



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
GRADUATE COLLEGE

**MINUTES
OF
GRADUATE COLLEGE FALL FACULTY MEETING
Thursday, November 11, 2021
2:30 – 4:00 PM
Microsoft Teams**

ATTENDANCE

64 including Graduate Faculty members, 3 Graduate College staff members, and 1 guest speaker joined the Teams meeting.

WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Cynthia Forehand, Dean of the Graduate College.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the April 22nd, 2021, meeting were **approved** as written.

DEANS REPORT: Welcome/Agenda (slide 1-2)

DEANS REPORT: Committees: Vision Statement (slide 2)

Dean Forehand noted that 3 committees will be assembled to move specific content and policies forward. One committee will develop a vision statement. These will be *ad hoc* committees, each led by a member of the Graduate Executive Committee (GEC). The Graduate College (GC) doesn't have a vision statement, which is true for a lot of graduate colleges. The UVM Graduate College has a mission statement that defines how we support graduate education, but a vision statement would define who we want to be as a graduate institution. UVM has a really broad population of students, including professional and research students—so, the GC Vision Statement would reflect that breadth.

DEANS REPORT: Committees: Postdoc Parameters (slide 2)

Another committee is looking at post doc position parameters. They are considering standardizing the way salaries are set in the different units. The committee will also determine whether post doc benefits should be changed. This committee is up and running and will be providing recommendations soon.

DEANS REPORT: Funding Letter Template (slide 2)

The GC has created a funding letter template. It was posted today on the HR site. There is some flexibility in language, but everything that's in that letter needs to be in funding letters. Please have a

look at it, and if you have questions, you may contact Dean Forehand or Sean Milnamow in the Graduate College. It has been reviewed by the Deans, Associate Deans, Business Managers, and all Program Directors.

DEANS REPORT: Mentoring Workshops (slide 2)

For the spring term Jim Vigoreaux and Dean Forehand are putting together 2 workshops that will focus on diversity, inclusion and mentoring of graduate students.

DEANS REPORT: Committees: Graduate Assistant Stipends, Benefits, and Position Parameters (slide 2)

A third committee will look at graduate assistant stipends, benefits, and position parameters. Today the Graduate Faculty (GF) are going to hear from Baxter Worthing, a GSS Senator who is on the GSS Stipends and Benefits Committee. He is a member of the GEC *ad hoc* committee on this topic. There has been an ongoing discussion about setting stipends. The committee needs one more member who will be selected soon, and then work will begin.

Though not an agenda item, Dean Forehand wanted to make sure the GF is aware that graduate students are discussing formation of bargaining unit. The GC respects their right to form a bargaining unit and wants them to have good information in order to make the best decision for themselves. There are many conversations going on. It is important in terms of our stipend discussion because, as with all bargaining unit processes, if it gets to the point where they submit a petition to the Labor Board, these conversations would stop. For now, we are moving forward as usual.

DEANS REPORT: Constitutional Changes (slide 4-5)

The proposed change to the Constitution are pretty small. Constitution changes require a one-week notice for review. The vote will occur by email ballot following today's discussion. The slides display the old wording and the proposed new wording side by side for the 3 proposed changes.

Regarding the first proposed change [slide 4]: These are *ex officio* members of the GF, and many do not have a clear definition of what academic administrative offices are. So, it has been changed it to say which administrative officers become *ex officio* as a byproduct of their appointment; when they leave that position, they're no longer members of the GF (unless they have applied to be a member on their own). Those are defined as President, Provost, and Deans. Chairpersons aren't there because they are typically already members of the Graduate Faculty.

For the second proposed change [slide 5]: "Regular Members" has been changed to "Research-based or Practitioner-based" to match what we currently define as categories.

The third proposed change is a little more substantive [slide 6]. There has always been a rule that a GF member can be a member of the GEC for only one term, and then they have to take a year off before returning for another term. This is unfortunate, because a consecutive term allows someone to have background knowledge of the committee's workings and mentor new members. The proposed change would allow a member to be reappointed for a second consecutive term (or step off if they wish).

