

**College of Arts and Sciences**  
**Task Force on Graduate Student Funding**  
**Final Report**  
May 10, 2019

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Task Force was charged with preparing a report that:

- Provides a description of the landscape of graduate funding for programs under the College of Arts and Sciences
- Develops a data-based argument for additional graduate student funding
- Identifies principles and priorities for future graduate funding initiatives.

We situate our report in the context of current threats to the viability of our graduate programs. These include stagnant stipends, declining cohort sizes, and reductions in recruitment and retention of tenure track faculty.

To inform our report, we solicited data from graduate programs on their recent funding offers to PhD and MFA students, funding sources for their students, and recruitment experiences; from Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) comparators on their stipends and standard funding offers for PhD and MFA students; from financial aid data on graduate student loans; and from several College offices.

Low stipends place students at grave financial risk. The data we reviewed reveal that our graduate stipends fall below those of most of our BTAA comparators and IU's own estimated costs of attendance, and sit close to the poverty level and eligibility lines for income assistance programs. The already-low value of our stagnant stipends is reduced further by the high unremittable and mandatory fees all of our graduate students pay and the additional fees paid by international students.

Low stipends also reduce our ability to recruit high quality graduate students which, in turn, reduces our ability to recruit and retain high quality faculty and to provide the best possible education to our undergraduates. Moreover, challenges in recruiting high-quality graduate students affect our faculty's ability to publish, receive federal funding, and develop and expand research programs in all divisions: Arts and Humanities (A&H), Social and Historical Sciences (S&H), and Natural and Mathematical Sciences (N&M).

We recommend that the College work with central campus administration to plan and implement a three-stage approach to improve graduate funding: (1) cover the unremittable fees; (2) increase graduate stipends and regularize stipend increases; and (3) increase the number of recruitment fellowships we offer. This phased approach would allow the College to make progress toward improving graduate funding steadily and incrementally in the context of regular budgetary planning.

## CURRENT STATUS OF COLLEGE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

The College of Arts and Sciences is home to 50 graduate programs, 41 of which offer PhD or professional doctoral degrees (e.g., Doctor of Audiology), 3 of which offer Masters of Fine Arts degrees, and 9 of which offer Masters degrees exclusively. These programs house over 60% of the doctoral students on the Bloomington campus. Strong doctoral programs matter to the College and campus for several reasons. They help us recruit and retain strong faculty; strong faculty want to work with strong students and strong students want to be affiliated with strong programs. Strong graduate students propel laboratory research supporting the cycle of publications, federal funding, and development and expansion of science research programs. Strong graduate programs serve students from other campus units, adding depth and breadth to the education of students in the professional schools. From 2013-18, graduate students from outside the College enrolled in over 3,600 College courses.<sup>1</sup> College graduate students support undergraduate education through their work as course instructors and assistants. In 2018-19, 26.6% of lower-level courses in the College and 13.5% of upper-level courses were taught by graduate student instructors of record; many other graduate students served as course assistants for lower-level courses. Outside of the classroom, graduate students train undergraduate students in labs and studios, and help maintain the camaraderie that attracts undergraduate students to College majors. Moreover, the variety and quality of College graduate programs are essential to the institution's status in the Association of American Universities (AAU).

Despite their importance to the College and campus, graduate programs in the College face existential threats. Reductions in the number of tenure-track faculty in the College have left some programs without a critical mass of faculty in core areas of the discipline. (See Appendix B.) Declines in undergraduate enrollments have been accompanied by significant reductions in graduate support. The number of academic year Student Academic Appointments (SAAs) has declined from 2,482 in 2013-14 to 2,183 in 2017-18, with the most significant reductions in the Arts and Humanities programs. (See Appendix C.) Changes in undergraduate student enrollment patterns have also reduced the number of available summer graduate teaching positions.

