

To: Students, Faculty, and Staff
From: Cathy J. Cohen, Deputy Provost for Graduate Education
Thomas F. Rosenbaum, Provost
Date: August 25, 2008
Re: Increase in Remuneration for Graduate Student Teachers

We are writing to update you on the work and recommendations of the Provost's Committee on Graduate Student Teaching. We are pleased to announce that we plan to accept the recommendations of the committee, as detailed below. This will result in a significant increase in the remuneration for graduate student teachers, effective during the Autumn Quarter beginning in September.

In February 2008, the Provost, the Deputy Provost for Graduate Education, and the Vice President and Dean of Students established a set of action steps to address some of the key issues raised by graduate students during the previous year. One action was to have the Deputy Provost establish a committee of faculty, graduate students, and administrators to explore issues related to graduate student teaching. The Provost's Committee was asked initially to focus on issues of remuneration for graduate student teachers, issuing an interim report at the end of Spring Quarter 2008. The Committee would then return to work Autumn Quarter 2008, addressing issues of pedagogical training, delineating graduate student teacher's responsibilities, reviewing job classifications and the possible need for newly defined positions, and designing a plan to monitor the experience of graduate student teachers in the classroom.

The Committee submitted its interim report to the Provost at the end of June with a set of recommendations regarding remuneration of graduate student teachers. The report can be found in the news section of the Office of the Provost Web site (<http://provost.uchicago.edu>). A series of meetings followed to obtain wide feedback on the report. We first met with members of the Committee in early July to discuss their findings and address any outstanding issues. We then met with most of the Deans of the Divisions and provided a period of comment for those Deans who could not attend the meeting. Toward the end of July we met with representatives from the Graduate Council to receive their comments and concerns. All of these meetings proved to be informative and insightful.

As noted above, the Provost has decided to accept and implement all the increases to graduate student teaching remuneration recommended in the report. These increases will take effect Autumn Quarter 2008. The total cost of these increases in remuneration for the 2008-09 academic year is \$2.8 million. Maintaining remuneration at these increased levels will require similarly sized expenditures in future years which the Provost's office will fund.

In the report, the committee makes specific recommendations for increasing the remuneration graduate student teachers receive across a number of designated positions. The recommended increases apply only to those making less than the recommended amount. Positions paid more than the recommended amount will remain unchanged.

Listed below is a summary of the accepted recommendations.

- Increase the remuneration for lecturers from \$3500 to \$5000
- Increase the remuneration for course and teaching assistants from \$1500 to \$3000
- Increase the remuneration for laboratory and lecture teaching assistants in the Biological Sciences Collegiate Division from a range of \$650-\$2750 to a range of \$709-\$3000
- Increase the remuneration for writing interns from \$1900/\$2000 to \$3000
- Increase the remuneration for core interns from \$1500 to \$3000
- Increase the remuneration for writing program lectors for undergraduate courses from \$1400/\$1500 to \$2500
- Increase the remuneration for writing program lectors for graduate courses from \$2000 to \$3000
- Increase the remuneration for preceptors from the range of \$2500-\$6500 to \$7500 over three quarters
- Increase the remuneration for lectors in language departments from \$1500 to \$3000
- Increase the remuneration for drill instructors from \$800 to \$1500
- Increase the remuneration for studio assistants from \$1000 to \$1500

We urge each of you to read the entire report which is posted on the Office of the Provost website to gain a better understanding of the changes in remuneration recommended and accepted.

In addition to the increase in remuneration, we are adopting the recommendation of the committee to reduce stipends for teaching commitments in the 2008-09 academic year by the previous, lower remuneration levels for all teaching positions. Specifically, those students in the Social Sciences and Humanities Divisions whose stipends are scheduled to be reduced for required teaching expectations will have their stipends reduced only by the previous remuneration levels instead of the newly increased remuneration levels. Thus, students who were scheduled to have their stipends reduced by the amount they will receive for serving as a teaching assistant in one course as part of their teaching requirement will have their stipends reduced by \$1500 instead of the new rate of \$3000. This delay of one year in adjusting stipend reductions to reflect the new rates of remuneration will allow students time to plan for increases in their stipend reductions in accordance with their teaching requirements. We will begin to reduce stipends at the new levels of remuneration beginning in the 2009-10 academic year. We refer you to the report and your Dean of Students for greater clarification on how stipend reductions will affect students in each division.

We will continue to monitor annually the remuneration provided graduate students, with the goal of remaining competitive with our peers. We do not want to increase remuneration this year only to find ourselves in the same situation five years from now. As always, budgetary decisions must be made in the general context of the many demands on resources across the University.

As noted in the report, the issue of competition and comparisons to peer institutions is a complicated one. There will be those who point to other schools that seem to pay their students more to teach. On this issue we have two thoughts.

First is the recognition that a number of schools use a different system for calculating remuneration than what most of our divisions currently use. Some of our peers use a system of teaching fellowships in place of the general stipend support we currently provide. Students awarded a teaching fellowship are often expected to teach during the designated years of support. In such a system, if a student receives a teaching fellowship of \$20,000 for the year and is required to teach three courses, the school might list the remuneration for graduate student teaching as \$6,666 with the understanding that pay for one course is equal to one-third of the teaching stipend. We currently do not use teaching fellowships, so it may appear that our remuneration for required graduate student teaching is less than another school although our students are receiving the same amount of yearly support—often with a smaller teaching requirement. The use of teaching fellowships by other schools is not the reason we have trailed our peers in what we pay graduate students for their services in the classroom. In the past we neglected to pay attention to this important area of compensation. The use of teaching fellowships by other schools, however, makes comparisons of graduate student remuneration across schools more difficult.