Dean Forehand introduced Baxter Worthing, a doctoral student in plant biology and a GSS Senator, who gave a presentation: "Living Wage Approach to Doctoral Stipends" [See attached slide show presentation]

Dean Forehand explained that this work is an outgrowth of the GSS Committee on Benefits, Stipends, and Assistantships' work. This committee looked at other issues related to graduate education too. So, the work is a little broader than just stipends. At April's GF meeting the GC mentioned possibly developing an approach for using living wage as a metric to set graduate stipends. At that time, the MIT living wage calculator was discussed, but the conversation is now focused on the Vermont Basic Needs Budget (VBNB).

Baxter Worthing noted that GSS has done surveys and roundtable talks, and graduate students struggling financially (both unfunded and funded students) was often a topic raised. He said that through research and conversations with Dean Forehand, other administrators, and faculty, their work has culminated into a number of "asks" related to stipends and fees. He noted that the thrust of his presentation addresses the cost of living and how it is calculated because minimum stipends generally do not constitute a livable wage in Burlington; they do not cover the most basic costs of living. He underscored the importance of this for recruiting outstanding graduate students and for making sure that those graduate students can focus on teaching, studying and research without the distraction of financial burdens.

Worthing noted one of the reasons graduate students aren't receiving compensation that constitutes a livable wage in Burlington is simply because the fees at UVM are very high, higher than schools considered comparison schools. See [slide 2] for a breakdown of recent reduction of fees and GSS recommendations. Worthing added that even with the two recent reductions, UVM fees are about a 22% higher than those of comparison schools.

[slide 3] Though not the focus of today, Worthing also mentioned that they hope for more forms of support for unfunded students by way of a tuition freeze that would grandfather in the student's starting tuition rate. In a similar vein, GSS would like to see some sort of variable tuition rate for unfunded students and more exploration of funding opportunities and scholarships. They would also like to see support for international students who often have a more complicated and challenging financial situation.

Worthing stated the hope to get graduate stipends up to the livable wage as defined by the VBNB.

[Slide 4] The idea Worthing proposes is to set the minimum doctoral stipend to be at least at the livable wage as defined by the VBNB. It would set the benchmark. GSS would also like to see this for master's students. GSS hopes that UVM will look for more external funding opportunities in order to have recurring funding for graduate students that doesn't come from UVM's general funds.

[Slide 5] Worthing noted that VBNB is split into rural and urban; Burlington is considered urban [Slide 6] breaks down what is in the budget. There are a number of basic needs budgets, those for people living alone or sharing a space. Differences between the financial situation of a graduate student and regular citizens of Burlington must be considered, such as the fact that graduate students don't pay FICA taxes. Another difference is that graduate students have to pay the comprehensive university fees.

[Slides 5 &6]. The last slides outline housing and expenses with the hourly wage required to meet them.

Feedback from Worthing's colleagues strongly supports graduate students being able to live alone in a one-bedroom apartment. See the slide for the difference between the calculated livable wage and the current stipends.

A GF member weighed in with support for graduate students living alone in an apartment, which promotes accessibility for disabled students, parents, or students of color who wish to avoid a toxic housing situation, for example.

Another GF member supported the analysis and the bringing to light the fact that a lot of graduate students struggle financially. He asked about NSF funded projects where grad students get a lot more money than with regular stipends and noted that departments should look to see if they qualify for NSF funds. He said that he did his own cost of living analysis previously and knows that the cost of living in the area places UVM at a disadvantage. He supports using the presented approach. He worries that master's students face the same livable wage issues though and wondered if they should be increased to the VBNB.

Dean Forehand noted that his is something that could be on the table as well. Many of the things mentioned will be looked at by the committee. An intentional decision was made to raise doctoral stipends faster than master stipends for a number of years now, and the reason for that is the doctoral students make a five- or six-year commitment whereas for a master's student, it is typically about two years. For the shorter time, students can borrow money to help with costs of living. It's an open question. Dean Forehand also noted the issue of considering a maximum. There is a ceiling defined by NIH, but there's a lot of flexibility within and across units. Units are allowed to set their own minimum higher than the Graduate College stipulated minimum. Dean Forehand responded to a question in the chat, specifying that this the discussion is for a 12-month stipend.

