

# **The Report of the Working Group for Graduate Student Life in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Divinity School**

## **I. Introduction**

In February 2007, President Zimmer announced a new Graduate Aid Initiative that transforms the material circumstances of graduate students at the University of Chicago, with nearly 50 million dollars in new financial support for incoming students in the Humanities and Social Sciences over the next six years. President Zimmer's goals include a major boost to recruitment, and an improvement in relations among future graduate students, by placing them on an equal financial footing. The dividends of the program are likely to be far-reaching.

This announcement has become the occasion for broader reflections on graduate student life at the University of Chicago. Students who had already begun their graduate careers before 2007 broadly welcomed the changes. However, they also expressed concerns, particularly about the lack of new funds for current students. They worried that some provisions (such as the integrated teaching component) might actually affect them adversely if the University did not ensure that their opportunities were not compromised. They also raised issues relating to all graduate students, current and future. More generally, the Initiative provided a welcome opportunity for graduate students, faculty, and administrators to articulate and discuss a variety of questions and issues about graduate work here, many of them predating the announcement itself.

In the spring of 2007, Provost Rosenbaum convened the Working Group on Graduate Student Life in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Divinity. He charged it with exploring issues relevant to current and future graduate students. Its members were drawn from faculty in Humanities, Social Sciences, and Divinity; administrators concerned with the graduate programs; and graduate students:

- Alison Winter, Chair (Associate Professor of History)
- Brian Clites (third-year graduate student in History of Religions)
- David Martinez (Associate Professor of Classics)
- Martina Munsters (Deputy Dean of Students for Student Affairs)
- Rachel Ponce (fifth-year graduate student in History and CHSS)
- Thomas Thuerer (Dean of Students, Division of Humanities)
- Greg Weinstein (fifth-year graduate student in Music)

To ensure that current students' own views on these issues were heard, the Provost determined that three of the seven group members would be student representatives, chosen by the Student Government Graduate Council. Students' concerns will be clear throughout this report, and unless otherwise noted, they are the views expressed by the representatives themselves. They wished most urgently to make clear that their overwhelming priority in the structuring of any new financial support was the wish for funds to be distributed equally. They were also extremely concerned about the low level of teaching remuneration; and about the burden of advanced residence tuition. These and

other issues are discussed at length in the course of our report. Because different members of the group had different perspectives on how issues of graduate work should be defined, we have tried to give some information about the source of opinions; in particular, whether they came from a graduate student representative, an administrator, a faculty member, or some combination. The recommendations section (II) is not written in this way; but the “advantages” and “disadvantages” outlined there are excerpted from the more discursive section (III), where these arguments are traced in detail.

We also asked our graduate representatives to author a section of this report (Section IV). They discuss current student experiences, particularly in relation to the effects of uneven funding. Our goal for this section was to provide an account of current students’ concerns that was expressed in their own voice. This section is therefore not intended to be the only or the dominant place in which students’ views are expressed, but rather to provide a narrative that enhances the informative value of this report, in addition to our summary of our group discussions. Students’ contributions to those discussions are recorded, along with the rest of our Group, in Section III.

#### *Brief summary of our activities*

The Working Group met regularly beginning in June 2007, until the end of the autumn quarter. We began by articulating concerns about various areas of graduate student life, among them graduate stipends, remuneration for teaching, medical insurance, and Advanced Residence Tuition. We read the requests made in a letter of May 2007, from graduate students to President Zimmer (see Attachment 1), and we discussed questions from faculty about how the funding initiative would be implemented. After initial discussions on our own, we met with Provost Rosenbaum to discuss his aims. The Provost informed us that although he would make no promise of additional funding for graduate students, there was a possibility of creating new funding sources. He emphasized, however, that our recommendations should articulate lasting institutional innovations that could benefit doctoral students well into the future.

In July of 2007, we met with individuals from the Budget Office to learn more about the University Budget; with the three relevant Deans of Students; with the Divisional Deans in Humanities, Social Sciences and the Divinity School; and with the Dean of the College and several of his key office members. From July through September we sought out information both from programs within the University, and at peer institutions. From August through November, the Chair, Alison Winter, also met individually with several department chairs, graduate program heads, Deans, Deans of Students, and others to learn more about the management of particular doctoral programs, to learn how our provisional recommendations might be implemented in their departments, and to hear in advance about problems or technical issues relating to our funding proposals. In early December, she also held a series of meetings with small groups of graduate students to discuss our provisional recommendations (for lists of the individuals who met with the Group and with Winter, see Attachment 2). The Group met frequently throughout the fall quarter to discuss our findings, develop our recommendations, and draft our report. Our recommendations are summarized in Section II, followed by a more detailed account of our work in Section III.

## II. Recommendations

### **Financial support (fellowship packages and grants)**

The Working Group recommends that the University create a set of new grant opportunities for graduate students, designed to address the concerns we have encountered. We understood from Provost Rosenbaum that the level of possible funding rules out any systematic changes to fellowship packages. In consequence, while we estimated the costs of such proposals to understand their financial implications, we have not made recommendations relating to this kind of funding. We offer here several (unranked) options for new grant structures (See Attachment 4 for estimated costs).

#### **Option 1: Significant increase in Dissertation-year Fellowships.**

Currently, there are 41 dissertation-year fellowships across the Division of Humanities, the Social Sciences Division, and the Divinity School, which have been notably successful in achieving their purposes (see Attachment 3). We advocate roughly doubling the number by adding 40 new fellowships at a stipend of \$25,000 each, plus tuition and health insurance (this is approximately the standard of living for a year in Chicago, and would allow us to require that students do little work apart from their dissertation). These competitive grants could be held up to the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> year of graduate work. They would be “terminal” awards (recipients would become ineligible for most future funding). This option would cost \$1,000,000/yr. plus administrative costs, tuition, and health insurance.

#### **Advantages:**

- Funds are targeted to a critical period of graduate work, and to an applicant pool poised to take advantage of the funds. Experience has shown that this kind of support brings significant and immediate results (Most recipients complete their doctorates within a year after the end of these grants; for sample data, see Attachment 3).
- Most current and future students could benefit from this plan, since few students complete their dissertations in five years.

#### **Disadvantages:**

- This kind of support could not, of course, reach all students.
- Such fellowships would not provide immediate support to students currently in scholastic residence, some of whom have little or no funding.

#### **Option 2: Two-phase funding plan combining one-term support for students reaching candidacy, and dissertation write-up grants**

##### Phase 1 (2008-2012):

- Provision of one term (\$3000) for each student reaching candidacy, deadlines to be determined by division or department (for instance, because average time-to-candidacy is 5.89 years in Humanities, that Division might choose an outer limit

of 6 years; Divisions could decide to make students eligible if they had reached candidacy within the defined period, in the past two years. On time-to-candidacy, see Attachment 8).

- Creation of 5 new dissertation write-up grants (\$375,000 annually), on the same terms as Option 1.

Phase 2 (beginning in 2012):

- Beginning in 2012-2013, the 1-term stipend program will be converted into 35 more dissertation grants, bringing the total to 40.

**Advantages:**

- Funding would be tailored to the specific concerns of two quite different groups: current students (S2+) and matriculants of 2007+. Both cohorts will need a boost of funding around their 6<sup>th</sup> year, but for different reasons: current students average 4-5 years to reach candidacy, and are out of funds early in their doctoral research. New students will be well-funded, but only for five years, and few will finish in this time. The two funding phases support a common goal while addressing these differences.
- The timing of the two phases is complementary: the first phase would finish in 4 years, when its target students complete their sixth year. The first of the new cohort will then complete their fifth year and their funding.
- This funding structure would support most graduate students now in SR2 and beyond. Yet the dissertation fellowships would also provide opportunities to mature students.
- The breadth of this support is in keeping with the greatest priorities of current students as expressed both to President Zimmer (Attachment 1) and by graduate representatives in our group.
- For those students not yet advanced to candidacy, it would provide some incentive and support.

**Disadvantages:**

- This plan could be less effective than other funding structures if the primary goal is to produce the most scholarly progress for the money.
- This is our most complex funding proposal. The goal of devising a funding structure that could address the needs and concerns of current students while providing forms of support appropriate for future generations produces the complexity.

**Option 3: Increase in Provost's Summer Fellowships (2-year program)**

Last spring, 40 Provost's Summer Fellowships of \$3000 each were made available to graduate students in SR1-4; next year this number is scheduled to shrink to 25 and then to 15 in the following year. We propose a significant increase in the numbers of these

fellowships, adding 100 for summer 2008 and 75 for summer 2009. We also recommend clarifying the criteria by which applications will be evaluated.

**Advantages:**

- The first competition, in spring 2007, gave evidence of a large pool of excellent applicants (the total number of applicants was 289).
- Unlike the dissertation-year fellowships, these stipends could go to students at any stage of graduate work prior to candidacy.

**Disadvantages:**

- This plan does not meet our graduate representatives' call for equal funding for each student.
- This plan provides no access to support for advanced students
- One of graduate students' strongest concerns was that they believe that students who have received small funding packages have made slower progress toward standard benchmarks. Our graduate representatives are concerned that under funded students may be at a special disadvantage here, since they may be in Advanced Residence before reaching candidacy and these fellowships are restricted to applicants in SR1-4 (we should note that our research indicates no correlation between funding and time to orals/candidacy, though this does not mean that under funded students are not disadvantaged in more subtle ways by their lesser financial resources).

**Option 4: Reduction in new admissions in exchange for funds for current students**

We recommend that departments be allowed to reduce offers in a given year, in order to release funds to support current students. This proposal is limited to the next three years, because it is designed to free up funds for students in SR2-5 during the transition to a community of students fully funded under the new Initiative. The Provost would need to allow funds to be concentrated during three years (rather than five), and should expect a high proportion of funds to be used in the first year, diminishing in the second and third.

For instance, the sacrifice of one matriculant (which might amount to two or three offers, depending on the yield rate) could bring around \$100,000, depending on the arrangement with the Provost and Divisional Dean. One might reckon the total cash available from the sacrifice of one slot as follows:

Stipend: 19,000 x 5 years  
Health care: 2,000 x 5 years  
Summer stipend: 3,000 x 2 years  
Total: 111,000

One Dean (Mark Hansen, of Social Sciences) would like to make an adjustment for "present value" of these funds (e.g. around \$106,000 if the entire fellowship were used in the first year).

**Advantages:**

- This structure allows a decentralized approach to a problem that varies between departments. It seems fitting that some of the cost of increasing the support of students on low stipends should be borne by their departments.
- Departments are the authorities best-suited to evaluating the academic merits of individual graduate students: if the criterion for further funding is academic prowess rather than financial need or level of existing stipend, they are the natural entities to make these decisions.
- This option requires no additional funds from the center, so it can be implemented alongside any other funding scheme. We recommend it as a complement to other funding strategies, not a solution on its own terms.

**Disadvantages:**

- The highest priority of our graduate student representatives was for funding that is not merit based. They worry that departments may allocate these funds, not to make funding more even, but according to some competitive system.
- Departments may choose not to direct money to students with low funding (or choose not to use it at all). Conversations between the chair of our Working Group and Departmental chairs has shown no tight correlation between a department's interest in the plan and their funding policies. Some departments with full funding embrace the idea; some departments with great variability appreciate the flexibility but do not expect to use it.
- Departments that have maintained great variations in funding in recent years have many fields represented under their disciplinary umbrella. Faculty in smaller fields, already worried that the Initiative will result in a smaller graduate group that may threaten their programs, worry about the consequences of any further reduction.

**Advanced Residence****Review of Tuition**

We propose an urgent review of the level of Advanced Residence out-of-pocket tuition, and of the procedure by which annual increases are reckoned. This is an area of significant anxiety among graduate students. The Working Group is concerned that the level of this tuition has risen too quickly (see table below). We hope to see a reduction in this charge, and, ideally, a new formula for calculating future increases. We hope a decision can be made quickly so as to give relief to students currently in Advance Residence.

AcYr	AR Out-of-Pocket Tuition/Qtr	Per 3 Qtrs	% Increase	Annual Inflation Rate	If Increase = Inflation Rate
1992-93	450	1350		3.03%	
1993-94	475	1425	5.56%	2.96%	1,391
1994-95	510	1530	7.37%	2.61%	1,432
1995-96	550	1650	7.84%	2.81%	1,469
1996-97	590	1770	7.27%	2.93%	1,511
1997-98	620	1860	5.08%	2.34%	1,555
1998-99	650	1950	4.84%	1.55%	1,591
1999-00	683	2049	5.08%	2.19%	1,616
2000-01	557	1671	-18.45%	3.38%	1,651
2001-02	585	1755	5.03%	2.83%	1,707
2002-03	614	1842	4.96%	1.59%	1,756
2003-04	645	1935	5.05%	2.27%	1,784
2004-05	677	2031	4.96%	2.68%	1,824
2005-06	711	2133	5.02%	3.39%	1,873
2006-07	747	2241	5.02%	3.24%	1,936
2007-08	784	2352	4.95%		1,999
<b>Average</b>			<b>3.97%</b>	<b>2.65%</b>	

**Advantages:** The current level of AR tuition appears to us to be too high, and the method for calculating its annual increase arbitrary.

**Disadvantages:** None that we can foresee.

### **Tuition Aid for AR1**

We suggest that the administration consider AR tuition aid for AR1, as a means of helping students in the final stages of graduate work. As other parts of our findings indicate, almost no students finish by this point, and both students and faculty worry about the “cliff” that AR1 represents, with graduate work losing momentum just as students need support for the push to completion.

**Advantages:**

- AR tuition is a particularly great burden because it begins just as fellowship packages run out. Lifting this burden could allow students to maintain productivity at a crucial period.
- AR tuition makes a very small contribution to the university’s budget, but is a significant burden on students’ individual budgets, and at a time when that sum is particularly hard for students to find.

**Disadvantages:**

- Some faculty (but only two of the eight individuals with whom our Group’s Chair has discussed this issue) have worried that financial aid for tuition might reduce students’ motivation to finish, but they were referring to a suspension of AR tuition, not financial aid restricted to the first year.

## **Teaching**

### **Remuneration**

We recommend an urgent review of teaching remuneration, and the institution of a regular review process for the levels at which this remuneration is fixed. Our research indicates that teaching remuneration is extremely low here, compared with peer institutions, and there is no regular review process. In a study of peer institutions, as well as other schools where we would have expected teaching pay to be less competitive than at Chicago and its peers, we found the average pay for an 11 week course (reckoned at 20 hrs/week) to be \$5,868, with a median pay level of \$5018 (most TA positions here pay \$1500). We would like to note that this discrepancy in pay levels was one of the most striking research results we saw as a group, and we consider its findings to indicate a clear need for significant improvements.

#### **Advantages:**

- Regular reviews would make remuneration more responsive to current norms within the university, as well as at peer institutions. They would also demonstrate the administration's commitment to being thoughtful in handling this important component of graduate student income.
- A well-designed review system would help our remuneration levels to become (and remain) comparable to peer institutions.

