



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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To: Arts and Science Chairs and Directors

From: Arts and Science Deans

Re: FAR 4

The improvement of graduate student financial aid has been for the last seventeen years one of the highest priorities of the Faculty of Arts and Science. These improvements and faculty hiring have been the primary causes of transforming the Graduate School. Reforms have focused on two major priorities: the guarantee of multi-year support and the reduction of teaching semesters. In 1992, Financial Aid Reform 1 (FAR 1) introduced MacCracken packages for selected doctoral students; in 2000, FAR 2 extended the MacCracken packages to all FAS doctoral students, increasing the number of fellowship semesters and decreasing teaching semesters; in 2006, FAR 3 further increased the number of fellowship semesters and decreased the number of required teaching semesters.

It is obvious to everyone that the current economic crisis is difficult to manage. In response, many universities have already announced significant budget cuts. These have included the downsizing of doctoral programs, a step that also recognizes the tightening academic job market. NYU is not immune to these trends. To our regret, along with other cuts, the overall size of our doctoral program will need to be temporarily reduced. Despite this, given the importance of doctoral programs to our aspirations as a research university, we believe that this is an opportune time to improve the quality of financial aid packages. We are therefore discussing with the FAS community and proposing to the University Administration FAR 4. Like previous financial aid reforms, FAR 4 would provide a school-wide framework for reducing teaching as well as making available additional financial support for students.

The discussions we have had with Arts and Science departments and committees have been helpful and instructive. In order to summarize and further them, we lay out below the proposed basic components of FAR 4. You should feel free to circulate this to your faculty and students.

KEY ELEMENTS OF FAR 4 PROPOSAL

Fellowship Support

Humanities and Social Sciences: for MacCracken students entering fall 2009, 5 years of fellowship; 4 years for students entering with 24 points or more. Sciences: for MacCracken students entering fall 2009, 5 years of guaranteed support, consisting of a combination of fellowship semesters (replacing assistantship support) and research assistantships; 4 years of

guaranteed support for students entering with 24 points or more. All continuing MacCracken students with remaining semesters as teaching assistants in their package would have these TA semesters turned into fellowship semesters.

Departments would continue to have flexibility in managing their pools of fellowship support. As is currently the case, departments would be free to direct these funds to other forms of graduate support, e.g., summer money, travel money, 6th year of fellowship, etc. These pools would now be much larger, since the amount of fellowship money in a typical MacCracken package would increase from ~\$66K to ~\$110K.

MacCracken packages will be improved to include a waiver of maintenance of matriculation fees, registration and services fees, and premiums for NYU student health insurance for the two years immediately following their MacCracken package. This is an extension of one year over the current package.

Students who secure their own external funding can “bank” fellowship semesters. If the external funding provides support for a year, the student would normally receive support for 6 years (5 from GSAS and 1 from the external source). If the external funding were for a longer period, the department can consider a blend that provides some extra years of support and summer funding. We will also work out a system that allows students flexibility as to how to use the “banked” funds, e.g., a choice between adding semesters of support and taking summer money.

There will continue to be a number of named fellowship positions in GSAS for which post-MacCracken students may apply, for example, the Torch Fellowships.

As is currently the case, departments would have the option of requiring students who have completed their course work to participate in pro-seminars, dissertation seminars, research apprenticeships, or other such non-credit academic opportunities.

Teaching

MacCracken students will continue to have opportunities to teach.

Although teaching is not (and never has been) a requirement of the PhD, each department would be free to create its own expectations for the kind of teaching necessary for professional training and for how that teaching is best timed and sequenced within the MacCracken years and/or afterwards. GSAS through its graduate student educational development program will expand its teaching certification program for students and will work with departments to create teaching certification programs that are discipline specific. Departments will have the option of making these certificate programs mandatory for students who plan to apply for teaching positions upon graduation.

During their MacCracken years, students will be able to teach as recitation leaders, problem session leaders, and lab section leaders. When MacCracken Fellows teach, they would be appointed under the adjunct contract; they would be paid according to the contact hours for their assignment, and this pay would be in addition to their fellowship stipend.

FAR 3 established a presumptive maximum of four semesters of teaching during a student’s MacCracken years. This limit remains in place, but since one of the core goals of FAR 4 is to reduce time-to-degree, the expectation in most departments will be that students will teach no more than two semesters during the five-year MacCracken framework. In departments where more than two semesters of teaching is necessary for professional training and where more than two semesters does

not extend time to degree, students may be appointed to adjunct teaching positions for up to four semesters.

Post-MacCracken teaching positions will be available for many students. These positions will be structured as part time adjunct positions so as to allow equal opportunity for post-MacCracken support to foreign and domestic students (full time, pre-doctoral positions are generally not attractive to foreign students, since their visas permit only two years of practical training). Departments will have flexibility to craft these teaching opportunities according to their needs and the needs of their students. By adjusting teaching assignments, these positions can have a level of compensation approximating a full stipend. In addition, there will continue to be teaching opportunities in summer session.

Essential teaching support for departments, formerly provided by TAs, would be provided through a variety of means, customized to the circumstances of each department: add on adjunct teaching by MacCracken students; post-MacCracken teaching positions; hourly grading support; clinical teaching positions; adjunct positions for masters students; and/or post-doc teaching positions.

Admissions

As economic conditions and the job market recover, we will rebuild numbers of doctoral students governed by criteria that have been place in GSAS for a number of years ---- 1) a responsible ratio of research active faculty to doctoral students in a program; 2) a large enough pool of qualified applicants to a program so that the faculty can select and then recruit the best possible students; 3) the capacity of faculty and, where appropriate, students in obtaining external support; 4) the timely progress of students towards their doctoral degrees; and 5) the placement of students after they obtain their degree.

There are also other ways for departments to increase the number of their doctoral students.

In the sciences, growth in the grant profile of the department can increase numbers. In addition, we are beginning to explore the feasibility of reducing tuition remission charges made to federal research grants as a way of making RAships more affordable for PI's.

Non-science departments that are able to support students on grants would have the option of using the funds to provide additional support for students beyond their MacCracken years or providing the support within the MacCracken years, thus increasing the number of students they can support.

To help address concerns about size in departments where there are limited opportunities for external support, GSAS will relax its restrictions on unsupported students. Since the inception of FAR 2, GSAS has been committed to full-time study on the part of fully funded doctoral students, but some programs have asked over the years to enroll non-funded students in very small numbers. When approved, these exceptions have been limited and managed judiciously. GSAS will now provide more opportunities for paying students (part time or full time) and even a limited number of tuition scholarships depending on the student's particular circumstance. If such students do well, and if a program's financial aid portfolio permits it, a department can consider them for some financial aid after their course work. Unsupported students would also be able to apply for adjunct teaching positions. A GSAS faculty committee will be formed to establish criteria for admitting unsupported students and examining the success of the program in subsequent years.