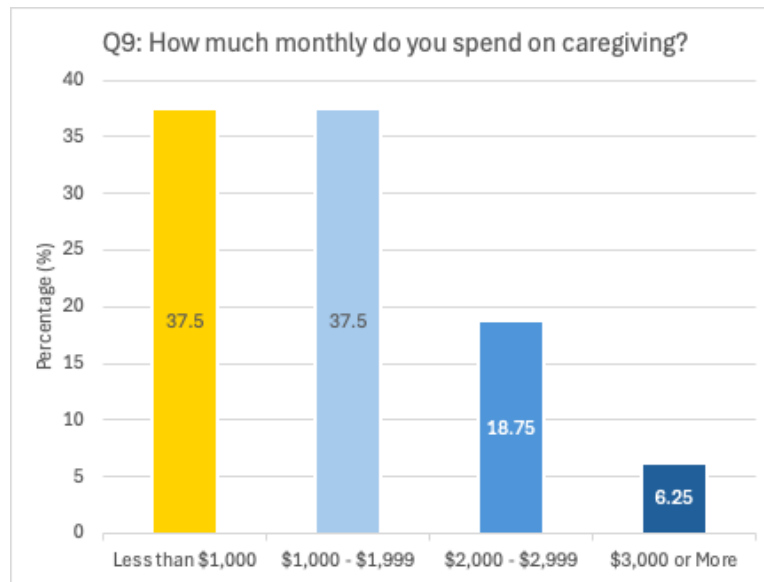
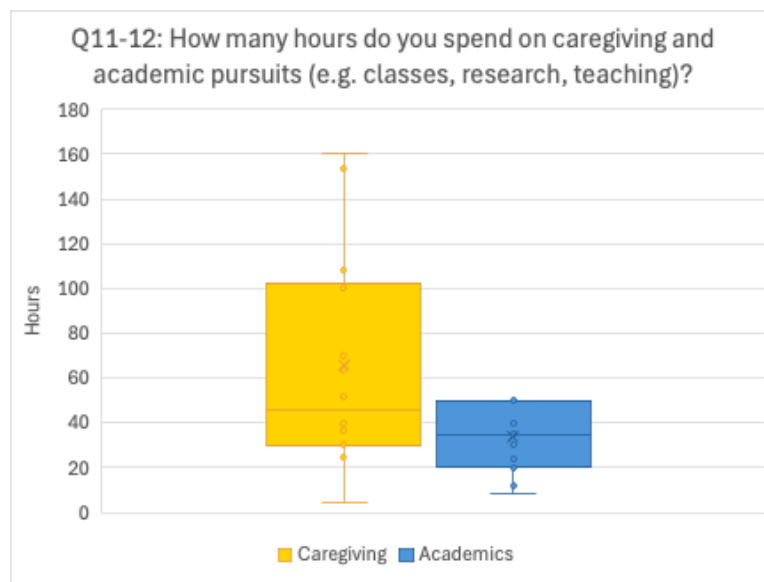


Figure 1. Responses from Q9 suggest that the majority of student caregivers at U-M spend over \$1k on caregiving costs.



⁷ Our next rendition of the survey will be shortened with the hope of increasing the overall response rate as well as the completion rate.

Figure 2. Responses from Q11-12 suggest that student caregivers at U-M spend more time on caregiving responsibilities than academics each week.

| | <i>Min</i> | <i>Max</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Median</i> |
|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| <i>Caregiving</i> | 4 | 160 | 65.3 | 46 |
| <i>Academics</i> | 8 | 50 | 33.5 | 35 |

Table 1. Box and whisker plot data points accompanying the results in Figure 2.

