

Graduate and Professional Student Organization (GPSO)
Report on 2008/2009 Surveys of Indiana University Graduate Students
and Chairs/Directors of Graduate Studies

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In late fall of 2008, the Graduate and Professional Student Organization (GPSO) conducted two surveys to assess the impact of funding and Student Academic Appointee (SAA) stipends on recruitment and retention of graduate students at Indiana University: the first survey of graduate students and the second of Directors of Graduate Studies and Chairs of Departments.. The data indicates that funding and stipends compare unfavorably to other academic institutions, and negatively affect the competitiveness of Indiana University in recruiting and retaining top quality graduate students. Funding is ranked by the students as the highest priority in need of attention from the university. Funding and stipends differ substantially by schools, and students that are not funded by their own department either borrow large sums in the form of student loans or work additional jobs, which risk impeding their own research efforts.

Department officials point to the importance of graduate students for the quality of undergraduate education and research in their own departments and indicate that they face a structural problem of declining resources to adequately fund enrolled students and to attract top recruits of the kind required to meet their own departmental needs for teaching and research positions.

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the findings from two surveys, one of graduate students and a second of Directors of Graduate Studies/Chairs at Indiana University. The surveys were conducted in reaction to a recent report by the Graduate and Professional Student Organization (GPSO) that compared stipends for SAAs at Indiana University with students in similar positions at other Big Ten universities. The findings of the previous analysis suggested that a substantial discrepancy in pay between graduate students in the Physical Sciences and the Social Sciences and Humanities at Indiana University exists, and that this discrepancy seems particularly pronounced when compared with salaries at other Big Ten schools.¹ To investigate the current financial situation of graduate students at Indiana University and the competitiveness of IU in recruiting and retaining graduate students, the report recommended that the GPSO conduct surveys of graduate students and department chairs.

¹ "Report on SAA Stipends across the Big Ten Universities", prepared by Martha Wilfahrt (September 2008). See <http://www.indiana.edu/~gpso/gpso-reports.php>

The first survey, with 803 responses representing all the major schools, focused on three main issues: graduate student recruitment, retention, and the impact of funding and salaries on graduate life at Indiana University. To complement the opinions of graduate students, the second survey, conducted of 45 Chairs/Directors of Graduate Studies, focused on the ability of departments to recruit top quality graduate students, the resources available for this recruitment, and the relative ability to stay competitive with other schools in the recruiting process. Additionally, the respondents were asked how graduate student stipends relate to or affect the quality of undergraduate education and research in their own departments and what initiatives they have taken to secure external funds for graduate students. While the response rate does not justify broad quantitative analyses, the results of the survey provide useful information about the relative competitiveness of Indiana University in the recruiting process and the impact of funding on retention.

This report proceeds with an analysis of responses from both surveys and includes a description of each sample. A concluding section summarizes broader questions of graduate student recruitment, retention, and the effect of salaries on graduate student life and education.

GRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY

Sample Description

The survey was conducted online by the GPSO in November/December 2008 of graduate students at Indiana University. The invitation to participate in the survey was sent to graduate student representatives and/or staff in all departments with the request to distribute it among their graduate student populations. 803 students completed the survey, which represents a response rate of about ten percent of the graduate student population. The respondents include graduate students from eleven different schools; the majority of them pursuing their degree in the College of Arts and Sciences (42.0%), the Kelley School of Business (11.3%) and the School of Law (10.3%). Most students are seeking a doctoral degree (51.9%) and have completed between 2-3 years at Indiana University. About sixty percent of the respondents are female (59.2%) and almost four fifth are US citizens (78.3%). Respondents represent a variety of household situations; a little more than a third of the respondents are currently unmarried and living alone (34.6%), and an additional twenty five percent are unmarried and living with roommates. About ten percent have one or more children

Slightly more than half (51.2%) of the graduate students in the sample receive a Student Academic Appointment (SAA) with tuition remission, health insurance, and a stipend. An additional ten percent receive only tuition remission, while another six and eight percent only receive health insurance or a stipend, respectively. A quarter of the respondents (25.0%) do not receive any support from IU for their graduate education. For about two thirds of the students with funding, the source is their own academic department (65.7%); for seventeen percent, funding comes from an external source outside of Indiana University, and the remaining students either receive funding from another academic department or IU office or did not provide any information on this question.

