

**The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth  
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

**FACULTY MEETING  
March 3, 2022 - 3:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

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**Present:** Michael Galko, Chair; Actor, Akbani, Alcorn, Aldaz, Arur, Azhdarinia, Bailey, Bankson, Bar-Eli, Bartholomew, Bedford, Bednar, Beierlein, Berdeaux, Blackburn, Calin, Cantor, Carlin, Carmon, Chandra, S Chang, Han Chen, Ken Chen, Lisa Chen, Jichao Chen, Xiaodong Cheng (MDA) S Cho, Cole, Cunha, Curran, Czerwinski, Dabaghian, Daniel, DeLay, Du, Gandhi, Denicourt, Dessauer, Do Monte, Dougherty, Eckel-Mahan, Eckmekcioglu, Eisenhoffer, S Evans, Farach-Carson, A Flores, Fornage, Friel, Fries, Frigo, Frost, Gandhi, Garsin, Gordon, Gorfe, Gu, Hagan, Harrington, Hart, Hildebrandt, Horton, Jian Hu, A Jain, Jayaraman, D Johnson, K Jones, Jun, Karmouty Quintana, Kalluri, Kaplan, Kapoor, Klegerman, Koehler, Konovalova, Krahe, Kry, Kudchadker, Layman, Dung-Fang Lee, Jayhun Lee, Liang Li, Wenbo Li, Wenliang Li, Yi-Ping Li, Yisheng Li, Ziyin Li, Chunru Lin, Ruitao Lin, Lorenz, Lozano, Zhen Lu, Margolin, Marshak, Mattox, McCrea, McCullough, Milewicz, N Millward, Mirkovic, Mogghaddam, Morales, Morano, Morgan, Morrison, Mosher, Nagayama, Narkar, Netherton, Olson, Pagel, Pan, Parker-Thornburg, JC Perez, Richie, Sahoo, Salinas, Santos, Scaini, Seymour, Shadding, Shahnawaz, Shete, Siddik, Singletary, Stavoe, Taegtmeier, P Taylor, Teng, Titus, Urayama, van Hoof, Venna, Viale, Walker, Walters, Bin Wang, Guocan Wang, Hongyu Wang, Jihon Wang, Jun Wang, Xin A Wang, KK Wong, Waxham, John Weinstein, Wendt, Chenggang Wu, Danielle Wu, Liuqing Yang, Xiangli Yang, Yates, C Yin, H Ying, You, D Yu, S Zhang, J Zhang, X Zhang, M Zhu

**Staff/Administration:** Agurcia-Parker, Barker, Barnett, Brewer Savannah, , Amy Carter, E. Wassim Chehab, Cruz Bruesch, Lademora, Lau, Lindheim, Perez, Price, Rademacher, Rech, Sirisaengtaksin, Simon, Snow, Spitzenberger, Valladolid, Weinberg, Williamson

**1. September 9, 2021 Faculty Meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

**2. Commencement Plans**

Dr. Mattox reported:

- GSBS Commencement 2022 will be held at Minute Maid Park on Friday, May 13 at 4:00 pm. This will be a joint ceremony with the McGovern Medical School and the School of Bioinformatics.
- Advisors will be able to hood their graduates. GSBS will pay for faculty regalia.
- The McGovern Outstanding Teaching Award will be presented to the honoree.
- Dr. Brene' Brown will be the commencement speaker.

**3. Admissions – Interviews and On-site Visitations**

Dr. Shadding and Karen Weinberg reported:

- We have had two sets of virtual interviews, with the last two planned for March 2022.

- We plan to invite students that have been admitted to GSBS to attend one of two in-person visitations sessions, currently scheduled for March 23 or April 6. This is optional, but we want to give them a chance to learn more about our school.
- We will have a Dean's Welcome, lab and facility tours, student talks, activities, and dinner with faculty.
- Admissions update:
  - 54 offers out
  - 5 accepted
  - 2 declined
  - 45 students invited to March 23<sup>rd</sup> visitation, and 19 have confirmed so far

#### **4. Dean's Report**

Dean Blackburn reported:

- Thanked faculty, students, staff and leaders who have been attentive and flexible in providing guidance during COVID to ensure that we can continue to educate students and ensure that they are making academic progress.
- Since COVID numbers have fallen, we will see guidelines issued that will allow more in-person teaching and gathering. We should get together whenever we can, while remaining safe. We will begin to see in-person program retreats and poster sessions.
- Dean Blackburn will retire at the end of June. A formal announcement, including a transition plan for interim leadership is forthcoming.
- The institutions have committed to hold a national search for the next dean, and they have selected Dr. Guillermina Lozano and Dr. Kevin Morano as the search committee co-chairs.