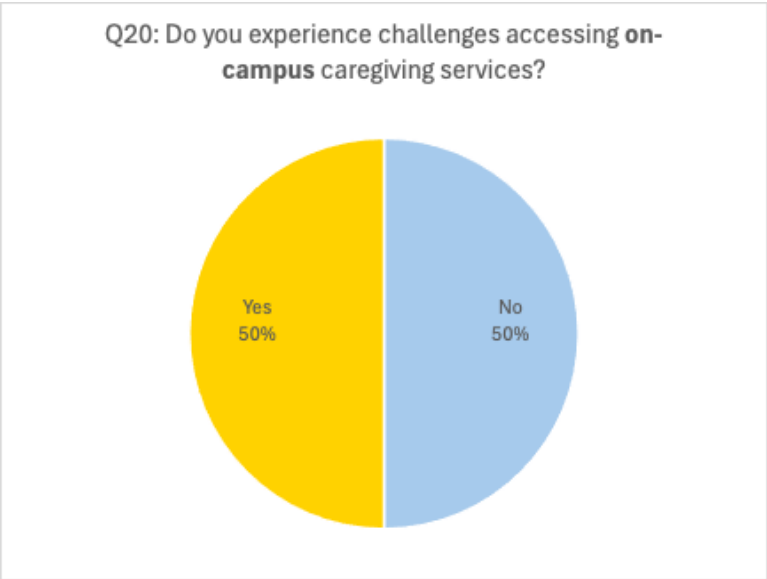


Figure 3. Responses from Q20 suggest that roughly half of student caregivers at U-M experience challenges accessing on-campus caregiving services.

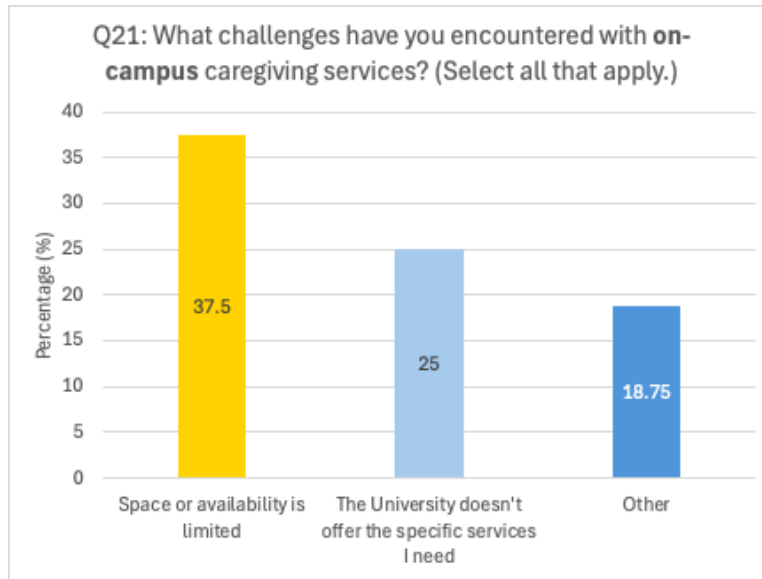


Figure 4. Responses from Q21 suggest that limited space or availability is a barrier for nearly 40% of student caregivers who experience challenges accessing on-campus caregiving services.