The funding situation of graduate students differs systematically by school. In the College of Arts and Sciences, 80.7% of the graduate students obtain SAA funding; only 7.7% do not receive financial support. In the Kelley School of Business, 18.7% of the students are given SAAs; 38.5% of business graduate students are not financially supported. In the School of Law, this number is even higher, with 53.0% of law students not receiving any support.² The same applies to the School of Library and Information Science, where 55.9% of graduate students indicate that they receive no financial support.³

These differences are important for understanding the data, as graduate students tend to evaluate the ability of their departments to recruit and retain students differently depending on how much funding is provided for students in their department. Additionally, students' assessments of their own financial situation in graduate school seem largely dependent on their funding situation. It is therefore expected that significant differences in graduate student opinions occur between schools, due to disparities in funding across schools.⁴

Findings

The graduate student survey was organized into several series of questions, each providing the same battery of answer choices rated on a continuous scale. The first questions were concerned with graduate student recruitment and explored reasons for choosing Indiana University, the competitiveness of its graduate programs, and the factors which hinder or support the recruitment of

² Out of these law students, more than half (52.3%) indicate they are pursuing a professional degree, while the remainder is roughly split between MA and doctoral students. Many law students appear to have indicated they are pursuing both a professional degree and an MA or Ph.D.

³ Almost all graduate students in the Kelley School of Business and the School of Library and Information Science who do not receive funding are seeking a Masters degree.

⁴ Funding differences also imply that some survey questions are not relevant to schools with few funded positions. These include questions about the workload for research or teaching fellowship, the salary for living expenses, or the extent of health insurance benefits.

prospective students. The second set of questions related to student retention and examined the reasons some students leave IU. The next series of questions probed into the financial situation of graduate students, focusing on the additional funds students might need to support their studies, the amount of student loans incurred, whether they work additional jobs, and how this affects students' progress towards the graduate degree. Related to these issues, the last few questions asked the students to indicate the issue of highest priority for graduate students. One version provides a list of choices and another allowed for open-ended responses.⁵

Graduate Student Recruitment

Why Did Graduate Students Choose IU?

The majority of graduate students at Indiana University considered other programs before they came to IU. The "most important" factors for choosing their program were the reputation of the faculty and/or the department, the curriculum of the program, and the available funding for tuition.⁶ "Important" factors included the quality of faculty mentoring, the salary for living expenses, and the cost of living in the area surrounding the university. "Least important" reasons for attending Indiana University were the health insurance benefits, the workload for research or teaching fellowships, the geographic location of the institution, the culture and available social opportunities around the university, and the available opportunities for spouses or partners. Other open-ended responses included academic and professional reasons such as the opportunities for post-graduation employment, networking and, the collegial relationship between graduate students in the department and personal reasons, such as proximity to family, the transfer of credits from previous schools, and eligibility for in-state tuition.

The ranking of reasons for choosing IU are generally the same in every school, although students from the School of Law rank the curriculum as less important than the average across all schools, and students from the Kelley School of Business, the School of Law, and the School of Library and Information Science all rank funding for tuition as less important. This is not unexpected, as these

⁵The survey also included several questions related to drop/add fees for classes and the use and benefit of certain services and organizations at Indiana University. These questions do not directly relate to the topic of this report and are therefore summarized elsewhere.

⁶These factors were rated on a seven point scale by more than 70% of graduate students as either "important (6)" or "very important (7)". Factors that were rated "important" or "very important" by only 70-40% of the respondents are classified as important for this report, and least important factors were ranked in the two highest categories by less than 40% of the respondents.

schools generally provide less funding to their students than the other schools. Graduate students in the College of Arts and Sciences rank the stipend for living expenses as more important than the sample average.⁷

Table I: Reasons for Choosing Graduate Program: Relative Importance of Factors

	1 (Not At All Important)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Very Important)	9 (Don't Know/NA)	Top Two Categories
reputation of the faculty/department	0.4%	0.4%	1.5%	3.7%	12.3%	23.6%	57.3%	0.7%	80.9%
available funding for tuition	2.2%	1.3%	2.9%	5.3%	10.9%	17.0%	57.5%	2.9%	74.5%
curriculum of the program	1.0%	0.7%	2.8%	6.0%	18.2%	33.6%	37.2%	0.7%	70.8%
quality of faculty mentoring	1.4%	2.0%	5.2%	10.2%	18.3%	25.4%	32.9%	4.7%	58.3%
salary for living expenses	9.1%	2.8%	3.9%	9.1%	14.1%	21.3%	30.2%	9.6%	51.5%
cost of living	5.1%	4.0%	6.9%	15.5%	22.6%	24.1%	19.0%	2.8%	43.1%
health insurance benefits	11.9%	5.5%	9.6%	13.3%	17.5%	24.1%	17.7%	7.5%	41.8%
geographic location of the institution	8.3%	8.5%	12.2%	16.3%	21.5%	16.5%	15.4%	1.3%	31.9%
culture and available social opportunities	7.3%	8.6%	12.7%	17.2%	21.3%	20.5%	10.1%	2.2%	30.6%
workload for research or teaching fellowship	9.6%	5.4%	8.0%	16.3%	18.7%	17.7%	9.6%	14.7%	27.3%
available opportunities for spouse or partner	17.2%	2.8%	3.1%	3.8%	7.0%	10.0%	11.9%	44.4%	21.9%
other consideration	8.1%	0.0%	0.7%	0.5%	2.5%	5.3%	15.9%	67.0%	21.2%

How Does Each Program Compare?

