



**Graduate Board  
Room 57, Stodder Hall  
Thursday, December 14, 2017  
Refreshments - 3:00 pm  
Meeting - 3:15 pm**

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Approval of the October 2017 Graduate Board minutes
3. November/December Curriculum Committee Reports
4. Quick items:
  - a. Waldron and Hunter fellowship nominations
  - b. Proposed tax cut legislation
  - c. TargetX feedback
  - d. Graduate School Commencement update
  - e. Guidelines for advisor/advisee relationships
  - f. CGS meeting summary
5. Draft guidelines for assistantship allocation
6. Discussion of MBA reorganization
7. Items arising

**Graduate Board**  
**Room 57, Stodder Hall**  
**Thursday, October 26, 2017**  
**3:30pm**

**Attending:** P. Agrawal, J. Artesani, K. Beard, D. Bousfield, S. Butler, S. Delcourt, K. Evans, C. Gerbi, E. Haigh (for S. Ell), N. Hall, L. Hicks, C. Isenhour, S. Jain, Z. Jin, J. Kelley, M. Kienzler, A. Knightly, S. Marrs, I. Mette, K. Miner, D. Neivandt, B. Olsen, E. Pandiscio, B. Preziosi (for M. Blaszkiewicz), D. Rooks-Ellis, J. Rosenbaum, M. Shea, C. Sponarski, M. Tajvidi, C. Villacorta Gonzales, Y. Zhu

**1. Review and approval of the September Graduate Board (GB) minutes**

Motion to approve, seconded, unanimously approved.

**2. Graduate Curriculum Committee report**

S. Delcourt presented the following courses which were recommended by the Curriculum Committee at their October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting for approval by the GB.

*New Courses:*

BMB 502 - Introduction to Bioinformatics

*Modifications:*

NUR 506 - Professional Issues in Advanced Nursing Practice

**3. Short items:**

a) Graduate School solicitation for (Eckardt, Waldron and Hunter) fellowship nominations

S. Delcourt reminded GB members that the timetable for fellowship awards process has been moved up and requests for nominations will be due in early December so awards may be decided prior to the Christmas break.

b) Maine Impact Week (April 16-20, 2018)

D. Neivandt discussed the plans for Maine Impact Week, scheduled to include the Student Symposium on April 17. An interactive event with the business community will also be added in the evening. The “Celebrating Scholarship” event, similar to that from 2015, will also be part of that week, held on April 19.

c) Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Research Collaborative Program

D. Neivandt reminded GB members of the announcement regarding the Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Research Collaborative Program, calling for proposals and the opportunity for interdisciplinary teams to receive grants of up to \$30K through 2018. Program will start in early January.

d) TargetX application training for graduate program coordinators

S. Delcourt discussed the progress of the TargetX implementation. Training is scheduled to begin the week of October 30, 2017. Trainees may come to group training sessions in the Graduate School or individual training sessions may be offered in individual departments for those who cannot attend group sessions.

**4. Overview of the TargetX view for graduate program coordinators**

J. Ballinger provided information regarding changes in the current admissions review process with relation to using TargetX. Each graduate program will receive a Google group email address to use as the departmental login for the Target X decision module. J. Ballinger explained how to navigate TargetX to enter information and make decisions. Questions were asked regarding how to manage interviews/auditions for departments that require them. J. Ballinger responded that the topic will be researched and reported on later. A question was also asked regarding the ability to rank students within the system for use in determining scholarship awards, etc. That topic will also be researched and reported on later. A question was asked regarding the ability to download and print applications, and it was confirmed that applications will be available to print from TargetX for a finite period of time (several years) or indefinitely from WebNow.

**5. Draft resolution on conducting a Graduate School Commencement Ceremony**

S. Delcourt discussed the possibility of holding a separate commencement ceremony for the Graduate School instead of a hooding ceremony. The Executive Committee drafted a resolution for submission to GB to determine the feasibility of holding a separate Commencement for graduate students as early as May 2018. The group discussed making changes to the regular Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony and how changes to the Graduate School Commencement might affect the undergraduate ceremony. The group unanimously voted to adopt the resolution attached and pursue further review of a Graduate School Commencement.

**6. Draft guidelines for graduate advisers/advisees – K. Miner**

K. Miner presented draft guidelines for graduate advisors/advisees. She explained that the draft has been through a number of reviews by multiple offices including the President, the Provost, Office of Human Resources and the Title IX office, and the feedback from those reviews has been incorporated into the current version. A discussion ensued mainly involving interpreting the section regarding time off. It was decided that the draft would be placed on Google Docs for further review and comment. Graduate Board members who have a section in their Graduate Student Handbooks on vacation and sick time were encouraged to provide this information to Lauren in the Graduate School office.