#### **Disadvantages:**

- The costs of an improvement in teaching pay would have to be found, and balanced against other interests. Higher pay would clearly represent a new cost when allocated to current students, or students beyond SR5. Students currently in SR1 would also expect an increase in their packages if teaching pay were increased, since they would not expect the level of their stipends to be adjusted downward with an upward change in teaching pay. In principle, the teaching pay/stipend allocations could be adjusted in such a way as to keep total income static (reduce stipend levels by the same amount of pay increases) but we would expect objections from students, since the stipend amounts for next year's SR1 cohort would then be lower than the stipend amounts for this year's group. Because of these many ambiguities, we have been unable to estimate the cost of raising teaching stipends.

### **Teaching roles**

We propose a review of what guidance is provided to students and faculty about the nature of student teaching roles, particularly internships and teaching assistant positions.



**Advantages:**

- We suspect that there is considerable ambiguity about these roles, and much variation in how they are defined in practice. We hope that a review will give rise to some general guidelines.

**Disadvantages:**

- None that we can foresee.

**International students**

We recommend that Office of the Vice President and Dean of Students, which will continue to investigate these matters, prioritize a review of financial and legal issues facing international students: International students have limited options for borrowing, and any loans must be co-signed by a credit-worthy United States citizen or permanent resident. They must also provide a Financial Resource Statement every year to establish their ability to pay for the cost of attendance. We hoped to find possible solutions to these problems by examining the policies of our peer institutions, but we find that other schools are in the same predicament, and have identified no means of bringing greater security and relief to international students.

**Monitoring/mentoring of graduate students**

We recommend that the University develop guidelines for how graduate students are monitored as they progress through the various stages of graduate work. Any such guidelines would need to allow for differences between academic programs. The Working Group did not make this issue a central focus of its work, but during our conversations, we were struck by the frequency of questions about how students' progress through graduate work is monitored, and how problems are identified and solved. One possibility is an "exit interview" (upon graduation or attrition) to record dates of qualifying exams, doctoral proposal, and degree, as well as the interviewee's own suggestions and concerns. Other kinds of surveys or interviews could be carried out earlier in students' graduate careers to solicit open-ended information from students about their experiences. This project could provide an excellent opportunity to evaluate students' experiences and concerns.

More generally, we advocate a concerted institutional effort to develop standard ways of measuring student progress, by way of annual reporting from the departments, divisions and schools. This information would properly be housed centrally in the University's student information system, and would provide query capability and download access to individual units to assist them in tracking student progress and analyzing their programs. Our own committee, when attempting to do its work, was regularly frustrated by the lack of good, uniform data on Chicago's graduate programs. Rectifying this situation would involve a serious commitment on the part of the University toward building a truly comprehensive and accessible central student database.

**Representation of graduate students on university committees**

The Working Group has not spent much time studying this issue, but the question both of increased representation and increased communication has been prominent in several

areas of discussion since our first meetings. We have noted a clear desire from graduate students, one shared by many faculty and administrators, for greater student representation on committees at several levels:

- **Departmental committees:** We have not researched the representation of graduate students on departmental committees, but we have studied the opinions of students, who clearly desire greater representation within the intellectual and administrative life of their departments. Any decisions about student representation at this level must, of course, be made by departments themselves.
- **Divisional committees:** Currently there exist no formal means for graduate students to communicate with the Deans. Preliminary work is under way to form an Advisory Council for the Division of Humanities. Graduate students are enthusiastic about this change, and about the possibility of similar forms of representation in other Divisions. The Student Government Graduate Council is working to develop a means of electing representatives for this council, and the resulting scheme an efficient means of generating a pool of possible representatives from which the student government could select committee members not only at the divisional but also the university level (see below).
- **University committees:** Some university committees—for instance, several of the Statutory Boards (e.g. Student and Campus Life, Library, Computing Activities and Services, Graham School Board) -- could benefit from graduate student participation. Many of them are concerned with issues that affect the whole university community; the contribution of students would be a natural and straightforward way of enriching their discussions. A few advisory councils and committees are already in use (e.g. in association with searches for people to hold administrative positions). Broadening the use of students on university committees would establish student voices and experiences as an expected part of decision-making across the university. Broad-based student representation would also make it far easier to access student representatives on particular topics, something that is a significant challenge at the moment (as our committee itself has learned in its own efforts to gather information). And not least, the experience could be educational for the students involved. Committee members could be drawn by the process described above. We would suggest that the university consider some kind of modest financial compensation for committee work that involves a significant time commitment (in recognition of their commitment, rather than as remuneration for work).

### III. Working group activities and research, June-November 2007

This section of our report recounts the research we undertook, the broader issues we discussed, and how we reached the recommendations outlined above.

#### Grants and fellowships

##### *Fellowship packages*

Over the last several years, different departments have maintained different approaches to graduate funding. Some decided to fund all students equally, by admitting a relatively small number of students and funding them at the top level. Equal packages helped student cohorts become more of a coherent community, largely by preventing funding-related rivalries to develop in an environment already extremely competitive. Such funding made it more likely that students would meet program deadlines and complete their doctoral projects expeditiously. And it allowed a department to recruit a small number of top choice applicants more aggressively than it could otherwise.

Other departments chose to spread the funds unevenly in order to admit a larger number of students, giving some students the maximum fellowship packages, others tuition plus a lower-level stipend, others tuition only, and finally, others with no aid of any kind. These departments often argued that this was the only way to maintain widely disparate subfields, which would collapse if they were not able to admit students every year. In departments that distributed funding unevenly, students admitted with little or no aid were eligible to apply for further support after their first or second year, although few of students were able to receive significant increases in non-tuition aid and many received no new funding. The result of these policies has been a great spectrum of financial support, ranging from full funding, to smaller stipends of \$2k-14k/year, to no funding beyond tuition.

Social Sciences	2007-08											
Funding level	SR1		SR2		SR3		SR4		AR1		Total	
No Tuition	NA		2	1%	1	1%	1	1%	42	38%	46	7%
Tuition Only	30		8	6%	3	3%	2	2%	13	12%	56	9%
Stipend <\$5k	NA		0	0%	3	3%	7	6%	11	10%	21	3%
Stipend 5K-12K	NA		27	19%	43	36%	44	36%	13	12%	128	20%
Stipend ≥12K	91		98	68%	59	50%	58	48%	31	28%	339	54%
External	10		10	7%	10	8%	10	8%	2	2%	42	7%
Total	131		145	100%	119	100%	122	100%	112	100%	632	100%

Humanities	2007-08											
Funding Level	SR1		SR2		SR3		SR4		AR1		Total	
No Tuition	NA		0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	40	38%	40	10%
Tuition Only	NA		6	7%	7	7%	7	6%	2	2%	22	5%
Stipend <5K	NA		6	7%	7	7%	7	6%	11	10%	31	8%
Stipend 5K-9K	NA		11	13%	5	5%	11	9%	7	7%	34	8%
Stipend 10K-15K	NA		14	16%	21	22%	46	39%	36	34%	117	29%
Stipend >15K	NA		50	57%	56	58%	48	40%	10	9%	164	40%
Total	NA		87		96		119		106		408	

Divinity	2007-08											
	SR1		SR2		SR3		SR4		AR1		Total	
No Tuition	NA		0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Tuition Only	NA		0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Stipend \$6K - \$9K	NA		2	18%	2	9%	13	48%	0	0%	18	28%
Stipend \$10K - \$13K	NA		4	36%	5	23%	11	41%	0	0%	21	33%
Stipend \$14K - \$17K	NA		5	45%	15	68%	3	11%	4	100%	28	44%
Total	NA		11		22		27		4		64	

Even before the launching of the new Initiative, in which President Zimmer's stated highest priority was establishing equal funding packages, many graduate students were concerned about funding differences. They worried that students receiving little or no support sometimes incurred sizable debts in order to continue graduate work; or worked so many hours that their doctoral progress was jeopardized. They also worried that disparities in support sharpened the already competitive culture within graduate programs. Research depends on the student being embedded in a broadly sympathetic collective, and sharp disparities in funding threaten to erode this community. They also pointed out a potential longer-term issue in the form of alumni community we would want to develop—one that would have positive memories of graduate school.

Faculty members were concerned about disparities too, to the extent that some departments have painfully overhauled their graduate programs to admit fewer students and fund all of them at the top level. But many faculty have also responded to these concerns by arguing that, under the system as it was before 2007, students with little funding knew what their packages would be before they joined the University. Although they hoped to secure more advantageous funding in future years, they knew that there was no guarantee of this funding, and that it would be based on competitive review. These risks came with the opportunities of a graduate program that admitted a larger cohort, including students who would not otherwise have had the chance to come here. Equity of access, as much as equity of financial support, looms large for these faculty. (Moreover, some departments are nervous that the new Initiative will result in the collapse of their small-fields programs). Some graduate students have argued in reply that no matter what students expected before matriculation, large differences in funding are unhealthy for graduate programs, and it is incumbent upon the University to try to reduce these differences, particularly now that the practice of even funding has been given such robust support by the Graduate Aid Initiative. Indeed, they argue, the Initiative changed the expectations of current students, by the arguments it made about the principle and the practical possibility of equal funding.

Students admitted prior to 2007 had assumed that there was no way of raising the funds to bring their packages up to a commonly shared level. When the Initiative was launched, many students were surprised and dismayed that no funds had been allocated to the improvement of their own circumstances. The dollar figure announced with the news of the initiative—\$50 million—led some students to believe that these funds were available for immediate use. Whatever might be available, they thought, could have been shared between current and future students. Many students felt hurt when they saw the administration assert the importance of equal funding, and commit to delivering it—but only to new students.

Graduate student groups organized discussion forums, distributed surveys of their peers, and developed a profile of current students' greatest concerns. After the Initiative was announced, graduate student groups made formal requests for significant increases in stipends that would bring current students up to the same high level of support. The proposal given to President Zimmer in May of 2007 called, among other things, for a stipend of \$19,000 for the remainder of the first 5 years for all graduate students in the doctoral programs. The cost of this part of their proposal is estimated at more than \$31 million over the next 4 years (see Attachment 4). They also requested other reforms in areas that included teaching (e.g. remuneration and job descriptions), medical insurance and medical care, and Advanced Residence Tuition (see Attachment 1).

The graduate students in our Working Group provided further details about the discussions among graduate students, and how they thought the majority of graduate students who had attended their meetings would wish additional stipendiary support to be allocated. Among the graduate students in our working group, the clear preference would be for one of two options: (1) a dispensation of some set amount, in the thousands of dollars, to increase the fellowship package of every graduate student through their fifth year (2) a dispensation of a variable amount to bring all fellowship packages up to some minimum level from SR2 through the fifth year. The graduate students on the committee were united in urging that one of these plans be considered.

All members of our group agreed that it would be ideal for current as well as future students to be funded at the same high level. However, our conversations with administrators and, especially, the Provost, made it seem exceedingly unlikely that this level of funding would be found. We then discussed whether it would be practical or desirable to use any available funds to bring student packages up to some minimum level of funding, even if this were well below the initial request of \$19,000/year. Would it be possible to raise student fellowships to a minimum of \$10,000/year (plus tuition)? Or \$5,000? Or even \$3,000?

Faculty and administrative members of the group were concerned that this might not be the most effective use of the level of funds we were considering, compared to a smaller number of larger grants, available by competition. But we still wanted to know what such a project would cost, and to discuss it, since the goal of reducing funding disparities was so strongly felt by our graduate student representatives.

We asked the Deans of Students to calculate the costs of the proposal to bring all students' fellowship packages up to a minimum threshold. Their reports are provided in Attachment 7. The cost of ensuring that all students in years SR2-AR1 are funded at no less than \$3000/year, including tuition, would be more than \$900,000 for the first year alone in the Divisions of Humanities and Social Sciences (we wanted to obtain a rough, minimal estimate of costs, so we did not work out the full cost of this plan, which we think would be considerably more expensive). The cost of raising all students' fellowship packages to a minimum of \$5,000/year plus tuition would be more than \$1 million in the first year (\$491,000 from Humanities and \$483,000 in Social Sciences; these figures gave us a beginning point for our conversation, and we decided not to pursue the numbers for Divinity, which are harder to access). Of course, these amounts would decrease as students completed their dissertations or moved on to advanced residence. But the cost nevertheless seemed very great to several members of the working group (particularly one faculty member and one administrator), who pointed out that we had been led to

expect significantly less support for the sum of all new funding that might be proposed for graduate students.

There was also an issue of equity, particularly since the purpose of the plan was to reduce funding differences. Under this funding structure, a very small number of departments would draw a very high proportion of the funds. All members of the working group (faculty, administrators and students) were concerned by the uneven distribution of funds under this scheme.

We were also concerned that implementing it would mean giving up on one of the major goals for the creation of new funding: to propose structures of funding that would make for lasting changes in our institution.

### *Grants*

#### Dissertation-year fellowships

Our Group spent a great deal of time discussing the merits of different kinds of grants that the University might make available to graduate students. One of the first proposals involved a significant increase in competitive dissertation-year grants. The arguments in support of this option are that funding of this kind has, in the past, been immensely successful, with a very high proportion of funded projects ending in a completed dissertation. Several Group members (faculty and administrators) who had been involved in the evaluation of such competitions argued that the University could feel more assured that it would see a clear result from the funding. They also argued that support at this stage could motivate not only students but also faculty to help maintain the momentum of doctoral projects, so as to be ready in time to apply for these grants. And finally, the strengthening of the University's support for dissertation write-up projects, if it were institutionalized as an ongoing program, could be of great long-term benefit to our graduate programs. No student packages reach beyond the fifth year, yet time-to-degree data from our three units and from peer institutions show that almost no dissertations are completed in fewer than six years. Indeed, several of our peer institutions have six-year funding packages, with the final year treated as a write-up year.

The graduate student members of the committee agreed that an increase in dissertation fellowships was appealing, but it was not their top priority (see next section). Their interest in this kind of funding was based not so much on the cost-outcome considerations of Group members who had been on the other side of the application process, but on the premise that students in the three Divisions most need funding (at a level that allows them to give up paid work) in the period after fellowships expire. The Group was therefore united in stressing the importance of enhancing dissertation-completion funds.

We understand that funding for *every* student who is ready to write up may not be a likely outcome at the current moment, just months after the launching of an expensive initiative. But a dramatic increase in *competitive* dissertation-year funding would therefore nevertheless help to address a reality of doctoral work in the fields we were asked to examine. And it is the single funding structure that most clearly and simply addresses the request for long-term transformative ideas with which we were charged.

### One-term stipend for all doctoral candidates

Graduate students' first goal had been to bring all students' packages to the level of funding offered to students entering in 2007 and beyond. This remained their ideal, for reasons that mirrored President Zimmer's own statements about the desirability of equal funding levels in the new Initiative. Their second choice, after our evaluation and negative conclusions about the option of bringing all students up to a common minimum funding level, was a one-term stipend for all.

We therefore considered the possibility of creating a single summer fellowship or term of support (set at \$3k) for each student at candidacy level. We also considered a variation on this idea: applicants could be required to have met the canonical departmental deadlines, or some later deadline determined to be the outer limit of what one might consider a reasonable time to candidacy. Since canonical deadlines were the basic rules of early graduate work, advocates argued, this was not an unreasonable request, and for students in the early years of scholastic residence it would supply an impetus to meet those deadlines. But our graduate representatives argued that some departments themselves have unrealistic deadlines that many students do not meet, so this requirement could unfairly shut out too many students. There were also complaints that departments did little to avoid situations that could create serious delays, and in which students were helpless.