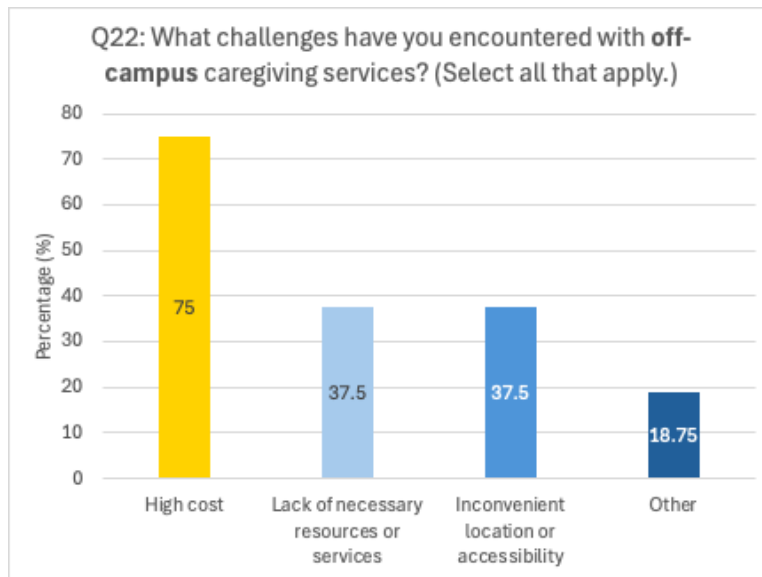


Figure 5. Responses from Q22 suggest that the high cost of off-campus caregiving services is a challenge for the majority of student caregivers at U-M.

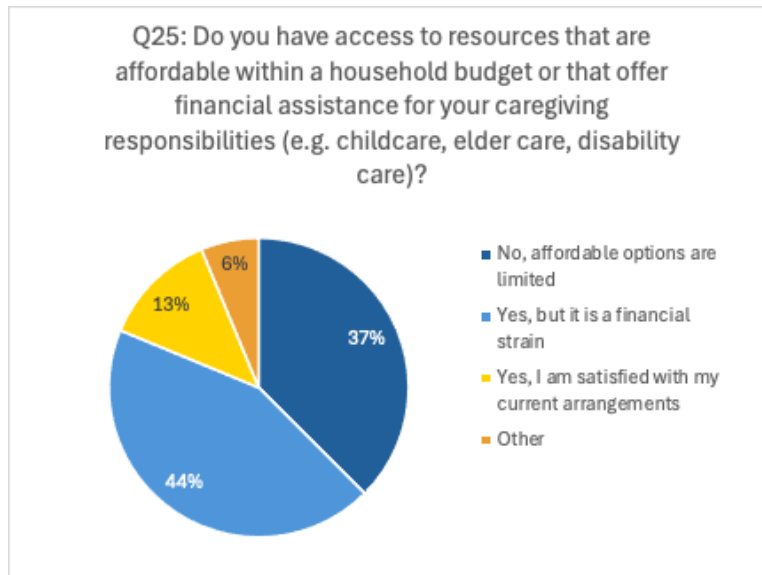


Figure 6. Responses from Q25 suggest that the majority of student caregivers at U-M either do not have access to affordable caregiving resources or have access but with a financial strain.

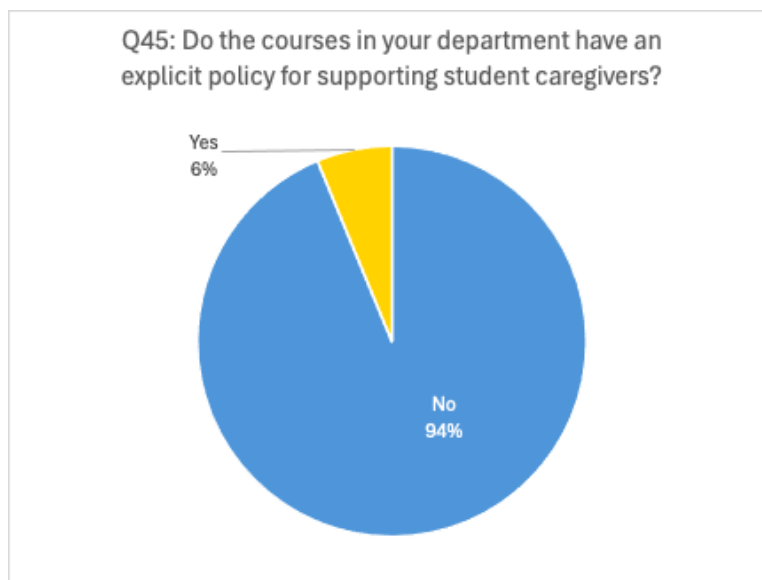


Figure 7. Responses from Q45 suggest that nearly all student caregivers at U-M experience a lack of explicit course policies supporting student caregivers.