Programs have responded to these reductions by reducing the number of students they enroll, especially at the doctoral level.<sup>2</sup> In 2013-14, 2,344 doctoral students enrolled in College of Arts and Sciences programs. By fall 2018, the number of enrolled doctoral students had declined to 1,907,<sup>3</sup> a reduction of 19%. Reductions in SAAs and cohort sizes have put some programs perilously close to non-viability. Some departments are no longer able to fill graduate seminars—even the required first-year courses for incoming PhD students. Programs have adapted by offering joint undergraduate-graduate sections, which leave both students and faculty dissatisfied. Some faculty offer independent readings sections to address training gaps, which amounts to unpaid teaching, and heightens faculty dissatisfaction. Even programs in the Natural

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<sup>1</sup> Enrollments extend across virtually all programs, with the highest enrollments in language and statistics courses. (See Appendix A.)

<sup>2</sup> Some programs have reduced the size of graduate cohorts in response to declining employment opportunities, and through efforts to reduce time-to-degree, as well.

<sup>3</sup> For comparability, both figures include students coded as “doctoral” in the College’s major divisions, the programs that moved to the School of Global and International Studies, and the programs that moved to the Media School, with the exception of Journalism. Some students who are coded as “Masters” will move into their department’s doctoral programs in future.

and Mathematical Sciences that have large cohorts face mounting challenges recruiting high quality cohorts because the funding packages we offer are not competitive with our AAU comparator institutions.

Reductions in the number of enrolled graduate students have been accompanied by reductions in the value of our funding offers. Stipends in most programs have been stagnant since 2013-14, even as tuition, student fees, and cost-of-living have risen. In short, College graduate programs are in decline according to all of these indicators.

In the context of these challenges, we were charged with preparing a report that:

- Provides a description of the landscape of graduate funding for programs under the College of Arts and Sciences
- Develops a data-based argument for additional graduate student funding
- Identifies principles and priorities for future graduate funding initiatives.

Our discussions were informed by several sources of data. Graduate programs reported on their standard funding packages, the availability and use of Foundation funds to supplement College funds, and rates of admissions and acceptances. (Please note that not all programs provided data.) Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) departments in 12 disciplines shared information on the funding they offered their Fall 2018 cohorts. The University Graduate School shared data on graduate student loans. We also worked with the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) and the University Graduate School on a graduate student survey that inquires about non-IU employment and other sources of graduate financial support. Although we made progress on plans for the survey during the 2019 spring semester, we were not able to distribute the survey before the end of the semester and its results will not be available in time for the report. When these data become available, we hope that they will inform the College and campus response.

We present much of this information in aggregate form, typically disaggregated by division. Because aggregate data do not adequately convey the challenges specific programs face and the creative approaches they have adopted to address them, we present case studies of 6 graduate programs.

## **COLLEGE FUNDING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Most College doctoral programs at IU provide at least some guaranteed funding to their students. This funding typically comes through some combination of four main types of graduate student appointments:

- Instructional student academic appointments (SAA): Most SAAs assist faculty with undergraduate instruction or serve as instructors of record for undergraduate courses.
- Graduate assistantships (GA): Programs use GA appointments in different ways. For our purposes, GAs refer to graduate positions that assist with the work of centers and institutes or publications. Some of that work may be substantive and some administrative.
- Research assistantships (RA): RAs assist faculty with their scholarly work. Most of these positions are funded by external grants, although some chairs and directors receive funds to hire RAs as part of their compensation packages.

- Fellowships: The College offers some graduate programs recruitment fellowships. Some programs distribute those fellowships to students in their first and/or second years; others offer them as writing-year or dissertation fellowships. A few graduate programs have enough Foundation funds to directly fund fellowships to incoming students. Often, use of these funds is constrained by the original gift agreements.

SAAAs, GAs, RAs, and fellowships are accompanied by partial tuition remission and health insurance. For resident students, the tuition remission covers 91% of the student's tuition. For nonresident students, the tuition remission covers 96.5% of the student's tuition. Health insurance is currently valued at just under \$3,200 per academic year.