Discussions with graduate program chairs and examination of candidacy data in sample departments confirmed that in departments with great funding variations, a significant number of students failed to meet these deadlines; but they also indicated that most students reached candidacy within a year of those deadlines. Moreover, we found to our surprise that there was no straightforward correlation between funding and time to orals or candidacy: students with little or no funding meet these deadlines as quickly as – and in some cohorts more quickly than—well-funded students (see Attachment 8). More generally, data from the Deans of Students indicate fairly long times-to-candidacy in the three units, ranging from a little over four to more than five years. These findings suggest that further, carefully-framed research on the factors affecting time-to-orals, candidacy, and degree would be both possible and fruitful, and could provide guidance on how certain kinds of funding and departmental monitoring could affect students' progress. For our immediate purposes, the implications were simple: we decided that different fields should define their own deadlines, but also that an absolute outer limit could be established, perhaps related to average times to candidacy in each unit.

There still remained a central problem with this kind of funding: the rationale was time-limited, and did not meet the criterion of producing a lasting institutional benefit. This plan was suitable for the current cohort, with those students' worries stemming from funding disparities and their fairly long time-to-candidacy (which left a high proportion of students with no funding soon after becoming ABD). But it was not appropriate for the new students. It then occurred to us that a hybrid plan could solve all of these problems. If we coupled the one-term support with a modest increase in competitive dissertation-year grants, we could offer funds that could provide opportunities (if not guaranteed funds) for all students currently enrolled here, up through the seventh year. In four years, the one-term-fellowship funding would have run its course, if it were limited to students currently in SR2 and beyond. At that point, however, the new generation of students

(entering from 2007) would be approaching their own sixth year “cliff.” In their case, however, we hope that the average time-to-candidacy will have shrunk a bit, allowing a higher proportion of these students to be readying themselves to write up in their sixth or seventh years. This cohort, then, we reasoned, would need further support of their own just as the one-term funding structure became redundant. At that point, this funding could therefore be converted into another increase in dissertation write-up grants. Some thought would have to be given as to appropriate deadlines for write-up grants – graduate students wish to set generous deadlines— but the principle could work.

The group as a whole could agree to include this plan as one of the funding options. It included the equal funding that is graduate students’ strongest concern; it provided opportunities for more advanced students in the dissertation write-up grants; and it would evolve to meet the needs of future generations without sacrificing those of the current community. The increases in dissertation write-up grants could also, we hope, spur the university community to begin to discuss the possibility of creating enough of them to meet the needs of all qualifying students. This is perhaps the most significant financial issue that has come up in our discussions facing future doctoral students here. In the fields that concern our Group, the number of students who can complete the PhD in five years is small. And every administrator, departmental chair, and graduate program head we have consulted has emphasized this as one of their greatest concerns.

#### Provost Summer Fellowship

A disadvantage of the dissertation write-up funding outlined in Option 1 is, of course, that it does not provide immediate options to students currently in scholastic residence, and only a minority of applicants would be successful in funding a write-up year, even if we raised the numbers of such grants considerably. And a disadvantage (from some perspectives) of the one-term support outlined in Option 2 is that it does not contain a competitive element. We addressed these problems in the proposal relating to the Provost’s Summer Fellowship, which was offered this spring. The number of Provost Summer Fellowships was far smaller than the number of highly-qualified applicants (289 applicants for 40 fellowships). Here, then, is timely evidence that an increase in this kind of support would draw excellent applications.

#### Departmental-level budget flexibility in graduate admissions

We also discussed a very different proposition: individual departments could choose to make fewer graduate admissions in a given year, and use the savings to provide support to current students. For instance, a department could hold back 4 offers calculating that this would yield two matriculants. It would then be allowed to distribute the savings to current students. This decision would generate up to around \$222,000, which could be used over the next three years in direct financial aid to current graduate students.

One advantage of this plan is its decentralized character. Because the financial situations of graduate students vary so greatly from program to program, it seems appropriate that some of the cost of increasing the support of students on low stipends should be borne by individual departments. That is, we felt that individual departments should be allowed (and should have the responsibility) of making their own contribution, if they wished to see improvements in the financial circumstances of students they had admitted with small funding packages.



Many, though by no means all departmental chairs have expressed interest in this possibility (there is no tight correlation between departments with students on variable funding and the expressed interest of departmental chairs). All, of course, asked logistical questions. Graduate students and faculty in our working group also have concerns. These do not call into question whether this option should be available to departments, but instead, how big a difference it would make to the top concerns of current students (as opposed to faculty and administrators). They suspect that individual departments would perpetuate or intensify unevenness in funding. Indeed, in departments where there already is a worry that the new initiative will squeeze small graduate programs by shrinking the matriculating class, there is a concern that the use of new slots will intensify those problems. The conclusion drawn from these discussions is that department-led support for graduate students should be allowed, but it cannot be depended upon to make a significant difference in the status of current students.

#### Summary of issues relating to grant proposals

After several meetings, it became clear that members of the committee were invested in one or more of three broad options, and were also interested in the possibility of somehow combining them:

- a significant increase in the availability of competitive funds to support work at a particular stage of dissertation preparation, especially the completion of the PhD, but possibly also smaller funds to support research at an earlier stage
- a large number of equal, widely-distributed stipends that would reach all current students, without constraints
- a large number of stipends that would be dispensed to a large number of current students, but with some constraints, such as reaching candidacy within a certain number of years; in this plan the funding would shift (after 4 years) into a new phase in which the annual allocation from the center would be structured as competitive dissertation-year fellowships.

There was no disagreement about the idea that each of these options had some merit, but there was a divide in emphasis about how to evaluate them. The graduate student group members felt strongly that student support should be increased evenly for all students in SR2 through the fifth year, even if there were no reasonable way to increase all stipends to a common minimum threshold. They also argued that although the amounts per student that we were discussing would have to be small to reach all students, those on particularly small grants would benefit from even a small award (though of course, for those on large grants, the benefit would be less significant).

Other members of the group, two in particular (one an administrator, the other a faculty member), argued that there should be some kind of merit threshold or competitive element to maximize the likelihood that funds would support or require productive work. The student representatives were ambivalent about this idea for a number of reasons. First, they were skeptical about one of the major rationales commonly used in support of

competitive funding, namely that the prospect of such funding could provide motivation to make progress on the doctoral work, on the grounds that our group could identify no empirical studies documenting this relationship. Second, they objected to the introduction of competition for this funding “option” because they felt that the broad distribution of equal funds for current students was justified on the same grounds as the even funding announced for future students in the new funding initiative. They pointed to President Zimmer’s announcement of the recent Initiative, in which he emphasized the importance of equal funding. They argued that the linking of this principle to the sweeping change in graduate funding should inaugurate a new way of thinking about how university funds were distributed to graduate students – current as well as future. That is, the assumption that funds for current students should always be distributed on a competitive basis should be revised in light of the importance placed by President Zimmer on equal financial support.

The group found a possible compromise by framing the plan that is called Option 2 in our Recommendations, which is described above and in the recommendations.

### *Teaching*

A clear area of concern for graduate students and faculty alike relates to teaching opportunities for graduate students. Teaching experience is a crucial part of graduate education, recognized by all students and faculty. But until the new Initiative, teaching was not formally integrated into many students’ graduate packages. As a result, large numbers of students who entered the University of Chicago before the current academic year have been expected to be entrepreneurial with respect to teaching opportunities, and their teaching work is not closely or monitored by departments or the administration. The issues we discussed relate to both the old situation and the changes that may come with the new initiative. We discussed them in a meeting with John Boyer, Dean of the College, and with the Divisional Deans, and our Chair pursued them further in one-on-one conversations with graduate program heads, departmental chairs, and deans.

One of the biggest concerns is the level of remuneration for Teaching Assistant positions. TAs receive \$1500 per quarter; and preceptors, writing interns, lecturers and lecturers in the foreign language receive \$3500 per quarter. We asked how the levels of these payments were set, how often they were reviewed, and whether there was an automatic calculation to raise the level (for instance, according to inflation). We learned that there is no regular review of the level of such stipends, they have not been examined for approximately eight years, and they have remained unchanged throughout this time.

In a comparison of teaching rates at peer institutions and area schools in and near Chicago, we found the University of Chicago’s remuneration to fall at the very bottom: they appear to be less than half the very lowest level of remuneration of our peers. In comparison with our \$1500 stipend, stipends at peer schools range from \$3422 at the bottom to \$9777 at the top (these numbers represent 11 weeks of work at 20 hrs per week). The average pay at the other schools sampled is \$5869, and the median \$5018. It should be noted that the work that was carried out to access these numbers was considerable, since most schools integrate teaching pay into their fellowship packages (schools were therefore asked what they pay when teaching is done outside these packages, e.g. by advanced students whose fellowships have run out, or students supported by outside grants like an NSF fellowship). Although we here recommend a

review, we consider that much of the necessary work is represented in our attachment, and we think the implications (a need for a dramatic improvement) are clear.

Another serious worry is the defining of teaching assistant roles. Graduate students on the Working Group have informed us that there is confusion among current students about what to expect in a Teaching Assistant position. While graduate students in many programs have many sources of guidance about how to develop and teach stand-alone courses, there seems to be less guidance about other teaching roles. Even within a single field, students assisting in different courses can find their duties varying tremendously from each other. Some find the experience a stimulating preparation for teaching their own courses, with a great deal of mentorship from faculty; others are given time-consuming chores with little intellectual content; still others are asked to shoulder responsibilities for which they are ill prepared, such as running many class sessions, or assigning the final grade for midterms, finals (or even for the course itself). We therefore recommend a review leading to the development of guidelines within individual graduate programs that could provide guidance about teaching roles, constraints on what graduate students may reasonably be asked to do, and procedures for students who feel they are being asked to do inappropriate work.

A secondary but still important concern is for more practical resources when graduate students first begin Teaching Assistant work. Currently, students can attend a workshop before the beginning of their first course, and some faculty set aside time to mentor student assistants. But there is a desire for more sustained help, not just before, but also during the first course, at a level that most faculty find impossible to deliver. We would like to encourage the development of institutional structures that could provide more organized guidance to students. We have learned that various activities are already under way that may culminate in the development of structures of this kind, based on successful programs at peer institutions, in which experienced (and paid) graduate students mentor less experienced ones within distinct departmental settings. Such students would also be natural choices for individuals who could help draft the written guidelines mentioned above. More generally, we have learned that members of the Center for Teaching and Learning are discussing Teaching Assistant preparation with members of individual departments, and this issue (along with that of teaching roles) is also being discussed in a group formed by the College Curriculum Committee and the Masters, convened by Dean Boyer.

Finally, graduate students and faculty are concerned about how the new aid initiative may affect the teaching opportunities of students in years SR2+. Unlike new students, whose packages include teaching commitments, older students are not guaranteed teaching opportunities. Students, faculty, and some senior administrators have asked for reassurance that there will not be pressure to give preference to new students over older ones, because they fear that in some fields there may not be teaching opportunities sufficient for all. Our Group has been told by several administrators that preference for teaching assistant slots may, eventually, be given to students in Scholastic Residence, over those in Advanced Residence. We are assured by Dean Boyer, however, that this policy will not apply to students currently in SR2 and beyond. It will only be applied to the new cohort as they mature out of scholastic residence. Dean Boyer also assures us that no preferences along these lines will ever be made in evaluation of students applying for lectureship positions.

Faculty members have also reported that under the new initiative, they have been told that it is possible to develop new teaching roles for students, beyond the existing TA positions. They have requested guidance about how this can be done.

### *Advanced Residence Out of Pocket Tuition*

Doctoral students are required to remain continuously enrolled until they receive the PhD or withdraw from the program. During the first four years of registration, the students are enrolled in Scholastic Residence and in most departments the tuition aid for that enrollment is provided by the University for all current doctoral students once they enter their second year, even for students whose initial aid packages did not include tuition. Beginning this year, the university provides tuition coverage for all doctoral students for the first five years. But for all students, this initial period of Scholastic Residence is followed by another, Advanced Residence, if they have not completed their doctorate by the end of the fourth year (depending on the program and the year of enrolment).

Advanced Residence was introduced in order to make it possible for students who needed more time to complete the doctorate (that is, almost all of them) to remain in residence, with access to the various resources that the University had to offer – for a fee. The tuition rate for Advanced Residence is currently charged at \$784/quarter, or \$2352 for 3 quarters of registration.

During our initial discussions, the Working Group asked how this level of tuition had been reckoned. We learned that the tuition in 1992-1993 was \$450, and then increased steadily at a rate of 4 % per year. Over the last seven years, the rate has increased each year by 5%, a marked difference from the national inflation rate of 2.8% (see Table in Advanced Residence Tuition recommendations). The working group members were united in their surprise and concern at these large automatic increases, and at the resulting charges, which seem to us very high.

The issues raised by group members were, perhaps, obvious: these charges are levied at the moment when students lose institutional support, and when, if they are making progress on their dissertations, they most need to minimize the time they spend at unrelated work. If the purpose of the tuition is to pay for the support they receive from the university, these charges seem very large given the kinds of resources they use: these students are usually in the closing stages of their doctoral work, not enrolled in classes, spending less time with their advisors than they did during scholastic residence, and less time on campus. There was a consensus that the charges seemed out of line with the resources students were using. We suspected that they were the unwitting result of a mechanical annual percentage increase with no recent scrutiny of the resulting rate.

Suggestions made by the members of the Working Group included a review of both the current level and the increase policy, including some reflection on the purpose of the tuition. We thought that an explicit reflection on what, specifically, these charges are thought to pay for would be appropriate. How are the costs calculated? Is the tuition intended as an incentive to finish, and if so, does it work as intended? Others proposed the possibility (not to be considered as an alternative to a review of tuition rates) of an advanced residence “scholarship” for students who could show that they were very near completion of their thesis, or, more ambitiously, for everyone in AR1.

### *Monitoring of academic progress in doctoral programs*

Members of the working group, and others who met with us, have often raised questions and concerns about the guidance and encouragement of graduate students. We have not tried to explore these issues in a systematic way, but we nevertheless wish to communicate the concerns that came up prominently in our conversations, as well as some of the proposals that have been mooted to address them.

We have been told, in the course of discussions and meetings with people from outside our group, that there are some departments which have ambiguous guidelines, requirements, and deadlines for various stages of doctoral work. We recommend a stock-taking of the requirements and deadlines in different programs, to determine whether clear rules exist in each program. We also wonder what written guidance is available within individual graduate programs to advise and orient students.

Members of our own group and others we spoke to raised many questions that would fall loosely under the umbrella of effective “monitoring” of graduate students by faculty advisors and their departments. This implies a question about whether there is adequate self-consciousness and self-scrutiny, by individual graduate programs and perhaps by the Divisions, of how graduate students are guided here. Do any departments evaluate the efficacy of graduate supervision? Do graduate students feel they have enough contact with members of their committee, and particularly their committee Chair? Do they get timely feedback on written work? Guidance about how to prepare for the job market, and in finding outside funds? Do departments provide guidance in finding funding from outside the university? Are the roles and responsibilities of different members of a committee clearly stipulated in different programs? And how one harmonize these criteria across units?