Second, a number of schools have been able to increase the remuneration of graduate student teaching by limiting which students are eligible to teach. Specifically, at some peer institutions, students are only eligible to teach while receiving stipend support or holding a teaching fellowship—often during the first five to six years of graduate study. We do not impose such restrictions on graduate student teaching. The University has benefited from the expertise advanced graduate students often bring to the classroom. That said, we want to state emphatically that these increases in remuneration should not be seen as endorsing or facilitating an increase in the number of graduate student lecturers. We strongly encourage all divisions to work with their departments and programs to devise systems so that advanced graduate students have to rely less on teaching for needed support and can instead devote more of their time to completing their dissertations. These issues of teaching among advanced graduate students and time limits or caps on teaching will be addressed by the Provost's Committee on Advanced Residence and Time to Degree.

We also want to underscore our belief, echoed by the committee in its report, that graduate student teaching is just one dimension—although a critically important one—of graduate education more generally. Classroom experience is an opportunity for graduate students to hone their communication, listening, and evaluation skills. In the classroom, through the guidance of a professor, graduate student teachers learn how to present material, listen to and address contradictory arguments, and evaluate and constructively engage the written and verbal work of others. We believe that teaching is an experience that benefits all graduate students whether their careers will be strictly academic or they choose some other arena through which to make a contribution. We hope that departments and programs across the University will take the announcement of these

increases in remuneration to discuss among their faculty and students the purpose of teaching and how the teaching experience of graduate students can continue to be improved.

Increasing the remuneration provided graduate student teachers is part of our continued commitment to enhance graduate education at the University of Chicago. Over the past three years we have made significant investments in numerous areas to ensure that our graduate students have the resources and support they need to be successful in their endeavors. Through the Graduate Aid Initiative (GAI), we have significantly changed our funding packages, providing five years of full funding and health insurance and two summers of additional support to nearly every student matriculating to the University since Autumn 2007. We are expanding the GAI to include newly matriculating students in the Divinity School. For those students not covered under the GAI, we have worked with departments and divisions to increase the minimum stipends of many underfunded students.

The University now guarantees that every graduate student who matriculated since 2003 will have health insurance through the balance of their first five years of graduate school. We increased the number of Provost Summer Fellowships awarded this summer from 25 to 100. Provost Summer Fellowships will again be available next year. We will award 50 fellowships in the summer of 2009, up from the 15 originally budgeted. We have funded a new set of dissertation fellowships that will be available for at least five years, the first fellowships having been awarded earlier this year. The administration has secured an endowment of \$6 million from the Mellon Foundation explicitly for the funding of graduate education. In the first five years of the endowment the award will be used to fund dissertation fellowships. More recently we suspended the annual increase of 5 percent in Advanced Residence tuition. We also have created a policy to ensure that graduate students who are new parents have greater flexibility in meeting their requirements.

Although we have made substantial progress in reinforcing the core aspects of our graduate programs, we will continue to review our policies and support. For example, the work of the Teaching Committee will continue through the Autumn and Winter Quarters. The Provost's Committee on Advanced Residence and Time to Degree will intensify its work over the next year; the Vice President and Dean of Students, Kim Goff-Crews, will move forward with her committee to explore issues that confront international students; and the Council on Teaching will devote some of its time in the upcoming year to examining the training provided graduate student teachers.

One very important goal of our work concerning graduate education has been to strengthen the lines of communication between graduate students and the administration. Leading our efforts in this area is Professor Cathy Cohen, Deputy Provost for Graduate Education, whose responsibilities include not only providing better coordination across units responsible for graduate education and making the necessary changes to enhance the educational experience we provide graduate students, but also making sure that the concerns and opinions of graduate students are seriously considered when we decide our

priorities and our commitment of resources. Toward this end, all of the recent committees examining issues that directly affect graduate students have included graduate student representation. As we did in this instance, both the Provost and the Deputy Provost have met with representatives from the Graduate Council to seek their input on the recommendations forwarded from University committees. We also have made ourselves available to discuss recommendations and decisions with a wider group of graduate students through forums and other meetings.

To extend this type of exchange between graduate students and the administration, this fall the Deputy Provost will begin a series of meetings with the graduate students in each department, program, and school. These meetings will be opportunities to hear the concerns of graduate students and also to discuss the efforts of the administration and how best to improve graduate education generally across the University. She also will continue to make regular presentations to the Graduate Council and will for the first time meet quarterly with the Directors of Graduate Studies across the University. We believe that graduate students are an important part of the University community who hold a unique perspective on the education delivered to both graduate students and students in the College. We want to hear from and work with graduate students. None of this is meant to supersede the essential communication and work that happens within the divisions, departments, programs, and schools, which hold the most important responsibilities in planning, improving, and protecting the exceptional education we offer graduate students.

We thank the committee for its hard work and look forward to its final report, which we expect to receive toward the end of the Winter Quarter 2009. Enjoy the rest of your summer and we look forward to seeing you in September.