Most graduate programs have access to some "top-up" funding, either from the College's recruitment allotment or from their own Foundation accounts. Those funds are used to supplement SAA or fellowship stipends, either during the academic year or as summer fellowships. Some programs concentrate these funds in offers to students from underrepresented groups, in an effort to increase the diversity of their programs. In other programs, this funding has become essential to offering competitive stipends for first-year students. For example, Physics devotes its top-up funds to stipend supplement because its base stipend is the lowest in the BTAA; Biology does the same. Using top-ups to supplement stipends is not ideal as this arrangement can be difficult to explain in an offer letter, especially when the supplement is only available in the first-year, after which students receive only the base level stipend.

In addition to these basic sources of funding, the College runs fall and spring competitions for graduate travel funding and a spring competition for dissertation year fellowships. Each year, the College gives roughly 60 travel awards each semester (typically \$150-\$500 each to 1-2 students per program), 24 dissertation research fellowships (@ \$20,000), and 16 dissertation completion fellowships (@ \$25,000). Dissertation completion fellowships carry the restriction that students cannot receive any additional funding from the College or its graduate programs in subsequent years. Some graduate programs are able to provide graduate students with travel or research awards, using Foundation funds.

The University Graduate School and the GPSG offer additional support to students. The University Graduate School provides a limited number of recruitment fellowships (\$19,000-\$25,000), diversity fellowships (\$20,000-\$25,000), and grants-in-aid for graduate research (up to \$1,000). The GPSG offers a small number of research awards (\$1,000 each) and travel grants (\$500). It is important to remember that several hundred graduate students are competing for the College awards and even more for the University Graduate School awards; thus, only a small fraction of our students can hope to receive this significant honor.

### **Graduate Funding by Division**

The structure of graduate funding varies by division. (Details in Appendix D.) We use the abbreviations A&H to refer to Arts and Humanities programs, S&H to refer to Social Science and History programs, and N&M to refer to Natural and Mathematical Sciences programs.

A&H programs rely heavily on instructional SAAs to support their graduate students, effectively tying the fortunes of their graduate programs to undergraduate enrollments. Some programs offer some of their incoming students fellowships in the first year (as we will see below, a less favorable offer than at many other institutions). Many programs that fund incoming students with fellowships or SAAs top-up those awards using recruitment funds or their own Foundation funds. Most A&H programs offer close to 5 years of guaranteed funding—the minimum standard for programs in this division—but some struggle to do so. Of the A&H graduate programs, only English is able to guarantee 6 years of support to incoming students from College funds.

A&H programs make creative use of other positions and other funds to support their programs. Some programs (e.g., Classics, Folklore) have few options beyond College-funded fellowships and SAAs, and their students receive support at the low end of the range. Others have more flexibility. English has editorial positions and W131 assistant director positions available. French and Italian has one first-year fellowship in Italian. Some programs place students in P155 or other College courses. Folklore, in particular, relies heavily on these other courses to support its students, as well as on GA positions in other units (e.g., Archives of Traditional Music) and external fellowships. Many of its students hold full-time employment outside of IU.

S&H programs vary substantially in how they fund students. Some departments, such as Criminal Justice and Sociology, rely heavily on College-funded instructional SAAs. Others, such as Anthropology, draw funding from numerous sources including FLAS awards, the Glenn Black Lab, the Ostrom workshop, and the American Indian Studies Research Institute, as well as instructional SAAs in other programs. History has several editorial positions at journals, and also places students in Groups, Collins, and other non-departmental teaching positions. History and Philosophy of Science and Medicine has 2 faculty-funded RA positions available. That program also uses College fellowship funds creatively by alternating between admitting 1 and 2 students with fellowship funding, and giving each a higher fellowship. Programs also vary in the length of their guaranteed funding offers, with most offering 5 years of guaranteed funding but some offering as little as 1-2 years—far below the standard 5-year package in the BTAA. SAA stipends also vary within the division, with most set at the lowest stipend level for the College and two programs (Economics and Political Science) receiving higher stipends.