#### **5. Dean Search**

Dr. Lozano and Dr. Morano reported:

- Drs. Colasurdo and Pisters are supportive of a national search for a dean. This individual will be a nationally-recognized individual from one of our institutions or an external candidate.
- The search committee composition will be finalized soon. There will be representation from both institutions and the GSBS advisory council. Committee members will be required to take unconscious bias training.
- The committee will work with the executive search firm Spencer Stuart to identify top talent and generate the strongest candidate pool possible.
- Faculty are encouraged to suggest candidates to Drs. Lozano and Morano or the search firm; especially open to a diverse candidate pool.
- The search timeline aims to have a new Dean in place by September 2023. Dean Blackburn will retire in June, and there is a plan for the interim period that will be announced as soon as the paperwork is finalized.

#### **6. Proposed Stipend Increase – Michael Blackburn, PhD/Pat Bruesch**

Dean Blackburn and Pat Bruesch reported:

- An important part of what we do is to support our students with stipends and benefits.
- The proposed increase was discussed with the Executive Committee and Program Directors Committee and was sent to the GSBS Faculty to prepare for discussion at this meeting. Both

committees agreed that it's important to support students and to offer a stipend that is competitive with other schools.

- It's important to GSBS to include faculty feedback in this process since they are the ones that support students through grants/programs. The institutions will also have to approve the increases due to the impact on the budget, and knowing that an increase is supported by the faculty will be important to our institutional leadership.
- **Proposal: Increase stipend for PhD and MD/PhD students from \$32,000 per year to \$36,000 per year effective Fall 2023 for all students**
  - The last GSBS stipend increase occurred in Fall 2018
  - A list of competitor schools was derived looking at admissions data from the past 5 years to compare stipend levels
  - Although Houston has a lower cost of living than the national average, an increase is needed to provide a living wage for students

**Proposal if GSBS faculty approve the above: Increase stipend range for MS in Biomedical Sciences students in line with PhD students**

- Current range is \$24,000 - \$32,000
- If Stipend goes up to \$35K for PhD – new range would be \$27,000 - \$35,000 per year
- If Stipend goes up to \$36K for PhD – new range would be \$28,000 - \$36,000 per year

**GSBS will discuss an increase to stipend range for MS in Medical Physics program students with Medical Physics program faculty**

- Current range is \$15,000 - \$32,000

**Any stipend increases would apply to all students, not just those matriculating in Fall 2023.**

- **GSBS Stipend Level and Duration of Support from GSBS**

Entry Year	Stipend Level	Duration of Support from GSBS
2004	\$ 20,800	9 months
2005	\$ 23,000	9 months
2006	\$ 23,000	9 months
2007	\$ 23,000	9 months
2008	\$ 26,000	2 years
2009	\$ 26,000	2 years
2010	\$ 26,000	2 years
2011	\$ 26,000	2 years
2012	\$ 29,000	2 years
2013	\$ 29,000	2 years
2014	\$ 29,000	2 years
2015	\$ 29,000	2 years
(Beginning Summer) 2016	\$ 29,000	16 months
2017	\$ 29,000	16 months
2018	\$ 32,000	16 months
2019	\$ 32,000	16 months
2020	\$ 32,000	16 months
2021	\$ 32,000	16 months

Last stipend increase was in 2018, when the amount increased from \$29,000 to \$32,000

- A list of competitor schools was generated using the last 5 years of admissions data. These are schools that students went to who also declined an offer of GSBS admission. Stipend amounts offered by competitor schools were compared to the GSBS stipend level. A comparison of the raw stipend levels and a comparison of stipend levels following cost-of-living adjustments were provided.

- Based on stipend amount, without any cost-of-living adjustment, GSBS ranks 16/18.