The next series of questions was concerned with students’ opinions on how Indiana University (and especially their own programs) compares to other institutions. These questions indicate Indiana University’s competitiveness in recruiting graduate students. More than seventy percent of the respondents answered that the reputation of the faculty and/or department compares “favorably (6)” or “very favorably (7)” on a 7-point scale. Programs compare "favorably" with respect to curriculum, the quality of faculty mentoring, the costs of living in the area around the university, and the culture and available social opportunities around the university.⁸ Areas that compare "unfavorably" to other institutions and programs included the available funding for tuition, health insurance benefits, the stipend for living expenses, the workload for research or teaching fellowships, the geographic location of IU, and the available opportunities for spouses and partners.⁹ Other factors named in open-ended responses as favoring Indiana University included the diversity of the graduate student community,

⁷ 69.9% of COAS students ranked the salary as “Important” or “Very Important” vs. an average of 51.1% for the entire sample.

⁸ The categorization of responses remains the same as for previous questions. The “costs of living in the area surrounding the university” is the second highest ranked factor (63% of responses in “Compares Favorably” or “Compares Very Favorably” category).

⁹ For the factors “health insurance benefits”, “the salary for living expenses”, “the workload for your research or teaching fellowship” and “the available opportunities for spouses and partners”, a high percentage of graduate students answered “Don’t know/Not applicable”.

support for international students, the cost of tuition, and the placement record for graduate students, especially for minorities.

The schools ranked highest in the competitiveness of their reputation were the Jacobs School of Music (95.8% in top two categories), the Kelley School of Business (84.4% in two highest categories), and the School of Library and Information Science (88.7%). The schools for which their reputation compared less favorably with peer institutions were the School of informatics (41.2% of responses for “Compares Favorably” or “Very Favorably”), and the School of Law (53.0%). The curriculum was rated as comparing more favorably than the sample average in the Kelley School of Business (77.6% in two highest categories) and the School of Library and Information Science (66.0%). For the Kelley School of Business, students also ranked the quality of faculty mentoring (76.6% in top two categories) and the available funding for tuition as more competitive than the average across all schools.

Table II: Comparison with Other Institutions: Favorability of Factors

	1 (Does Not Compare Favorably At All)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Compares Very Favorably)	8 (Don't Know/NA)	Top Two Categories
reputation of the faculty/department	0.6%	1.0%	2.0%	5.3%	19.0%	28.7%	41.5%	2.0%	70.2%
cost of living	0.8%	2.3%	2.1%	8.2%	17.5%	32.4%	31.4%	5.4%	63.8%
curriculum of the program	0.7%	1.8%	2.9%	10.1%	26.7%	27.4%	26.2%	4.2%	53.6%
quality of faculty mentoring	2.8%	4.5%	4.5%	11.5%	16.5%	25.5%	25.0%	9.7%	50.5%
culture and available social opportunities	2.8%	5.1%	9.0%	15.0%	20.6%	25.4%	16.7%	5.3%	42.1%
available funding for tuition	6.5%	9.5%	10.5%	12.9%	17.0%	17.8%	16.3%	9.5%	34.1%
health insurance benefits	5.5%	7.0%	9.1%	14.5%	15.2%	14.9%	10.7%	23.2%	25.6%
geographic location of the institution	6.3%	10.3%	13.6%	18.4%	19.7%	16.4%	9.1%	6.2%	25.5%
workload for research or teaching fellowship	3.0%	4.8%	6.6%	15.7%	18.1%	16.2%	5.8%	29.9%	22.0%
salary for living expenses	6.3%	9.6%	8.4%	15.2%	18.1%	11.7%	7.2%	23.5%	18.9%
available opportunities for spouse or partner	4.8%	6.0%	5.7%	8.1%	8.2%	7.1%	6.2%	53.9%	13.3%
other consideration	3.4%	1.0%	1.8%	0.8%	1.0%	2.6%	3.6%	85.7%	6.2%

What Factors Affect Recruitment of Graduate Students?

The next battery of questions asked directly about the factors that affect the program’s ability to recruit graduate or professional students. The scale for these questions ranged from “hinders the department’s recruiting efforts” (1) to “supports the department’s recruiting efforts” (7) on a seven point scale, with “no impact” (4) in the middle.¹⁰

¹⁰This scale differs from the previous scales, because it ranges from negative to positive categories with a neutral category in the middle. The results are therefore classified by the proportion of responses that fall in the “hinder” categories (1-3) vs. the “support” categories (5-7). The median is also provided to indicate the average response.

