

January 9, 2026

Re: Reallocation of Graduate Stipends: Implications for Recruiting for Fall 26

Dear Deans, Associate Deans, Directors of Graduate Studies, and Program Chairs,

Welcome back to the New Year. I hope your winter break was restful and rejuvenating.

I want to update you on our plans for the strategic reallocation of stipends in the upcoming academic year, and alert you to our intent to hold back a small number of stipends to create a reallocation pool, which should be taken into account as we enter recruiting season for next year's class.

As you know, four years ago the Graduate School simultaneously began the complicated process of re-centralizing funding for graduate student support and implementing an increase to doctoral stipends of \$2.4 million dollars over four years. We have now completed both projects: all stipends funded by centralized dollars intended to support graduate education are now back in the Graduate School, and the final \$1,000 doctoral stipend increase was distributed this fall, and thus all doctoral stipends have increased by at least \$4000 over the last four years. Additionally, the minimum stipend amount for masters' students has increased over that period to \$15,000. As promised in 2022, we have kept the number of stipends stable in all units while we worked with the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) to build data dashboards on program admissions data (# of apps, acceptance rate, yield), number of degrees conferred annually and time-to-degree (measured in 3 semesters per year), and number of students supported by non-CAR funds. This information provides us with data to determine the competitiveness of programs, their productivity, and their expertise and efficiency in helping students finish; this data will help us reallocate stipends where they can have the highest impact. Here's the link to the dashboards, which we have shared multiple times with our DGSes; most recently, we shared them at our Fall 2025 DGS meeting and asked for each DGS to review them and let us know if they matched the data the programs collect. We now invite all of you to peruse the dashboards at this link and to provide us with your feedback (there is also a financial aid dashboard, but IRP is in the process of updating that dashboard with current data):

https://saspub.louisville.edu:8343/SASVisualAnalyticsViewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer_guest.jsp?reportName=UofL+Graduate+Programs+Reallocation&reportPath=/Shared+Data/External+Reports/&appSwitcherDisabled=true&reportViewOnly=true

At December's Council of Graduate Schools annual meeting in Washington, there was much discussion about the headwinds confronting higher ed and more specifically graduate education; cuts to federal funding (both faculty funding and graduate student support from R01 and F-31 grants) and federal changes to VISA guidelines and processing for our international students both threaten recruitment and the number of graduate students we can fund. Graduate deans from across the nation reported cutting GA positions by 15%-40%, with some of the most prestigious schools cutting STEM stipends by 40-50% and SS/HUM stipends by 50-60%.

We do not plan to make such draconian cuts. At the provost's request, we are now turning toward our original goal of **reallocating** stipends with an eye toward both individual program performance and equity across programs/units. To implement our reallocation process, the Graduate School will hold back **10%** of each unit's allocated number of stipend lines. These stipends will not be cut from the Graduate School's budget, but rather they will be reallocated strategically. Each unit will have to give up at least one line for recruiting for 2026, and some units will give up many more. I'm alerting you to this now because it likely has implications for the number of students you may recruit for next year.

This spring, we will complete our model for reallocation after consulting with the Graduate Council (an elected body of graduate faculty from all colleges with graduate programs), but we wanted you to know that you must scale back by 10% the number of lines you promise to incoming students; if your total number of graduate assistantship lines is 8, you'll hold off recruiting one student; if it is 60, you'll promise funding to 6 fewer students. Deans and Associate Deans will need to work with Chairs and DGSes so that they know what the impact on recruitment will be for each program, and we are asking you to be strategic as you make decisions about which programs you will ask to recruit fewer students. And as we've told DGSes several times, you can accept a student for admission and waitlist them for funding. This is preferable to delaying decisions on admission until all students accept or decline offers because it allows you to make an offer of funding as soon as a student turns you down.

Moving forward, all units will be able to request additional stipend lines (first, you must spend the ones you have with a prioritization of doctoral students). Using the dashboards created by Institutional Research, and with input from the Graduate Council, we will ask questions such as how many doctorates are produced by each stipend, what is the time to degree for those students, what is the yield from number of applications to acceptances to eventual enrollment, what proportion of students are funded by grants? The decision to return or reallocate lines to the units will be based on the metrics I mentioned above. When we reallocate, we will propose that the line will be yours for four years as long as that student remains funded by the unit (if the student leaves the program before finishing the degree, the line will revert to the Graduate School for redistribution).

I've spoken widely about inequities in the distribution of GA lines that are a result of a decision made over 25 years ago, when leadership in the Graduate School decentralized lines and allocated them to the units to use as they saw fit; almost no new lines have been created in that quarter of a century, and some new units and programs have been developed and frankly under resourced. The stipends allocated to units range from 7 and 8 lines to 255 lines, with newer units/doctoral programs having only 7-13 lines to recruit and retain doctoral students for several programs. This reallocation initiative will help to ensure that our limited resources are being used in the most effective way possible to support student success.

We know that these changes will make this year more difficult, but if we don't begin reallocating now, it will extend inequities that exist within our system and not hold individual doctoral programs responsible for their degree-productivity. Please reach out to me or to Paul DeMarco with your questions.

Best regards,



Beth A. Boehm, Ph.D.
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