Graduate Fee Reduction Resolution

for consideration and vote by the GT Academic Faculty Senate
after approval for advancement to agenda by Faculty
Executive Board in 7-0 vote, Sept. 24, 2019

Joshua Weitz
Professor of Biological Sciences
Director of the Quantitative Biosciences
Interdisciplinary Graduate Program

GT Academic Faculty Senate Meeting

October 22, 2019
Graduate Student Fees for AAU Institutions - Updated April 3, 2019

Disclaimer: check with each institution to verify if fees are responsibility of student or PhD program.

Data and links:
bite.ly/aau_grad_fees
GT is “#1”: Based on comparative analysis, graduate students at GT are estimated to pay the highest fees of any AAU institution (i.e., even when serving as GRAs or GTAs).

**Special institutional fee is a major factor:** The $1,032 mandatory “Special Institutional Fee” (SIF), initiated in 2009 functions, in effect, as supplementary tuition.

Faculty-led resolution including 343 signatories:

Whereas, current Georgia Tech graduate student fees are far above peer institutions;

Whereas, graduate students are at the core of GT efforts to ‘create the next’;

Whereas, talent need not start rich

Whereas, annual budgets should not be borne on special institutional and athletic fees paid by graduate students;

Whereas, financial stress negatively impacts graduate student productivity;

Whereas, a graduate fee reduction initiative would demonstrate institutional values through action-taking, the faculty ‘requests’ that Pres. Cabrera (working w/partners, including the Graduate SGA):

1. **Reduce the special institutional fee** charged to full-time graduate students at Georgia Tech from $344/term (in FY20) to $172/term (in FY21) to $0 (in FY22).

2. **Eliminate the athletic fee** charged to full-time graduate students (from $296/yr in FY20 to $0 in FY21).

3. **Requests a moratorium on increases to all other graduate student fees**, pending an institute-wide re-evaluation of graduate support.
Living on a Graduate Student Stipend

College of Engineering GRAs (relatively better than other Colleges)
Monthly Stipend after taxes and mandatory fees: $1800

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GT on campus</th>
<th>GT off campus</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent +Utilities</td>
<td>$1145</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel ($\sim1000/year)</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1725</strong></td>
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Based on the COE cost of living survey 2018: Sample size - 702
MSE GSAG stipend survey: Sample size - 71

- Less than $100/ month for contingencies.
- Financial stress was one of the main reasons for mental health issues in grad students according to Grad Experience Survey 2016.
- Rents have been increasing at 3-5% every year.
- Students are ‘severely rent burdened’ as per HUD guidelines (paying >50% in income in rent).
Steps to a Resolution

Resolution draft to FEB along with initial signatories

Faculty Executive Board votes 7-0 to approve
9/24/2019

GT Academic Faculty Senate Review and vote
10/22/2019

Implementation Challenges

1. Budget process and timing
2. Changing fee structure
3. Addressing revenues
4. Developing appropriate policy
5. Elevating the importance of graduate support as part of annual budget and capital campaigns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signatories</th>
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<tr>
<td>14-Aug</td>
<td>22</td>
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</tr>
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August 2019

September 2019

October 2019

Spring 2020

Summer 2020

Fall 2020
# Steps to a Resolution and Implementation

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- **Resolution draft to FEB along with initial signatories**
- **Faculty Executive Board votes 7-0 to approve**
  
  9/24/2019

- **GT Academic Faculty Senate Review and vote**
  
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## Implementation Challenges

1. Budget process and timing
2. Changing fee structure
3. Addressing revenues
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5. Elevating the importance of graduate support as part of annual budget and capital campaigns

**But, if not now, when?**
A Change in Structure is Possible

- Many institutions charge $0 when on a GRA/GTA, including large state institutions like UT-Austin and UVA.
- Median is approximately $1,100/yr.

Fees: $0
- U Penn
- UVA
- Oregon
- Princeton
- Johns Hopkins
- Yale
- UT-Austin
"MIT depends on its excellence in graduate education. As a research educational institution it could not survive without it. But in many ways graduate education, the realm of academic units and individual faculty, gets short changed in the discussions at the center of the institution where undergraduate education, in my opinion, dominates. The bottom line is that we must excel in both and nobody is going to compromise on that point. To continue to excel, though, we must elevate the discussions of graduate education and provide a better forum for it at the policy discussions that occur at the highest level of the Institute.” – Rafael Bras, as Faculty Chair, MIT, 2004
http://web.mit.edu/fnl/volume/283/bras.html
In effect, all graduate students at GT, including those receiving GRA/GTA and a tuition waiver must pay ~$2,800 per year, after taxes back to the Institute.

- Special institutional fee is $1032/yr
- Division 1 Athletics fee is $296/yr
- This does NOT include health insurance

Some of these are earmarked for particular ‘benefits’, while the special institutional fee is not. **The special institutional fee is, in effect, supplementary (non-waived) tuition.**

The benefits to the athletic fee is disproportionately centered on UG benefits:
- Student tickets & assistants.
- Marching band & cheerleading squad.

### Georgia Institute of Technology

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>APPROVED RATE FALL 2018</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED RATE FALL 2019</th>
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<tr>
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<td>CRC Operations Fee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Institutional Fee – Undergraduate Students**</td>
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<td>Student Center Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>85</td>
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</tbody>
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** Special Institutional Fee for Graduate Students Only

**Mandatory Student Fees**

**Special Institutional Fee**

This is a general purpose fee charged system-wide by the Board of Regents (BOR) at all “teaching” institutions. This fee was established in 2009 to ensure continued academic excellence during times of reduction in State funding. This fee is required by the BOR and is not subject to a vote by the Mandatory Student Fee Advisory Committee. For more information see the Special Institutional Fee FAQs.