Dean Forehand responded to a faculty member's question about if the VBNB and the hours worked calculations.

Another GF spoke in support of Worthing's research and noted that her MA students report food insecurity and inability to afford housing. She underscored the fact that graduate students give a lot to the university through teaching, research, etc.

Dean Forehand noted that everything can be considered in the bargaining and underscored the importance of these conversations. Dean Forehand noted that the next step is take this to the committee that's looking at the position parameters.

A GF member noted that he'd be interested in hearing arguments from the other side such as how many fewer students UVM would not be able to take in in order to meet the higher stipend.

Dean Forehand noted that this is exactly what the committee will do. The current mechanism for setting stipends is to be the median or above for our peer institutions (defined by Oklahoma State Survey). The VBNB will, at least initially, move stipends higher more quickly.

FALL 2021 ADMISSIONS REPORT

[slide 8] Kimberly Hess, Director of Graduate Admissions and Enrollment Management, introduced herself and began her presentation.

[Slide 9] There is positive growth in the 2021 summer and fall applied, admit, enroll numbers. Applications were off the charts last year. A large percentage of increase in applications was for programs that didn't have capacity to accept them. [See the slide 9 for the AY 20/21 numbers summary].

[Slide 10] The number of countries that are represented in 2021 has changed significantly. [See the slide for top countries breakdown].

The Study International campaign seems to be working in terms of international graduate students. There were 497 applicants, which is the highest number since 2012. [see slide 11 for breakdown of numbers].

[Slide 12] shows residency and where applicants are coming from [see slide for details].

DEANS REPORT: Graduate Executive Committee Actions [slide 13]

Dean Forehand reminded everyone that the GEC is a group of elected individuals from each college or school, with a few appointed members for balance.

[See slide 13 for stats on major actions] Dean Forehand noted that it is a busy season for GEC as in addition to regular items, it is awards season.

DEANS REPORT: Graduate Executive Committee Actions for Programs [slide 14]

[See slide 14 for uncontested program terminations and new programs] Dean Forehand noted that there are some new and exciting programs. CESS has a new Certificate of Graduate Study in "Education for Sustainability," which is a partnership with Shelburne Farms. In-place learning and activities through Shelburne Farms are paired with online courses by UVM faculty. It's designed to teach educators (primarily K through 12 educators) how to teach in the context of sustainability. There is a certificate and a micro certificate.

There is an exciting new Ph.D. program proposed in Transdisciplinary Leadership, Creativity and Sustainability (through RSENR). It has not gone through the Faculty Senate yet. It just went through GEC last week. It will be an online doctoral program, designed to attract more diverse groups of people into leadership roles related to the environment and sustainability.

DEANS REPORT: Graduate Executive Committee Actions. Other: Applicant Prior Criminal Conviction History

[Slide 15] Every three or four years, the question comes up about whether the GC application should have a question regarding whether someone has been convicted of a felony. The same conclusion was reached this year as in previous years. People are uncomfortable with asking this question, mostly because criminal justice system is often biased. There are programs that that require background checks. Those are usually licensed programs. If a program really wants to ask this question, it will be allowed on a program-by-program basis. It would only be seen by the GC until after admissions were decisions were made. If there is a flag, the GC would reach out to the program at that point before applicants are notified of the decision.

DEANS REPORT: Graduate Executive Committee Actions. Other: Tuition Policies for Funded Students Who Leave an Assistantship

[Slide 15] Recently, there has been an increase in the number of students who decide that they no longer want to do their assistantship, but they don't wish to leave the program. This is often for things like a medical situation or a family emergency. GEC discussed this at length. At some schools, students have to repay all their tuition in this situation. GEC has said we should not do that. Rather, tuition payback should be on a prorated basis.

DEANS REPORT: Graduate Executive Committee Actions. Other: Develop a Standard of Behavior Contract for Graduate Students (and Faculty/Staff)

Dean Forehand asked the GG to send examples of behavioral contracts and indicated that she is exploring the possibility of having some sort of behavioral contract in at the Graduate College and level. If departments have them, please to send them to her.