Researching these questions is beyond the scope of the work it was possible for our Group to carry out (with the time and staff available to us). The preliminary work we have done (in our various meetings and in our research on time to orals, candidacy, and degree), indicates that this would be an important area for further investigation.

### *Medical insurance and care*

In the spring of 2007, graduate students wrote to President Zimmer to express concern about the quality, cost, and accessibility of health care at the University of Chicago over the course of the period of graduate work. In particular, they asked that the University cover the cost of insurance premiums, which are very expensive, particularly for dependents. As of this year, the University will pay the premiums of all students in Humanities and Social Sciences and Divinity in SR1-AR1.

The University requires all registered students to have health insurance coverage similar to the coverage provided by the University-sponsored health insurance program. Students are eligible for the University’s program while they remain enrolled as students, though doctoral students who enter Extended Residence (beginning in year 13) are no longer eligible for coverage or most other student privileges. The health insurance premium for 2007-08 is \$1770 for basic coverage. For current graduate students in the Humanities and Social Sciences in the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> year, some may have had insurance coverage as part of their funding packets but most do not. Furthermore, almost all doctoral students in the Divinity School were responsible for the premiums.

Two years ago, the Humanities and Social Sciences expanded their funding packets for incoming students to include health insurance for funded students. The Initiative, by expanding the number and duration of funding packages, ensured that all incoming students as of 2007 will have basic insurance coverage by the University's insurance program through their 5<sup>th</sup> year.

We did not make an evaluation of medical insurance our top priority, partly because the recent improvements in health care coverage made by the University made this issue seem somewhat less urgent than others we wished to address. We also felt that there was a group that was better equipped for such a study: the Student Health Insurance Review Committee has graduate student members and is devoted to addressing issues of health care and insurance.

However, in our explorations of student concerns during the fall of 2007, we became aware that well after the improvements in health insurance coverage made by the University in spring 2007, graduate students reported (in response to a questionnaire circulated electronically—see Attachment 7) that their absolutely top priority was to see improvements in health insurance coverage and care. The nature of the questionnaire did not make it possible to record students' specific concerns systematically, and studying this would have required more resources and more time than we had. We would like to note, however, that many of the comments sent in with this questionnaire urged that the University consider providing health insurance for any period when students are employed as TAs or teach stand-alone courses, and this exhortation was made by all the students we consulted in December 2007 for feedback on our recommendations. We recommend that the issue of health insurance (broadly construed) be made an early priority for the Office of the Vice President and Dean of Students, when they continue to examine issues of graduate student life.

One line of inquiry that we did pursue was to compare the University's spending on health care with that of our peer universities. The range of students at various stages of their work who are covered by insurance is comparable our peers in several key respects (graduate students are covered through AR1, for instance), and generous in others (students have access to insurance and services after the period of their fellowships has expired, whereas most peer institutions do not provide access to health insurance after the period of initial funding). We are also within the middle range of spending per student, when compared with our peer institutions.

**Peer School comparison of health care cost per student**

School	Medical (Health Center)	Mental Health	Health Promotion	Health Insurance	Total
<b>Chicago</b>	<b>\$221</b>	<b>\$197</b>	<b>\$8</b>	<b>\$1,689</b>	<b>\$2,115</b>
A	\$147	\$139	\$37	\$1,354	\$1,677
B	\$299	\$151	\$0	\$1,440	\$1,890
C	\$358	\$112	\$66	\$1,528	\$2,064
E	\$781	\$326	\$36	\$1,158	\$2,301
F	\$833	\$116	\$27	\$1,401	\$2,377
G	\$1,150	\$242	\$36	\$996	\$2,424
H	\$150	\$119	\$12	\$2,202	\$2,483
I	\$219	\$94	\$24	\$2,388	\$2,725
<b>Avg cost</b>	<b>\$437</b>	<b>\$144</b>	<b>\$26</b>	<b>\$1,385</b>	<b>\$1,993</b>

This is not to say that our students’ *expenses* are also in that range or that satisfaction with health care is also comparable with the average experience at other institutions. We did not ask for data on the total cost of health care compared between the various institutions, nor did we make any effort to develop a comparative understanding of students’ satisfaction with their health insurance packages or care. We hope that such a comprehensive review, if it is undertaken, would attempt to secure this kind of information.

**Feedback from graduate students**

By early December 2007, our Group had formulated its recommendations and was revising its report. The timeline of our work meant that by the time recommendations were ready for review, it was late in the end of the autumn quarter, and there was therefore limited time and scope to organize meetings to discuss our provisional recommendations with students outside the committee. Nevertheless, we decided it would be worth holding a series of informal meetings in advance of submitting our report to the Provost. We sought out a number of students who held, or had recently held, some kind of formal representative role in their departments or divisions, were associated with a University-level committee, or had played a significant role within the student-organized discussions about graduate life in 2007 (for a list, see Attachment 2).

In early December, we held a number of meetings with students from HD, SSD and Divinity to discuss our proposals. These discussions were held in four meetings (each of approximately 2-2.5 hrs) between the Chair and small groups of students, ten in all. Most of them had some kind of representative role in their department or Division, or had been actively involved in reviewing student concerns about graduate aid last spring. Students were given a schematic list of the areas of our discussion and our recommendations and options (new grant proposals, teaching remuneration and roles, Advanced Residence Tuition, health insurance, international students, monitoring of student progress, and student representation).

In general, students were pleased with the various areas on which our Group focused and with many of our recommendations, had many thoughtful responses to offer. Here is a brief outline of their comments:

### *Grants*

Students were disappointed but not surprised that we were making no recommendations about systemic changes to current students' fellowship packages. They welcomed the possibility of new funds for graduate work, and spoke at length about each option. They were asked to reflect on each of our funding options, and invited to express a preference for one or more over others, if they had one.

Dissertation fellowships ("Option 1"): Students expressed great enthusiasm for a significant rise in write-up fellowships, and, when asked to rank the funding options, most placed this at the top, for several reasons. For some, the crucial point was that it would provide a level of funding that was far beyond most students' reach. For others, the opportunity to focus exclusively on writing for an entire year outweighed the benefits of funding at the earlier phases of research, because it was harder, they felt, to complete a major writing project when one's time was divided (by the need to work). Some students found most compelling the fact that this was the funding option for which the greatest number of students could apply.

All students emphasized the importance of including health insurance (and tuition) in write-up grants, something that we had not explicitly thought to specify in our original recommendations. This change seemed important and straightforward, and we have made it in the final version of our proposals.

Two-Phase grant program (Option 2): Two of the students expressed a preference for this funding structure over all others. One student argued that this plan offered "the best of both worlds" (immediate funds for most students who reached a certain stage of work, and an increase in access to competitive dissertation fellowships). The other student said that the \$3,000 "candidacy" stipend, whose level had been denigrated by most other students, should not be dismissed: it could provide seed money that could be used to raise further funds to support the research phase of doctoral work (this argument, and the student's preference, was provisional, and would change if teaching remuneration were improved; see Teaching below). A third student did not advocate either Options 1 or 2, but proposed instead that the administration consider creating a \$3000 stipend program for all students who have reached some benchmark (such as orals or candidacy), regardless of time in graduate study or current academic standing

All students (not only these two) recognized the value of the ideal of even funding that had inspired the graduate student representatives' advocacy of the \$3,000 candidacy grants. But many others argued strongly against this funding structure, on grounds that in many fields the proposed \$3,000 was not high enough to be worth the sacrifice of a large increase in write-up grants. They also argued that although the write-up grants did not supply equal funding to all students, they supplied at least as broad access (in the sense of eligibility to apply for funding) as the 3k grant program, and possibly greater access since students up to year 7 could apply for the dissertation fellowships. As much as they supported the principle of even funding, the practical merits of Option 2 were so much weaker, in their opinion, than a large increase in dissertation fellowships that the practical considerations of the two options made them choose Option 1.



Provost's summer stipend ("Option 3"): We were surprised that this proposal did not produce more discussion from students, who tended to pass it over without much comment. In part this may be because the funding option is familiar (since the summer stipend was introduced last spring). Several welcomed the significant increase in the numbers of these fellowships that we recommended, but were more generally less interested in discussing this structure than others. Students gave two reasons for this: they felt urgently the need for long-term, institutional changes to graduate student support, and regarded this short-term funding option (in a commonly-used term that surfaced in each meeting and was also used in reference to Phase 1 of Option 2) as a "Band-Aid". And when asked whether their views would change if this funding structure were to become permanent, students were still concerned, because of the eligibility constraints. More generally, students agreed that expanding these stipends, if it could be done alongside one of the longer-term funding options, would be welcomed, but students were nervous that supporting this option would make it less likely that longer-term funding structures, pitched at a high level for each fellowship, would be launched.

Departmental flexibility in admissions procedures ("Option 4"): Students welcomed the introduction of budgetary flexibility for departments in admissions, but they share our student representatives' concern that departments may not use this option, or may not choose to use it to increase the funding levels of students with the least funding.

### *Teaching*

All students were relieved to see the comparative data on teaching remuneration, which confirmed their sense that remuneration was very low. They also welcomed the development of guidelines about teaching roles, and urged that the university create some body or office to which students could send queries or information in confidence if they felt they were being asked to carry out inappropriate tasks. Several students also asked that the groups that will continue to examine teaching issues in the new year should teaching roles that are less well-known than the broad categories of TA and stand-alone lecturer (e.g. language instructor). Several Advanced Residence students pointed out that a rise in teaching remuneration was one of the few areas of our recommendations that would directly affect students in AR, and for this reason among many others should be emphasized. Another student, who had expressed enthusiasm for the two-phase grant proposal, said that a significant increase in teaching remuneration would change this calculation for her, because the \$3,000 "candidacy" stipend would then become "much more findable", whereas the dissertation fellowships (Option 1) would still represent an extraordinary opportunity that otherwise would remain out of reach.

All students stressed their wish for medical insurance to be linked to teaching (one term of medical insurance to accompany a term of teaching), a recommendation that the group as a whole has not made, but which the graduate representatives have stressed both in their conversations with the group and in their "perspectives" narrative (see Section IV).

### *Advanced Residence out of pocket tuition*

Students were happy with the recommendations to review and reduce the level of tuition, and for the recommendation to provide financial aid for AR1. However, students in

Advanced Residence thought the proposal to provide financial aid for AR1 did not go far enough. They pointed out that average times to degree, both in the three UC units under consideration by our Group, and in the relevant fields at peer institutions, were on the whole well over 6 years. They concluded that AR tuition represented a significant financial burden that was being laid on students well in advance of the time when even the speediest students could be expected to finish their doctoral work.

#### *Health insurance*

This was the one area where all students were disappointed in our recommendations. All students, regardless of field or length of time in the program, are deeply concerned about the cost and quality of health insurance and care at the University of Chicago. They recognize that health insurance and medical care are national problems, but still feel that what is available at the University of Chicago is well below what students can obtain at peer institutions. When they were told that what the University pays for health insurance is within the range of other institutions, they replied that this was a different matter from the benefits (in terms of cost and care) that students receive as a result of these payments. They argued that the University should be comparing itself to other institutions, not in what they spend, but what they are able to provide to students, since this is what students will care about when they are deciding between different programs.

The students with whom we met are worried about the high cost of premiums for those students (in AR) who must pay them; about the high level of out-of-pocket costs; and about the quality of health care that they receive. The greatest concerns relate to Advanced Residence, when all students are extremely worried about the predicament of mature students.

#### *International students*

Students expressed frustration at the little we had been able to accomplish in this area, though they also (particularly international students themselves) acknowledged the difficulty surrounding this particular cluster of issues. One student informed us that in planning meetings last spring, he and other students had urged that this particular issue would require its own committee, equipped with members or consultants who had special legal and financial expertise, and he urged that this possibility be revisited.

#### *Monitoring of student progress*

Several students emphasized the need for greater monitoring of student progress. Some expressed particular enthusiasm for the idea of an “exit interview”, on the grounds that students at this stage would feel more comfortable to speak freely about their experiences here. Students also wished to emphasize their sense that there was a need for more careful monitoring of students as they pass through the early stages of graduate work; they hoped that departments could be urged to reflect on how this could be improved, and that the administration could create some central means of tracking student progress (across departments).

#### *Student representation*

Students were enthusiastic about our proposals here, and gave reasons that were already drafted into our report.

## IV. Graduate representatives' perspectives

We asked our graduate representatives to author the following section. We hope it will provide useful perspectives on how they understand issues that are specific to the experiences of students admitted before 2007, and also that it will provide a richer context for understanding the contributions of our graduate representatives to the discussions of the group as a whole (summarized above in Section III).

*Background: the rationale behind student unrest*

President Zimmer's announcement of the new Graduate Aid Initiative (GAI) was met with both eagerness and dismay by current graduate students. Students were happy to see that the GAI would do much to improve the financial situation of incoming graduate students by offering many of them complete funding packages (tuition plus stipendiary support of \$19,000 per year for their first 5 years, with an additional two summers of \$3,000, plus teaching commitments in years 3-5.) However, they were disappointed that the reforms in graduate student funding were being offered only to future graduate students and not to the students who had suffered the most from the problems of wide disparities in funding and chronic underfunding which the Initiative intended to correct. Many students agreed with Zimmer's statement that "our graduate programs have distinguished the University and influenced graduate training across higher education," and that the university had an "obligation to support these programs at the highest level."<sup>1</sup> However, in omitting current graduate students from the benefits of the GAI, many students began to wonder if these lofty ideals were somewhat disingenuous.

Together, the GAI and the decision one year prior to extend health care coverage to all graduate students in years SR1-AR1 reflect a shift in both the priority and philosophy behind graduate student funding at the university. Prior to the Initiative, many departments chose to allocate graduate student funding on a competitive basis, creating tiered funding structures within departments. This meant that programs could have some doctoral students receiving no funding whatsoever (neither stipendiary support nor tuition remission). Although the number of students receiving no support has been reduced in recent years—for example the Humanities Division was able to offer a minimum of tuition to every admitted student from 2005 onward—many current students still struggle with little to no funding during their most intensive years of doctoral work. At the opposite end of the spectrum are the select few who received highest levels of funding, like the Century Fellowships, which provide approximately \$17,000 in annual stipendiary support for a minimum of four years.<sup>2</sup> The majority of students received funding

---

<sup>1</sup> Quotation from President Zimmer, University of Chicago News Office, February 7, 2007. [http://www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/07/070207\\_graduate.shtml](http://www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/07/070207_graduate.shtml)

<sup>2</sup> The exact dollar amount of Century Fellowships varies by division and occasionally by department. In 2006-07, Century Fellowships in the Humanities Division included full

packages somewhere in between these two extremes with roughly half of the current student body receiving stipends of at least \$12,000 per year, and nearly 25% receiving \$5,000 or less.

Through our committee's meetings with divisional deans and department chairs, several explanations were offered as to why departments favored the tiered funding structure. The primary motivation behind tiered funding was that programs could support a larger number of graduate students if they were offered smaller funding packages than they could if they were to only admit students they could fully support. At the departmental level, some faculty worry that small subfields would quickly collapse from lack of students if they were only able to admit the number of graduate students that they could fully support. A second argument in favor of tiered funding is that it allows programs to allocate a larger proportion of their financial resources to the most competitive applicants on a given year, thus enabling them to entice students whom they would otherwise not be able to attract. Finally, many faculty supported tiered funding based on its grounding in meritocracy. Funds are distributed unevenly because not all students perform at the same level. Tiered funding can thus give departments the flexibility to reward students who perform well in a given year, in turn providing incentive to other students to perform well.

