September 2, 2022

TO: Nancy Postero  
   Chair, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate

FR: James Antony  
    Dean, Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA)

Dear Chair Postero:

In your, and past Academic Senate Chair Javidi’s, May 26, 2022 email you asked for a report of the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force. You asked that this report outline the background, rationale, and implementation plan for the decisions on block grant and diversity funding announced in the December 2021 campus-wide memo (link). And, you asked for a plan pertaining to the assessment of the announced changes.

Please accept this document as a fulfillment of your request. As we discussed in our July 13, 2022 follow-up meeting together, I offer this document as an invitation to work with me, my team, and the still-constituted Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force over the next few years to assess the impact of the announced decisions, and related initiatives, and make recommendations for improvement.

**Background**

It has long been the ambition of UC San Diego to simplify the block grant formula, modify the TA resource allocation approach, and move toward a five-year funding guarantee for PhD students and a three-year funding guarantee for MFA students.

The charge to simplify the block grant and to address the TA resource allocation method derived from earlier work by a Senate-Admin Workgroup (link), and the momentum to move the campus toward multi-year funding guarantees derived from our own Chancellor’s often-stated priorities, which were incidentally later also taken up by UC Office of the President (link).

**Timeline**

In response to the Senate-Administration work group’s recommendations, in October 2019 campus leadership announced the first major graduate funding reform initiatives (link). The most notable policy change was to ensure that students under an active funding guarantee be funded at a minimum 50% appointment level in each quarter of the academic year. This helped to correct a campus-wide practice that had evolved in which many students were appointed at 25%, thus only earning half of a stipend while their tuition and fees were fully covered per the dimensions of the ASE contract.
After the October 2019 announcement, the next goal of senior administration was to move toward revising the block grant formula and the manner in which TA resources were allocated. As we all know too well, the ensuing pandemic and associated impact on campus budgets necessitated a partial pause to some of those plans. As a result, the block grant formula was not revised and block grant distributions continued to follow the legacy formula for the academic years beginning in 2020 and 2021. However, even though the block grant formula was not revised, GEPA still worked closely with all deans, department chairs, student representatives, and other department officials to follow through on the Senate-Administration Workgroup’s recommendations to address the TA resource allocation method. This work on TA resource allocation was conducted during the winter and spring quarters of the 2020-2021 academic year, with full implementation occurring later that fall.

Also, in individual divisional meetings with Deans and Chairs, both in late fall of 2020 and winter of 2021, GEPA made clear the campus commitment to five-year funding packages for all incoming PhD students, and three-year packages to all incoming MFA students, beginning that fall.

Later, in spring of 2021, an additional new reform was announced that set a floor for stipends ensuring that students in the incoming cohort and beyond could expect the opportunity to earn a 12-month stipend of at least $30,000. This is what has come to be called the “$30K initiative.” The campus-wide memo that announced the $30K initiative indicated, in the last paragraph, that an Implementation Task Force would be brought together to recommend to the senior administration how to implement this initiative.

As such, the Implementation Task Force was formed and charged by the EVC. This task force was composed of students, senate faculty, and staff. Senior Associate Dean Judy Kim and I were asked to co-chair this task force. This task force met a handful of times and it was quickly determined that a more holistic view of graduate funding was needed in order to make any sensible recommendations to the senior administration. Specifically, we felt we needed a more holistic view of all graduate funding issues, which meant an exploration of the long-delayed revision of the block grant formula, the approach to enhancing diversity, an examination of funds that came to programs in the form of GSGEI and other streams, as well as the implementation of the $30K initiative.

Therefore, the Implementation Task Force was sunset and the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force was born, bringing over many members from the previous Implementation Task Force while adding new members from across campus. Once again, just like the Implementation Task Force it replaced, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force was charged by the EVC and Senior Associate Dean Judy Kim and I were asked to serve as co-chairs.

Over the summer of 2021, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force convened to discuss modifications that could be made to the block grant formula, the campus approach to supporting graduate student diversity, and the implementation of the $30K initiative. The work of this task force included a discussion of available data, and the
consideration of a host of ideas that could be recommended to the senior administration.

During each meeting of the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force, detailed notes were taken. These notes, to which all members of the task force had access and which they were invited to edit, ultimately formed the basis of preliminary recommendations made to the senior administration, which in overarching form were also shared via the notes with members of the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force.