Dean Forehand noted that she has an example from the Biology Department. Though it is department-specific, it starts out with more generic things that concerns all members of the department, students, undergraduates, graduates, staff, and faculty. These are about expectations of courtesy, professionalism, respect, kindness and fairness in all in-person and electronic interactions with a stated no tolerance policy for harassment, bullying, unprofessional, or offensive behavior. It states what is expected for academic honesty, what's expected from GTAs, and how to they should conduct themselves when interacting with students and the department.

Dean Forehand wonders if there should be a sort of university-wide behavioral contract to set expectations and hold everyone accountable. Some things are covered by the Code of Conduct, but things outside the classroom, emails, etc. are not covered under the Code of Conduct. This is an ongoing discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 4 PM.

Graduate College

Graduate Faculty Meeting 11-11-21

Presented by:
Cindy Forehand
Dean of the Graduate College
University of Vermont Graduate College

Agenda

- Welcome
- Approval of the April 22, 2021 Minutes
- Dean's Report – Cindy Forehand
 - Vision Statement Committee
 - Postdoc position parameters
 - Graduate Assistant stipends, benefits and position parameters
 - Funding Letter Template
 - Mentoring Workshops
- Constitutional changes (3)
- Living Wage Approach to Doctoral Stipends- Baxter Worthing (GSS Senator)
- Admissions Report – Kimberly Hess
- Activities of the Graduate Executive Committee – Cindy Forehand
- New business
- Adjourn

Dean's Report

- Vision statement committee
- Postdoc position parameters committee
- Graduate Assistant stipends, benefits and position parameters committee
- Funding Letter Template
- Mentoring workshops in collaboration with Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

Constitution Changes

Constitutional Change #1

A proposed change to Article II (Membership), section E (Ex Officio Research and Scholarship-Based or Practitioner-Based Appointments) was discussed and approved at 4/15/2021 GEC meeting.

OLD Wording:

Chairpersons of departments with graduate programs and academic administrative officers who are not already Regular Members shall be Ex-Officio Members of the Graduate Faculty.

NEW Wording:

Presidents, Provosts, and Deans as Academic Administrative Officers who are not already **Research-based or Practitioner-based Members** shall be Ex-Officio Members of the Graduate Faculty.



Constitution Changes

Constitutional Change #2

A proposed change to Article IV (The Executive Committee), paragraph 1 was discussed and approved at the 5/6/2021 GEC meeting.

OLD wording:

The members shall consist of the Dean of the Graduate College, who shall serve as Chairperson of the Executive Committee (or name a designee from the Executive Committee to serve as Chairperson), the Associate or Assistant Dean(s), up to eleven other **regular or professional** Graduate College Faculty members, and one graduate student.

NEW wording:

The members shall consist of the Dean of the Graduate College, who shall serve as Chairperson of the Executive Committee (or name a designee from the Executive Committee to serve as Chairperson), the Associate or Assistant Dean(s), up to eleven other **Research and Scholarship-based or Practitioner-based** Graduate College Faculty members, and one graduate student.



Constitution Changes

Constitutional Change #3

A proposed change to Article IV (The Executive Committee), paragraph 4 was discussed and approved at the 5/6/2021 GEC meeting.

OLD wording:

A member who has served three years shall be eligible for **reelection or subsequent reappointment after an interval of one year.**

NEW wording:

A member who has served three years shall be eligible for reelection **or reappointment for a consecutive term.** **After two consecutive terms,** the member must wait one year before serving another term.



Graduate Student Senate Presentation

Living Wage Approach to Doctoral Stipends

Presented by:

Baxter Worthing

Doctoral Student in Plant Biology

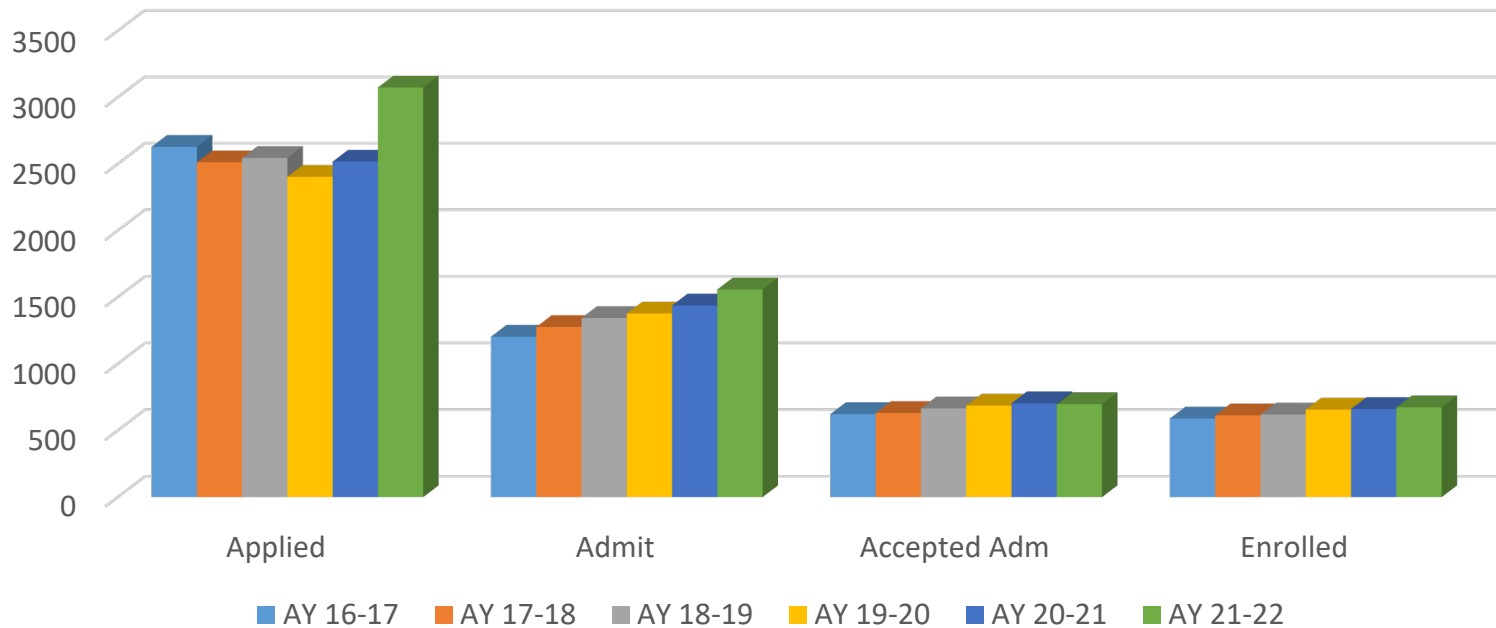
GSS Senator; Co-chair Stipends and Benefits Action Committee

Graduate College

Admissions & Enrollment Management Update Fall 2021

Presented by
Kimberly L. Hess, M.S.
Director of Graduate Admissions & Enrollment Management
University of Vermont Graduate College

