

Graduate Council Meeting

Barry W. Scheuermann, Ph.D.

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Graduate Assistants and Missed Pay



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Funding Allocation and On Boarding of Graduate Assistants

- Graduate student budget for AY2020-21 was reduced by approximately \$5.7 M
- Impact of COVID-19 on projected revenue and state share of support.
- Resulted in significant change in the process that was used to to allocate graduate assistant funding to the colleges and students.

Funding Allocation and On Boarding of Graduate Assistants

- **Changes in the process;**
 - A memo was sent out on April 14th from Dean of COGS and the Provost to Graduate Council, Deans, Associate Deans, and Graduate Program Directors.
 - Funding was prioritized based on whether the student was a continuing doctoral, continuing masters, new doctoral and new masters.
 - Lowest priority given to administrative assistants.
 - Tuition scholarships to be utilized minimally during AY2020-21.

Funding Allocation and On Boarding of Graduate Assistants

- **Changes in the process;**
 - Colleges were not provided with an amount to be allocated this year which was a significant change to the process
 - Colleges were sent notices via email when to submit the names and relevant information via a webform which was a new process this year.
 - Each webform had a staggered opening date, based on the prioritizes for funding described already.
 - The last webform (new masters students) was made available on July 14th, 2020.

Funding Allocation and On Boarding of Graduate Assistants

- **Changes in the process;**
 - Once the student information was entered into the webform, COGS prepared each of the offer letters based on the information that was provided by the colleges – credit hours and stipend for fall, spring and summer, in-state, out-of-state, etc.
 - Offer letters were signed by Dean of COGS and forwarded to the colleges for signature and distribution to the students.
 - For some colleges, the first batch of offer letters were not sent to the colleges for distribution until the second week of July.

Funding Allocation and On Boarding of Graduate Assistants

- **Changes in the process;**
 - Since the new students were the last to be entered into the webforms which triggered generation of the offer letters were last offer letters generated and distributed to the students.
 - New students are required to complete and send back several forms and copies of identification to their college which in turn, is sent to COGS for review and further processing.

Funding Allocation and On Boarding of Graduate Assistants

- **On-boarding challenges;**
 - Students return their signed offer letter and supporting document to their academic college for initial processing.
 - Colleges enter student information into the ePAF system and forward copies of the supporting documents to COGS.
 - COGS reviews each ePAF and supporting documents to HR/Payroll for processing.
 - Any missing information and/or incorrect information must be corrected either by COGS or the student's college depending on the deficiency.

Funding Allocation and On Boarding of Graduate Assistants

- **On-boarding challenges;**
 - Limited resources – one dedicated person working on a reduced schedule and one individual who is able to assist as duties permit.
 - Need to process between 800 and 900 students.
 - August 18th was the deadline to meet the first pay period of August 28th.
 - Overall, a process that typically starts early in the spring semester did not begin until July resulting in a multiple issues culminating at the worse possible time.

Funding Allocation and On Boarding of Graduate Assistants

- **Moving forward for AY2021-22;**
 - Funding of graduate students and allocation of funding was discussed during the first COGS Council of Associate Deans meeting.
 - Workflow between colleges and COGS will be reviewed and communication/training plans developed.
 - Workflow between COGS and Office of Finance will be reviewed, including the uploading and transferring of data between units.