After deliberation with the senior administration, the preliminary recommendations were refined and a draft of the December 2021 campus-wide memo was constructed in late October/early November, 2021. Also constructed was a publicly-facing spreadsheet that transparently detailed the allocations made to every program. Shortly before the release of the December 2021 campus-wide memo, a draft was circulated to the members of the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force. A draft was also shown to Academic Senate leadership, who provided recommendations about the wording of the proposed “Prong 2” portion of the memo.

Because the December 2021 campus-wide memo did not address implementation of the $30K initiative, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force reconvened, meeting two more times over the spring 2022 quarter. On August 15, 2022 the recommendations about implementation of the $30K initiative were forwarded to the senior administration, and I include those recommendations as an artifact in the appendix of this document.

**Spirit of this Document**

As we discussed during our July 13, 2022 follow-up meeting together, the charge of the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force, like the Implementation Task Force that preceded it, was to offer recommendations directly to the senior administration. Neither task force had been set up as a Senate-Administration Work Group. As such, we co-chairs interpreted the charge, and described on many occasions to the members of both task forces, being to offer recommendations directly to the senior administration.

You and I agree a more constructive approach might have followed the conventions consistent with a formal Senate-Administration Workgroup. That was perhaps a missed opportunity, but I feel it is important to acknowledge that the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force followed its charge. You and I also agreed that, given the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force’s recommendations to the senior administration have already led to policy announcements, it would be best to not represent the present document as a formal report of the task force. Instead, this document is offered to you in the spirit of an invitation to work with my team and me, and the still-constituted Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force, from this point forward to jointly assess the ongoing impact of the already-announced reforms, and related initiatives, with the goal of developing further recommendations to improve graduate funding approaches in the future.
Structure of this Document

This document outlines the discussions of the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force, the data that the co-chairs used to help guide those discussions, and how these discussions served as the rationale behind the recommendations made to the senior administration. This document also describes the implementation of the decisions announced in December 2021. This document then shares the recommendations made to the senior administration regarding the implementation of the $30K initiative. Finally, this document outlines the plan to engage Academic Senate leadership, along with the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force, in an ongoing fashion to assess the impact of the already-announced reforms, and other related initiatives, with the goal of offering recommendations to the senior administration aimed at further improving graduate funding approaches.

Discussions of the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force

Block Grant Formula

As was described in the December 2021 campus-wide memo, a new formulation of the block grant was needed to address long-standing issues first identified by the original Senate-Administration Workgroup.

A goal of graduate funding reform had been to simplify the block grant formula, making it more predictable and transparent. The Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force worked to achieve these goals, while also recommending the allocation of summer stipend resources to departments that do not yet meet the 12-month $30K stipend minimum mandated by the $30K initiative.

In its simplest form, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force recommended a block grant formula for PhD programs with minimal resources as:

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3 \text{ Quarters of tuition, fees, and stipend} + 2 \text{ Summers of stipend} \times \text{approved entering cohort size}^1
\]

The formula is similar for MFA programs, with the exception that the summer stipend component is for one summer.

Implementation

While some programs are nearly fully dependent upon the block grant and TA-ships to fund their students, others have access to external resources and have consequently

\footnote{Cohort size is jointly determined by each program and the GEPA dean. This happens in spring or summer, prior to the start of a new admission cycle. If a program yields under their agreed upon cohort size, block grant is held harmless. If they yield over their agreed upon cohort size, the expectation is that they will adjust downward the following year to bring things back into balance. Any requests to permanently increase cohort size are discussed jointly with the Program Chair, GEPA dean, School Dean, and EVC.}
never relied upon the block grant as a primary source of graduate funding. Therefore, the implementation of the new formula was adjusted to take into account program variation in access to different types of external resources.

Furthermore, as the March 2021 campus-wide $30K initiative announcement made clear, new resources to enable a 12-month stipend floor of $30K would be focused on graduate programs where student support has historically been below this amount. Shortly after the $30K initiative campus-wide announcement, School Deans were consulted to confirm which graduate programs already met or exceeded the 12-month $30K stipend minimum, and which still needed resources to meet this requirement.

Taking the above factors into account, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force recommended that the implementation of the \(3Q + 2S\) multiplied by cohort size formula be contextually adjusted and that these adjustments be reviewed periodically by School Deans, the GEPA Dean, and the EVC. The upshot is that for FY 22/23 nearly all programs are seeing a one-time increase in their block grant.