2021 Summer/Fall Applied, Admits & Newly Enrolled Comparison

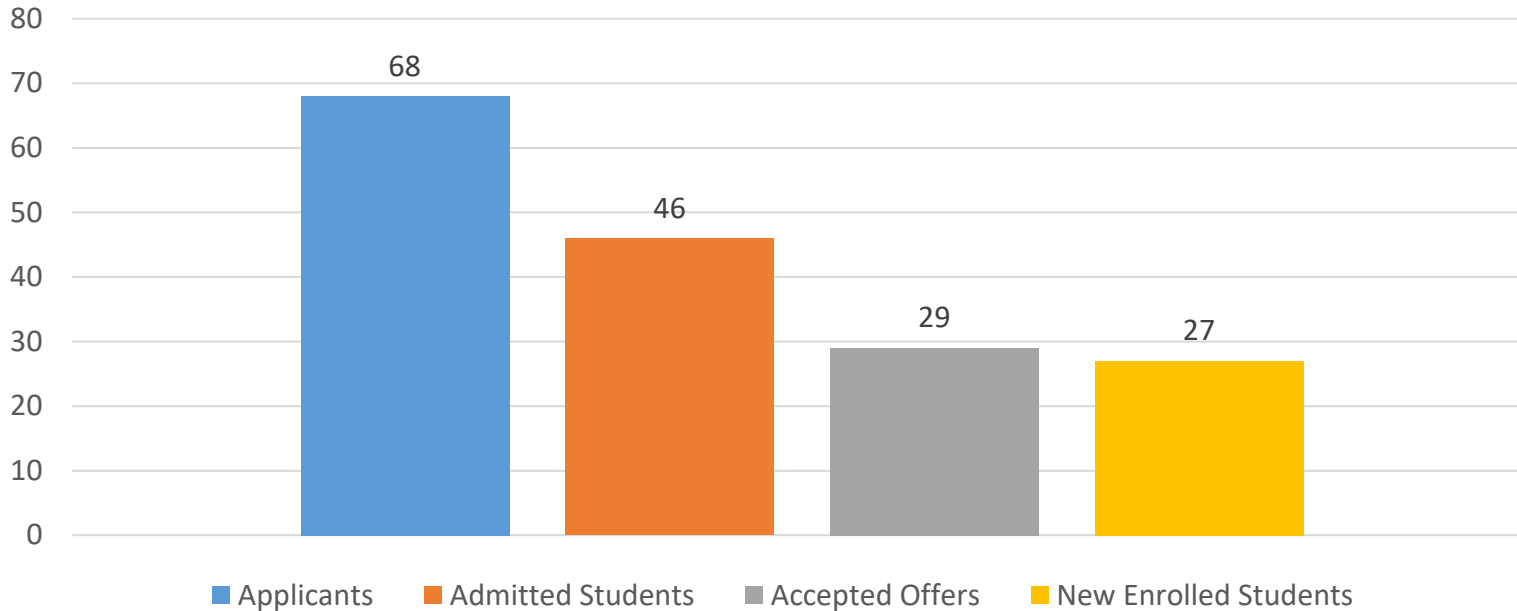


For AY 20/21 this represents:
 22% Increase in Applications
 8% Increase in Admissions
 1% Decrease in Acceptance

1% Increase in New Enrollment
 43% Yield from Admitted Pool
 22% Yield from Applicant Pool

Admitted Yield = # admitted that enrolled
 Applicant Yield = # applied that enrolled

of Countries represented in 2021



Top 5 Countries Represented

APPLIED	Iran	India	China	Nigeria	Bangladesh
ADMIT	Iran	India	China	Ghana	Nigeria
ENROLLED	Iran	India	Canada	United Kingdom	Ghana

International Graduate Student Recruitment Successes 2021

497 - Highest number of International Applicants since 2012.