**7. Discussion of University of Maine policies governing maternity/paternity leave by graduate students**

S. Delcourt informed the GB of a recent audit by the Department of Energy and the Office of Civil Rights of the Civil and Environmental Engineering program due to a large grant award that exceeded the threshold to trigger an audit. This audit was very positive and did not identify any serious issues of concern. However, the auditors did note the absence of a policy specifically governing family leave. S. Delcourt reported that crafting a policy of this type is the responsibility of the Title IX office and that all the Title IX officers system-wide will form a committee to draft a comprehensive family leave policy that will apply to both graduate and undergraduate students. S. Delcourt will also be a member of that committee to advocate for the specific needs of graduate students.

**8. Proposal to create a Graduate School of Business in Portland**

S. Delcourt called for comment on the proposal that reorganizes UMaine's and USM's MBA programs within a single Graduate School of Business in Portland. John Mahon, John M. Murphy Chair of International Business Policy and Strategy and Professor of Management, spoke in opposition of the proposal. He also answered questions from the group. It was decided that Dr. Mahon would provide additional documentation via email to D. Neivandt and S. Delcourt for further review by the Executive Committee, and the GB will revisit in one month.

## **Resolution on Holding a Graduate Student Commencement**

Whereas the Graduate Student and Faculty Recognition (Hooding) Ceremony is considered by many master's and CAS level students to be their graduation ceremony since each student is hooded by his/her college dean and a faculty member from the college and whereas a large number of graduate students choose not to attend the larger (and longer) University Commencement the following day, the Graduate Board charges the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School to explore the option of implementing one or more Graduate School Commencement ceremonies, where master's and CAS students would receive both their hoods and degrees, in place of the current Graduate Student and Faculty Recognition (Hooding) Ceremony. The current practice of recognizing graduating doctoral students at both ceremonies will continue in some respect.

A change to a Graduate School Commencement Ceremony would necessarily include discussions with the University's senior administration, the leadership of the Graduate Student Government, and the members of the Graduate Board in order to ensure that all necessary stakeholders could attend the proposed Commencement Ceremony, given the timing constraints due to other competing graduation-related ceremonies and the space constraints due to the seating needs to hold one or more Graduate School Commencement ceremonies.

The Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School shall report to the Graduate Board on the progress of these discussion with the purpose of developing a plan for the May 2018 Commencement Ceremony, if possible, but no later than the May 2019 Commencement Ceremony.

*Passed by Graduate Board, October 26, 2017*

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*Contributors*

# **GOP tax plan will place greater tax burden on Maine's graduate students**

By Camerin Seigars and Walter McCulley III, Special to the BDN • December 12, 2017 9:58 am  
Updated: December 12, 2017 10:12 am



The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act **under consideration in Congress** negatively impacts higher education at all levels, with graduate students among those who will be most adversely affected.

Graduate students are the blue-collar workers in university research efforts that affect local, national and global economies, and they make a difference during periods of great transition in the world. As the next generation of college faculty and working professionals, graduate students work tirelessly to obtain the advanced knowledge and professionalism to contribute and succeed.

At Maine's land grant university, the scientific research, scholarship and creative achievements of graduate students help advance the state, affect potential policy change for the well-being of the public, and contribute to quality of life.

The University of Maine in Orono is the center for research and graduate studies in the state. It is home to nearly 2,000 graduate students. They move the UMaine research efforts forward, mentor undergraduate and high school students, take on leadership roles and influence our society in profound ways.

But the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, if passed and enacted, specifically as it applies to graduate students, will negatively impact all graduate students and the disciplines that depend on their hard work and dedication.



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By **State Farm**

***[GOP tax plans make the American dream harder to achieve]***

The House version of the bill, **passed last month**, makes changes to the U.S. tax code that will have profound effects on students' ability to pursue higher education at all levels, but especially graduate studies. The bill alters **the American Opportunity Tax Credit, eliminates the Lifetime Learning Credit** for part-time students, graduate students and nontraditional students, who take more than five years to graduate, and eliminates **a tax benefit for graduate students**, significantly increasing the price to further their education and professional development.

Many graduate students who earn small stipends of \$20,000 or less per year for helping to teach or assist faculty members with research receive a tuition waiver. **Tuition** can vary from around \$8,000 a year for Maine residents to \$25,000 for nonresidents. Under this new legislation, the tuition now generously covered by a waiver would **count as taxable income**, dramatically increasing students' tax burden.