For most programs within the School of Arts & Humanities, the Rady School of Management, and the School of Social Sciences (except for Psychology, which has historically funded its students above the 12-month $30K floor), 100 percent of the agreed-upon entering cohort was used as the multiplier in the \(3Q + 2S\) formula in determining the block grant for FY 22/23.

For Psychology, SIO, the School of Biological Sciences, the School of Physical Sciences, the Jacobs School of Engineering, and Health Sciences PhD programs, the previous year’s block grant was augmented by a one-time amount.

In addition to the one-time increase, Math and Clinical Psychology also received an appropriate summer stipend component to account for the fact that neither program has historically reached the 12-month $30K minimum stipend.

In FY 22/23, nearly all other programs received a one-time increase in their block grant; and HDSI, as a new PhD program, was determined to need an initial level of support and block grant value calculated using a methodology to be discussed with that program’s leadership. Moreover, it was determined that as other program structures or new departments emerge, conversations would be had about setting baseline block grant allocations and diversity resources.

As stated in the December 2021 campus-wide memo, the following notes govern the implementation of this new block grant formula:

- GEPA will outline basic accountability and reporting requirements at the department and school levels.
- Departments can make local decisions about how to spend block grant funds in support of graduate education each year, so long as they meet the obligations of funding guarantees to students. Departments must spend their full block grant allocation on an annual basis.
The block grant may be adjusted in future years, subject to the availability of funding.

GSGEI allocations totaling about $15M per year, which provide substantial relief for non-resident supplemental tuition (NRST), shall continue this year at the current 90% reimbursement value. Please note that this year-by-year program is subject to annual review.

We expect this renewed campus investment in the block grant to be strategically deployed by departments and schools/divisions to yield improved rates of enrollment and degree attainment by students from historically marginalized populations. ²

Finally, in an effort to promote transparency, the FY 22/23 block grant and diversity allocations for all programs were posted online, easily reachable from the GEPA website. The direct link for FY 22/23 allocations can be found here. In the coming weeks, this publicly-available spreadsheet will be revised to include a second tab, which is an augmented version of the originally-released spreadsheet, that also includes TA resource allocations and other financial information.

Potential Challenges that Lie Ahead for Block Grant

Although the revisions to the block grant formula have been widely applauded by many departments, as these revisions address a number of the challenges felt within the Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences, more opportunity exists for refinement. For example, our colleagues in STEM departments are motivated to revisit how block grant is calculated for their programs.

This is an important conversation for us to have and, beginning in the 2022-23 academic year, GEPA will work with the senior administration and the respective school deans to get this conversation started. Although no specific approaches have yet been decided, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force did discuss the possibility that the STEM areas’ block grant distributions could follow the same cohort-size-driven formula used for Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences, but with an adjustment term being applied that takes into account the availability of external resources for graduate funding. Clearly, going forward, part of our overall assessment efforts should also include an examination of the impact the current block grant approach is having on our STEM programs with an eye toward offering recommendations for possible refinement.

Another challenge that lies ahead pertains to the ultimate resolution of a contract for the upcoming GSR union, as well as to that of the upcoming contract negotiations with the ASE union. As clarity emerges regarding the new negotiated terms of both these contracts, the overall impact on graduate funding will need to be assessed. Again, no specific early recommendations exist on either of these fronts, other than to illuminate the need for us to keep this in mind.

² This point is further reinforced, below, when we discuss the use of all funds, or the entire corpus of funding, when thinking about how to achieve our diversity goals.
Finally, another challenge that lies ahead for the block grant has to do with the emergence of new programs and departments. The campus will need to project what the impact of the growth of new programs and departments will be on the overall budget, and will need to determine how to set baseline block grant allocations for new programs and departments as they develop. The good news here is that we are already working to do this very thing with the formal emergence of HDSI’s new PhD program. More university program growth likely lies ahead, which is a good thing—after all, we want to grow PhD enrollment. We will need to think all of this through as the future unfolds.

**Arriving at the Two-Pronged Approach to Advancing Diversity**

Because the work of the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force was to look at all funding sources pertaining to graduate education, an examination of the investment made by campus in the form of diversity fellowships was also pursued. What follows is a summary of the discussions had by the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force with respect to diversity funding.

**Data on Diversity Fellowships**

To guide the conversation about diversity fellowships, GEPA’s Institutional Researcher created a series of spreadsheets that summarized the last decade’s worth of information about the distribution of the various kinds of diversity fellowships. Data from these spreadsheets guided our conversations in the task force. The data in these spreadsheets were recently placed into a more user-friendly Tableau dashboard, to which we have provided restricted access to the leaders of Academic Senate. This dashboard can be accessed [here](#), and I will be generally referring to it in my discussion below. To the best of our knowledge, this open scrutiny and analysis of diversity fellowship data are the first of their kind for Campus, and it is our intent to base decisions and recommendations on these and other comprehensive data.