A large majority of the graduate students responded that the reputation of the faculty and/or the department clearly supports the department's recruiting efforts (90.5% in categories 5-7), with the average rank falling in the highest category. Furthermore, the curriculum of the graduate programs clearly supports recruiting efforts; 81.7% of the responses fell in the "support" categories, with the median response marked by category 6. Cost of living was noted by 80.8% as "supporting recruiting efforts", and the quality of faculty mentoring was noted by 71.8% in support categories.

Clearly fewer, but still more than half of the respondents (59.2%) think that the available funding for tuition helps recruiting efforts, with the median response falling in category 6. "Culture and available social opportunities in the area surrounding the university" was also rated as supporting recruitment effort, with 59.2 percent of graduate students falling in the support categories, although the median response is lower (category 5). A little less clear, but still generally rated as supporting rather than hindering recruitment efforts were the influence of health insurance benefits (43.7% rated as supporting and 20.7% as hindering recruitment) and salary for living expenses (45.1% support, 26.1% hinder). The workload for research or teaching fellowship has a higher percentage of responses in the neutral/middle category ("no impact"). The only factor that is clearly rated as not supporting recruitment efforts is the geographic location of Indiana University (only 36.7% of respondents ranked it as supporting recruitment).¹¹

The responses that deviate by school from these general response trends come mostly from the Jacobs School of Music. For this school, the available funding for tuition, the salary for living expenses and health insurance benefits are all ranked as clearly not supporting recruitment efforts of the school.¹² In the School of Library and Information Science, 53.7% of the graduate students rate the available funding for tuition as hindering recruitment, with the median response in category 3.¹³

¹¹ The responses for the question about available opportunities for spouses/partners are highly skewed towards the category "not applicable", which includes 47.4% of the responses. The answers for support (23.4%) and hinder (18.1%) are roughly split.

¹² Available funding for tuition: 56% "hinder recruitment", median response is category 3. Salary for living expenses: only 31.9% "supporting recruitment", median: category 3). Health insurance benefits: only 27.7% "supporting recruitment", median response: no impact (category 4).

¹³ The number of responses for many of these school comparisons is relatively low (n= 25-30). For some schools, a few questions were less applicable, such as the impact of salaries in schools without many stipends (such as the Kelley School of Business, the School of Law, or the School of Library and Information Science).

Table III: Recruitment of Graduate Students: Influence of Factors

	1 (Hinders Department's Recruiting Efforts)	2	3	4 (No Impact)	5	6	7 (Supports Department's Recruiting Efforts)	8 (Don't Know/NA)
reputation of the faculty/department	0.8%	1.1%	2.6%	2.6%	16.1%	24.5%	49.9%	2.4%
curriculum of the program	1.0%	1.0%	3.9%	9.3%	23.3%	29.1%	29.4%	3.2%
cost of living	1.0%	0.8%	2.5%	10.0%	28.7%	28.8%	23.4%	4.9%
quality of faculty mentoring	2.5%	2.7%	6.0%	9.7%	18.1%	25.0%	28.8%	7.3%
available funding for tuition	10.4%	6.9%	9.0%	6.5%	15.8%	18.9%	24.4%	7.9%
culture and available social opportunities	2.9%	4.3%	12.0%	16.4%	25.5%	22.1%	11.7%	5.2%
health insurance benefits	5.8%	5.1%	9.7%	16.9%	16.5%	15.5%	11.7%	18.7%
salary for living expenses	8.3%	6.9%	10.8%	9.6%	15.8%	17.5%	11.8%	19.2%
workload for research or teaching fellowship	2.5%	2.8%	7.5%	22.9%	19.3%	14.1%	6.8%	24.1%
geographic location of the institution	7.2%	12.2%	20.7%	17.7%	15.2%	15.0%	6.5%	5.4%
available opportunities for spouse or partner	4.3%	6.8%	7.1%	11.0%	10.8%	8.5%	4.1%	47.4%

*Shaded cells indicate the median response category.

Finally, students were asked in an open-ended question why they decided to attend Indiana University for graduate school. The responses were generally positive and included repeated mention of the following attributes: the unique research and employment opportunities, a good placement record in their department, the positive relationship with other graduate students, the opportunities to take classes in other departments (e.g. languages, or joint programs degrees), as well as the relatively low costs for tuition and living while attending a program with a good reputation.¹⁴ As for negative responses, a number of students indicated that they either did not ask enough questions or were misled about available funding and/or workload that was offered to them. These students stated that if they had known about funding constraints in their department, they might have chosen to attend another institution.

Graduate Student Retention

Why Did Some Students leave IU?