While many graduate students understand these various rationales behind tiered funding, the consensus among students is that this uneven funding structure creates more problems than it solves. For example, instead of creating a richer and more diverse intellectual community vis-à-vis larger cohorts, tiered funding undermines these efforts to create an open and cooperative environment by making competition an ever-present part of student interactions. Students also struggle to make sense of the discrepancies in their levels of funding: underfunded students often wonder why they were considered to be worth less than their colleagues, while well-funded students may feel burdened by the constant pressure to demonstrate that they are deserving of greater financial support. Hence tiered funding may allow departments to entice and reward a select group of highly competitive students, but it does so at the expense of the quality of the cohort as a whole. Moreover, many graduate students feel that the meritocratic dimension of tiered funding begins to break down when we consider the fact that students admitted with smaller funding packages can never increase their support to a level comparable to that of students who were admitted with highest funding packages available regardless of how well they perform. Over time, the tiered funding structure becomes less a system of merit and more a system of caste. Students who enter with low levels of funding may indeed receive slight increases over time if they excel in their programs, but they will nevertheless remain locked in the lower funding echelons for the duration of their time as graduate students.

In short, the experience of many graduate students strongly suggests that the tiered funding structure not only fails as a solution to several very legitimate administrative and

---

tuition, insurance, and a stipend of \$18,000 for five years. The stipend was somewhat less for Century Fellowships offered in the Social Sciences Division, and the majority of these fellowships were granted for only four years. Neither division included summer stipends as part of their standard Century Fellowship.

departmental concerns, but it in fact also tends to exacerbate the very problems it is believed to solve. As a result, the tiered funding structure places a considerable burden on the shoulders of many current graduate students, making their overall experience as University of Chicago scholars more embittering than educational.

Another problem that results from the wide diversity of fellowship packages is that many students do receive some level of funding, but most are still chronically underfunded. Students may feel lucky to be receiving a stipend of \$3,000, \$5,000, or even \$10,000, but all of these packages fall dramatically short of the estimated cost of living for the nine-month academic year, currently estimated at \$19,560. The estimated cost of living for the twelve-month calendar year is \$26,080.<sup>3</sup> Thus even if many or all students in a department are receiving some stipendiary support, most will still be forced to have a secondary source of income to support them throughout their time in the program. For many this means seeking employment that is usually unrelated to their field of study, taking out loans, or both. For students on a \$10,000 stipend who have a secondary job that pays \$15 an hour, they would have to work 18.52 hr/wk throughout the nine month academic year to make the additional \$10,000 necessary to keep up with the cost of living. *In essence, many full-time students are being forced to relegate their academic work to part-time status.*

This system creates inequities in more than just a financial sense. Students working secondary jobs have less time for their academic work and are more likely to fall behind than their better-funded colleagues. Thus students who are singled-out at the time of admission of being less deserving of university resources are saddled with the double burden of being expected to perform as well as their colleagues while having less time to dedicate to their work. Hence, one of the key concerns of current graduate students that is frequently misunderstood is the desire for equality of opportunity. This is not an argument against merit, but it is an argument insisting that *merit can only begin to be fairly assessed if students are competing on an equal playing field.* The tiered funding structure ensures that they are not.

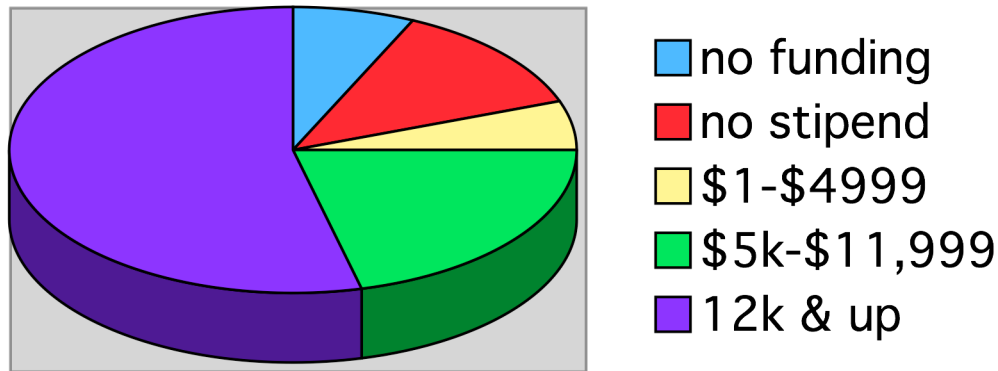
Finally, the mentality of continually committing more and more resources to future students seems to have created a condition of general neglect of the experience of graduate students once they have matriculated. While it is agreed that such forward-thinking approaches are necessary to maintain a competitive edge in graduate student recruitment with our peer institutions, healthy graduate programs require a balance of attention: the courtship process with attractive candidates lasts a few months, their experience as University of Chicago graduate students lasts many years, and their memories of that experience when they are alumni is just as vital to the health of the university as were those efforts to recruit them in the first place.

In this context, the significance of President Zimmer's Initiative cannot be understated. It marks a radical departure from the previous structure of graduate student funding, and puts the majority of graduate students on equal financial footing. Even those denied full fellowship packages in their first two years now have a guarantee of funding in their later

---

<sup>3</sup> From <http://gradfinancing.uchicago.edu/expenses/FinanceGradEd.pdf> as of 11/26/07.

# Graduate Student Stipends (SR1-AR1) Social Sciences, 2005-06



years assuming the make satisfactory academic progress. In short, the new Graduate Student Initiative has done much to revolutionize the University's approach to graduate student funding, as well as bringing the university's support of its graduate students within range of peer institutions, some of whom have been granting 5 years of full funding plus health insurance coverage to all accepted graduate students since the late 1990s.<sup>4</sup>

## *The Present: A Brief Overview of the Current Cohort*

One shortcoming of the competitive funding regime remains in the new Graduate Aid Initiative, the focus on recruitment and the relative blindness to the experiences of currently enrolled graduate students. A quick analysis of the situation of current graduate students funded on the older competitive model quickly reveals some of the lingering problems created by this structure.

54% of students in the Social Sciences Division make over \$12,000 in stipendiary support. The figures are roughly equivalent for students in the Humanities Division.<sup>5</sup>

While these numbers may, at first glance, appear favorable because more than half the current students receive significant financial support, closer inspection reveals that these numbers are actually revelatory of the huge financial burden placed on most current students. The cutoff used here to separate low-level from high-level funding packages is

---

<sup>4</sup> Data taken from an "in-house" report (held in the Office of the Vice President and Dean of Students) surveying graduate funding at other peer institutions.

<sup>5</sup> Data provided by the Humanities Division was not broken down into the same way as the Social Sciences. The Humanities data (provided in tables included in the main report) was divided into categories of no tuition, tuition only, stipends < \$5k, stipends 5k-9k, stipends 10k-15k, and stipends over 15k. Therefore we could not use the same figure of \$12k to distinguish between low-level and high-level funding, and hence chose to use the Social Sciences data exclusively for our example here. Our estimate for Humanities is based on splitting the number of students in the 10k-15k category in half. Based on that rough estimate, we calculate that approximately 54% of graduate students in the Humanities Division receive more than \$12k in stipendiary support.

\$12,000. This is less than half of the University's estimated cost of living for one year. This means that at least 46% of current students in the Social Sciences Division do not make even half the amount they must earn to support themselves during one full calendar year of their doctoral programs. Of the remaining 54% who do receive packages of \$12,000 or more, they still may fall up to \$14,000 short of the annual cost of living.

Data was not available to do more detailed analysis of the current funding situation, particularly for students who received higher levels of funding. What the limited data available to us did show clearly was that underfunding is not a problem that affects only a few current graduate students, it is endemic in the current funding structure. Based on the highest levels of funding packages offered prior to the GAI, the Century Fellowships, even the most generously funded students still made less than the annual estimated cost of living.<sup>6</sup> More importantly, Again, the consequences for these students as scholars should be clear: most doctoral students are forced by their financial situation either to put at least as much time into secondary jobs as they are putting into their academic training or they leave the university having accumulated significant debt in support of their education.

### *The Proposal to Zimmer: Graduate Students Speak with One Voice*

In response to the disillusionment felt by graduate students after the announcement of their exclusion from the GAI, doctoral students in the Divinity, Humanities, and Social Sciences Divisions spoke in a singularly unified voice to ask the University to address the problems created by the existing disparities in funding and the new disparity created by the GAI between old and new students. They submitted a Proposal for Changes to Current Doctoral Funding (attached in its entirety as Attachment 1) that identified six key areas in which inadequate financial support proved particularly burdensome to students.

These areas are as follows:

- Stipends
- Summer Funding
- Health Insurance
- Tuition
- Teaching
- International Students

This document was produced as the result of graduate student meetings in which representatives from 32 departments and committees across the three divisions met for well over 70 hours over the course of three months to discuss the problems created by the competitive funding structure, as well as to discuss the ideal ways in which these problems could be remedied. The document produced was the result of extensive deliberation on the part of graduate students: it resulted from town hall meetings with over 100 students in attendance and responses from 581 doctoral students polled in an online survey taken in April. Hence it warrants more than a superficial acknowledgment.

---

<sup>6</sup> Humanities students with Century Fellowships seemed to fair the best, receiving \$18,000 over five years in 2007. Social Sciences students received smaller stipends and only four years of support.

*The Proposal to Zimmer is perhaps the single most concise and articulate expression of graduate student concerns authored by graduate students themselves that the University has ever received, and while its specific recommendations may prove ultimately untenable for various reasons, this should be the starting point for any analysis of graduate student concerns.*

### Stipends/Summer Funding

The issue of stipends has already received some attention here. Stipends for graduate students in their first five years of graduate study (SR1-AR1) has, under the competitive funding model, fallen far short of what the university estimates the cost of living to be. A second, related concern, is that pre-Initiative graduate students by and large receive no additional summer funding. Remember that the calculated cost of living for the nine-month academic year alone is \$19,560. Even students with the best stipends must also receive a supplemental summer stipend in order to be able to fully cover their costs for the entire year. The need for additional summer funding should be quite clear based on the numbers of students who applied for the Provost's Summer Fellowships introduced last year. These fellowships, which provided the recipients with \$3,000 in funding over the summer, received 289 applications. Only 40 fellowships were awarded. This means 249 eligible students were forced to find alternative means of supporting themselves over the summer last year. When combined with the fact that only students in their first four years (SR1-SR4) of study were eligible for these fellowships, we estimate that at least another 100 students in their early stages of Advanced Residence were left without means of University summer support regardless of how successful they might be as students.

### Health Insurance

Graduate students were nearly unanimous in their concern about the costs related to health care at our university.<sup>7</sup> Students were aware that the university had recently taken steps to ameliorate the cost of health insurance for graduate students by fully subsidizing basic health care insurance for students in years SR1-AR1. However, many felt that given the average amount of time it takes to complete a doctoral program, stopping coverage at AR1 did not sufficiently aid students who were in the final stages of their programs. Many students hope that the university will reevaluate its calculation and ask whether AR2 is really the appropriate time to stop subsidizing health insurance premiums. Students realize that the University cannot subsidize health insurance indefinitely. They nevertheless believe that the University's goal should be to subsidize health insurance at least through the year that students are expected to finish and defend their dissertation, rather than force students who are in their final stages of the program to cope both with the loss of stipendiary support and additional fees to their quarterly bill.

Another option that students expressed great interest in would be the provision of health insurance coverage for students who are working for the University as teachers or research assistants. Current salaries for teaching assistants do not even cover the cost of one year of health insurance. The Basic plan costs \$1770 annually, while the Advantage

---

<sup>7</sup> In the graduate student survey in April, 489 of the 539 respondents, or 90%, voted in favor of requesting better health insurance coverage from the University. See Attachment 7, question 14.



plan costs \$2,724.<sup>8</sup> Teaching assistants, however, make only \$1500 per course. Providing health insurance to students who serve the University would help correct this current imbalance between the high cost of mandatory student fees and the relatively low income earned from University employment. At the same time, it would circumvent any objections that providing health insurance without any restrictions might encourage students to delay their graduation. It would also bring our University in line with many of its peer institutions who offer health care coverage to teaching assistants.<sup>9</sup>

### Tuition

These fees, although obviously they serve a purpose, burden graduate students at a time when their funding situation is the most precarious. Advanced Resident tuition begins typically in a graduate student's fifth year of doctoral research. The fees, which currently amount to an out-of-pocket cost to graduate students of \$2,352 per year (\$784 per quarter) comes at a stage when many graduate students no longer have any stipendiary support from the University. Many students prior to the GAI matriculated with funding packages guaranteeing only four years of support. Hence at the same time that their income disappears, they are expected to pay additional fees. 38% of graduate students in the Humanities Division in their first year of Advanced Residence for this 2007-08 academic year will be paying this out-of-pocket tuition cost. Given that nationwide average time-to-degree for social sciences and humanities programs is eight and nine years respectively<sup>10</sup>, students may pay up to \$7,000 in tuition fees alone in years 5-8 of their programs.

### Teaching

Teaching is as important to our graduate students' development as intellectuals and educators as it is to their current financial stability. Teaching salaries at the University of Chicago have not increased in over 8 years. Moreover, our rates of compensation for all levels of instruction (Teaching Assistanceships, Writing Interns, Lecturers, and Preceptors) lag far behind that of our peer institutions (see Attachment 6). While it is true that the University prides itself on being one of the few major research institutes that still relies primarily on having tenured faculty in the undergraduate classroom rather than graduate student instructors, this in no way explains or justifies the wholly inadequate teaching salaries currently in place. Even if teaching is considered a part of graduate training rather than as compensation for labor, the fact that graduate students cannot support themselves financially while teaching means that they again are not receiving the full benefit of that training. Their energies instead are being spent looking for support elsewhere.

If we examine the current pay rates more closely, we can see that *one full year serving as a teaching assistant in one course per quarter pays less than one quarter of the cost of living for the academic year*, or \$4,500. In short, it is impossible for any student not

---

<sup>8</sup> These are the 1007-08 figures taken from the SASI website.  
[http://studenthealth.uchicago.edu/studentinsurance/downloads/SASI\\_brochure.pdf](http://studenthealth.uchicago.edu/studentinsurance/downloads/SASI_brochure.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> This will be explained in more detail in the section on teaching.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas B. Hoffer and Vincent Welch, Jr. "Time to Degree of U.S. Research Doctorate Recipients," NSF document 06-312, (March 2006). <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/infbrief/nsf06312/nsf06312.pdf>

already receiving at least a \$15,000 stipend to support themselves during the academic year through consecutive teaching assistantships. Even a student who held one full lectureship every quarter for three quarters would only make \$10,500 for the year. This figure stands in stark contrast to graduate schools around the nation. In a report from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* published in October of 2004, of 64 universities who reported average annual stipends for teaching assistants in English departments, 55 of those universities offered stipends over \$10,000. Among those schools that participated in the survey who might be thought of as peer institutions, the average annual stipend for teaching assistants in English was over \$14,000.<sup>11</sup> It should also be noted that of the full 83 universities surveyed, 56% provided teaching assistants with health insurance as well. Even if these salaries and benefits are part of combined teaching-aid packages, it does not change the fact that *at our University students cannot support themselves financially through any combination of teaching positions.*

The *Chronicle's* survey data, combined with the data collected in Attachment 6, clearly demonstrate the inadequacy of our university's teaching salaries when compared to other institutions. More importantly for our students, the dismally low salaries paid to student instructors of all varieties here creates a situation in which teaching, one of the few jobs that a student can hold that directly aids in their professional development, is also a position few students can afford to take.

