

Subject: Raising the provost's minimum stipend for graduate assistants
Date: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 at 9:14:06 AM Central Daylight Time
From: Hewes, Randall S.



Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to share great news about an unprecedented University of Oklahoma investment to support graduate education.

Over the past six years, we implemented fee cuts for graduate assistants (GAs) in OU Norman campus programs totaling \$3,840 for 18 credit hours of enrollment. The biggest of these fee cuts, averaging \$1,700 per GA, was implemented this fall. This brought the out-of-pocket cost of fees down to the public AAU average of \$1,021, resulting in net stipends (stipends minus fees) that are more nationally competitive.

Now, to fully close the gap with many of our peer institutions, I am thrilled to announce a \$6.2 million investment in fiscal year 2025, funded in large part through the *Lead On, University* strategic plan, to increase base graduate assistant stipends. Effective July 1, 2024, the provost's minimum GA stipend for a 0.50 FTE appointment will increase by 63% from \$13,830 annually to **\$22,560 annually in summer 2024**. In FY25, this will translate to a minimum pay rate on a biweekly basis of \$867.69. GAs appointed for the academic year rather than on a 12-month basis will receive a minimum stipend of \$17,354.

Individual colleges will receive additional funding starting in FY25 to cover the costs of this increase, based on the calculated difference between the new rate

and a historical unit baseline for GA appointments on internal accounts (E&G and Foundation sources). In addition, the Office of the Vice President for Research and Partnerships (OVPRP) will be announcing a supplemental funding program to help cover the costs of this increase for grants. Further details on the application process for principal investigators to request these stopgap funds will be announced by the OVPRP later in the academic year.

This combination of fee cuts in FY24 and stipend increases in FY25 is projected to bring average stipends for OU GAs to 100% of public Carnegie R1 peer institutions. We are timing this announcement, as the application cycle for fall 2024 is just getting started, with an eye toward having the maximum possible impact on recruiting for next year's class.

With this move, we are taking a major leap toward realizing our goal of becoming one of the nation's truly premier public research universities. At the same time, we are making a very important investment in student success. Thank you for all the work each of you have done to help make this possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randall S. Hewes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Randall S. Hewes, Ph.D.
Dean, OU Graduate College