When graduate students were asked if fellow students in their program have recently left Indiana University, almost half of the respondents answered in the affirmative (49.7%), about a third of the students responded that they did not know (35.4%) and about fifteen percent answered the question negatively. When asked how many of the students in their incoming class were still enrolled in

¹⁴ Personal reasons included that the respondent was already living in Indiana, had family in close vicinity or a spouse or partner who already lives in Bloomington.

the program, more than half of the respondents claimed that 75-100% was still enrolled. About fifteen percent estimated that 50-75% of the students that entered the program with them are still there, and less than one out of twenty respondents estimated that less than a quarter of their incoming class remained at IU.¹⁵

To follow up, the next question asked graduate students to describe, to the best of their knowledge, the factors that influenced their peers' decision(s) to leave Indiana University. While a large number of students answered that they did not know the reasons for leaving (29.6%) or that the factors were not listed among the options given in the survey (29.9%), the cause that was mentioned most often was the available funding for tuition (29.6%). This choice was followed by the curriculum of the program (27.5%), the quality of faculty mentoring (22.2%), and the stipend for living expenses (20.1%).¹⁶ The least mentioned factor was the cost of living in the area surrounding the university (2.8%). Other motives named in open-ended answers included the inability of the department to hire new faculty or the limited number of course offerings, as well as financial reasons such as receiving a job offer or running out of money for graduate school. The remaining answers pertained to personal reasons, such as a change of mind about graduate school or the degree, exhaustion or medical conditions, and the lack of academic success or the repeated failure of comprehensive exams.

The number of students reported to know fellow students that have left the program is higher than the university average in the Jacobs School of Music (70.2%), and lower in the Kelley School of Business (only 8%, but 46.7% of business students reported that they did not know). More than 90 percent of graduate students from the Kelley School of Business also claim that 75-100% of their incoming class is still enrolled in their program. A similarly high retention rate was stated by law student respondents (83.3 percent responses for 75-100% retention).

Graduate Student Funding and Stipends

What is the Impact of Graduate Student Stipends on Graduate Life and Education at IU?

In general, graduate students estimate the cost of living in Bloomington to be average (45.6% of the responses) to low (37.0%). The average monthly salary of all graduate students is \$957 (after taxes). However, this aggregate number hides significant variation in levels of support. Graduate students who

¹⁵ Again, the number of students who did not know how to answer this question was significantly high (16.9%)

¹⁶ Multiple answers were possible.

replied that they do not receive any funding by the university receive an average salary of \$458 per month, while students with SAAs receive, on average, \$1167 per month. Graduate students report a need for about \$5000 in additional funds per year on top of their stipend to support themselves or their graduate studies.¹⁷

While 37.7% of graduate students claimed that they have not had to use any student loans to continue their graduate studies at IU, the median respondent has borrowed between \$10,000-25,000 in student loans so far.¹⁸ About half of the respondents work a second job (46.0%). Most of those indicated working for about 10-20 hours a week (46.2% of the respondents with a second job). When asked if this additional work has in any way impeded the progress in the graduate program or the work at Indiana University, 43.5% of the graduate students stated that it impeded their research efforts. Roughly a quarter of the respondents also claimed that it delayed their ability to fulfill the course requirements in their program (27.0%) and/or delayed work on their MA thesis, Ph.D. dissertation or final paper project. Finally, about one out of six graduate students with second jobs felt it delayed their ability to complete final or comprehensive exams, and about thirteen percent answered that it interfered with their teaching duties. A third (33.2%) of the graduate students responded that their additional work has not impeded their progress or work at Indiana University.

The amount of additional funds needed by graduate students differs dramatically by school. The differences reflect the fact that students in the Jacobs School of Music, the Kelley School of Business, the School of Law, and the School of Library and Information Science are less likely to receive any funding through their department and therefore seem to rely more heavily on additional funds. The highest average for additional yearly funds can be found in the Kelley School of Business and the School of Law (\$20,000 annually for each), followed by the Jacobs School of Music (\$12,500 per year) and the School of Library and Information Science (\$10,000 per year). On the contrary, graduate students in the College of Arts and Sciences need only about \$3,800 in additional funds each year. These students are also less likely to borrow student loans (50.3% without any loans), while business students have borrowed between \$25,000-50,000 so far, and law students \$50,000-100,000.¹⁹

¹⁷ This number is the median of all responses. The mean is significantly higher (\$9596) due to some large outliers. Also note that 47.3% of the respondents chose not to answer this question.

¹⁸ The response rate for this question was considerably higher (87.8%). It is important to keep in mind that the average respondent to the survey has completed 2-3 years of graduate work at Indiana University.

¹⁹ The Kelley School average is especially relevant since the business students included in the sample have completed only about 1 year in graduate school, as opposed to the average for all students of 2-3 years.