**Diversity Fellowship Challenges Discussed**

The following challenges were discussed, with an eye toward devising recommendations that would address each.

**Average Annual Number of Diversity Fellowships**

One of the first things the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force had to consider was whether the small number of fellowships historically distributed, university-wide, constituted a systemic and comprehensive strategy for diversifying graduate programs. Not including the two final years of fellowship distribution, which were outliers, the

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3 Prior to 2020, departments made nominations to a faculty selection committee. This faculty selection committee made final awards, guided by a common set of criteria. Although the selection committee allowed for standardization, and enabled GEPA to monitor the number of awards made so as to not exhaust the budget, departments felt the committee process was too slow. In response, for 2020 and 2021 a pilot was undertaken to allow departments to nominate three students and be guaranteed those three awards if they yielded the students. Although previous years’ yield data suggested this pilot would result in the same average annual award distribution (about 35 awards), the method proved impossible to manage and the awards made dramatically outstripped resources available. As such, the GEPA Dean determined that continuing the pilot would no longer be advisable.
average annual number of fellowships given out over the last decade was **35 fellowships per year**. In the dashboard, you can see the annual university-wide distribution of fellowships in the scrollable table, *Diversity Fellowships Awarded by Department/Program*, at the bottom of the “Who Earns” tab.

The Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force was faced with a simple question of whether an average of 35 fellowships per year, applied to an admitted cohort that is composed of a conservative estimate of about 1,700 PhD and MFA admitted students per year ([link](#)), constitutes a comprehensive and systemic approach for enhancing the diversity of the graduate student body.

In the broadest sense, my suggestion to the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force was that the most comprehensive and systemic approach to advancing our competitiveness for students, especially underrepresented minority (URM) students, would be our 5-year PhD/3-year MFA funding guarantees, something that UC San Diego never had when the diversity fellowship strategy was originally put into place years ago.

**URM versus Non-URM Awarding of Diversity Fellowships**

Complicating the question of whether an average of 35 diversity fellowships for an average admitted cohort of 1,700 students was a comprehensive and systemic approach for enhancing diversity was the fact that a notable percentage of the diversity fellowships awarded were being awarded to non-URM students. Specifically, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force learned that, over the last decade, nearly 45 percent of Cota Robles fellowships and nearly 30 percent of San Diego fellowships were awarded to non-URM students.

Diversity can be defined in many ways, and nobody is trying to minimize the importance of other forms of diversity by examining the ratio of URM to non-URM diversity fellowship awards. That said, UC San Diego has long been public about its commitment to specifically increase URM diversity. This public commitment makes sense, given that it is well documented in the literature that URM representation in PhD/MFA programs matters both for the success of fellow URM students already matriculating in our programs, and for the eventual success academia might experience when it comes to increasing the URM diversity of the faculty ranks. By examining the percentage of diversity fellowships being awarded to URM students versus non-URM students, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force was able to partially gauge how effective the diversity fellowship strategy has been as one, of many, tools for specifically advancing URM diversity.

The diversity fellowship strategy has been used to promote diversity in the broadest sense of the word, and is therefore an imprecise tool for advancing URM diversity. Legal constraints make it difficult to do anything different. The one exception is fellowships dedicated to students from federally recognized tribes, and the December 2021 campus-wide memo made clear that such fellowships remained intact. ⁴

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⁴ State law, specifically Proposition 209, prohibits the University of California from providing financial aid to students based on race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin. UC campuses can provide financial aid to students based on membership in federally recognized tribes because such membership is legally deemed a political classification, rather
We also considered the historical yield of URM students without the aid of diversity fellowships. Given the low number of available diversity fellowships, how successful were programs in actually enrolling URM students even when they did not receive a diversity fellowship? The data in the dashboard provide clear evidence that, over the last decade, most of UC San Diego’s programs were able to yield and enroll many, if not most, of their URM admittees without the aid of diversity fellowships (see the “Admissions+Diversity” tab of the dashboard; select “(ALL)” in the pulldown menu; as you examine various departments, the last column of data shows the yield of URM students without the aid of a diversity fellowship).

