



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

To: Ian Orchard, Vice-President, Academic & Provost
From: Beth Jewkes, Chair, Graduate Student Support Advisory Committee
cc: Members of the Graduate Student Support Advisory Committee
Jane Manson, Director of Finance
Date: 6 March 2017
Subject: 2017/2018 Graduate Student Financial Support

The Graduate Student Support Advisory committee (GSSAC)* considers the TA rate, compensation for RAships and distribution of additional funds across TA Support, UW Graduate Scholarships and Millennium Bursaries. GSSAC met on 8 December 2016, 23 January 2017 and 13 February 2017 and held a subsequent e-vote on two funding options:

Two options were considered via an approval vote.

1. The first was a 1.5% increase in overall funding, to align with the 2016/2017 faculty and staff salary increases.
2. The second was a 1.58% increase in overall funding, commensurate with the overall cost of living increase for graduate students, as computed by IAP as part of the committee deliberations.

Voting Results:

- Option 1 had 2 approval votes
- Option 2 had 4 approval votes (passed).

GSSAC therefore recommends to the Provost:

1. Graduate Student Support. A 1.58% increase in graduate student support by \$331,000 in total, effective 1 May 2017, with all \$331,000 directed towards TA's and Graduate Experience Awards (GEA). There will be no increase in the Graduate Scholarship or Millennium Bursary Funds.

Rationale: This reflects the increase in the graduate student cost of living for 2016/2017, as computed by IAP for GSSAC.

2. TA Rate. A 1.58% increase in the TA rate for 2017/2018 to \$31.93 per hour, effective 1 May 2017.

Rationale: This reflects the increase in the graduate student cost of living for 2016/2017, as computed by IAP for GSSAC.

3. RAships. A recommendation that the rate for RAships for graduate students also be increased by

1.58% from \$39.07 to \$39.69 per hour at the masters level, and from \$44.95 per hour to \$45.66 per hour at the doctoral level, effective 1 May, 2017.

Rationale: These rates are a voluntary guideline. They follow decisions made in previous years whereby RA rate increases follow TA rate increases.

4. Matters of Concern to GSSAC.

- a. Members of GSSAC have queried the role and mandate of the committee in light of the new budgeting process. The chair of the committee will seek guidance from the provost on this matter.
- b. GSSAC recommends that the Provost establish a graduate student funding review committee. The committee should review overall levels of graduate student support as well as decision-making processes for establishing and modifying:
 - TA pay rate and standard TA workload;
 - the GEA (in particular, whether it is achieving its original intent and whether it should be continued);
 - RA pay rates;
 - minimum funding levels for PhD students;
 - the potential of a minimum funding level for research masters students;
 - budgets for needs-based and scholarship funds.

The chair of GSSAC, the Associate Provost, Graduate Studies and a representative of the Graduate Student Association will develop terms of reference for this graduate student funding review committee, in consultation with the Provost.

- c. The GSA representatives of GSSAC have expressed concern about making decisions about TA and RA rates in isolation of the larger context of overall funding for graduate students. GSSAC had a brief discussion about alternative philosophies for graduate student funding without attempting to achieve consensus. GSA representatives requested that their position on graduate student funding be included, for information, in this memo.

Official Position of the GSA - Graduate Student Funding

Council declares it to be the official position of the GSA that net student funding (defined as total funding minus tuition fees, mandatory incidental fees and taxes) should be at a level not lower than the cost of living in Waterloo for all research-based graduate students. The GSA's focus on net student funding implies that individual components of the funding / tuition equation should not be treated in isolation, but rather in the context of all factors affecting the student support picture.

***Committee Membership 2016/2017**

Beth Jewkes (chair)
Nadia Singh (secretary)
Jessica Brake
Robert Bruce

Bruce Hellinga
Norman Kearney
Srinivasan Keshav
Robert Lemieux

Jeff Casello (resource)
Sarah Hildebrandt (resource)
Jennifer Kieffer (resource)
Allan Starr (resource)

Response from provost: To be consistent with other employee groups I can only approve an increase of 1.5% for TA rates and RAships. It is unclear to me why the WBMA has an effect on the role and mandate of the committee. I have earlier asked the AP OSO to establish a student funding review committee, and so am

supportive of this.

Jan Orcher