

Goal 2: Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity

A. Conduct world-class research and creative activities

TA/RA stipends

TA/RA stipends are often an urgent issue since they affect graduate student recruitment. IUPUI needs to be competitive with other top research universities. Higher quality graduate students help the graduate program and enhance faculty recruitment. Conversely, high quality faculty attract excellent graduate students.

Committee: Susanmarie Harrington, Nancy Newton, Simon Rhodes, and Sherry Queener (Chair)

Current Status:

Many graduate programs report that they are seriously limited in their funding for TA or RA support. Some programs have accepted that faculty may need to take primary responsibility for procuring funding for RAs through external research grants, whereas within other programs there is lingering faculty resistance. There is no single source of information on the level of support now offered to TAs and RAs and it is difficult to determine actual numbers of students supported because many individuals are simultaneously supported on multiple lines; nevertheless, 473 students appear in the system as supported for some or all of the academic year 7/1/06 through 6/30/07. Amounts of support range from \$626 to \$33100; support reported at the lower level is confirmed in many cases to represent only the amount used to "top off" a different award. Only 58 students in the system showed support below \$6000 and 135 were supported at \$20000 or above.

The Graduate Office monitors the level of support offered by recruiting fellowships within the CIC and advises the Fellowship Subcommittee of the Graduate Affairs Committee of these figures so that levels of our University Fellowships can be adjusted upwards to keep IUPUI competitive. The Fellowship Subcommittee strongly feels that the purpose of the money they oversee is to bring outstanding students to IUPUI who will contribute to the research mission of the campus. Last year IUPUI University fellowships for doctoral students were \$22000/year; during the comparable period, Michigan State University fellowships ran \$23000-\$35000, University of Minnesota fellowships were \$13000-\$21500, University of Iowa fellowships were \$15000-\$21000, and Northwestern University fellowships were \$18660-\$19260.

Detailed information on student support is part of the National Research Council (NRC) Survey of Research Doctoral Programs, which is expected to release data in February 2008. This data source will make comparisons between institutions easier and can help IUPUI stay competitive in its support of graduate students.

Recommendations/suggestions:

*During times of financial stress resulting from restricted budgets from the state and constricting research funding from key federal agencies, IUPUI must strive to put even more into the budgets for RA support for programs; without this support, our programs will lose their competitiveness for external research funding.

*Building support for TAs into base budgets for key teaching units should be explored by academic units.

*Better capacity to mine the data to determine numbers of students supported in various ways is needed.

*External funding should be actively sought to support the training of graduate students, and this faculty activity should be supported by service units both at the school and campus level.

Implementation:

1) The Fellowship Subcommittee has been informed of these ongoing discussions, and as a result the subcommittee agreed to release money recovered from returned or unclaimed fellowships to allow funding of approximately one extra fellowship for each school that was awarded a block grant.

2) Ten TAs were awarded to the School of Science, supported by CTE funding; the TAs are engaged in the undergraduate mission, tutoring and/or teaching within University College.

3) A general data specialist within the Graduate Office will support the ongoing data collections likely to be required in the wake of the NRC survey.