

**Memorandum of Understanding**

**between**

**the University of Oregon President and the  
Dean of the Graduate School and the  
Graduate Student Assistance Fund Committee**

**1. PURPOSE**

The University of Oregon (“UO”) hereby creates a fund that will assist its graduate students facing financial hardship relating to the care of a new child or a medical issue.

**2. FUND**

On January 1, 2015, (January 1<sup>st</sup> shall be referred to as the “Commencement Date”) UO will establish a "Graduate Student Assistance Fund" (the “Fund”) and will place an amount equal to **\$50 per admitted and enrolled UO master’s and doctoral student**, (the “Annual Amount”) into the Fund to be used for awards (“Awards”) to eligible UO graduate students between January 1, 2015 and September 14, 2015 and annually thereafter, beginning on September 15, 2015. On September 15, 2015 and each September 15<sup>th</sup> thereafter, UO will replenish the fund with the Annual Amount and will carry-forward amounts remaining in the Fund from the previous year up to one-third of the previous year’s Annual Amount (this process shall be referred to as the “Annual Accounting”). For purposes of determining the Annual Amount on any September 15<sup>th</sup>, the number of admitted and enrolled master’s and doctoral students will be the number cited as enrolled in the Fall Fourth Week Data Report of the previous Fall.

**3. AWARD ELIGIBILITY**

Graduate Students eligible to receive Awards are those students:

- (a) Admitted to and enrolled in a master’s or doctoral degree program
- (b) Enrolled for at least three graduate credits during the term in which the Qualifying Event occurs, and in which the student applies for access to the Fund unless the graduate student is on academic leave as a result of the Qualifying Event. For Qualifying Events and applications occurring during the Summer, the student must have been enrolled for at least three graduate credits in the previous Spring term;
- (c)
- (d)
- (e) Experiencing a Qualifying Event. A Qualifying Event is defined as follows: (1) the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child (“New Child”) ; (2) pregnancy disability or prenatal care; or (3) to care for a spouse (or equivalent under Oregon law), child or parent who is experiencing a serious medical condition; or the student’s own serious health condition (Cumulatively the latter two events shall be referred to as “Medical Issues.”);
- (f)
- (g)
- (h) In good academic standing. In determining whether a student is in good academic standing, consideration will be given to the impact of the underlying Qualifying Event

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- and that appointment and reappointment as a GTF is contingent on satisfactory academic progress;
- (i)
  - (j)
  - (k) Not on academic leave; unless the student is on academic leave as a result of the Qualifying Event;
  - (l)
  - (m)
  - (n) Experiencing a financial hardship arising out of a Qualifying Event. For the purposes of the Fund, financial hardship shall be defined as an immediate and significant financial need related to the Qualifying Event which cannot be met through existing household financial resources;
  - (o)
  - (p)
  - (q) Who have not received an Award more than: (1) two times over the course of their academic career in the case of a master's student; and (2) six times over the course of their academic career in the case of a doctoral student. Students who have met these limits may petition the Dean of the Graduate School in writing for an exception due to extraordinary circumstances (one exception in the case of a master's student and up to two exceptions in the case of a doctoral student). The Dean's decision to grant additional opportunities pursuant to this section is final and binding; and
  - (r)
  - (s)
  - (t) Who have not previously received an Award associated with the same Qualifying Event.

~~Section 3 of this MOU can only be altered by mutual agreement of the parties.~~

#### 4. APPLICATION

Graduate Students may apply for an Award by providing documentation sufficient to demonstrate eligibility to the Dean of the Graduate School or his/her designee. Such documentation shall include at least: (1) documents demonstrating financial hardship; (2) documents describing the Qualifying Event. Depending on the underlying circumstances, students may be required to provide medical documentation verifying the Qualifying Event; and (3) the exact amount requested and a brief description of how it will be used. Award requests cannot exceed \$1,500 in the case of a New Child and \$1,000 in the case of Medical Issues. Applications must be made no later than ninety (90) days after the Qualifying Event.

The Dean of the Graduate School or his/her designee shall determine whether the information submitted is sufficient to prove eligibility up to the full amount of the Award requested. If the information presented is not sufficient to prove that the graduate student is eligible for the full amount of the Award requested, the Dean or his/her designee may grant the Award in part or may fully deny the request.

If the information is sufficient to prove eligibility and if Funds are available, requests shall not be unreasonably denied.

#### 5. FUND COMMITTEE

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The Dean of the Graduate School shall form a Fund advisory committee (the "Fund Committee"). The committee shall be comprised of the following members who shall serve for a period of one year starting on the Commencement Date:

- a. A designee of the President;
- b. A faculty member appointed by the Graduate Council, a UO committee reporting to the University Senate;
- c. A Graduate School staff member appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School
- d. Two representatives who are GTFs at the time of their appointments, appointed by the GTFF; and
- e. Two graduate student representatives who are not GTFs at the time of their election, elected by a mutually agreed-to procedure.-

The Fund Committee will review the Fund and its operations, and review any associated reports, including reports associated with the number of Awards and Award denials, in order to assess the Fund's viability. The Fund Committee will annually report its findings and recommendations to the President.

## 6. APPEAL

Subject to the student's rights under FERPA and HIPAA and the UO's associated obligations, if a graduate student's application is denied in full or in part under Section 4, he or she shall be informed in writing within ten (10) days of the basis for the denial (the "Denial") and his or her right to appeal the Denial within fifteen (15) days. The student will have the choice of appealing the Denial in writing to the Fund Committee or to the Provost. If the Denial is appealed to the Fund Committee, the Fund Committee's recommendation shall be forwarded to the Provost for action. The Provost's decision shall be final and binding on all parties.

## 7. AMENDMENTS

This MOU can only be altered by mutual agreement of the parties.