A little unexpectedly, students from the Jacobs School of Music and the School of Library and Information Science borrowed the same amount of money as the average across all schools. However, these students are also significantly more likely to have a second job (83.0% of music students and 73.6% of library and information science students), with students from the School of Library and Information Science working an average of 20-40 hours a week. In contrast, only 28.8% of law students and only 12% of Kelley School of Business students work a second job.

What Improvements would Graduate Students like to see?

As a final set of questions, the survey asked what the respondents considered the highest priority to be addressed for graduate students at Indiana University. The highest response was the availability of financial aid (28.3%), closely followed by the stipends for Student Academic Appointees (26.3%). The next highest response was the quality of faculty mentorship, which was named by about one in ten students (10.7%). Other ranked priorities were the curriculum within programs (9.6%), health and dental insurance benefits (8.0%), and the availability of research support (7.3%). The social environment for graduate and professional students was named least frequently as a priority (2.8%). The open-ended responses about priorities for graduate students indicate that a number of students would like to see recruiting top students as a priority, as well as better career services for enrolled students, lowering tuition costs (especially for out-of-state tuition), allowing in-state tuition after one year of residency, lowering the mandatory student fees, providing additional funding for international students, better allocation of the unequal workloads for SAAs within departments, and giving students the opportunities to take additional classes beyond their programs' immediate requirements.

The next question gave the students the opportunity to elaborate on the reasons why they chose a certain priority as most pressing. More than half of the students included in the sample wrote comments; some going into great detail about their frustration with the issues that need to be addressed. Consistent with their quantitative responses, most students prioritized financial concerns and the need to change either the amount of funding or the number of SAA positions in their departments. Students wrote that the amount of funding was too low to cover their living expenses (especially in the summer), that the mandatory student fees were too high (as a percentage of their annual salary), and that the workload for SAAs was too high, underappreciated, and unfairly distributed within departments and across schools, especially compared to other institutions. Additionally,

respondents asked departments to more clearly reveal to incoming students the actual workload and how many years they would be funded.

Other priorities included the provision of additional funds for graduate students with families (especially for health insurance benefits), and increasing health insurance benefits to include optical insurance or the treatment of chronic illnesses (especially for non-SAA students). Some students wrote that faculty members in their department need to be more accessible, that IU needs to focus on the quality of teaching, and must offer a greater number of classes. Faculty recruitment and retention was an additional concern for some students, while other students mentioned the need to increase emphasis on recruiting top graduate students to stay competitive; they proposed admitting fewer students to better allocate the available financial resources.

Again, there are important differences between. Notably higher than the survey's average, 41.4% of the students in the College of Arts and Sciences named the stipends for SAAs as the highest priority that needs to be addressed. The availability for financial aid was only named by about one in seven COAS students (14.2%). In the Jacobs School of Music, these percentages are reversed, with as high as 63.8% indicating the availability of financial aid as their highest priority, and only 21.3% mentioning stipends for SAAs. In the Kelley School of Business, most students consider the availability of financial aid as the highest priority (41.3%), but a fifth of the students would like to see the curriculum of the program addressed. In the School of Education, the quality of faculty mentorship (27.0%) ran a close second to the availability of financial aid (29.2%) as the highest priority for improvement. In the School of Informatics, the availability of research support was named as the highest priority (28.13%). In the School of Law and the School of Library and Information Science, a greater percentage of students than average claimed that the availability of financial aid was a pressing issue (47.0% and 56.6% respectively). The open-ended responses of students in the Jacob School of Music indicated the allocation of teaching positions is a pressing issue, as these positions seem to be rewarded based on performance ability and not on the ability or desire to teach.

DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES/CHAIRS SURVEY

Sample Description

The survey for Directors of Graduate Studies and Chairs of Departments was taken by 45 respondents, with about two thirds in DGS positions (29 out of 45) and one third in chair positions (16

out of 45). Respondents work in seven different schools, with the majority from the College of Arts and Sciences (37 respondents). Two respondents were from the School of Informatics and the School of Library and Information Sciences. There was one response each from the Kelley School of Business, the School of Education, the School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER), and the School of Public and Environmental Affairs. Most of the respondents' programs offer MA/MS degrees (41 out of 45), and/or Ph.D. degrees (40 out of 45). In three programs the conferred degrees are either professional or MFA degrees.

The sample size for this survey limits the possibility for quantitative interpretations, especially between schools. However, the data and the qualitative responses to open-ended questions provide an important supplement to the graduate student survey.

Findings

Graduate Student Recruitment

The survey focused on each department's ability to recruit and retain graduate students, and the effect of the available financial resources. 36 out of 45 respondents indicated that their departments identify up to a quarter of the pool of applicants to the graduate program as "top recruits". 25 out of 45 state that their department is ultimately able to recruit 0-25% of these top recruits. Ten departments claim that between 25-50% of their top recruits eventually enroll in their graduate program.

