

Fee Increase Proposal

Purpose: The Graduate Student Advisory Council recommends a \$1.00 increase in the Graduate Student Fee for fiscal year 2009-2010 effectively increasing the amount from \$2.00 to \$3.00.

About the Organization.

The current fee was established in the 2003-2004 fiscal year to support GSAC. The Council serves Eastern Illinois University's 1779 graduate students by reviewing graduate education policies and programs and insuring that graduate students have a voice in the graduate education enterprise on campus and in national professional associations. Please find below is a list of accomplishments.

- GSAC provided research and guidelines to the Dean in order to assist the development of a plan to increase graduate stipends after nine years of frozen stipend levels. The plan insured that stipends increased in every academic program.
- GSAC also provided research and guidelines to assist the Dean in the development of three graduate-level awards: the Williams Travel Award, the Graduate School Research Award, and the Thesis Awards. These became the most important forms of recognition for graduate students on Eastern's campus. The student recipients of these awards bring local, regional, and national recognition to EIU's graduate programs.
- GSAC provided research and guidelines to the Commencement Committee to restructure commencement so that graduate students received recognition appropriate to their distinguished achievements.
- GSAC developed the graduate faculty mentor award. This prestigious award recognizes the contributions of graduate faculty members who are sincerely devoted to the graduate education process.
- GSAC brought important matters of financial aid to the attention of the Office of Financial Aid. The outcome of these discussions served to better inform graduate students and meet their needs.
- GSAC provided evidence that demonstrated the assessment of fees for graduate assistants was not equitable. As a result of their work, billing adopted new fee procedures insuring the equitable assessment of fees for graduate students.
- GSAC provided research and offered feedback regarding library policies for graduate students.

- GSAC established procedures cementing the inclusion of a GSAC member on the Council on Graduate Studies prior to the Council's first meeting. This insures GSAC a voice in policy making and development.
- GSAC constructed the template and guidelines for the Graduate Exposition and Distinguished Awards Ceremony, as well as provided the necessary leadership to spur the creation of a Graduate Journal showcasing graduate education accomplishments. GSAC also expanded the presentation activity during Graduate Exposition week to include a competitive award for poster presentations, along with having established an 18 year legacy of effective graduate education programming.
- GSAC members serve on the regional councils of the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (here in after referred to as NAGPS). This achievement provides regional recognition for Eastern's graduate programs.

Present Problem:

Currently the graduate student fee is set at \$2.00 due to its last modification in 2003. The graduate student fee was established to provide GSAC with the start up resources required to formulate the council and initiate participation in policy and program development and participation in national organizations. However, this amount is no longer satisfactory to meet the needs of GSAC and the representation of Eastern's graduate students. One of the many facets GSAC engages in throughout the academic year is the NAGPS yearly conference. Eastern's presence at this conference is not only significant to Midwest representation but crucial to further enhance GSAC's goals on campus. Due to the minimum funding derived from the graduate student fee, GSAC can only sponsor one representative to attend this conference. Sending only one representative limits our participation in various forums and presentations, which in turn does not grant EIU the opportunity to attain more information to address graduate student concerns. The graduate student fee increase would provide more funds for Eastern's representation at NAGPS.

It should also be noted that GSAC provides opportunities for graduate students to further develop their professional education as well as address their concerns. When referring to academic professional development GSAC aims to expand on programs where graduate students can attain assistance in professional life skills. However, these programs primarily rely on the GSAC budget to achieve success. The current fee does not allow the council to provide such events of advantage. The current fee creates a budget that is inadequate to perform the majority of the organization's goals and provides us with no room to expand or create additional resources for the graduate population. Nonetheless, an increase in the fee would make these opportunities available. GSAC relishes the opportunity in continuing to provide assistance to graduate students via

council participation, program developments, national organizational representation and communication amongst faculty and staff. However, this is not possible without an increase in the graduate student fee, which would make GSAC a more reliable resource to the graduate student body.

What will a fee increase do?

Originally, the \$2.00 graduate student fee was established to provide GSAC with the resources required to form the council and initiate policy and program development on campus and allow participation at the regional and national level. Although GSAC has fulfilled expectations and invested in resources for graduate education on campus, there are many more professional development activities that this organization is focused on to achieve first choice status for the Eastern Graduate program.

A fee increase will allow the organization to achieve the following goals:

- To maintain the current programs and to continue publishing the *Graduate Scholar*, a journal of graduate student achievements.
- Support GSAC's initiatives to establish bonds between EIU and alumni in providing stronger and more expansive programs during homecoming and related campus events.
- Create additional resources for the Graduate student population such as monetary travel awards, research awards, and awards of excellence.
- Support GSAC's Graduate Exposition and Distinguished Graduate Awards Programs.
- Support GSAC's initiative to collect survey data from all graduate students to expand its strategic plan for fiscal years to come. The survey provides ongoing data and information to guide graduate development of graduate student services, programs, and policies.
- Support GSAC's initiatives to extend plans to increase assistantship stipends, provide additional benefits and stipends to graduate students and assistants, and insure that graduate education policies provide appropriate support for graduate students.
- Support GSAC leadership so that minimally two representatives from GSAC can attend the annual NAGPS national and regional meetings. This is essential to insure that the most relevant issues, policies, and programs are brought to the attention of the university.

- Reduce GSAC's reliance on the Graduate School to subsidize its' programs and resource needs. Currently the Graduate School provides significant support to insure that GSAC can execute all of its programs.

In summation, a fee increase has become a necessity for the future success of this organization. The attached budget details our revenue and expenditures for the past fiscal year. We are currently operating in the red each year and the Graduate School is facilitating our needed expenditures. GSAC has recommended an increase of one dollar, which would increase the fee from two dollars to three dollars. This amount was voted on by all the representatives of the graduate program departments and represents the views of the graduate student population as each representative is responsible for conveying their department's views and opinions to the council. This fee increase will allow us to fulfill our financial obligations, continue to achieve the organization's goals from year to year [as set forth in the previous pages], and alleviate the majority of the financial burden on the Graduate School. This increase will also allow us to continue to grow and expand by allocating additional resources to the graduate population at EIU.

Graduate Student Fee

Budget for Fiscal Year 2008

Total Revenues	
Summer 2007	\$ 367.13
Fall 2007	\$1,641.70
Spring 2008	\$1,633.80
Summer 2008	\$ 515.20
 Total 07-08 Revenues:	 \$4,155.83

Expenditures:

National Association of Graduate & Professional Students	\$ 350.00
National NAGPS Conference	\$ 1,695.70
Regional NAGPS Conference	\$ 470.87
National Black Student Union Conference	\$ 626.54
Spring graduate events	\$ 144.60
Tent City/Homecoming-	\$ 94.85
Graduate Student Exposition/Awards Ceremony	\$ 2,188.26
Graduate Symposium/Poster Competition	\$ 352.85
Higher Learning Commission	\$ 227.10
 Total	 \$6,150.77
 Deficit	 \$1,994.94

The following activities were supported by the Graduate Student Fee for Fiscal Year 2008.

- Membership in the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS)
- Representation at the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS) National Conference held at the University of Texas.
- Representation at the Midwest Regional Conference of the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS) held at Michigan State University.
- Representation at the Black Student Union Conference held in Chicago, IL
- Graduate Student Exposition week
 - Printing for advertisements and flyers, Panther Catering for the Distinguished Graduate Student Award Ceremony, Publication of the Graduate Student Scholar Program for the ceremony
- Day long Graduate Symposium to celebrate graduate student research
- Poster presentation and competition outlining graduate student research
- Supplies for Tent City and Homecoming activities