
From: Lynn Cooley, Dean of the Graduate School <grad.dean@message.yale.edu>
Sent: Monday, September 27, 2021 10:37 AM
Subject: Graduate student financial well-being

Yale

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

A Message from Dean Cooley

Copied to: DGSs, Chairs, registrars

In this message: Summary of recent changes and current projects aimed at ensuring graduate student financial well-being.

September 27, 2021

Dear students,

My years in academia have taught me to greet every autumn with a special sense of expectation and excitement. This fall semester feels especially joyful as our beautiful Yale campus comes alive again after the disruptions and uncertainties of the past eighteen pandemic months.

Accomplishments

As we return, I want to acknowledge with gratitude the [Graduate Student Assembly](#) (GSA), whose leaders have been extraordinary partners in addressing issues that affect the lives, careers, and well-being of our students. Never has this partnership been stronger or more evident than during the pandemic. The GSA worked closely with my office to ensure that graduate students' interests were at the forefront of ever-changing academic and public health policies, including the vaccination roll-out, community compact revisions, and library availability, as well as access to registration extensions and emergency childcare.

Your GSA representatives continued to advance a broad platform of non-COVID initiatives as well, including the completion of multi-year negotiations – along with the GPSS – with Delta Dental to offer improved dental insurance coverage with increased services and no waiting period and the ongoing development and formalization of department-specific advising guidelines for each GSAS program.

Next priorities

I am delighted to be able to continue this important work as we start this new academic year. To let you know some of what we are working on, here are three high-priority projects focused on the financial well-being of graduate students.

- **Undertake a Cost-of-Living Analysis**
 - We have heard anecdotally that the cost of living for graduate students in New Haven has risen significantly in recent years, but in order to make a case for any systematic adjustment to PhD student stipends, we need comprehensive supporting data and analysis.
- **Increase the Family Support Subsidy** for PhD students who are parents
 - As childcare costs increase, student parents face additional challenges to their academic success that should be addressed.
- **Expand the Dean's Emergency Fund** to include medical leave hardship awards
 - Medical crises can impact students very differently depending on the resources and family support available to them, with resulting differences in academic repercussions.
 - For students with few resources, modest medical leave hardship awards could make a necessary medical leave of absence financially possible, ensuring the student's place in their academic program.

These are ambitious goals that will require time and significant human and financial capital to accomplish. I invite you to join me and my GSA partners as we work towards securing the support students need to thrive in their graduate studies.

Wishing you a safe and successful year,

Lynn Cooley

Dean, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Vice Provost of Postdoctoral Affairs

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