Quite a few respondents admit that their department has lost prospective graduate students to more competitive offers by other academic institutions. 26 out of 45 respondents replied that they have recently lost between 0 - 50% of their prospective students because these students were offered better financial packages elsewhere. For retention of students, however, offers from other institutions do not seem to be an issue. In more than half of the departments, enrolled graduate students are not reported to have been lost due to competitive financial offers; another 14 respondents claimed that this number was below 25%.

What Factors Affect Recruitment of Graduate Students?

The factor most helpful for their recruiting efforts is by far the reputation of the faculty and/or the department (41 out of 45 responses rated it as "beneficial" (6) or "very beneficial" (7). The next two most helpful qualities are the curriculum of the program (27 as "beneficial" or "very beneficial") and the

available funding for tuition (28 in top two categories). These are followed by the quality of faculty mentoring (24 responses in category six and seven), and the quality of the graduate student body (25 responses). The next highest rated factors were the stipend for living expenses (21 in top two categories), health insurance benefits (20 in top two categories), and the cost of living in the area around the university (18 responses rated it as beneficial for recruiting). Less beneficial for recruitment is the workload for research or teaching fellowships and the culture and available social opportunities around the university. The factors least mentioned as beneficial for recruiting were the geographic location of IU (with only 2 mentions in top two categories) and the available opportunities for spouses or partners of prospective grad students (only three times rated as beneficial).

In open-ended responses regarding the constraints they confront in their ability to recruit top choices from the pool of applicants, 34 out of 36 respondents mentioned funding as the main constraint. This factor was mentioned most often, followed by few mentions of the geographic location of Indiana University and the teaching load for graduate students.

What Resources Are Devoted to Graduate Student Recruitment?

The next question in the survey asked department officials about the resources that are devoted to the recruitment of certain populations within the department. The answers were to be ranked on a scale from 1 (minimal resources) to 5 (abundant resources). The data show that a large amount of resources are devoted to recruiting faculty (17 responses in the two highest categories), and undergraduate students (11 responses in high categories). No respondent estimated that “abundant resources” are devoted to the recruitment of graduate students. In fact, the median response for graduate students fell in category three, which represents the middle of the scale. The only group that receives fewer resources is the recruitment of professional staff and administration, falling into the same median response category as graduate students.

How Does Each Program Compare?

The next battery of questions addressed the competitiveness of each department compared to similar departments at other institutions. The respondents were asked to rank their department on several dimensions from 1 (“well below average”) to 7 (“well above average”). The only dimension consistently ranked “above average” was the quality of the faculty, followed by the quality of the graduate student body (with 14 ratings “above average”). The next most important factors were ranked

with a median response – 4 – “average” compared to other institutions. These were the number of graduate students admitted to the program, the proportion of graduate positions funded by the university, and the ability to recruit prospective graduate students. Rated as “below average” (where the median response was a 3) was the compensation of graduate students, the compensation of faculty, and the availability of donations/supplemental funding for graduate students.

Any Change in Graduate Student Admissions and Funding?

More than half of the respondents stated that the number of admissions to their graduate program has stayed the same over the last five years. Almost a third responded that it has increased and 6 out of 45 respondents answered that it has decreased. Two thirds of the respondents claimed that the number of graduate positions funded by the university has also stayed the same (29 out of 45); while seven respondents stated that the number of funded positions has increased, and another seven claimed that it has decreased over the last five years.

How has the discrepancy between increasing numbers of admitted students and relatively constant funding by the university been offset by funding from outside sources? Only four respondents indicated that more than half of their funding comes from outside sources, while the majority of respondents estimated that less than a quarter of their funding for graduate students comes from sources outside the university. Notably, eighteen officials claimed that more could be done by the IU Foundation and the Alumni Association to generate funds for graduate student fellowships and supplemental funding. A third of the respondents claimed that "not much effort" has been made by these institutions to support their department.

Graduate Student Retention

What is the Impact of Graduate Student Stipends on Undergraduate Education and Research?

Respondents were asked in an open-ended question to consider the effect of graduate student financial support on undergraduate education. A majority of department officials pointed to the significant role that graduate students play in the teaching of undergraduates in their department and how the quality of their teaching is very good to excellent. Stipends, therefore, were said to have a major impact on undergraduate education. Some responses pointed to the fact that limits on funding prevent them from hiring the best graduate students as Associate Instructors. Others mentioned that

additional funding could allow departments to fund graduate students that are not natural teachers as Research Assistants, until they have been better trained to be Associate Instructors.

The impact of graduate student funding on research was judged by most respondents to be equally high. Many responses point to the immediate impact of graduate student research assistants on the amount of research that can be done in each department (especially in experimental lab research). The respondents also point out that having qualified graduate students allows faculty to teach seminars on their own research, and receive valuable input from students in these classes. One response even stated that the support of qualified graduate students is “probably the most important factor in sustaining research quality” in their department.