Name of School	City and State	Annual Stipend w/ cost of Health Insurance	Cost of Living Index (BestPlaces.net)	Percent Difference in Cost of Living Index on 100	Annual Stipend Adjusted to Cost of Living Index of 100 (BestPlaces.net)	Percent Difference in Cost of Living Index (Salary.com)	Annual Stipend Adjusted to Cost of Living Index of 100 (Salary.com)
Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences	New York, NY	\$ 43,500	187.2	87.2%	\$ 23,237	80.4%	\$ 24,113
University of California, San Francisco	San Francisco, CA	\$ 42,500	269.3	169.3%	\$ 15,782	86.1%	\$ 22,837
Harvard University	Cambridge, MA	\$ 40,632	181.8	81.8%	\$ 22,350	51.0%	\$ 26,909
Northwestern University	Evanston, IL	\$ 35,196	119.9	19.9%	\$ 29,354	14.9%	\$ 30,632
Baylor College of Medicine	Houston, TX	\$ 35,000	96.5	-3.5%	\$ 36,269	-8.0%	\$ 38,043
Johns Hopkins University	Baltimore, MD	\$ 34,910	88.2	-11.8%	\$ 39,580	10.9%	\$ 31,479
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	Ann Arbor, MI	\$ 34,794	117.5	17.5%	\$ 29,612	6.7%	\$ 32,609
University of California, San Diego	San Diego, CA	\$ 34,000	160.4	60.4%	\$ 21,197	35.0%	\$ 25,185
University of Chicago	Chicago, IL	\$ 34,000	106.9	6.9%	\$ 31,805	15.0%	\$ 29,565
University of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, PA	\$ 34,000	101.2	1.2%	\$ 33,597	13.7%	\$ 29,903
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill	Chapel Hill, NC	\$ 33,000	118.3	18.3%	\$ 27,895	2.2%	\$ 32,290
Emory University	Atlanta, GA	\$ 32,569	107.5	7.5%	\$ 30,297	0.3%	\$ 32,472
University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas	Dallas, TX	\$ 32,500	101.6	1.6%	\$ 31,988	-2.7%	\$ 33,402
Washington University in St. Louis	St. Louis, MO	\$ 32,500	81.3	-18.7%	\$ 39,975	-11.6%	\$ 36,765
Vanderbilt University	Nashville, TN	\$ 32,500	101.4	1.4%	\$ 32,051	-4.8%	\$ 34,139
University of Texas MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences	Houston, TX	\$ 32,000	96.5	-3.5%	\$ 33,161	-8.0%	\$ 34,783
Princeton University	Princeton, NJ	\$ 31,720	194.6	94.6%	\$ 16,300	13.5%	\$ 27,947
Duke University	Durham, NC	\$ 31,160	95.2	-4.8%	\$ 32,731	4.3%	\$ 29,875

- After cost-of-living adjustment, GSBS ranks 3/18 (based on data from Salary.com). Baylor ranks at number 1.

Name of School	City and State	Annual Stipend +/- cost of Health Insurance	Percent Difference in Cost of Living Index (Salary.com)	Annual Stipend Adjusted to Cost of Living Index of 100 (Salary.com)
Baylor College of Medicine	Houston, TX	\$ 35,000	-8.0%	\$ 38,043
Washington University in St. Louis	St. Louis, MO	\$ 32,500	-11.6%	\$ 36,765
<b>University of Texas MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences</b>	<b>Houston, TX</b>	<b>\$ 32,000</b>	<b>-8.0%</b>	<b>\$ 34,783</b>
Vanderbilt University	Nashville, TN	\$ 32,500	-4.8%	\$ 34,139
University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas	Dallas, TX	\$ 32,500	-2.7%	\$ 33,402
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	Ann Arbor, MI	\$ 34,794	6.7%	\$ 32,609
Emory University	Atlanta, GA	\$ 32,569	0.3%	\$ 32,472
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill	Chapel Hill, NC	\$ 33,000	2.2%	\$ 32,290
Johns Hopkins University	Baltimore, MD	\$ 34,910	10.9%	\$ 31,479
Northwestern University	Evanston, IL	\$ 35,196	14.9%	\$ 30,632
University of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, PA	\$ 34,000	13.7%	\$ 29,903
Duke University	Durham, NC	\$ 31,160	4.3%	\$ 29,875
University of Chicago	Chicago, IL	\$ 34,000	15.0%	\$ 29,565
Princeton University	Princeton, NJ	\$ 31,720	13.5%	\$ 27,947
Harvard University	Cambridge, MA	\$ 40,632	51.0%	\$ 26,909
University of California, San Diego	San Diego, CA	\$ 34,000	35.0%	\$ 25,185
Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences	New York, NY	\$ 43,500	80.4%	\$ 24,113
University of California, San Francisco	San Francisco, CA	\$ 42,500	86.1%	\$ 22,837