N&M programs typically fund students through a combination of instructional SAAs and RA positions. Stipends vary across programs in this division, with the lowest stipends in Speech and Hearing Sciences, Math, Astronomy, and Physics, and the highest stipends in Biology, Biochemistry, and Chemistry. Some programs, but not all, offer students fellowships in their first year. Several N&M programs have training grants that serve as another source of funds for students. Recruitment pressures for some programs in this division are especially strong because they compete against medical school doctoral programs which offer multiple fellowship years that carry no teaching responsibilities. No programs in this division offer more than one fellowship year. Traditionally N&M programs have offered higher stipends than do programs in the other College divisions but, when compared against other N&M programs (both in basic research and medical schools) that compete for the same pool of graduate students, IU generally ranks in the bottom half.

The commonalities within each division mask significant variation across individual programs. The case studies highlight the unique funding needs and approaches of individual programs, and caution against developing a universal funding model.

### **Other Sources of Support**

Graduate students supplement the funding they receive from their programs from three main sources:

**Other IU funding:** Some students are able to obtain summer teaching positions (typical stipend: \$3,465-\$4,789) or teaching, research, or administrative positions in non-College units, either during the academic year or the summer.

**Loans:** In 2018-19, 1,320 College graduate students supplemented their IU funding with loans. Among those who received loans that were disbursed through IU in 2018-19, the average loan amount was \$3,728, with a range of \$330 to \$9,938. The Department of Anthropology case study adds depth to these aggregate figures. Over half of their students have taken a loan during graduate school, 93% of whom also receive SAA funding.

**Outside funding:** As the Anthropology case study highlights, College graduate students seek employment outside of IU to supplement their SAA stipends and fellowships. (Two-thirds of Anthropology graduate students have taken an additional job outside of IU while at IU.) Many Task Force members know students who sell their plasma and other biofluids, or engage in other entrepreneurial activities, to support themselves. When available, the GPSG survey will provide more precise information about these other sources of income.

## **EVALUATION OF GRADUATE FUNDING**

Appendix E presents the 2018-19 graduate stipends and SAA allotments by program within division. A&H and S&H programs offer the lowest stipends—typically \$15,750. Stipends in these programs were last increased in 2013-14. N&M programs offer higher stipends (\$18,333 to \$21,766), and (with the exception of Biology) were last increased in 2016-17.

The value of our stipends is undercut by the fees students have to pay. In addition to living expenses, books, and other academic expenses, graduate students must cover unremittable and mandatory fees. For resident students enrolled in 12 credits per semester, unremittable fees are \$831 for the academic year and mandatory fees are \$1,339 (\$2,170 total for the academic year). For comparable nonresident students, unremittable fees are \$1,117 and mandatory fees are \$1,339 (\$2,456 total for the academic year). International students are charged an additional \$204 in fees each regular academic semester and \$163 each summer (whether or not they are in residence). Most (84%) College graduate students are nonresident, implying that most receive an effective stipend far below the base stipend level.

Table 1 presents the effective stipends for students in the lowest and highest paid programs, calculated as the stipends minus unremittable and mandatory fees, disaggregated by resident and international status. For students in the lowest paid programs, the effective stipend for resident

students is \$13,580, for domestic nonresident students is \$13,294, and for international students is \$12,726. For students in the highest paid programs, the effective stipend is \$19,596 for resident students, \$19,310 for domestic nonresident students, and \$18,742 for international students.

<p align="center"><b>Table 1</b>  <b>College of Arts and Sciences</b>  <b>Effective Graduate Stipend in 2018-19</b></p>						
	Lower stipends			Higher stipends		
	Resident	Nonresident - Domestic	Nonresident – International	Resident	Nonresident - Domestic	Nonresident - International
SAA stipend	\$15,750	\$15,750	\$15,750	\$21,766	\$21,766	\$21,766
Tuition	\$831	\$1,117	\$1,117	\$831	\$1,117	\$1,117
Mandatory fees	\$1,339	\$1,339	\$1,339	\$1,339	\$1,339	\$1,339
International student fees			\$568			\$568
Net stipend	\$13,580	\$13,294	\$12,726	\$19,596	\$19,310	\$18,742

Based on enrollment in 12 credit hours each semester.