What Efforts Are Made by the Departments to Increase Graduate Student Funding?

When the respondents were asked about the balance between the number of funded graduate students and the amount of funding they can offer graduate students, a good number pointed to the need to fund a greater number of students with less money in order to meet the departments' teaching and research needs. This imbalance was said to limit their competitiveness in recruiting graduate students because the packages they offered are lower than elsewhere and they cannot give multi-year funding guarantees. A number of department officials stated that they simply need more funding from the university to provide students with a decent salary, especially if they support graduate students with funds from external sources.

The use of external sources to supplement graduate student salaries seems to differ greatly between departments and schools, but a large number of responses indicated that such resources are not available for their department. Some departments supplement student funding to a greater extent, but these respondents point out that external funding often does not cover tuition expenses. Many department officials encourage graduate students to apply individually for external funding. Generally, little to no funding is sought from outside agencies, alumni, friends, private industries, and foundations.

Initiatives to increase the number of graduate student fellowships in the future include seeking support from potential donors, alumni, or private industries. Furthermore, faculty members have been urged to request graduate stipends in grant proposal budgets. Respondents also mentioned plans to request endowment money and more funds from their Dean and the university. In order to supplement the salaries of SAAs in their department, some respondents have used specific external fellowships and

offered summer research or additional teaching options. However, many respondents point out that it is the university's responsibility to pay their SAAs more money and that they have repeatedly asked them to do so.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The surveys of graduate students and Directors of Graduate Studies/Chairs help illuminate the impact of graduate student funding and salaries on recruitment, retention, and graduate education at Indiana University.

The average graduate student receives a monthly average salary of \$957 (\$1167 for SAAs), needs about \$5000 in additional funds per year, and has borrowed between \$10,000-25,000 in student loans so far (after studying at IU for 2-3 years). About half of the respondents work a second job, most for about 10-20 hours a week. This is said to have impeded the research efforts for almost half of all graduate students. These numbers differ significantly by school, with law and business students having borrowed much more in student loans, and a larger number of music and library and information science students working second jobs with longer hours. These differences are a reflection of disparities in graduate student funding: In the College of Arts and Sciences, 80.7% of the graduate students obtain SAA funding; while 55.9% of the students from the School of Library and Information Science, 53.0% of the students in the School of Law, and 38.5% of students in the Kelley School of Business are not financially supported. Jacobs School of Music students receive the lowest salary with \$605 per month.

These data indicate that funding circumstances at Indiana University generally leave students with a low income and a considerable amount of debt. The graduate students' survey shows that a majority of students believe that this situation negatively affects the competitiveness of Indiana University. The available funding for tuition, health insurance benefits, the salary for living expenses, and the workload for research or teaching fellowships were all ranked as comparing unfavorably with other academic institutions. Even though more than half of the graduate students sampled agree that the available funding for tuition supports recruiting efforts (except for in the Jacobs School of Music and in the School of Library and Information Science), available funding for tuition is also named as the most important factor for students to leave their academic program, with the salary for living expenses not lagging far behind. Finally, the availability of financial aid was mentioned as the single highest priority in need of attention at Indiana University. This priority was closely followed in frequency of mention by the

need to address salaries for Student Academic Appointees. Both requests were impressively supported in the open-ended accounts of a majority of graduate students.

The opinions of graduate students were largely supported by the data from the second survey of department officials. A significant number of these officials reported having lost up to fifty percent of prospective students due to better financial offers from other institutions. And again, even though the available funding for tuition is said to support the departments' recruiting efforts, funding is also mentioned as the most salient constraining factor for recruiting their top choices from the pool of graduate student applicants. Additionally, the compensation of graduate students that are enrolled at Indiana University was ranked as "below average" by a high number of respondents.

The data from the second survey also indicated structural problems with respect to graduate student funding and salaries. In the recruiting process, the absence of resources for recruiting graduate students lowers the number of top recruits in each department. For enrolled students, most respondents agreed that graduate student funding has a very positive impact on the quality of undergraduate education and research efforts in their own department. But, the amount of funding available from the university has not kept up with the changing number of student admissions over the last five years. In order to meet their needs for graduate student teaching and research positions, departments have had to pay lower salaries to each graduate student. The amount of funding from external sources is generally low and/or unavailable for most departments. Initiatives by departments to secure external funding tend not to have been organized or have not been coherent or strategic enough to overcome or compensate for this structural problem.

On the upside, the quality and reputation of Indiana University's graduate departments and faculty were consistently ranked by graduate students and department officials as comparing most favorably with other academic institutions and as the most important reason for graduate students to come to IU. The effect of graduate student funding on recruiting and retaining highly motivated and qualified graduate students seems therefore even more relevant and important for securing Indiana University's reputation of academic excellence in the future.