

GRADUATE RESEARCH TUITION DIFFERENTIAL FELLOWSHIP

The Offices of the Provost and the Vice President for Research and Economic Development are pleased to announce a new graduate research tuition differential fellowship initiative to begin in FY 2010. This new graduate research fellowship program will address an important integrated research and educational issue raised by the University community, and represents a new strategic and important investment in graduate education and research. One of the most prevalent concerns expressed by faculty in recent years has been the escalating cost of out-of-state tuition for externally funded graduate research assistants that is typically charged to federal, state, foundation and industry grants secured by faculty. This cost has compromised our ability to attract some excellent graduate students and may place our faculty research proposals at a competitive disadvantage. Currently, our out-of-state tuition rates are near or exceed expenditure caps that federal funding agencies have set for supporting graduate research assistants. Given the highly competitive nature of research funds at the federal level and the challenging economic climate, we need to augment our support of graduate research assistants and insure the competitiveness of our grant proposals. This new graduate research tuition differential fellowship will address these grant-funding issues as well as enhance graduate education and the research mission of the institution.

CONDITIONS

This initiative will provide a fellowship for the difference between out-of-state (OS) tuition and in-state (IS) tuition for graduate students supported by externally funded graduate research assistantships who begin their graduate study at URI in FY 2010 and thereafter. Using FY 09 tuition as an example, this fellowship would support the annual \$13,022 differential between in-state and out-of-state tuition for graduate research assistants funded on external grants. Funds associated with these fellowships can ONLY be used to support the OS-IS tuition differential for externally funded graduate students. Faculty will continue to be responsible for supporting graduate research assistantship stipends and in-state tuition from their externally funded grants. Out-of-state masters candidates, and Ph.D. candidates with a master's degree appointed as graduate research assistants will be provided a tuition differential fellowship for up to 2 years; out-of-state Ph.D. graduate students without a master's degree that are appointed as graduate research assistants may receive a tuition differential fellowship for up to 3 years. Fellowships will be cycled back into the pool for reassignment to new students after the 2- or 3-year time frames. This strategic investment of approximately \$1.2 million will provide fellowship support for more than 90 fellowships starting in FY2010.

Our expectation is that this program will enhance our competitive position in research and encourage strategic growth in our graduate student and funded research programs. We plan to monitor changes over time and, if the expected

growth is realized and funding is available, we plan to expand the pool of resources over time proportional to the growth in research productivity.

PROCEDURE

These fellowships must be included in proposal budgets to be approved by the Office of Sponsored Projects Review prior to the submission of a research proposal for external funding as part of the normal grant proposal submission and budget development process. Fellowships will be provided until the existing funding pool is expended. The Office of Budget and Planning will monitor fellowship allocation and compliance with the aforementioned time frames.

SUMMARY

The graduate research tuition differential fellowship initiative will stimulate a more vibrant learning and research environment at the University by supporting a larger cohort of exceptional graduate students. More graduate research assistants should facilitate a greater capacity for innovation leading to more and better research, contributions to knowledge-based economic development in Rhode Island, and meaningful experiential learning for our undergraduate and graduate students.

The program offers the following benefits to the URI community:

a more attractive and competitive funding package from the perspectives of both graduate research assistants and faculty;

an investment that leverages institutional resources;

a university investment that can be used as matching funds on grants;

a co-investment with PI's in graduate education and research;

expansion of the size and diversity of the URI graduate student community.