Costs based on fall and spring only except international student summer fee.

Since 2013-14, when stipends were last increased in A&H and S&H programs, nonresident graduate tuition in the College has increased by 6% each year (the resident rate has increased 3% each year). Because unremittable fees are calculated as a percentage of tuition, the fees students pay have increased from \$994 in 2013-14 to \$1,339 in 2018-19. The tuition increases, thus, further reduced the value of student stipends.

We turn, soon, to a detailed analysis of the adequacy of graduate student stipends in the College of Arts and Sciences. We conclude, perhaps not surprisingly, that against several reasonable standards, our stipends fall short.

Before presenting the details of that analysis, we highlight the challenges that low stipends pose for students and for graduate programs. For students, our low graduate stipends present existential risks. Most students cannot live on the stipends they receive, and are forced to rely on families, loans, or other entrepreneurial activities (including selling biofluids) to make ends meet. Outside employment distracts students from their studies and increases time to degree. Financial strain and uncertainty are also major stressors for graduate students nationwide (Council of Graduate Schools, 2009) and at Indiana University (LaTouche, 2017).<sup>4</sup> As we see below, our stipends fall below the official Medicaid-eligibility, placing our students in financial jeopardy.

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<sup>4</sup> Council of Graduate Schools. 2009. *Ph.D. Completion and Attrition: Findings from Exits Surveys of PhD Completers*. Washington, DC.; LaTouche, Rachel. 2017. *Graduate Students' Mental Health: Departmental Contexts as a Source of Differential Risk*. PhD dissertation, Indiana University.

The risks graduate students face are especially profound for international students and DACA students. As noted, in response to changing federal requirements, the Office of International Services has increased its international student fees so that these students now pay \$204 per semester more than domestic students, and an additional \$163 fees for the summer, even if they are not in residence. International students cannot work outside of IU and are not eligible for US social welfare programs (e.g. food stamps). The dire financial situation for international students has been heightened by the current federal administration's enhanced scrutiny of hourly IU employment that international students hold beyond their SAAs. In the past, hourly employment could be justified by its relationship to general training goals and professionalization (Curricular Practical Training, or CPT). Under the current federal administration, to qualify for CPT, any hourly IU employment must be associated with a specific course enrollment and, when associated with thesis credits, must be substantively and methodologically relevant to the dissertation. The Office of International Services has said that much of the hourly employment international students held in the past will no longer be approved.

DACA students face different, but no less profound, challenges. Despite a judgement from the IU General Counsel's office that DACA students are eligible to hold SAAs, University offices continue to attempt to refuse appointments to these students. DACA students also cannot receive top-up money from state funds; these costs are sent back to graduate programs who must use Foundation funds (if such funds are even available) for this purpose. This places sometimes-strapped graduate programs in the difficult position of having to scramble to ensure the financial well-being of their DACA students. Appendix F presents the details of one DACA student's struggles to receive the financial support she was offered at the time of admission.

For graduate programs, the low stipends make it difficult to recruit top graduate students. Although not all programs maintain records on the reasons students decline offers of admission, those that do identify low stipends are a common complaint. We note with concern that the number of applicants to our graduate programs has declined rapidly over the past 5 years from 5,066 in 2014-15 to 3,679 in 2018-19 (a reduction of 27.3%). Some of the decline reflects national trends but, in departments where comparative data are available (e.g., History within the BTAA), the decline is much sharper here than elsewhere. Low stipends are particularly consequential for recruitment of underrepresented minority (URM) students, who often receive augmented financial offers from other institutions. (Fellowships of \$30,000 in A&H and S&H programs are not uncommon; fall 2019 URM recruits to Biology at Texas A&M were offered \$32,000 fellowships [no teaching required] for five years). While some supplemental funds are available for URM students, those funds often are insufficient to match the packages at other institutions. Moreover, even when we can match those packages, they introduce funding inequities that can be damaging to student morale. Increasing funding for *all* doctoral students would reduce the gap in funding between underrepresented students and other graduate students and, ultimately, support campus diversity efforts.

