

From: Stephen W Coll <sc3688@columbia.edu>  
Subject: Responding to Your Letter  
Date: February 1, 2016 at 1:48:04 PM EST  
To:

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your patience as I have reviewed your concerns about the support provided to doctoral students by the Journalism School. It has taken some time to review the forecasted costs of various options. I also have been aware of broader discussions about the concerns of doctoral students across the university, and I have taken some time to consult and listen outside the school while considering our position.

More and more, we appreciate the role and importance of doctoral students here. As graduate journalism education draws increasingly on computation and social science methodology, the opportunity to connect doctoral students to our teaching and research should continue to grow. The Tow and Brown Centers and Academic Affairs under Dean Coronel have turned increasingly to you for research, writing, and teaching. I am very supportive of these changes and look forward to continuing our previous discussions about how best to integrate and support your work.

Yet there are financial realities. We are a small school where all our major programs terminate in master's degrees. The masters' programs effectively subsidize the PhD program at the school, which operates at a deficit of more than \$1 million a year. One can say that the masters' students reap the rewards of their cross-subsidy through the enrichment of school's scholarship created by doctoral students and faculty. I believe that is true. Yet fairness to masters' students and financial reality mean we face real limits to how much more of a subsidy we can provide.

I have tried nonetheless to come up with some meaningful and affordable changes to our policy that will result in additional investment in the doctoral program by the school. As of next school year, we will:

- 1) Guarantee Gold level health care for enrolled doctoral students four years past course work (for a total of up to 6 or 7 years, depending on advanced standing); and
- 2) Guarantee facilities fees and Health Services fees for four years past course work (for a total of up to 6 or 7 years, depending on advanced standing)

I know that doctoral students university-wide have expressed concerns about the disparities in stipend policies at different graduate schools. The Journalism School is not in a position to change our core stipend policy at this time. However, I will certainly want to stay in touch with you and the PhD faculty about the issue.

I would also like to renew our discussions about fundraising efforts we might undertake together to increase the access of doctoral students to grants, research contracts and additional stipends. I will ask the school's development office to conduct some initial research about fundraising at comparable programs to see if we can identify some fresh strategies and potential donors.

Thank you again for your patience as I have reviewed your requests.

Sincerely,

Steve Coll