### Philosophical Divides: Competition versus Equity

It is impossible to deny that the situation for pre-Initiative doctoral students is, at best, troubling. The true difficulty that this situation presents is in how best to remedy it. There is currently a philosophical divide in the university community regarding the best way to produce successful graduate students. On one side are the proponents of the traditional competitive funding model. Competitive funding, they argue, gives students incentive to complete their programs in a timely fashion. It rewards the best performers, and in so doing encourages other students to perform to their utmost ability. It also often forces students to create concrete goals and develop feasible short-term projects as part of the application process to receive competitive funds. These factors combine to distribute funding to the only most worthy students and drive their further successes. The other side accords more with the rationale behind the new Graduate Aid Initiative, and indeed aligns more closely with the model set up at many of our peer institutes. This model (what we call here an equity-based model) provides support for all students, giving everyone an equal starting point at matriculation. Instead of being in a constant state of competition, it fosters a spirit of community and cooperation. Students are not propelled forward in their programs by a sense of panic at the prospect of facing another term with insufficient funding. Instead they make progress because they are able to devote themselves exclusively to their studies. This kind of funding also encourages all students to succeed, not only those handful dubbed the "most promising" at the time of admission. In theory, this kind of funding structure should lead to short times to degree (fewer

---

<sup>11</sup> Scott Smallwood, "The Stipend Gap," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (October 15, 2004).

students will be slowed down by the need to take on secondary work) and a greater likelihood of meeting departmental timelines throughout their graduate student careers.<sup>12</sup>

This philosophical divide sparks contentious debate in part because the lack of comprehensive centralized data on student funding as it correlates to things like time to candidacy, time to degree, number of hours worked in secondary jobs, and overall program satisfaction leaves both models backed largely by personal experience and anecdotal evidence. However inconsistent such evidence may be, the fact remains that the personal experiences of students and faculty indicate that both forms of funding structure can be efficacious in some respects and harmful in others. The recommendations of this Working Group have taken into consideration the wide variety of experiences and rationales behind each structure and tried to create a range of solutions to address the problems specific to different stages in students' doctoral programs. What the broader Working Group Report does not emphasize is that *we, as graduate students, urge the university to consider implementing most, if not all, of the Working Group's recommendations as quickly as possible.*

### *Graduate Student Conclusions*

We (the graduate students of the Working Group) wanted to furnish this additional section to make clear to the administration and Trustees of this university how the tiered funding structure has affected the lives and the academic work of the current students. While the proposal sent to President Zimmer last May has been criticized by university administrators and by many graduate students for suggesting a set of reforms whose total cost is prohibitively expensive, we hope that this section has made it clear that the financial hardships of current graduate students is not one that can be remedied cheaply.

As the table below shows, our recommendations are structured around the belief that current students will benefit most from different kinds of funding at different stages of their research. The recommendations, if treated as a package, are skewed toward making more opportunities immediately available to students in Advanced Residency. Over the long term, students currently in Scholastic Residence stand to benefit the most cumulatively. This we believe will help the cohorts who have received the least amount of funding and could benefit the most from an immediate boost in funding to complete their programs. At the same time, it follows in the logic of the GAI by proposing several improvements that will have long-term effects for all students.

---

<sup>12</sup> This section may seem to be at odd with the data furnished in Attachment 8 of the main document, however we should like to point out that here we are discussing over time-to-degree, not time-to-candidacy. We agree that more research within the university needs to be conducted on this, however indications from the previously cited NSF report by Hoffer and Welch suggests that time-to-degree does appear to be positively influenced by funding. See page 6 of that report.

	<b>Affects most students</b>	<b>Affects many students</b>	<b>Affects a limited number of students</b>
<b>SR1-SR4</b> SSD/HUM: years 1-4 DIV internal: years 1-2* DIV external: years 1-3*	Summer fellowships \$3,000		
<b>AR1</b> SSD/HUM: year 5 DIV internal: year 3 DIV external: year 4	Tuition remittance \$2,700	Increased teaching salaries w/ health insurance >\$2,400	
<b>AR2+</b> SSD/HUM: year 6+ DIV internal: year 4+ DIV external: year 5+	Tuition Aid <\$1,000	Increased teaching salaries w/ health insurance >\$2,400	Dissertation year fellowships \$25,000

We believe that if implemented fully, the combined effect of these proposals could resolve a number of the problems plaguing pre-GAI graduate students. Just as importantly, they will create an improved long-term experience for those entering classes under the GAI. These proposals together combine the funding philosophies currently at work in the University: using competitive funding for the later stages of candidacy when funding is the most sparse, while trying to make some small, but equitable changes that could ameliorate the often crushing financial constraints on students across the board.

Implementing these changes will not be inexpensive. However, we believe strongly that any less-expensive “band-aid” solution will fail to address the systemic nature of the problems in current graduate funding. All the recommendations put forward in this report are considerably more modest than those initially proposed by the graduate students, even though we have attempted to target all of the problem areas defined in their letter to President Zimmer. The Graduate Aid Initiative took the first step in eliminating a funding structure built on competition and calculated inequity. We hope that the University will show its genuine support for that measure by investing in the future of *all* of its graduate students, not only those who are yet to come.

# Attachment 1

## Letter from Graduate Students to President Zimmer, May 2007

TO: Robert J. Zimmer, President  
Thomas F. Rosenbaum, Provost  
David A. Greene, Vice President  
Martha Roth, Deputy Provost  
Martina Munsters, Deputy Dean of Students

FROM: Current Doctoral Students in the Divinity, Humanities, and Social Sciences Divisions

RE: **Proposal for Changes to Current Doctoral Funding**

---

The recent Presidential Funding Initiative demonstrates the University's dedication to continuing its legacy as a leader in academic excellence and graduate research. Current doctoral students unequivocally applaud the University's foresight and courage in making dramatic improvements to graduate funding. By its own terms, the Initiative recognizes that the financial struggles of extant students called for a renewed commitment to graduate funding.

The University has embraced this commitment, but it has failed to respond to the existing problem that generated the Initiative: the economic difficulties faced by the current doctoral population in the Divinity School, Humanities, and Social Sciences. In the University's attempts to bolster its competitive edge and to create parity with competing institutions, minimal resources have been dedicated to current graduate students. Only \$1.5 million, or 3%, of the Trustees' \$50 million commitment has been allocated to the current doctoral population.

The following proposal has emerged from the organized collaboration of students from 32 departments and committees in the Divinity, Humanities, and Social Sciences Divisions. A committee of student representatives from those departments has carefully created each component of this proposal, which was ratified and refined according to input received from an online survey that over 580 students participated in.

### **Stipends**

*The University has committed to providing incoming students with five years of stipend funding at \$19,000/yr. By making this gesture, the University has dedicated itself to supporting much of the cost of living during the academic year. The University "Graduate Guide to Student Loans and Federal Work Study" states that the estimated personal cost of living will be \$21,921 for the 2007-2008 9-month academic year. Current doctoral students in our divisions receive stipends unacceptably lower than this base cost of living estimate.*

- All students within the first five years of their doctoral program shall receive a stipend of \$19,000 for the remainder of their first five years of the Ph.D.

### **Summer Stipend**

*Doctoral students are expected to work towards their degree twelve months of the year. Without funding for summer studies, current students are forced to seek summer employment, resulting in*

*the lengthening of time to complete degree requirements. The limited quantity of competitive summer stipends currently available is grossly inadequate for addressing this problem.*

- All graduate students in their first twelve years of doctoral work shall receive two summer stipends of \$3000, pending departmental confirmation of sufficient academic progress towards the degree.

#### **Health Insurance**

*The University has acknowledged that healthcare is essential for students' intellectual and personal productivity. There is no compelling reason why this coverage should be limited to students in their first five years of doctoral study.*

- All students shall receive full health insurance coverage in their first twelve years of doctoral work. Students beyond their twelfth year shall have the option of purchasing the student health insurance plan.

#### **Tuition**

*Doctoral tuition and fees present an unnecessary and frequently crushing financial burden to students, slowing their progress toward degree and forcing them to focus on subsistence rather than scholarship.*

- Academic tuition and fees shall be waived for all students in their first twelve years of doctoral research.

#### **Teaching**

*Within our divisions, compensation for teaching positions has not been increased or adjusted since 1998, resulting in a net decrease in real personal income. The University lags far behind its peer institutions in this regard. Additionally, because the University does not have clear guidelines for teaching responsibilities, teaching assistants who feel exploited have little or no recourse. We appreciate the University's assurance that teaching opportunities will not fall below their current level.*

- Compensation for teaching assistants, instructors, and preceptors at the University of Chicago shall be raised to a level that matches the yearly pay for equivalent positions at peer institutions; this amount should be adjusted for cost of living increases on an annual basis.
- The University shall establish clear guidelines for the duties and responsibilities of teaching assistant positions, including the maximum number of hours required.
- Each year, the University shall demonstrate empirically that the current level of teaching assistant positions has not diminished as a result of the recent funding initiative.

#### **International Students**

- The University shall recognize the financial hardships of international students. Towards this end, the university shall create grant opportunities to serve in the place of funding available only to U.S. citizens, and in an ongoing dialogue with international students, the University will investigate additional ways to address their specific financial challenges.

We are confident that the Administration understands the importance of each of these issues, and we look forward to continuing to work with you on them.

## Attachment 2

### Meetings with students, faculty, and administrators

#### Individuals with whom the committee met:

Cathy Cohen, Deputy Provost for Graduate Education  
Simrit Dhesi, Financial Analyst, Office of Financial Planning and Budget  
Brad Geene, Financial Analyst, Office of Financial Planning and Budget  
Kim Goff-Crews, Vice-President and Dean of Students  
Patrick Hall, Dean of Students, Division of Social Sciences  
Mark Hansen, Dean, Division of Social Sciences  
Teresa Hord Owens, Dean of Students, Divinity School  
Tom Rosenbaum, Provost  
Richard Rosengarten, Dean, Divinity School

#### Individuals with whom Alison Winter met:

Irene Backus, Graduate Student, Department of Art History, and member of  
Advisory Board to the Dean of the Humanities  
Alexander Blanchette, Graduate Student, Department of Anthropology  
Catherine Fennell, 7<sup>th</sup> year Graduate Student, Department of Anthropology,  
Student-Faculty liaison committee, Department of Anthropology (2000-3)  
Bill Brown, Chair, Department of English  
Dan Brudney, Director of Graduate Studies, Dept. Philosophy  
Elizabeth Chandler, Director, Center for Teaching and Learning  
James Chandler, Director, Franke Institute for the Humanities  
Elisabeth Clemens, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies,  
Department of Sociology  
Jim Conant, Chair, Department of Philosophy  
Bruce Cumings, Chair, Department of History  
Peter Dorman, Chair, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations  
Andrew Graan, 9<sup>th</sup> year Graduate student, Department of Anthropology  
Patrick Hall, Dean of Students, Division of Social Sciences  
Katherine Hill, Graduate Student, Department of Slavic Languages and Literature,  
and member of Advisory Board to the Dean of the Humanities  
Adrian Johns, Chair, Conceptual and Historical Studies of Science  
John Kelly, Chair, Department of Anthropology  
Monica Lee, Graduate student in Anthropology and Co-president, of Sociology  
Student Organization  
Averill Leslie, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Graduate Student, Department of Anthropology, Graduate  
Council Committee on Graduate Aid  
Katherina Loew, Graduate Student, Department of Cinema & Media  
Studies/Germanic, and member of Advisory Board to the Dean of the  
Humanities  
David P. Lyons, 4<sup>th</sup> year Graduate Student, Divinity School  
Howard Nusbaum, Chair, Department of Psychology  
Philip Reny, Chair, Department of Economics  
Richard Rosengarten, Dean, Divinity School  
Martha Roth, Dean, Division of Humanities

Dana Rovang, 4<sup>th</sup> year Graduate Student in Committee on Conceptual and Historical Studies of Science, and member of Advisory Board to the Dean of the Humanities

Erica Simmons, 3rd year Graduate Student, Department of Political Science, and Graduate Liaison to Board of Trustees



### Attachment 3:

#### Mellon Dissertation Fellowship graduation data, 1995-2006

We examined graduation data for students supported by Mellon Dissertation Fellowships in the Division of Social Sciences over the past decade (This is the sole fellowship for which the Social Sciences Division tracks this kind of data). According to the Dean of Students for Social Sciences, Patrick Hall, the graduation results for this fellowship are slightly poorer than for the other fellowships offered in Social Sciences, so this information can be treated as a conservative estimate of the results one might expect from a strengthened dissertation fellowship program.

We would like to point out that, over the past few years for which graduation data is available, almost all recipients completed their dissertations within a year of the end of the Mellon Fellowship (7/8 of those whose fellowships began in 2005, and 7/8 of those whose fellowships began in 2004).

