

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dalhousie University depends on graduate students to help it achieve its critical mission as a centre of research, teaching and service. Graduate students work with faculty members to investigate the wide range of subjects that make Dalhousie internationally respected and renowned. Graduate students in many disciplines work as teaching assistants, directly influencing the quality of undergraduate education. Dalhousie's graduates contribute services and knowledge that meet economic and social needs in an increasingly competitive economy. Without a strong and vibrant cohort of graduate students, the University can not achieve its mission. **The reputation, competitiveness and societal contribution of the University rely on our ability to attract and retain the best possible graduate students.**

Competitive Context: In an increasingly aggressive market for high quality graduate students in Canada, the funding packages that Dalhousie makes available to graduate students prove less and less competitive. The provinces of Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia have initiated bold recruitment strategies to greatly increase graduate enrolment and graduate student support. Even before other provinces complete their new investments Dalhousie has fallen far behind its comparator institutions in funding offers to graduate students. Dalhousie's tuition levels are the highest in the country, compounding the challenge of attracting students. International students face high differential fees. **In this competitive context Dalhousie University must adapt its funding strategies in order to attract high quality graduate students to our programs and to retain our share of students seeking further education.**

Student Experience: High tuition and funding shortfalls undermine the quality of the graduate student experience at Dalhousie. The Task Force conducted a survey of graduate students that revealed the negative attitudes that are developing among students. Some students told the Task Force that they have warned other potential students that the funding at Dalhousie is not adequate. One said, "If I could do it again I would definitely choose to pursue my graduate studies at another Canadian university that provides adequate student funding." Problems with insufficient funding undermine Dalhousie's reputation and growing student frustration erodes the good will of students and alumni towards Dalhousie. High tuition, high differential fees, inadequate space and insufficient funding are as important as the reputation of the University when students make their decisions on which university to attend. **In a context where the student experience is central to the ability of the University to attract graduate students and maintain their good will towards Dalhousie, the funding problem becomes an important institutional dilemma.**

Providing adequate and competitive levels of funding to our graduate students has a significance that extends far beyond the well being of individual recipients. The funding of graduate students goes to the core of Dalhousie's identity, reputation, and capacity. **We need to resolve the funding shortfall because so much is at stake: the well being and future good will of students; the scholarly mission of the university; Dalhousie's reputation provincially, regionally, nationally and internationally; the quality of undergraduate education; and Dalhousie's continued success as a "research engine" in Nova Scotia.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

I NEED FOR FUNDING

Recommendation 1. Priority in new graduate funding be given to recruiting and retaining high quality students in graduate programs.

Recommendation 2. Priority for the use of new graduate funding be given to improving the stipends of graduate students in this order: PhD, research intensive Master's (thesis and comparable), and other Master's.

II SOURCES OF NEW FUNDING

Recommendation 3. University Funds be provided to increase funds available to attract the best students. This can be accomplished by establishing a Tuition Award program for high quality new PhD students, by re-establishing the value of the FGS Scholarship Allocation, by initiating a program of Graduate Entrance Scholarships, and by increasing the Teaching Assistant(TA) budget for those Faculties dependent on TAships in running their programs.

Recommendation 4. The Capital Campaign commit to raising funds to create competitive Graduate Scholarship Endowments.

Recommendation 5. The University join with other Nova Scotian universities to present the case for a Provincial Graduate Scholarship initiative to the Nova Scotia government through CONSUP.

III FUNDING SCENARIOS

Recommendation 6. A university wide minimum funding level and multiyear guarantee policy be established for PhD programs.

Recommendation 7. Each PhD program establish a Guaranteed PhD Funding Package, which stipulates the minimum stipend, at or above the University minimum, for students in that program.

Recommendation 8. Minimum stipends at the Master's level reflect disciplinary practice. They are recommended for the research intensive programs.

Recommendation 9. Programs may accept students as Unfunded, where this funding status has clear meaning with respect to expectations of university funds throughout a student's program.

IV CAPACITY PLANNING AND IMPACT ON FUNDING SUSTAINABILITY

Recommendation 10. Individual programs develop enrolment plans based on their capacity to support graduate students in terms of space, funding, and faculty supervision. University funding to support graduate students would be conditional on university approval of the enrolment plan.

Recommendation 11. The impact of new programs on University and FGS funding resources (including entrance scholarships, tuition bursaries and FGS allocation) MUST be considered before such programs are approved by FGS and by Senate. This may result in two kinds of new programs:

- a) Funded programs: Programs that have access to university funds to support graduate students
 - i. programs that have no net negative impact on these resources*
 - ii. programs that have an accepted strategic importance to the university**
- b) Unfunded programs: Programs that will operate without university student funding resources.*