- **30.1% increase as compared to 2020**

197 – Record high admitted applicants

- **39.7% increase over last year**

61 – Newly enrolled

- **84.4% increase from last year and 48.8% increase from a 'normal year'**

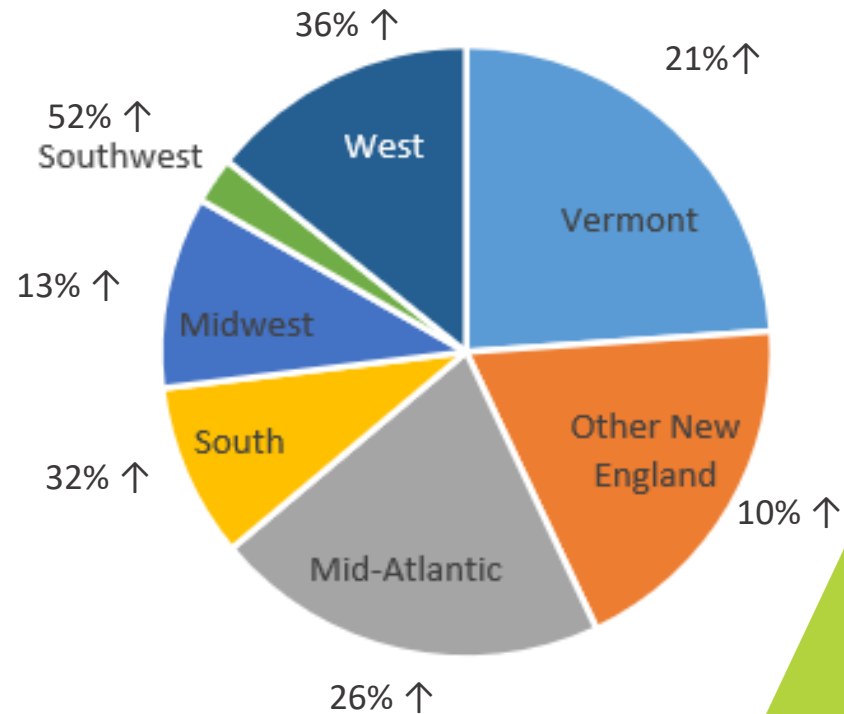
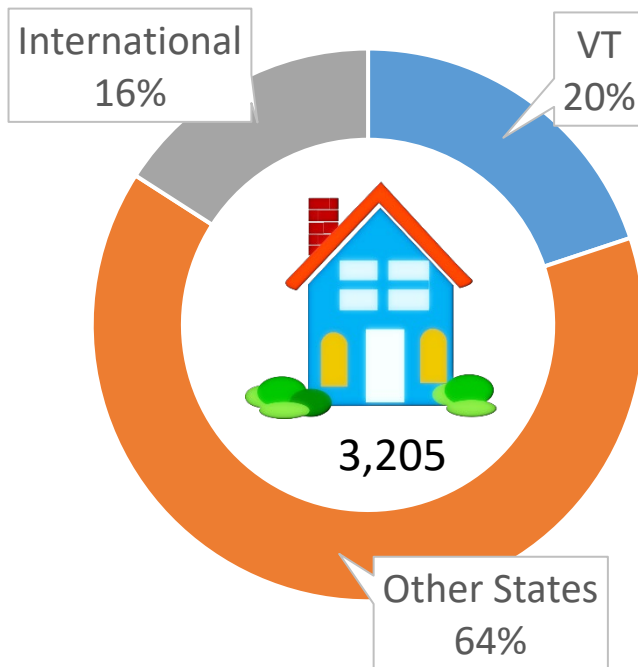
160 – Total enrolled

- **15.9% increase as compared to last year**



2021 Applicants by Residency

% Represents change over 4 years



49 states represented

Graduate Executive Committee Actions

Meetings

5 meetings subsequent to last Graduate Faculty meeting

Reviewed

6 new or significant change course proposals

46 minimal change, deactivation delete course proposals

19 graduate faculty applicants

Student

Student awards cycle/committee review has started

Faculty awards

University Scholar call for nominations will go out soon

Graduate Executive Committee Actions

Approved

- Uncontested program terminations:
 - Ph.D. in Microbiology and Molecular Genetics
 - Ph.D. in Pharmacology
 - Ph.D. and M.S. in Molecular Physiology and Biophysics
- New programs:
 - Certificate of Graduate Study in Education for Sustainability
 - Micro-certificate of Graduate Study in Education for Sustainability
 - PhD in Transdisciplinary Leadership, Creativity, and Sustainability

Graduate Executive Committee Actions

Other Discussions

- Applicant Prior Criminal Conviction History
- Tuition Policies for Funded Students Who Leave an Assistantship
- Develop a standard of behavior contract for graduate students (and faculty/staff)
- **New Business**
- **Adjourn**

Graduate Student Senate Presentation

Living Wage Approach to Doctoral Stipends

Presented by:

Baxter Worthing

Doctoral Student in Plant Biology

GSS Senator; Co-chair Stipends and Benefits Action Committee

Fees – Progress and Recommendations

Fees - Progress:

- Graduate Student Fees reduced \$60 per year in FY22
- Approved reduction of an additional \$250 per year in FY23 – WOW! GREAT NEWS!