#### *Mellon Dissertation fellowships graduation data*

AcYr	number of awards	graduated	graduated or other status	graduated or other status	graduated or other status
1995	12	10 in 1996-98	1 in 1999	1 in 2000	
1996	17	16 in 1997-99	1 withdrew 1999		
1997	13	10 in 1998-99	3 in 2000		
1998	14	10 in 1999-00	1 withdrew	1 in 2001	
1999	12	10 in 2000-01	1 in 2002	1 in 2003	
2000	13	12 in 01 or 02	1 in 2003		
2001	8	6 in 02 or 03	1 in 2004	1 withdrew	
2002	7	4 in 03 or 04	1 in 2005	1 in 2006	1 registered
2003	8	4 in 04 or 05	4 in 2006 or 07		
2004	8	7 in 05 or 06	1 registered		
2005	8	7 in 06 or 07	1 registered		

## Attachment 4

### Table of costs for each of our recommendations

<b>Phase 1</b>				
Students in SR2 - AR1 to receive once a \$3000 stipend at candidacy and number of dissertation fellowships at \$25,000 for after AR1				
<b>fiscal year</b>	<b>FY09</b>	<b>FY10</b>	<b>FY11</b>	<b>FY12</b>
<b>current students</b>	<b>AR1</b>	<b>SR4</b>	<b>SR3</b>	<b>SR2</b>
Hum	102	110	84	71
SSD	120	119	106	124
DIV	19	23	19	19
Total	241	252	209	214
cost of stipend	\$723,000	\$756,000	\$627,000	\$642,000
10 fellowships	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>\$973,000</b>	<b>\$1,006,000</b>	<b>\$877,000</b>	<b>\$892,000</b>
<b>Assumptions</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for Hum and SSD assume a 10% attrition for SR4</li> <li>• for Hum and SSD assume a 20% attrition for SR2 and SR3</li> <li>• for Div assume no attrition in number for SR2 and SR3</li> <li>• for Div SR4 cohort seems large - assume 10% attrition</li> <li>• includes current students in Pro Forma and on LOA</li> <li>• based on FY08 census data</li> </ul>				
<b>Phase 2</b>				<b>cost per year</b>
Effective FY13, 40 dissertation fellowships of \$25,000				\$1,000,000

#### **Option 3: Increase in Provost Summer Stipend (2008-2010)**

Cost for summer 2008: \$300,000 (cost of stipends only)

Cost for summer 2009: \$225,000 (cost of stipends only)

#### **Option 4: Administrative flexibility in graduate admissions budget**

Cost: Nothing new from the center

## Attachment 5

### Calculations of cost of student requests to President Zimmer

#### A. Funding packet for students in SR2 thru AR1 calculated at the level of package for students in SR1\*

	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
<b>Number of students</b>				
Hum	416	314	192	88
SSD	527	407	275	155
Div	78	59	33	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>1021</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>Cost per student</b>				
tuition	36,666	38,499	40,424	42,445
stipend	19,000	19,000	19,000	19,000
summer	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
insurance	1,770	1,859	1,951	2,049
<b>Total</b>	<b>58,936</b>	<b>60,858</b>	<b>62,876</b>	<b>64,994</b>
<b>Cost all students</b>				
Hum	\$24,517,376	\$19,109,349	\$12,072,132	\$5,719,514
SSD	\$31,059,272	\$24,769,125	\$17,290,815	\$10,074,144
Div	\$4,597,008	\$3,590,610	\$2,074,898	\$714,939
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60,173,656</b>	<b>\$47,469,084</b>	<b>\$31,437,845</b>	<b>\$16,508,597</b>
<b>Current cost of support</b>				
Hum**	\$19,923,446	\$15,373,435	\$9,680,225	\$4,111,061
SSD**	\$19,560,887	\$14,906,151	\$10,405,896	\$5,890,975
Div	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Center insurance**	\$817,740	\$492,503	\$160,017	\$92,205
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$40,302,073</b>	<b>\$30,772,089</b>	<b>\$20,246,138</b>	<b>\$10,094,241</b>
<b>Additional cost to the University to support student request</b>				
	\$19,871,583	\$16,696,995	\$11,191,707	\$6,414,356
<b>Additional cost to the University from FY08-FY11</b>				<b>\$54,174,641</b>
<p><b>* Assumptions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all Hum, SSD, Div doctoral students in SR2-AR1</li> <li>• 19k each, 2x 3k summer, insurance, no tuition</li> <li>• based on FY08 census data</li> </ul> <p>** these figures based on last year information from Budget office</p>				

**B. Summer Stipends for Students in SR2 thru AR8**

<b>Number of students in AR2 – AR8</b>							
	<b>AR2</b>	<b>AR3</b>	<b>AR4</b>	<b>AR5</b>	<b>AR6</b>	<b>AR7</b>	<b>AR8</b>
Hum	81	79	64	56	22	24	11
SSD	116	80	65	35	27	37	13
Div	26	16	16	18	15	7	13
	<b>223</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Cost for 2 summer stipends for students in AR2 – AR5</b>							
	<b>AR2</b>	<b>AR3</b>	<b>AR4</b>	<b>AR5</b>			
Hum	\$486,000	\$474,000	\$384,000	\$336,000			
SSD	\$696,000	\$480,000	\$390,000	\$210,000			
Div	\$156,000	\$96,000	\$96,000	\$108,000			
	<b>\$1,338,000</b>	<b>\$1,050,000</b>	<b>\$870,000</b>	<b>\$654,000</b>	\$3,912,000		
<b>Cost for 1 summer stipend for students in AR6 – AR8</b>							
	<b>AR6</b>	<b>AR7</b>	<b>AR8</b>				
Hum	\$66,000	\$72,000	\$33,000				
SSD	\$81,000	\$111,000	\$39,000				
Div	\$45,000	\$21,000	\$39,000				
	<b>\$192,000</b>	<b>\$204,000</b>	<b>\$111,000</b>		\$507,000		
Total cost of providing summer stipends for current students							\$4,419,000
Current Provost summer stipends							\$240,000
<b>Additional cost to provide summer stipends</b>							<b>\$4,179,000</b>
<b>Assumptions</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all current students in Hum, SSD, Div in AR2-AR8 to receive 1 or 2 summer stipends</li> <li>• students through AR5 will each receive 2x \$3k summer stipend</li> <li>• students in AR6-AR8 will each receive 1x \$3k summer stipend</li> <li>• based on FY08 census data</li> </ul>							

**C. AR out of pocket tuition and fees aid for students in AR2 – AR8**

<b>Fiscal</b>	<b>FY8</b>	<b>FY9</b>	<b>FY10</b>	<b>FY11</b>	<b>FY12</b>	<b>FY13</b>	<b>FY14</b>
<b>Number of students</b>							
Hum	337	256	177	113	57	35	11
SSD	381	265	185	120	85	58	21
Div	111	85	69	53	35	20	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Cost per student</b>							
AR out of pocket	\$2,352	\$2,470	\$2,593	\$2,723	\$2,859	\$3,002	\$3,152
student fees	\$639	\$671	\$704	\$740	\$777	\$816	\$856
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,991</b>	<b>\$3,141</b>	<b>\$3,298</b>	<b>\$3,462</b>	<b>\$3,636</b>	<b>\$3,817</b>	<b>\$4,008</b>
<b>Cost all students</b>							
Hum	\$1,007,967	\$803,981	\$583,671	\$391,258	\$207,228	\$133,608	\$44,090
SSD	\$1,139,571	\$832,246	\$610,052	\$415,495	\$309,024	\$221,407	\$84,173
Div	\$332,001	\$266,947	\$227,533	\$183,510	\$127,245	\$76,347	\$52,107
<b>Cost to the University to support student request</b>							<b>\$8,049,460</b>
<b>Assumptions</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only current Hum, SSD, Div doctoral students thru AR2-AR8</li> <li>• assume 5% increases per year</li> <li>• does not consider extending AR tuition out of pocket aid for current SR1 and future students</li> <li>• based on FY08 census data</li> </ul>							

**D. Student Health Insurance premiums coverage for students in AR2 – AR8**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>FY8</b>	<b>FY9</b>	<b>FY10</b>	<b>FY11</b>	<b>FY12</b>	<b>FY13</b>	<b>FY14</b>
<b>Number of students</b>							
Hum	337	256	177	113	57	35	11
SSD	381	265	185	120	85	58	21
Div	111	85	69	53	35	20	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Insurance cost</b>							
	\$1,770	\$1,912	\$2,065	\$2,230	\$2,408	\$2,601	\$2,809
<b>Cost all students</b>							
Hum	\$596,490	\$489,370	\$365,421	\$251,955	\$137,260	\$91,025	\$30,896
SSD	\$674,370	\$506,574	\$381,938	\$267,563	\$204,686	\$150,841	\$58,984
Div	\$196,470	\$162,486	\$142,452	\$118,174	\$84,282	\$52,014	\$36,514
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,467,330</b>	<b>\$1,158,430</b>	<b>\$889,812</b>	<b>\$637,691</b>	<b>\$426,228</b>	<b>\$293,880</b>	<b>\$126,395</b>
<b>Cost to the University to support student request</b>							<b>\$4,999,765</b>
<b>Assumptions</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only current Hum, SSD, Div doctoral students thru AR2-AR8</li> <li>• assume 5% increases per year</li> <li>• does not consider extending insurance premium coverage for current SR1 and future students</li> <li>• based on FY08 census data</li> </ul>							

## Attachment 6

### Teaching remuneration: Comparison between University of Chicago and peer institutions

The Working Group would like to thank Erica Simmons, Graduate Liaison to the Board of Trustees, for the very considerable work that she undertook to compile this data.

<b>Graduate Student Teaching Salaries</b>	
<b>Analysis:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not one school listed has wages per 20-hour week lower than the University of Chicago.</li> <li>• The range of salaries is \$3,422-\$9,777 for 11 weeks of work with a 20-hour work week.</li> <li>• These salaries are \$1,422-\$7,777 above the U of C standard TA rate for 11 weeks of work, 20 hrs/wk</li> </ul>	
The minimum wage rate per 20 hour week and 11 weeks of work is at Chicago	\$2,000.00
The maximum wage rate per 20 hour week and 11 weeks of work is at Cornell	\$9,777.78
The average rate per 20 hour week and 11 weeks of work at other schools sampled	\$5,868.40
The median rate per 20 hour week and 11 weeks of work at other schools sampled is	\$5,018.10

<b>School</b>	<b>Hrs/wk</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Salary</b>
<b>Yale</b>			
TF 1	5	Grading, reading, attending class. No independent teaching	\$2,320
TF2	10	Grading, leading discussion section (no more than 20)	\$4,640
TF3	15	Grading, leading discussion section (possibly 2)	\$6,960
TF3.5	17.5	Grading, leading section in lit/arts. No more than 18	\$8,120
TF4	20	Grading, leading discussion, 2 sections, hum & soc. sci.	\$9,280
PTAI	Varied	Grading, leading small seminar with faculty supervision	\$9,380
<b>Berkeley</b>			
GS1	40	NA	\$3,278
GS2	40	NA	\$3,456
GS3	40	NA	\$3,627
GS4	40	NA	\$3,902
<b>Harvard</b>			
Gov TF	8	Grading, leading discussion section, no more than 18 stu.	\$4,560
Gov Soph Tutorial	14.4	Grading, leading discussion section, no more than 18 stu.	\$8,208
Gov Jr Tutorial	10	Grading, leading discussion section, no more than 18 stu.	\$5,700
Gov Sr Thesis advising	3.2	Individual senior thesis advising	\$1,824
Gov Sr Thesis writing tut.	4	Group senior thesis advising	\$2,280

<b>Brown</b>			
TA	15	Grading, leading discussion section	\$9,250
Seminar leader	25	Design, teach your own course	\$9,500

<b>Cornell</b>			
TA	15	Grading, leading discussion section	\$10,000

<b>NYU</b>			
TA (2004-2005 )	20	Grading, proctoring, and office hours	\$9,000

<b>Columbia University</b>			
TA	15	Grading, leading discussion section	\$3,500

<b>University of Michigan</b>			
TA			

<b>Univ. of Wis. Madison</b>			
Inexperienced TA (2003)	16.4	Grading, leading discussion for four sections	\$4,618
Experienced TA (2003)	16.4	Grading, leading discussion for four sections	\$4,961
Senior TA (2003)	16.4	Grading, leading discussion for four sections	\$5,781
AVERAGE			

<b>Northwestern</b>			
TA	20	Grading, leading discussion section, 3 sections	\$4,905
Lectureship (school of cont. ed)	20	Grading, Teaching their own course	\$3,500
AVERAGE			

<b>UIC</b>			
TF	20	Grading three sections (and leading discussion?)	\$6,750
Seminar leader	20	Stand alone course	\$5,000
AVERAGE			

<b>UI-UC</b>			
TF	20		\$7,426

<b>Columbia College (Chicago)</b>			
Seminar instructor	20	Grade two sections, lead discussion	\$7,000

<b>University of Chicago</b>			
TA (SS, HM)	15	Grading, often leading discussion sections	\$1,500
BA preceptor	10	Advising BA theses. Meet weekly thru the year	\$6,000
TF (Harris)	20	Grading, leading discussion section	\$2,000
Seminar Leader	25	Developing and teaching your own seminar	\$3,500

Note: Columbia has a 21k stipend plus two summers at \$2,500. The stipend is docked by \$3,500 per course taught until the time when the student no longer receives a stipend at which point they receive the wage listed here.

School	System	Wks per unit	Hourly	Annual	Quarter Equivalent	Quarter Equivalent 20hrs/wk	More than U of C rate
<b>Yale</b>							
TF 1	Sem	15	\$30.93	\$4,640	\$1,701.33	<b>\$6,805.33</b>	\$4,805.33
TF2	Sem	15	\$30.93	\$9,280	\$3,402.67	<b>\$6,805.33</b>	\$4,805.33
TF3	Sem	15	\$30.93	\$13,920	\$5,104.00	<b>\$6,805.33</b>	\$4,805.33
TF3.5	Sem	15	\$30.93	\$16,240	\$5,954.67	<b>\$6,805.33</b>	\$4,805.33
TF4	Sem	15	\$30.93	\$18,560	\$6,805.33	<b>\$6,805.33</b>	\$4,805.33
PTAI	Sem	15	NA	\$18,760	\$6,878.67	<b>NA</b>	
AVERAGE						<b>\$6,805.33</b>	
<b>Berkeley</b>							
GS1	Mnthly	NA	\$20.49		\$9,015.05	<b>\$4,507.53</b>	\$2,507.53
GS2	Mnthly	NA	\$21.60		\$9,503.18	<b>\$4,751.59</b>	\$2,751.59
GS3	Mnthly	NA	\$22.67		\$9,975.08	<b>\$4,987.54</b>	\$2,987.54
GS4	Mnthly	NA	\$24.39		\$10,729.68	<b>\$5,364.84</b>	\$3,364.84
AVERAGE						<b>\$4,902.87</b>	\$2,902.87
<b>Harvard</b>							
Gov TF	Sem	14	\$40.71	\$9,120	\$3,582.86	<b>\$8,957.14</b>	\$6,957.14
Gov Soph Tutorial	Sem	14	\$40.71	\$16,416	\$6,449.14	<b>\$8,957.14</b>	\$6,957.14
Gov Jr Tutorial	Sem	14	\$40.71	\$11,400	\$4,478.57	<b>\$8,957.14</b>	\$6,957.14
Gov Sr Thesis advising	Sem	14	\$40.71	\$3,648	\$1,433.14	<b>\$8,957.14</b>	\$6,957.14
Gov Sr Thesis writing tut.	Sem	14	\$40.71	\$4,560	\$1,791.43	<b>\$8,957.14</b>	\$6,957.14
AVERAGE						<b>\$8,957.14</b>	\$6,957.14
<b>Brown</b>							
TA	Sem	15	\$41.11		\$6,783.33	<b>\$9,044.44</b>	
Seminar leader	Sem	15	\$25.33		\$6,966.67	<b>\$5,573.33</b>	
AVERAGE						<b>\$7,308.89</b>	
<b>Cornell</b>							
TA	Sem	15	\$44.44	\$20,000	\$7,333.33	<b>\$9,777.78</b>	\$7,777.78
<b>NYU</b>							
TA (2004-2005 )	Sem	15	\$30.00	\$18,000	\$6,600.00	<b>\$6,600.00</b>	\$4,600.00
<b>Columbia University</b>							
TA	Sem	15	\$15.56	\$7,000	\$2,566.67	<b>\$3,422.22</b>	\$1,422.22
<b>University of Michigan</b>							
TA						<b>\$4,846.25</b>	\$2,846.25
<b>University of Wisconsin-Madison</b>							
Inexperienced TA (2003)	Sem	15	\$18.77		\$3,386.26	<b>\$4,129.58</b>	\$2,129.58
Experienced TA (2003)	Sem	15	\$20.17		\$3,638.07	<b>\$4,436.67</b>	\$2,436.67
Senior TA (2003)	Sem	15	\$23.50		\$4,239.40	<b>\$5,170.00</b>	\$3,170.00
AVERAGE						<b>\$4,578.75</b>	
<b>Northwestern</b>							
TA	Qtr	11	\$22.30		\$4,905.00	<b>\$4,905.00</b>	\$2,905.00
Lectureship (cont. ed)	Qtr	11	\$15.91		\$3,500.00	<b>\$3,500.00</b>	\$1,500.00
AVERAGE						<b>\$4,202.50</b>	



<b>UIC</b>							
TF	Sem	15	\$22.50	\$13,500	\$4,950.00	<b>\$4,950.00</b>	\$2,950.00
Seminar leader	Sem	15	\$16.67	\$10,000	\$3,666.67	<b>\$3,666.67</b>	\$1,666.67
AVERAGE						<b>\$4,308.33</b>	
<b>UI-UC</b>							
TF	Sem	15	\$24.75		\$5,445.73	<b>\$5,445.73</b>	\$3,445.73
<b>Columbia College (Chicago)</b>							
Seminar instructor	Sem	15	\$23.33	\$14,000	\$5,133.33	<b>\$5,133.33</b>	\$3,133.33
<b>University of Chicago</b>							
TA (SS, HM)	Qtr	11	\$9.09	\$4,500	\$ 1,500.00	<b>\$ 2,000.00</b>	
BA preceptor	Year	33	\$18.18	\$6,000	\$ 2,000.00	<b>\$ 4,000.00</b>	
TF (Harris)	Qtr	11	\$9.09	\$6,000	\$ 2,000.00	<b>\$ 2,000.00</b>	
Seminar Leader	Qtr	11	\$12.73	\$10,500	\$ 3,500.00	<b>\$ 2,800.00</b>	

## Attachment 7

### Student-run questionnaire on graduate concerns, May 2007

The Working Group would like to thank the Graduate Council Committee on Graduate Aid for permission to include this questionnaire in our Report. The questionnaire was circulated in April 2007, in the context of discussions of how to communicate students' concerns to the President. It is important to consider this defining context when examining students' answers, bearing in mind that they were tailored to the goal of producing a proposal for increased support, rather than an open-ended expression of concerns.