### ***Three standards for evaluating graduate stipends***

We evaluate the adequacy of graduate stipends against several standards. Based on our analyses, our graduate stipends fall below each standard.

**Indiana University Bloomington’s estimates of the costs of attendance.** Table 2 presents the estimated cost of attending College graduate programs, based on data from the Office of International Services website. All international students who seek graduate study at IUB must prove that they have access to this level of funding before they can be granted a visa. This, then, seems a reasonable standard against which to judge College graduate stipends. According to Table 2, the stipend that most A&H and S&H programs offer their students falls over \$7,000 below the estimated costs of attendance.

**Table 2**  
**College of Arts and Sciences**  
**Estimated Cost of Attendance for Graduate Students in 2018-2019**

	Resident	Non-Resident
Tuition fees (24 credit hours)	\$9,225	\$31,932
Mandatory fees	\$1,339	\$1,339
Room and board	\$12,972	\$12,972
Total direct costs	\$23,536	\$46,243
Books and supplies	\$830	\$830
Transportation	\$2,958	\$2,958
Personal expenses	\$4,078	\$4,078
Total indirect costs	\$7,866	\$7,866
Total costs	\$31,402	\$54,109
SAA stipend	\$15,750	\$15,750
Fee remission (91% or 96.5% of tuition)	\$8,394	\$30,815
Total aid	\$24,144	\$46,565
Shortfall	\$7,257	\$7,544

Actual costs vary by student, based on student choice, travel habits, and academic program.

Based on enrollment in 12 credit hours each semester.

Costs based on fall and spring only.

**Stipends at comparator institutions.** Appendix G presents graduate stipends for BTAA institutions in 12 disciplines. We present the base stipends, supplemental funding, years of guaranteed support, and benefits for each institution. When available, we provide additional information about funding offers, such as the number of years of fellowship funding and typical teaching loads. Almost without exception, IU stipends fall at or near the bottom. IU appears to

offer stipends that are competitive in some of our N&M programs. However, we note that the data in Appendix G likely understate the offers from N&M programs at our comparator institutions. Chairs tell us that students report receiving offers from other institutions that include supplemental funding that the other institutions did not share with us.

In addition to these systematic comparisons, we received reports from three other departments about the financial offers their fall 2019 recruits have received. French & Italian reports that their fall 2019 graduate recruits were offered \$19,100 from University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign and \$20,000 at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Spanish & Portuguese reports that graduate recruits received offers of roughly \$25,000 from University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign and \$26,000 from Ohio State University. Sociology reports that, in addition to being offered higher stipends, many fall 2019 recruits were offered second-year fellowships by their recruiting institutions. Although less systematic than the comparisons presented above, they confirm that our funding offers fall far below those of our closest comparator institutions.

**Living wage in Monroe County.** The MIT Living Wage Calculation for Monroe County, Indiana estimates that single adults must earn \$24,731 to support themselves (<http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/42089>). The 2019 poverty level for a single adult is \$12,490—just below the effective stipend our lowest-paid students receive after paying unremittable and mandatory fees. For a household with three members (e.g., two adults and a child), the poverty level is \$21,330—far above the effective stipend for even our best-paid students. In Indiana, single adults become eligible for Medicaid if their annual income falls below \$17,448 ([www.in.gov/medicaid/members/59.htm](http://www.in.gov/medicaid/members/59.htm)).

### ***Other Challenges***

Our support for graduate students lags behind other institutions in four other important ways. First, students in many of our humanities programs have higher teaching loads than students at other institutions. In English, for example, our doctoral students typically teach 3 sections each year (1/2 or 2/1) whereas the typical teaching load at other BTAA institutions is one section per semester. (See the English case study for details.)

Second, we offer fewer years of fellowship support than many other institutions. For example, our History program offers one year of fellowship support to incoming doctoral students as compared to Northwestern and Maryland which offer two years of fellowship support in a 5-year package, Michigan which offers 3 years of fellowship support in a 6-year package, Ohio State which offers 1-3 years of fellowship support in a 6-year package, and Wisconsin, Illinois, and Rutgers which offer multi-year fellowships to all incoming students. At all of these institutions, students take a fellowship in their first year and then again when they are writing their dissertations. This later fellowship allows students to complete their degrees in a timely manner. (See the History case study for details.)

