

## **University Senate Graduate Compensation and Benefits Committee 2012-2013 Annual Report**

This brief report submitted to the University Senate Steering Committee outlines the activities of the Graduate Compensation and Benefits Committee (GCBC) during the 2012-2013 academic year and discusses future directions of the committee.

### Autumn Semester 2012

During Autumn 2012, the primary responsibility undertaken by GCBC was the completion of the first annual graduate associate stipend review. The rationale for implementing an annual review of graduate associate stipends originated in a resolution passed by the Council of Graduate Students (CGS; 1112-SU-005; passed July 15, 2011), in which it was noted that adequate financial support is fundamental to recruiting and retaining highly talented graduate students and to ensuring their success as graduate associates fulfilling vital roles at this institution. The annual stipend review process also provides a means of fostering a collaborative relationship between GCBC, CGS, the Office of Human Resources, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Graduate School, all of which have a vested interest in continually improving the graduate experience at Ohio State.

Comparisons of minimum and mean stipend values for the 2011-2012 academic year for graduate administrative associates (GAA), graduate research associates (GRA), and graduate teaching associates (GTA) were undertaken at three levels: 1) between Ohio State and benchmark and public CIC institutions, 2) between colleges at Ohio State, and 3) between individual departments within colleges at Ohio State. The minimum stipend for a graduate associate on a nine-month appointment at Ohio State for 2011-2012 was \$10,500, an increase from the previous year's minimum of \$9,000. This increase of \$1,500 resulted in modest gains in Ohio State's ranking among benchmark and public CIC institutions. For GAAs, Ohio State now ranks sixth out of eight institutions, where it had previously ranked seventh out of eight. For GRAs, Ohio State now ranks 10<sup>th</sup> out of 14 institutions, where it had previously ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of 13. Finally, for GTAs, Ohio State now ranks 10<sup>th</sup> out of 14 institutions, where it had previously ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of 13.

As increases in the graduate associate minimum stipend for nine-month appointments are in effect for the 2012-2013 academic year (\$12,000) and set to take effect for the 2013-2014 academic year (\$13,500), GCBC deemed that it was not within the scope of our review to formally recommend further increases in the minimum stipend at this time. It is expected that the annual increases of \$1,500 between 2012-2014 will continue the upward trend of Ohio State with respect to its comparison group. The collaborative annual review process that is in place will allow the possibility for further increases in the minimum stipend to be revisited by GCBC in the years to come. It was recommended by GCBC that the mandatory fees to which graduate associates are subject (e.g., student activity fee, student union fee, COTA fee, and recreational fee) be taken into consideration at the university, college, and department levels when minimum stipend values are being set in the future. These fees reach a minimum of \$200 per semester for full-time graduates and, therefore, substantially lessen a graduate associate's take-home pay. A full report of the stipend review will soon be publicly released on the Graduate School's website.

### Spring Semester 2013

During Spring 2013, GCBC began the acquisition and analysis of two datasets based on surveys administered to Ohio State graduate students. For the first survey, GCBC partnered with the Academic Relations Committee of CGS to gather information regarding: 1) expectations related to the fulfillment of graduate associate responsibilities during semester breaks or university holidays, as well as any department-level policies that are applicable in such situations, and 2) the effect of pregnancy on graduate student education and degree completion. For the second survey, GCBC is working with the Office of Institutional Research and Planning to obtain data from a 2011-2012 survey of graduate students to specifically address: 1) attitudes related to student satisfaction and engagement, and 2) areas of potential improvement at the university, college, and department levels related to academic and support resources (i.e., non-financial benefits). At the time of writing, analysis is ongoing and so there are no results to report.

### Future Directions

The members of GCBC for the 2013-2014 academic year are currently being discussed between the current committee and the incoming CGS administration and should be finalized by the end of May. Next year, GCBC will continue the annual stipend review process via the framework established this year. In addition, analysis of the survey data from the Spring 2013 semester can be used to identify particular areas of need and avenues available for enhancing graduate student benefits based on the concerns expressed by graduate associates (and the wider graduate student body) themselves. These data will have a large part in forming GCBC's agenda moving forward. One topic of discussion that came up often in CGS meetings throughout 2012-2013 was student health insurance, and this is an area in which GCBC can make future contributions (e.g., health insurance review similar to that for graduate associate stipends, organization of and participation in workshops informing graduate students of their health insurance benefits, etc.).

Throughout this year, I received correspondence from several graduates at other institutions inquiring about the framework used in our annual review of graduate associate stipends, and I think it is important for such channels of communication to remain open. To me, this is a good sign that GCBC can not only work to enhance the graduate experience at Ohio State but can also be a resource for graduate associations as similar reviews are undertaken more widely at other institutions.

Report submitted by:

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