

Report to the Faculty of Arts & Sciences
by the
Acting Dean of Research and Graduate Studies
May, 2001

There are three items I wished to bring to your attention regarding the state of the graduate programs in Arts & Sciences. These are: the results of a recent COGS study of our Ph.D. stipends, the need to implement last year's recommendations of the COGS Task Force "Study of the impact of closing MA programs", and a proposal to restructure the governance of the graduate programs.

I. Results of the Ph.D. stipend study:

Before his recent and untimely death, Dean Stephen Park initiated a study of the stipends for the Ph.D. programs. Our Ph.D. stipends were compared with those of our SCHEV peer group, and with a supplemental group that more accurately reflects our direct competition for good students. As was characteristic of everything he did, this study was thorough, carefully done, and provides us with a firm foundation upon which to discuss the issue. The results, summarized below, show several things quite clearly:

- • The base level of institutional support (*i.e.* 9-month stipends), for our Ph.D. programs is extremely lean. The total Ph.D. stipend support pool is currently roughly \$1M, and funds about 90 students, for an average stipend of a little over \$10K per student. (Approximately 80 Ph.D. students are funded from *external* sources.) Note that this does not include the Anthropology Ph.D. numbers, since that program will begin next Fall.
- • Funding has not increased in several years.
- • Stipend levels provided from the Dean's office are not competitive, requiring departments and programs to supplement from other sources, if other sources are available.
- • To remain competitive, the Dean's office has allowed departments/programs to offer fewer stipends at a higher rate. This is eroding the size of the programs.
- • In the humanities, Dean's support nominally ends after four years, while many of our competitors offer 5th year funding. If a department or program chooses to offer 5th year funding to compete, this erodes the class size even further.

It is vitally important that the University community realizes the long-term implications if this trend is not reversed:

1. 1. Our classification as a 'Doctoral I' university provides significant direct and indirect benefits, even for departments without graduate programs. These include, for example, a more select peer group for faculty salary comparisons, additional library funds, and a more vibrant and inclusive FRA program.
2. 2. The doctoral programs provide many research opportunities for our undergraduates, as well as graduate course offerings that are open to our undergraduates.
3. 3. As the summary tables below demonstrate, those Ph.D. programs that have access to external resources have been able to provide a significant leveraging of University resources. The competition for these external funds is intense. Because of the recent flat levels of base support for the graduate programs, these programs have had to divert an increasing amount of externally generated resources into stipend support to keep their programs competitive. There are opportunity costs associated with this diversion of resources. For example: the reduced ability to fund new faculty start-up packages, smaller travel and development funds for junior faculty, reduced funds for graduate recruitment, and reduced summer undergraduate research support.

It is clear that the Administration must make the increase of base support for the graduate programs a high priority. Except for the "Grad Dean's Stipend Budget", which has not changed in the last 3 years, all numbers are approximate and are intended to give a snapshot of the present funding profile of the 6 Ph.D. programs. The full data tables are available in the COGS annual report.

Definitions of Non-Standard Terms

Supplemental Group=	Schools that depts./programs view as their direct competitors
Dean's Stipend Budget =	Graduate Dean's office budget for stipends and suggested distribution
Actual Stipend Levels =	The allocation and stipend level the students actually receive. In recent years, to remain competitive the Graduate Dean's office has allowed depts./programs to increase stipend levels by admitting fewer students. This has the effect of eroding the size of the program.

SUMMARY

American Studies	9-Month Stipend	Total
SCHEV Peer Group Stipend-50th Percentile	\$11,000	
Supplemental Group Stipend-50th Percentile	\$13,250	
Combined SCHEV & Supplemental-50th Percentile	\$11,500	
W&M-Grad Dean's Stipend Budget	21@\$10,000¹	\$210,000
W&M-Actual Stipend Levels	19@\$12,000²	\$228,000
W&M-Shortfall Covered by Other Sources		\$18,000

¹Nominally, the Dean's support is for 4 years only. Many of our competitors provide 5 years of funding.

²In most years, American Studies provides support for 20-21 students.

Anthropology	9-Month Stipend	Total
SCHEV Peer Group Stipend-50th Percentile	\$11,150	
Supplemental Group Stipend-50th Percentile	\$10,450	
Combined SCHEV & Supplemental-50th Percentile	\$11,900	
W&M-Grad Dean's Stipend Budget	5@\$10,000³	\$50,000

³2001-2002 will be the 1st year of the Anthropology Ph.D. The eventual size of the program will be a nominal population of 20 students@\$10,000=\$200,000.

