

CLA Graduate Education Program and Funding Revisions

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Overview--This summer the Dean established the Graduate Program Task Force to strengthen graduate education in the College of Liberal Arts. Specifically, the task force was charged with investigating the appropriate size and scale of graduate education in the College to ensure competitive stipends and student financial support and to address the issue of how to improve the College's ability to mentor students into an independent record of scholarship and/or creative activity. The Committee was asked to consider a more decentralized model of graduate student support in which departments/schools have more control over how student financial support is allocated. The Committee was further asked to consider ways the College might offset a model with fewer graduate student instructors.

Recommendations--The Graduate Education Task Force Committee Report included a number of recommendations to drive the College's programs to the next level. Faculty and graduate student feedback was sought on the report. The result is a proposed framework for moving forward with the following goals:

1. Increase the College's ability to recruit the most prepared students.
2. Improve the experience for graduate students, by creating a graduate student experience with more balance between research and teaching opportunities.
3. Increase support for graduate student stipends and provide additional resources for research and conference participation and professional development by working toward a more appropriate size and scale of graduate programs.
4. Increase the preparation of graduate students to be competitive in the labor market, with improved placements at a broader range of research-intensive institutions as well as teaching-focused institutions and careers outside of academia, with a redefined role in undergraduate instruction.

In order to achieve these goals, the College expects to continue to **increase the stipend amounts for the competitive recruitment fellowships** that it offers each year (Ross, Andrews and PRF fellowships). The College has also begun to provide more **resources for support of graduate student research and conference presentations** with the **PROMISE** program. Funding will be available to hire Continuing Lecturers to satisfy unmet teaching needs.

This is a multi-year process and for some units it will take more than one year to achieve these goals. To move toward those goals, five objectives are proposed with more detail below:

1. Heads will determine the compensation level of CLA stipends for graduate assistantships (GAs include teaching assistants and research assistants).
2. At least 20% of CLA-funded GA lines will be set aside as RA positions.
3. All departments/schools will have to justify the rationale for programs with

- more than 50 CLA-funded GA lines.
4. All faculty will be involved in teaching introductory undergraduate courses.
 5. All departments/schools will move toward 5-8% administrative course releases.

Next steps- The College proposes the following frameworks for departments/schools:

Improve recruitment of top students; increase support for graduate student stipends, research opportunities and professional development.

The Dean will devolve the authority to make decisions about graduate student support to the departments/schools, providing a budget for a cash allocation for GA and RA funding rather than a specific number of teaching assistantship slots.

1. Heads will have flexibility in the level of compensation for individual GA stipends in which Heads will be required to explain why they are providing stipends that are less than \$15,000 per year.
2. The College will establish an expectation that in AY 2016-17 at least 20% of CLA-funded GA lines be set aside as RA positions. The College would like departments to provide funding for graduate students to spend at least 1-2 years of their doctoral programs (1/3 for MFA) in research appointments or fellowship years rather than teaching appointments. The College, in collaboration with schools/departments, will set limits on the amount of teaching students do over time (#courses, #hours/semester) in order to maximize their ability to devote time to their studies and research.

Appropriate scale and size of Graduate Programs:

3. The College will set an expectation that units must justify programs with more than 50 GA lines per PhD granting department/school (10 lines per year with 5 cohorts with a general expectation of 5 years of funding). These guidelines should be adjusted for students in MFA programs which come with a general expectation of 3 years of funding.

The CLA Graduate Education Program and Funding Revisions document was a starting point that asks departments/schools to reflect carefully on appropriate size and scope of their graduate programs. There is currently substantial variation in the current size and allocation of graduate student support across departments/schools that has been driven by historical factors relating to undergraduate teaching needs as much as optimizing graduate program planning.

The College would also like to work towards optimizing the size of graduate programs, with a goal of approximately 10 new graduate students in each graduate cohort.

The College would like Heads to consider setting guidelines or a cap on the number of graduate students each faculty member can mentor in the role of primary advisor.

The College recognizes that any changes to reduce the size of graduate cohorts will impact graduate course offerings. There is a resulting expectation of allowing for smaller graduate courses going forward.

Recalibrate Delivery of Undergraduate Education:

In exchange for increased flexibility, Heads must make a commitment to a hold harmless provision in the delivery of undergraduate education.

In order to meet these expectations of increased stipend levels, the College expects departments/schools will reduce the numbers of graduate students in their programs and will better engage faculty members in undergraduate education in order to offset undergraduate course needs.

4. The College expects all faculty members to be fully engaged in teaching introductory undergraduate courses. The College has a minimum expectation that all faculty members should teach at least one introductory class each academic year. (This number may increase over time). For units with university core requirements, it is expected that faculty in these departments/schools will teach at least one section of these courses per year. Lastly, each department/school will establish a minimum number of undergraduate students taught per year by each faculty member.

5. The College expects that department heads will work to put more faculty in the classroom, reducing the numbers of administrative (non-externally funded or Faculty Center related) course releases to 5%-8% each year. (This number should fall within the range as appropriate in relationship to the size and scale of the department or school.) Course releases include Head and Director of Graduate Studies; sabbaticals and research leaves are excluded from this calculation.

Deliverable

Heads are expected to provide a graduate education plan to the Dean by January 25, 2016. Plans may be submitted earlier. The dean's office will respond to these plans within two weeks of submission. The goal is to finalize all graduate education plans by February 29, 2016. Plans should address how each unit will achieve these stated goals over no more than a 4 year time period with substantial progress made towards these goals in year 1.