TO: Deans, Department Chairs, and Graduate Directors

THROUGH: William W. Destler, Senior Vice President

FROM: Ann G. Wylie, Interim Dean

DATE: April 7, 2006

SUBJECT: Stipend Increase and Minimum Stipend Levels for Graduate Assistants and Fellows for FY 2007

All graduate assistants must receive an increase of 5.575% for FY 2007, including all those supported on State and research accounts. Fellows also must receive this increase. Although graduate programs may have made offers of financial aid to students on the basis of last year's stipend levels, they must adjust the levels to meet the minimum stipend levels outlined below. There are no caps on stipends although they must be consistent throughout a unit.

I. GRADUATE ASSISTANT STIPENDS

A. 9-month Minimum Assistantship Step I = $12,528

The 9-month contract may NOT be offered to teaching assistants due to duties and responsibilities occurring after the last day of classes.

B. The 9.5-month Minimum Assistantship Step I = $13,224

C. The 12-month Minimum Assistantship Step I = $16,704

D. Assistantship Stipend Ranges (Steps I - III)

The Graduate School does not specify the minimum stipends for Step II and Step III. However, a department MUST increase the stipend for Step II and Step III by a minimum of 5.575% above the stipend level in FY06. Step increases must be equitable and uniform across the unit.

Step I is for first-year graduate assistants only; Step II is for second-year assistants, as well as those students, new or continuing, holding a master's degree; and Step III is reserved for doctoral candidates.
E. Payment of Assistantships

All students who hold assistantships are paid by their departments through the PHR system.

II. GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP STIPENDS

A. Payment of Fellows

Domestic fellows and international fellows who pass the five-year presence test are paid in two equal installments, once before the fall semester (August) and once in the spring semester (January), through the online system of Student Financial Aid. International students who do not pass the five-year presence test are paid by their departments through the PHR system.

B. Five-year Presence Test: An international graduate fellow who has been in the United States for five years or more on a student visa will be treated as a domestic student for fellowship payment purposes and must be put into the Financial Aid System, not the PHR system.

C. Fellowship Range for 9.5 months

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step I</td>
<td>$13,319</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step II</td>
<td>$13,730</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step III</td>
<td>$14,550</td>
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III. Special Consideration for International Students on Assistantships or Fellowships

In order to issue the I-20 document, International Education Services (IES) must have evidence of funding for 12 months, plus an indication of the funding commitment after the initial year of study. This funding evidence is necessary because international students are not permitted to work beyond their assistantship duties during the fall and spring semester; and also, students cannot drop their enrollment below full time without being out of status with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), risking deportation. In addition, student loans are generally not available to international students.

If international students are offered a 9.5-month assistantship or fellowship appointment at the above rates, they must be given additional summer support or show proof of private financial sources, which combined with the 9.5-month stipend, total a minimum of $15,168. This amount includes the cost of living, books, insurance and fees. According to the Office of Student Financial Aid, the current Standard Student Budget is $19,633 for in-State students and $31,957 for out-of-State students (see www.financialaid.umd.edu/OSFA ).

cc: John Blair  Barbara Hope  William McLean
    Linda Clement  John Porcari  Valerie Woolston