The purpose of this survey is to gather information from graduate students about their current funding priorities. Your participation will increase our leverage as we work with the university in an attempt to secure better funding for current graduate students. As you fill out this survey, please consider not only what would be beneficial to you, but also what you feel ought to be included in a proposal to the University administration. Your feedback is very important to us, so please take a few moments to fill this out! If you have any additional comments or questions, you can contact us at [uchicagophdfunding@gmail.com](mailto:uchicagophdfunding@gmail.com) Thank you for participating.

GENERAL INFORMATION: Your responses to the following questions will help us represent you to the University Administration. Results are anonymous. If you do not feel comfortable answering, please skip ahead to question 4.

1. Your department

[View 530 Responses](#)

2. Your year

First-year	129	24%
Second-year	83	15%
Third-year	81	15%
Fourth-year	72	13%
Fifth-year	56	10%
Sixth-year	44	8%
Seventh-year	33	6%
Eighth-year +	41	8%
Total	539	100%

3. Your funding history (e.g. current/past stipend levels, number of years funded at those levels, teaching requirements if any)

[View 494 Responses](#)

4. PRIORITIZE: On which funding category would you most like for our proposal to focus? Please rank in order of importance from 1-6, 1 being MOST important, 6 being LEAST. Feel free to leave categories blank if you think they are NOT important.

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option.

Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Stipends	155 31%	105 21%	69 14%	56 11%	61 12%	59 12%
Teaching	49 10%	82 17%	111 22%	144 29%	88 18%	21 4%
Summer Funding	44 9%	109 22%	111 22%	106 21%	100 20%	25 5%
Health Insurance	88 17%	108 21%	127 25%	97 19%	64 12%	28 5%
Tuition	97 19%	84 17%	72 14%	76 15%	134 27%	38 8%
Other (please specify later)	35 22%	9 6%	10 6%	5 3%	17 11%	84 52%

The following items are current components of a proposal drafted by an interdepartmental group of graduate students, to be brought before the administration by the end of this school year. Please indicate whether or not you would want to see the following items

included in our proposal.

**STIPENDS:**

5. I would like the proposal to include a request for 19K for 5 years (all students within their first five years to get 19K for each of their remaining first five years--ie, parity with incoming students)

Do not want in the proposal	69	13%
	27	5%
	61	11%
	80	15%
Strongly want in the proposal	301	56%
Total	538	100%

6. Comments on stipends:

[View 231 Responses](#)

**TEACHING:**

7. I would like the proposal to include a provision requesting pay for 1 year's worth of teaching at UofC to be made equal to one year's worth of teaching at peer institutions

Do not want in the proposal	28	5%
	22	4%
	75	14%
	104	19%
Strongly want in the proposal	309	57%
Total	538	100%

8. I would like the proposal to request the establishment of a common TA pool

Do not want in the proposal	71	14%
	58	12%
	203	41%
	79	16%
Strongly want in the proposal	88	18%
Total	499	100%

9. I would like the proposal to include the 'teaching promise': Administration keeps its promise that availability of teaching positions for current students not fall below the current level, and that it empirically demonstrate this each quarter.

Do not want in the proposal	43	8%
	48	9%
	121	23%
	115	22%
Strongly want in the proposal	198	38%
Total	525	100%

10. I would like the proposal to include a provision calling for a reduction in the class size necessary to qualify for a TA to 17 from 25.

Do not want in the proposal	40	8%
	46	9%
	123	23%
	136	26%
Strongly want in the proposal	182	35%
Total	527	100%

11. Comments on teaching:

[View 181 Responses](#)

**SUMMER FUNDING:**

12. I would like the proposal to ask for 2 summers of funding at \$3000 each for all Graduate Students enrolled in doctoral programs regardless of residency status.

Do not want in the proposal	27	5%
	22	4%
	65	12%
	113	21%

Strongly want in the proposal		309 58%
Total		536 100%





13. Comments on summer funding:

[View 176 Responses](#)

HEALTH INSURANCE:

14. I would like the proposal to request Full Health Insurance for all students in scholastic residence + 1 year, and for all students beyond 5th year who are emp U of C in any capacity (e.g. in RA, TA or lecture positions).






Do not

want in the proposal		48 9%
		43 8%
		96 18%
		107 20%

Strongly

want in the proposal		231 44%
Total		525 100%

15. I would like the proposal to request that domestic partners and children options be made comparable to faculty options.

Do not want in the proposal		48 9%
		43 8%
		96 18%
		107 20%
Strongly want in the proposal		231 44%
Total		525 100%

16. Comments on health insurance:

[View 156 Responses](#)

TUITION:

17. I would like the proposal to include a request that all tuition and all Advanced Residency fees be waived for Scholastic Residency, Advanced Residency & Extended Residency.

Do not

want in the proposal		34 6%
		15 3%
		63 12%
		83 16%

Strongly

want in the proposal		338 63%
Total		533 100%

18. Comments on tuition:

[View 129 Responses](#)

OTHER:

19. I would like the proposal to include a request that Research Assistant-ships have a baseline minimum wage for all RA-ships on campus \$15/hr for students with B.A.s and \$20/hr for students with M.A.s






Do not want in the proposal		44 8%
		50 10%
		141 27%
		124 24%
Strongly want in the proposal		162 31%
Total		521 100%

20. I would like the proposal to request that University guarantees low-interest loans to International students at comparable rates to Federal loans.






Do not want in the proposal		55 11%
		48 9%
		135 26%
		115 22%

Strongly want in the proposal		168	32%
Total		521	100%






21. I would like the proposal to request that the University start an office that takes in commercial translation work for international students

Do not want in the proposal		118	23%
		79	16%
		150	29%
		75	15%
Strongly want in the proposal		87	17%
Total		509	100%

22. I would like the proposal to request the University provide competitive grants for international students to take the place of funding opportunities only available to US citizens (eg.FLAS, Jarvis, NSF etc.) These grants would give priority to students from countries that do not have comparable funding to the US.

Do not want in the proposal		75	15%
		72	14%
		119	23%
		97	19%
Strongly want in the proposal		151	29%
Total		514	100%

23. I would like the proposal to request the creation of a Dissertation Start-up Grant that would competitively fund students in the initial stages of their dissertation research.

Do not want in the proposal		39	7%
		30	6%
		112	21%
		128	24%
Strongly want in the proposal		221	42%
Total		530	100%

24. Comments on "other":

[View 125 Responses](#)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

## **Attachment 8**

### **Times to orals and candidacy**

The topic of time-to-orals and time-to-candidacy has come up in many of our discussions. One of our recommendations ties funding to candidacy; other recommendations assume that it is reasonable to expect students to have carried out sufficient doctoral research (i.e. after candidacy) that they will be in a position to apply for doctoral-completion grants no later than the seventh year (in order to hold the grant no later than the eighth year). And at several points, our graduate representatives expressed strong concerns about certain types of competitive funding on the grounds that funding variations within the current student cohort placed students with lower funding at a disadvantage, because poorer-funded students would take longer to reach key milestones than their colleagues (and competitors).

All of these issues related to empirical questions, the answers to which were not readily available. We asked the Deans of Students in HD and SSD for median and average times to candidacy, in order to get a rough sense of the range across divisions (this is harder to calculate for Divinity, so we did not try to procure it). We were aware that many issues can affect times to candidacy, even within fields, and therefore the basic numbers from the Deans' Offices could be somewhat deceptive. We also wondered whether it would be possible to document differences in times to orals/candidacy over time in departments that changed from variable to full funding over the last several years (and at the same time made significant changes to the management and monitoring of graduate students in Scholastic Residence).

We therefore asked three sample departments for more detailed information on their own times to candidacy. We chose Anthropology, History, and English for a number of reasons: Anthropology has some of the longest times to candidacy (and some of the most significant variations in time) of the Social Sciences; it also maintained a variable funding structure before 2007. History had, until 2007, some of the widest variations in funding, and also maintains a large cohort of students. English changed its funding structure from variable to full funding in 2005, recently enough that comprehensive data is available for times to orals/candidacy are available for the preceding period, but sufficiently long ago that some comparisons may be made between the old and new systems (Philosophy made this change eight years ago, but their data does not extend back before then, so no such comparisons can be made).

Some of our findings are, while informative, not surprising. For instance, most students in Anthropology reach candidacy by the end of their fourth year (about 54%), 20% having qualified before their fourth year (most of these having arrived with Masters in hand) and 14.4 taking longer than five years (not counting students currently ABD). Anthropology found that factors in time-to-candidacy included a pre-existing Master's degree, involvement in two degree programs at Chicago, and the need to develop new skills necessary for the planned research project (such as a new languages).

Other findings are more surprising. For instance, we do not find a tight correlation between funding level and times to candidacy or orals. We could not evaluate this issue for Anthropology, but our data from both English and History (who very generously assembled for us data on times to orals and candidacy for each cohort since 2000, including financial information), indicate that students on little or no funding do not take longer than their well-funded colleagues to reach the standard landmarks of Scholastic

Residence. Although we did not have the resources to make a sustained and systematic study of this issue, we made a rough calculation for two cohorts in the English department, because the smaller numbers of students in this program (and a roughly two-tier funding system, unlike History's) make these calculations easier than in larger programs. We find that the overall averages for these cohorts are as follows:

<i>Cohort Entering</i>	<i>Average Time to Orals</i>	<i>Time to Candidacy</i>
Autumn 2000	2.71	4.54
Autumn 2001	3.02	4.83

When we calculated separate averages for fully funded students and unfunded students, we found:

*Cohort Entering*

2000: Students on full funding (8 students) average 4.93 yrs to candidacy, median 4.75.  
 Unfunded students (4 students) average 4.18 yrs to candidacy, median 4.25.  
 (One student was left out of calculations because there were no records on funding).

2001 Students on full funding (6 students): average 5.04 yrs to candidacy, median 4.875  
 Unfunded students (3 students) Average 4.41 yrs to candidacy, median 4.5

We found, therefore, that students on little or no funding were the same or very slightly speedier than their well-funded peers, perhaps *because* they had little funding (reaching landmark goals might have made other funding options more accessible to them). Our findings were similar for the Department of History:

	Time to Orals				Time to Candidacy			
	T Only/WOA		T+Stipend		T Only/WOA		T+Stipend	
	Avg, incl. MA	Avg, not including MA	Avg, including MA	Avg, not including MA	Avg, including MA	Avg, not incl. MA	Avg, incl. MA	Avg, not incl. MA
Aut 2000	2.43	1.86	2.32	1.77	3.46	2.89	3.43	2.80
Aut 2001	2.34	2.07	2.46	2.29	3.35	3.09	3.55	3.38
Aut 2002	2.34	2.27	2.43	2.23	3.08	3.00	3.27	3.09
Aut 2003	2.66	2.02	2.63	1.94	3.08	2.43	3.21	2.57
Aut 2004	2.44	2.14	2.47	2.16	2.69	2.25	2.88	2.13
	<b>2.44</b>		<b>2.46</b>		<b>3.13</b>		<b>3.27</b>	

Such calculations cannot be made for later years because too many students have not reached candidacy; and records have not been computerized for earlier years; calculations of this kind could be made for many departments, but we did not have the time to attempt this since in each case, the data had to be uploaded, organized, and then analyzed.

We were surprised to see this pattern, and we noted it more informally in the larger data sample provided by the Department of History, which also seemed to show no correlation between funding and time-to-candidacy (we have not appended this bulky raw

data, but would like to note that it, as well as the raw data for English, and other data from Philosophy and Anthropology, is available). We would like to note that this data does not look closely at attrition, which may help explain the lack of correlation (it may be that there is a high attrition rate among under funded students, which is invisible in this data).

These findings made us curious about correlations between funding and time to degree in the same program, and the graduate administrator in History, Kelly Pollock, very kindly prepared the following data for us:

	Time to Degree					
	T Only/WOA			T+Stipend		
	Avg years, including MA	Avg years, not including MA	Number Not yet Graduated	Avg years, including MA	Avg years, not including MA	Number Not yet Graduated
Aut 1995	8.33	8.03	2	8.22	8.09	1
Aut 1996	6.75	6.54	5	7.75	7.69	1
Aut 1997	8.31	7.86	5	8.19	7.19	2
Aut 1998	7.31	7.19	4	7.50	7.31	4
Aut 1999	7.35	7.25	4	6.97	6.58	4
Aut 2000	7.38	6.88	1	6.61	5.89	6
Aut 2001	5.94	5.31	14	6.00	5.67	14
	<b>7.34</b>			<b>7.32</b>		

These very preliminary findings seem to show no straightforward correlation between funding and time to degree, though we are quite skeptical that no correlation can be found (as we are about the idea that there is no correlation between funding and progress at earlier stages of academic work); it is, for instance, contradicted by national studies of correlations between funding and time to degree (e.g. Thomas B. Hoffer and Vincent Welch, Jr. “Time to Degree of U.S. Research Doctorate Recipients,” NSF document 06-312, (March 2006), at p. 6, cited earlier in this report on p. 49). We do have one indication that a certain kind of funding is quite effective at the University of Chicago: the large dissertation-completion grants (see Attachment 3). We think these findings indicate the need for more studies, based on more sophisticated design and execution than was possible for us.