Third, because of relatively low undergraduate enrollments and SAA allotments, several of our programs offer fewer years of guaranteed support than other BTAA institutions. For example, many History programs offer 6-7 years of guaranteed support, in contrast to our 5-year offer. Anthropology, Linguistics, and Folklore have historically offered 3 years or less of guaranteed

funding, putting them well below standard among their comparators. We note that, by dramatically cutting cohort sizes and aggressively seeking graduate positions outside of the department, Anthropology was able to increase years of guaranteed funding for the 2019 entering cohort. (See the Anthropology case study for details.) Most programs do not have easy access to positions outside the department.

Fourth, even the funding packages for our N&M programs—which appear much more generous than those in the other divisions—are not competitive with our comparators. Our stipends are lower and our offers rely more heavily on instructional SAAs. This is particularly true for programs such as Biochemistry and the molecular (Genome, Cell, and Developmental Biology and Microbiology) programs within Biology that compete with medical school doctoral programs for students. Graduate programs in medical schools offer more money for more years with no teaching obligations. Problems in recruitment and attendant reductions in cohort sizes are especially dangerous for N&M programs as graduate students are the lifeblood of laboratory research: More students means more publications which means more funding. A bottleneck in the quality or quantity at *any* one of these steps has severe implications for the research program of that laboratory. N&M programs are able to bring in federal funding but it is important to note that the costs of research in these programs are higher compared to A&H and S&H programs. Thus, although the dollar amounts of the grants are higher, after paying for research costs, not much is left to cover student salaries or supplement stipends.

## CURRENT EFFORTS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES

The College recently began working with individual graduate programs to restructure their funding packages. For example, the Department of Political Science secured an agreement to increase its stipends for incoming students to \$20,000 per academic year in return for: (1) limiting the size of its incoming cohorts to 6 students; (2) trading in recruitment top-up funds; (3) identifying funding outside of the department for four students per year; and (4) not funding students in their 7<sup>th</sup> year and beyond. The Department of Spanish and Portuguese entered into a similar agreement intended to address the increasing difficulty it has had recruiting top graduate students. The Spanish and Portuguese agreement, which is currently being offered to students who will enroll in Fall 2019, is structured so that:

- The typical teaching load for all graduate students remains 3 courses per year (unless student has a fellowship, special GA-ship, etc.)
- The stipend for all incoming students **only** was raised to \$18,000 (minus fees, etc.)
- All new recruited doctoral students will receive one semester off from teaching during their 5 years of funding (5 for doctoral students coming with an MA, 2 + 5 years for students arriving without a M.A.)
- The College will no longer provide the flexible fellowship funds that were typically distributed to the 2-4 most competitive students; the College will also no longer provide any top-up funds that were distributed to the most competitive students
- The department agreed to fix the size of the incoming class each year to a somewhat lower number of approximately 12-13 new students with the aim of reaching a total number of approximately 60-65 graduate student 5 years from now (down from

approximately 80 currently). The cohort reduction is intended to create a savings for the College.

Neither plan addresses the stipends of current students because doing so would be too costly. Despite some reservations, both departments voted to accept the agreements because they seemed better than the status quo.

