



OFFICE OF THE DEAN
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January 15, 2020

Elizabeth H. Simmons
Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Distinguished Professor of Physics
University of California, San Diego

Dear EVC Simmons,

The Graduate Division has read the response from Senate (dated November 22, 2019) regarding the Graduate Funding Report. We are grateful for the Senate's support of the proposed changes to the TA allocation formula and understand the hesitation regarding block grant. We would like to respond to the five specific bullet points and propose next steps upon which The Graduate Division can take the lead coordinating.

Senate feedback regarding TA allocation:

- *Reviewers endorsed the Workgroup's suggestion that criteria for the TA allocation formula be based on the pedagogical needs of the classes.*
- *Reviewers expressed the need for clear and measurable standards to define the course designations.*

Graduate Division response regarding TA allocation:

We are pleased that Senate is enthusiastic about the replacement of the historic PRC ratio with the new, pedagogy-based, weighted (by enrollment) TA load ($TALoad_{weighted}$). The Graduate Division looks forward to collaborating with partners to help implement the new formula. The values for $TALoad_{weighted}$ for each department/program (referred to as "department") should be determined in collaboration with the department. We propose the following process that utilizes representative data from 2018-19 to determine $TALoad_{weighted}$:

1. A critical component of the new process for TA allocation is classification of each class as *Intensive*, *Standard*, *Light*, or *No TA* in terms of TA needs. The definitions for these classifications will be established in consultation with academic units that receive TA funds. The definitions will be established with the expectation that departments will have a range of course types, with the majority of courses classified as *Standard*. As a starting point for the discussions, we will use the initial definitions established by the Senate-Administration Workgroup (page 3 in the Report). We will work with each Division, SIO, and the writing programs to set up

meetings in which representatives from each department (faculty, staff, graduate students) will be invited to meet with representatives from The Graduate Division (Dean/Associate Dean and staff) for input on the definitions. After these meetings, The Graduate Division will refine the definitions of each classification to be utilized across Campus. We would like to emphasize that graduate student input will be essential and expected in these meetings.

2. The Graduate Division will assemble a spreadsheet for each department. The spreadsheet will include: List of all courses offered in 2018-19, number of students enrolled in each course, and number of TAs/readers/graders utilized in each course.
3. This spreadsheet that contains course data from 2018-19 will be sent to all departments, and they will be asked to classify each course as *Intensive*, *Standard*, *Light*, or *No TA*. Departments will also be asked to indicate the preferred number of 50%-time TA slots for each course. Representatives from The Graduate Division will request in-person meetings with each department to ensure that the information is provided appropriately. Graduate students from the department as well as TAs in the writing programs will be requested to participate in these meetings and contribute to the classification of each class as *Intensive*, *Standard*, *Light*, or *No TA*.
4. After the data are collected, values for $TALoad_{weighted}$ for each department/program will be initially determined and provided in draft form to the departments/programs, and the EVC's office, for confirmatory discussions prior to making final determinations of the TA allocation.

Senate feedback regarding block grant:

- *Reviewers endorsed the recommendations of the Workgroup to devise a simpler, systematic and transparent policy for block grant allocations.*
- *Reviewers were supportive of the goal of the block grant formula to guarantee one year of support for each MFA and PhD students as a standard practice, with potential support for a second year. However, many questions remain about how the formula should be revised to achieve this goal. Before changes to the block grant formula are implemented, Senate Council recommends that the factors incorporated into the formula are clarified and an analysis of the model based on historical data is completed to measure the impacts on department funding.*

Graduate Division response regarding block grant:

We agree with Senate that transparency and simplicity should remain a top priority with the new process for allocation of funds to support graduate students. We propose to move away from the notion of a formula and focus on a process that will have flexibility and ability to adapt to changes in graduate programs in real time. The process should be simple:

- **First-year fellowships.** Each Department should work closely with their Dean and The Graduate Division to establish the target size of the incoming doctoral and/or MFA cohort, plus variance. The Department is guaranteed that if the incoming class size is within the target, each student is awarded a first-year fellowship. This process offers simplicity, clarity, and no risk to the Department so long as they stay within the agreed parameters. The Graduate Division will collaboratively develop a policy that will address those situations when a student earns an external fellowship. Additionally, The Graduate Division believes there should be minimal carryforwards retained within departments. We believe any carryforward balances should be spent on graduate student support and look forward to developing a strategy with Divisions and Departments on how to do so.

- Second-year fellowships. One possibility is to ensure that each doctoral student will have 33% of non-IA employment throughout their graduate career; the value of 33% is the equivalent of non-IA support for two years out of the current average time to degree (TTD) of six years. The Graduate Division can determine the fraction of doctoral funding in a given Department from IA employment. We can determine the fraction of IA-ships by evaluating the number of IA-ships per student for all quarters the student is registered in the doctoral program. The range of values would be from 0 (no IA-ships throughout the entire doctoral program) to 1.0 (100% reliance on IA-ships throughout the doctoral program). For example, a student who was a TA for five years (15 quarters) out of their six years (18 quarters) as a registered student would have a value of $15 \text{ IA-ships} / 18 \text{ quarters} = 0.83 \text{ IA-ships/quarter}$ (i.e. 83% of the support was in the form of IA-ship). The total fraction of support in the form of IA-ship can serve as a key criterion for the second year of support, where the goal is to reduce the reliance on IA-ships to no more than 67% of the graduate career. Programs that rely heavily on IA-ships would have priority for second-year fellowships. The rationale is that programs with limited external funds for GSR-ships would be provided additional support.

We believe that these two simple guidelines will help support disciplines that are traditionally underfunded as well as allow for easy adaptation to changes in program size and funding profile. After data are assembled, the financial impact can be assessed and presented to the Senate for further consideration.

Senate feedback regarding accountability:

- *Reviewers and Senate Council members felt that there should be an alternate means of holding departments accountable for the quality of their graduate programs besides adjusting potential funding to a lower amount during the annual block grant review, which seems to penalize the students most.*

Graduate Division response regarding accountability:

We agree with Senate that graduate student funding (what we have called block grant) should not be withheld as a mechanism of punishment because of the impact on students. The hope is that the new process for allocation of graduate student support will provide funding based on the size of the incoming cohort (as a way of determining first-year fellowships) and extent of reliance on IA-ships (as a way of determining potential second-year fellowships). In this scenario, the outcome from Program Reviews could, for example, impact incoming cohort size, and would not penalize existing students.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Antony". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

James Antony, Ph.D.
Dean, The Graduate Division
Professor in Education