Tuition Waiver Policies

Proposed Processes for Evaluation of Investments and Outcomes

The Graduate Tuition Waiver program provides incentives to individuals to enroll in graduate programs at MU. Graduate education benefits the institution by attracting bright and innovative young minds to work with faculty mentors and campus leaders to address complex scientific, societal and thought provoking questions. In addition to a tuition waiver, graduate students receive a stipend which historically provided for living expenses so that students could devote their efforts to their studies.

Research, surveys and analysis of graduate education and student support at American research institutions suggests most institutions either employ or are moving to a balanced approach to total student compensation. We will begin a process in the current budget year to evaluate our processes, their historical basis, their correlation with and relevance to the quality of graduate education being provided, with the intended outcome to generate a consistent and sustainable campus plan. Relevant issues within our current policies are:

- Teaching and Research Assistants receive a tuition waiver if they are employed at 0.25 FTE or greater.
- MU is one of very few AAU institutions that offer 100% waiver for 0.25 FTE (Michigan State, Penn State are others).
- On average, MU has 600-700 students receiving 0.25 FTE stipends, with the majority at the Master's degree level. Each year there are ~230 new students placed on 0.25 FTE stipends.
- Minimal tuition revenue ($1.5M) is recovered from grants and contracts (though many doctoral students are working on grant-related projects) compared to tuition waivers totaling >$31M.

The process for evaluating tuition waiver policies and procedures is currently under development. This document outlines the scope of the evaluation and a hypothetical timeline for immersion into these processes – it is likely to take longer for some questions but the important point is that it has to begin now. We will initiate generic processes that first require data gathering, then involve faculty, chairs and deans in discussions to analyze the data and make recommendations about the paths forward.

1. Data gathering step (significant volume of data will be required)
    a. What is the current distribution of tuition waivers (colleges and departments/divisions)
    b. What is the distribution of waivers across the spectrum of appointments (Doctoral or Master's students, GTAs and GRAs, 0.25-0.5 FTE)?
    c. What is the relationship of waivers to source of stipend in any college/graduate program?
    d. What is the ratio of waivers to paying students in any graduate program?
    e. Other relevant questions?
2. Coincident to this data gathering process, data relevant to graduate program review should be assembled – what correlations can be inferred if any and how do we use these data sets to make decisions about program support, adjustments, consolidation, elimination?
3. Share with Chancellor, Provost, Deans Council and Faculty Council the breadth of data assembled – robust discussion with faculty and administrators of implications and

implementation of processes/metrics to guide the waiver process in the upcoming budget planning processes
4. Initiate sustainable waiver policies beginning in FY19 budget – implementation may take 3-5 budget rounds.