These new arrangements acknowledge the unique needs of individual programs, will improve the College's ability to forecast funding needs and control costs, and will—both departments hope— increase the attractiveness of their offers. Mindful of these advantages, and with full appreciation for the College's willingness to entertain creative solutions to graduate funding challenges, we share three concerns about these arrangements. First, not all programs can take advantage of this flexibility. Spanish & Portuguese and Political Science each had something to offer in exchange for higher stipends. Not all programs do. If stipend increases are only possible in programs that have something to offer, the new arrangements will create a two-tiered system within the College. Second, the new funding arrangements introduce inequities in graduate funding within departments, with new students receiving higher stipends than more advanced students for the same work. These inequities have the potential to reduce cooperation and collaboration among students, and to increase competition and bad feelings. Indeed, Spanish and Portuguese reports that the plan they accepted has hurt morale among current students. (See student comments in Appendix H.) Third, the new funding arrangements may restrict cohort sizes so much that programs are no longer viable. Programs that grow too small will no longer be able to offer a full complement of basic courses in their field. Small cohorts also reduce faculty research productivity—most obviously in lab-based disciplines but, in less obvious ways, in disciplines for which students support faculty research through data analysis assistance, literature searches, archival research, and the like.

Should the College continue to pursue the strategy of program-specific arrangements, we encourage the College to pursue agreements that provide stipend increases for all students—even if the stipend increases for each student are lower—and to involve graduate students in the early stages of the discussions.

## PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

We offer recommendations that follow from three general principles: equity in graduate support; the centrality of the research mission of Indiana University; and a commitment to social justice. More plainly, we present priorities that will allow **all** programs to increase their graduate stipends, that will support research by improving our ability to recruit and retain high-quality graduate students and faculty, and that will address the grave financial risks our students face. We recommend a three-step approach implemented over a three-year period, with our specific priorities reflected in the order in which the steps are presented.

### YEAR 1

**Cover the unremittable fees for all students.** The unremittable fees make funding offers less attractive and reduce effective graduate stipends. Funding offers from College graduate programs

state that students must pay either 3.5% or 9% of tuition themselves—a necessary statement that nevertheless sounds discouraging in the context of an admissions offer. As noted above, the unremittable fees also reduce the purchasing power of student stipends by, in effect, taxing them. We also encourage the College to consider offering international students fellowships that will cover the costs of the OIS fees each year.

## YEAR 2

Establish a plan to increase stipends for *all* students. The College could approach increases in at least two complementary ways: by establishing a floor for graduate stipends and by aiming to move stipends for all programs into the top 1/3 of stipends in the BTAA.

**Establish a floor for graduate stipends.** This approach prioritizes providing students with a living wage. As noted, our lowest graduate stipends fall below both Indiana University’s estimated costs of attendance and the Medicaid eligibility line. While it is not immediately obvious how best to set the floor, we suggest 150% of the poverty line (which is currently \$18,735 for a single adult) as a reasonable standard.

**Increase graduate stipends for all programs into the top 1/3 of stipends in the Big Ten Academic Alliance.** We believe that our programs deserve stipends commensurate with their quality relative to other BTAA institutions. This approach responds to the external markets within which programs operate. For some programs, establishing the floor stipend will move them into the top 1/3 among their BTAA comparators. For other programs, additional increases would be needed.

In addition to taking the major step of increasing graduate stipends in year 2, we encourage the College to develop a plan to **regularize stipend increases**. Faculty receive salary increases most years. Graduate students—who are in a more vulnerable financial position—should as well. We recommend that the College begin budgeting under the assumption that graduate students will receive either a cost-of-living increase or the same % salary increase as faculty each year.

## YEAR 3

**Increase the number of recruitment fellowships to select departments.** Standard funding packages in humanities disciplines at other institutions include several years of fellowship support. Most of our A&H programs can offer one year of fellowship funding to students at best (and often not to all incoming students). Some programs may be able to restructure their undergraduate offerings so that they can shift SAAs to fellowships without reducing instructional capacity. In programs that have seen declines in undergraduate enrollments, shifting some funding from instructional SAAs to fellowships could be accomplished without increasing the total cost to the College. Although we see fellowships for humanities programs as the top priority, we note that similar adjustments may be possible in S&H and N&M departments, allowing a shift in funding from instructional SAAs to fellowships or RA positions.

## **CONCLUSION**

Our review of graduate funding in the College made clear to all of us that Indiana University remains a place of high-impact, high-quality graduate programs that merit high national ranking. The steps we recommend are modest but will make a significant difference, ensuring that the College of Arts and Sciences continues to be a leader in research and in graduate and undergraduate education.