Fees - Recommendations:

- Continue to decrease fees by \$50 per year until reaches \$500 per semester/\$1000 per year

Tuition and international student support – Recommendations

- For students in unfunded professional doctoral programs, ensure tuition frozen for duration of their time in the program
- Continue exploring variable tuition rate to reduce costs for programs without funding for students
- Explore resources available to international students and build a database of opportunities

Stipends – Recommendations

- Increase minimum doctoral stipend to the Vermont Basic Needs Budget and Livable Wage and
 - Minimum annual increases of 5% until this goal is reached
 - Use this metric for annual adjustment of minimum doctoral stipend
- Increase Master's stipends in an equitable manner compared to increase in doctoral stipends
- Encourage more applications for individual and University training grants and other means to secure stipends for unfunded students in eligible doctoral programs

Vermont Basic Needs Budget and Livable Wage

- The **Vermont Basic Needs Budget** is a market-based analysis that accounts for estimated monthly living expenses in Vermont
 - Basic needs include the costs for essential items such as food, housing, transportation, child care, clothing and household expenses, telecommunications charges, health and dental care, renters insurance, life insurance, and savings.
- The **Vermont Livable Wage** is defined in statute as the hourly wage required for a full-time worker to pay for one-half of the basic needs budget for a two-person household with no children and employer-sponsored health insurance, averaged for both urban and rural areas
 - Individual Living Wages are also calculated based on other family configurations and specific to urban or rural

Single Person Living Alone		Single Person Living Alone	
Resident - non student in Burlington/Chittenden County		UVM Graduate Student in Burlington/Chittenden County	
Category	Cost estimates (per month)	Category	Cost estimates (per month)
Food	336	Food	336
Housing	1265	Housing	1265
Transportation	458	Transportation	458
Health Care ¹	147	Health Care ³	78
Dental Care ²	4	Dental Care ⁴	30
Child Care	0	Child Care	0
Clothing & Household Expenses	134	Clothing & Household Expense	134
Personal Expenses	94	Personal Expenses	94
Telecommunications	117	Telecommunications	117
Rental Insurance	19	Rental Insurance	19
Term Life Insurance	0	Term Life Insurance	0
Savings	129	Savings	129
Student fees	0	⁶ Student fees	110
Total Monthly Expenses	2,703	Total Monthly Expenses	2,770
Annual Expenses	32,438	Annual Expenses	33,240
Federal & State Taxes	3,078	Federal & State Taxes	3,068
FICA/Medicare Tax	2,942	FICA/Medicare Tax	0
Annual Income needed	38,458	Annual Income needed	36,308
Hourly Wage required (@2080 hours) to meet basic	18.49	Hourly Wage required (@2080 hours) to meet basic	\$17.46
Hourly Wage required (@1040 hours) to meet basic	NA	Hourly Wage required (@1040 hours) to meet basic	\$34.92

Current minimum doctoral stipend of \$26.46/hr is \$8,898 less than VT BNB

Current highest minimum doctoral stipend by unit of \$29.11 is \$6137 less than VT BNB

Single Person Sharing 2 bdrm apt with one roommate			Single Person Sharing 2 bdrm apt with one roommate		
Resident - non student in Burlington/Chittenden County			UVM Graduate Student in Burlington/Chittenden County		
Category	Cost estimates (per month)		Category	Cost estimates (per month)	
Food	336		Food	336	
Housing	814		Housing	814	
Transportation	458		Transportation	458	
Health Care ¹	147		Health Care ³	78	
Dental Care ²	4		Dental Care ⁴	30	
Child Care	0		Child Care	0	
Clothing & Household	101		Clothing & Household	101	
Personal Expenses	94		Personal Expenses	94	
Telecommunications	93		Telecommunications	93	
Rental Insurance	19		Rental Insurance	19	
Term Life Insurance	0		Term Life Insurance	0	
Savings	103		Savings	103	
Student fees	0		⁶ Student fees	110	
Total Monthly Expenses	2,168		Total Monthly Expenses	2,236	
Annual Expenses	26,017		Annual Expenses	26,832	
Federal & State Taxes	2,741		Federal & State Taxes	2,826	
FICA/Medicare Tax	2,382		FICA/Medicare Tax	0	
Annual Income needed	31,140		Annual Income needed	29,658	
Hourly Wage required (@2080)	14.97		Hourly Wage required (@2080)	\$14.26	
Hourly Wage required (@1040)	NA		Hourly Wage required (@1040)	\$28.52	

Current minimum doctoral stipend of \$26.46/hr is \$2144 less than VT BNB

CALS, BIOE, CMB, NGP doctoral stipends all above the VT BNB