Applied Science	12-Month Stipend	Total
SCHEV Peer Group Stipend-50th Percentile	\$15,938	
W&M-Grad Dean's Stipend Budget	11@\$10,500	\$115,500
W&M-Student support from external sources (grants, outside fellowships, overhead recovery etc.).	See note ⁴	\$568,500

⁴The Applied Science department provides full support for 40 students @ \$17,100 (includes \$600 health insurance) = \$684,000. \$115,500 of the \$684,000 is provided by the Dean's office. The \$568,500 is the total amount of external support that Applied Science generates for student stipend support.

Computer Science	9-Month Stipend	Total	12-Month Stipend	Total

SCHEV Peer Group Stipend-50th Percentile	\$12,525		\$17,334	
W&M-Grad Dean's Stipend Budget	12@\$10,500	\$126,000	10@\$14,000⁵	\$140,000
W&M-Students supported from external sources (grants, outside fellowships, etc.) Support may be partial.				12 totaling \$106,000
W&M-Students supported and paid directly by external sources (grants, outside fellowships, employers, etc.).				3 students

⁵In 2001-2002, Computer Science will increase their stipends to \$16,000 and pay the shortfall from their own funds.

History	9-Month Stipend	Total
SCHEV Peer Group Stipend-50th Percentile	\$10,500	
Supplemental Group Stipend-50th Percentile	\$12,000	
Combined SCHEV & Supplemental-50th Percentile	\$11,000	
W&M-Grad Dean's Stipend Budget	26@\$10,000⁶	\$260,000

⁶Nominally, the Dean's support is for 4 years only. Many of our competitors provide 5 years of funding.

Physics	12-Month Stipend	Total
SCHEV Peer Group Stipend-50th Percentile	\$16,690	
W&M-Grad Dean's Stipend Budget	17@\$10,500	\$178,500
W&M-Students supported from external sources (grants, outside fellowships, overhead recovery etc.)	See note ⁷	\$568,500

⁷The Physics department provides full support for 45 students @ \$16,600 (includes \$600 health insurance) = \$747,000. \$178,500 of the \$747,000 is provided by the Dean's office. The \$568,500 is the total amount of external support that Physics generates for student stipend support.

II. Study of the impact of closing MA programs on the remaining graduate programs

The results of this study were forwarded to the FAC in the spring of 2000. The FAC reported that they were studying the report at the May 2000 faculty meeting. We summarize the recommendations:

- “1] The Administration should establish a fund for the support of interdisciplinary teaching. This would be used to fund buyouts or other mechanisms to ensure participating faculty receive reasonable rewards for their contributions to the University.
- 2] The merit systems of participating departments should be reviewed and, where necessary, reformed to make sure member faculty are being evaluated fairly.
- 3] The Administration, lead by the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies and in consultation with the Faculty, should develop guidelines and evaluation criteria by which any new proposed graduate program would be evaluated. It should then reaffirm its willingness to entertain proposals that meet these criteria.”

A copy of the full report can be found online at:

<http://www.wm.edu/FAS/Meetings/DOCS/GRAD-STUDIES/COGStaskforce.html>

I ask the FAC to report this back to the Graduate Dean so we can begin to work with them to implement the recommendations.

III. III. Proposed restructuring of governance of the A&S graduate program

Governance of the graduate programs at present is carried out by the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies and the Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS). COGS has representation from every graduate program in Arts & Sciences, and deals with matters ranging from routine course approvals to policy. In my opinion, the graduate programs would be better served by streamlining this structure so as to automate the more routine business (*e.g.* online approval of courses, or student extensions). In addition, the present size of COGS is too large for effective discussions of policy and the joint development of priorities. I propose that we move to a representative model of governance, where membership on the committee would rotate among the graduate programs. The committee would be charged with developing policy for the graduate programs and helping the Dean set priorities. I will work with Dean Feiss and the Faculty Affairs Committee to develop this new structure which, I believe, will reduce faculty workload regarding routine matters, while more effectively developing joint policies which benefit the graduate programs as a whole.

Respectfully submitted,

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