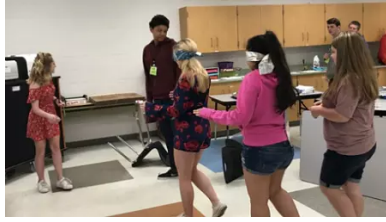
This could nearly double the taxable income of a graduate student who barely makes ends meet now. Many of these students are struggling to pay off expenses from their undergraduate programs while juggling family expenses, such as raising a family and supporting aging parents.

The Senate's version of the bill, **passed earlier this month**, left out many of these negative changes, but now lawmakers must reconcile differences between these these two bills.

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By **State Farm**

Although the stated purpose of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is to boost the economy, it could accomplish just the opposite: turning students away from advanced graduate training; preventing talented individuals from highly diverse backgrounds and all walks of life from calling UMaine home; and severely impacting research and development, the creation of a skilled workforce and other factors that contribute to a vibrant economy.

UMaine is Maine's public research and graduate university, and we ask that you advocate in keeping our relationship with the community strong. UMaine's ability to continue education, research and outreach in critical fields is dependent on access to graduate studies.

Graduate students are the fuel for the engine that drives university-based research, leading to new discoveries, innovation and economic development. We need to ensure that the engine remains strong by preserving the opportunities afforded by the Hope Scholarship, American Opportunity Tax Credit and other provisions in our tax code.

The potential economic and educational consequences of the tax bill are just too great and have far-reaching implications for Maine's and the nation's future.

*Camerin Seigars is a graduate student studying mechanical engineering at the University of Maine in Orono. Walter McCulley III is a graduate student*

*studying psychology at UMaine. Both are senators in the UMaine Graduate Student Government.*

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## **Background and Primary Objectives of the Assistantship Distribution Guidelines**

- Allocation of graduate assistantships has been based largely on past history without any adjustments that take into account growth in undergraduate instruction or growth of the graduate program.
- Newer graduate programs approved in the last 10 to 15 years were not sufficiently funded with TA positions due to limited resources.
- TA positions that were eliminated before the Graduate School pulled all positions centrally have limited the potential growth of some graduate programs.
- We have attempted to develop a rational process to be more strategic in the allocation of TA positions, using metrics that assess a graduate program's vitality, graduate student capacity and undergraduate teaching load (see appended guidelines). The guidelines will be discussed at Graduate Board, the Council of Associate Deans, and University Research Council.
- Since many colleges would have similar assessment tools for the units in the college, we wish to compare data to make sure that important variables are not being missed and that the data is not misrepresentative.
- Working with the college deans, our goal is to develop recommendations regarding the deployment of TAs that respect college needs regarding undergraduate instruction, but also help further strengthen graduate programs with a capacity to grow in terms of enrollment and/or external funding.
- We anticipate that the majority of these recommendations will pertain to changes in TA allocations within individual colleges, although not exclusively so.

## **Guidelines for the Distribution of Graduate Assistantships**

Programs will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. **Vitality** - based on admissions competitiveness (low admissions rate (%A) and high yield (%Y); and five year change in enrollment (ET).
2. **Capacity** - based on graduate student to faculty ratio (G/F); percentage of students funded (%F); and university to total assistantship ratio (U/T).
3. **Undergraduate instruction** - based on undergraduate student to faculty ratio (U/F) and undergraduate student credit hours (USCH).

The model for assistantship reallocation will be presented and discussed at the Council of Associate Deans, the Graduate Board, and the University Research Council.

Following the criteria for vitality and capacity above, graduate programs will be identified that have strong growth potential, moderate growth potential, and weak growth potential.

The programs with weak growth potential will be reviewed for undergraduate instructional needs and for alternative means of providing undergraduate instruction, including TA sharing between programs and the use of part-time or full-time lecturers.

Graduate programs with weak potential for growth and low undergraduate instructional needs will be designated for assistantship reallocation.

Initial attempts will be made to reallocate assistantships between graduate programs within a college, although assistantships may be reallocated between colleges as necessary.

The VPRDGS will discuss proposed assistantship reallocations with individual college deans and with the Provost before final reallocation decisions are made in December. In each academic year, no program will gain or lose more than 2 assistantships. However, over multiple years, it is anticipated that the graduate programs with strong growth potential will receive the majority of reallocated assistantships from the graduate programs with limited growth potential.