- An MIT living wage calculator suggests a living wage for a single adult in Harris County to be \$29,807. The Economic Policy Institute suggests a living wage for Houston, The Woodlands, and Sugarland Metro Area to be \$35,391. It is important to know that the calculators are highly individualized based on a person's unique circumstances.
  - These calculators are based on a large area of Houston/Harris County, and cost of living within the Texas Medical Center may be higher than surrounding areas.
- Annual Cost of Supporting a PhD Student

	Current Costs Academic Year 2021-22	\$35K Stipend Academic Year 2022-23	\$36K Stipend Increase Academic Year 2022-23
Stipend	\$ 32,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 36,000
Benefits	\$ 8,960	\$ 9,800	\$ 10,080
Tuition and Fees	\$ 5,828	\$ 6,645	\$ 6,645
Total	\$ 46,788	\$ 51,445	\$ 52,725
Increase of →		\$ 4,657	\$ 5,937

- Impact to GSBS Budget and Parent Institutions

Estimated Annual Costs			
Stipend Level	GSBS	MD/PHD Program	Total
\$ 32,000.00	\$ 3,571,916.80	\$ 711,449.60	\$ 4,283,366.40
\$ 33,000.00	\$ 3,724,876.80	\$ 738,849.60	\$ 4,463,726.40
\$ 34,000.00	\$ 3,877,836.80	\$ 766,249.60	\$ 4,644,086.40
\$ 35,000.00	\$ 4,030,796.80	\$ 793,649.60	\$ 4,824,446.40
\$ 36,000.00	\$ 4,183,756.80	\$ 821,049.60	\$ 5,004,806.40
Projected Additional Annual Costs in Comparison to \$32K stipend level			
Stipend Level	GSBS	MD/PHD Program	Total
\$ 33,000.00	\$ 152,960.00	\$ 27,400.00	\$ 180,360.00
\$ 34,000.00	\$ 305,920.00	\$ 54,800.00	\$ 360,720.00
\$ 35,000.00	\$ 458,880.00	\$ 82,200.00	\$ 541,080.00
\$ 36,000.00	\$ 611,840.00	\$ 109,600.00	\$ 721,440.00

- Discussion and questions

- What is the duration of support of our competitor schools? Can GSBS increase the duration of support?
  - There are some schools that support a longer duration, but most schools support students for less than 16 months. Discussions of longer durations with institutional leadership have not yet happened.
- If we do the increase to \$36,000, since the institutions must approve the increase, is it likely they will approve this?
  - This is an annual budget discussion, and they haven't approved it yet, but they have in the past. They will want to know what faculty think first. Approval is not guaranteed, but they have offered their initial support.
- This is a pretty modest raise if we're thinking over a four or five year period. We should be thinking about inflation. From the time they start to the time they finish, we should lean towards the higher end, just to be fair to them.
- Part of a rationale to propose the increase to start Fall 2023 is so that everyone has adequate time to plan for the impact to everyone's budget.
- Instead of a big increase to \$36,000, maybe it can be a gradual increase, or annual increase so that we don't have to revisit the issue in four or five years.
- We should support this to need to remain competitive, but for faculty that have multiple students they have been able to get support to GSBS in order to help cover the increases. Will it be the same this time?
  - In the budget discussions with our institutions, we will build in support for faculty that find themselves in this scenario.
- If we increase the salary and increase the fees, many PIs may favor postdocs over students.

- Occasionally, we have incoming faculty that bring students from other institutions, or there are students that go to another institution with their mentors. Is there a general understanding that these students should be paid the same stipend level?
  - When our students are in that situation, and they move because their faculty member is going to a new institution, students must be paid at least the same level as other GSBS students, and stipends are increased if cost-of-living is higher.
- Can we put it on the table to ask our institutions to increase the duration of support back to 24 months?
  - We might be able to leverage the opportunity of recruiting a new Dean to try to work with the Presidents on a bigger ask, such as a 2 year or 3 year period of support.
  - We should focus on this particular raise, then gain a groundswell of support for a longer duration.
- A motion was put forth to end the discussion and was passed by the GSBS faculty.
- The proposed stipend increases were approved by the GSBS faculty.
- Faculty approval of the stipend increases is step one. Next, the institutions will need to approve the increases.
- If/when the institutions approve the stipend increases, faculty will be notified by:
  - Email
  - Website
  - Notices in GSBS Essential

## **7. Old Business**

No old business was discussed.

## **8. New Business**

No new business was discussed.