Clearly, some programs seemed to only enroll as many URM students as those who received a diversity fellowship, and this phenomenon merits deeper examination, in and of itself; but such programs are few in number. The preponderance of our programs’ URM yields without the aid of a diversity fellowship have been quite high. This makes empirical sense as there simply have never been enough diversity fellowships to rely upon them as the sole strategy for advancing URM diversity, and the number of highly-qualified URM students admitted into our programs outstrips the number of fellowships available. As such, most of our programs have been successful yielding URM students using the resources they typically draw upon to fund any other student.

**A Decade of Slow Progress on URM Diversity**

Although all diversity is important, URM diversity continues to lag behind expectations. The diversity fellowship strategy we have been using for the past decade, because of its limited scale and broad eligibility criteria, is poorly tuned to uniquely improving university-wide URM diversity. At best, the strategy has been having marginal impact within a limited group of programs.

The Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force discussed URM representation in our programs. Even after a decade of the traditional diversity fellowship approach, UC San Diego’s URM representation has been low, both within almost every individual program and university-wide. Publicly available data published by UCOP shows very little progress at UC San Diego along these metrics.

It should be stated that some programs and PIs see the value of the diversity fellowships not so much in their capacity to produce broad, systemic, university-wide improvements to URM diversity but, rather, in their capacity to offer a financial incentive to a program of an individual PI to admit a student who contributes to diversity. In essence, the diversity fellowship served as an incentive because the student cost less to the program or the PI. On one hand, this incentive framing of the issue comports with what many of us understand to be typical organizational behavior within university contexts—if you want to see something happen, you need to incentivize it.

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5 Meaning, quite literally, the legal constraints imposed by Proposition 209 allow nothing short of a very broad criteria to be used when determining diversity fellowship eligibility.
On the other hand, many on campus have told GEPA that because diversity is so important, to achieve it we should use the whole of resources we typically draw upon to fund any other student. Proponents of this *whole resources framing* of the issue suggest that diversity fellowships, while appearing on the face to provide an essential incentive, may unintentionally promote the idea that there is a limit to the resources that can be used to advance diversity. In fact, many program leaders’ and individual faculty members’ immediate reaction to the December 2021 announcement (as evidenced by emails sent to GEPA) signaled that they believed the new pilot approach was taking away all the resources they had at their disposal to pursue diversity. These emails highlight our collective unwillingness as a campus to accept that the whole sum of resources that we use to fund any other student could also be used to pursue diversity.

This debate between the two frames, the *incentive* frame versus the *whole resources* frame, needs to be had across campus over the next few years. Clearly, the approach that the reforms announced in December 2021 advances is consistent with the latter frame. We shall see if this frame, which is promoting use of all our resources to pursue diversity, leads to improvements in URM recruitment and yield over the next few years when compared to the previous diversity fellowship model. As we carefully observe things over the next few years, it is important to also keep in mind that our recently-announced new approach exists within the context of several other important recent developments:

1. All incoming PhD and MFA students now receive five-year and three-year funding guarantees, respectively;
2. Our new PhD and MFA students are guaranteed the opportunity to earn at least a $30K stipend across 12 months;
3. Most of our graduate programs have suspended or permanently eliminated GRE requirements, which seems to be leading to more robust applicant pools;
4. Every program receives a reliable annual allotment of $30K to use in a variety of ways to support diversity—which for many programs is actually more diversity incentive money than they ever reliably received under the previous diversity fellowship model;
5. GEPA will be providing more robust recruitment and climate-improvement support to all schools.

So, will the new approach we are trying, accompanied by the above 5 contextual elements, lead to improvements in URM diversity? We hope so. At that same time, this is what we will critically assess, in tandem with you, over the next few years.

I should say that I do not suspect URM diversity to dramatically decrease while we are undertaking this pilot because, in too many of our programs, URM representation cannot get much worse. And, as I will detail below, initial evidence one admission cycle into the new approach suggests that URM diversity was not substantially harmed but, rather, actually improved across several programs. And, keep in mind the scale of the original diversity fellowship approach relative to the typical size of our admitted cohort: again, an average of 35 fellowships per year for an average of 1,700 admitted students per year. I think it is safe to say that trying out this new approach does not present a high degree of risk to URM diversity. But, as has always been said, if after a few years of
assessing the new approach with you we see a need for change, we reserve the right to
pivot.

**URM Yield**

Conversations with programs provide evidence that suggests many programs, even
when they admit underrepresented students, have trouble with yield. It is no secret that
many of our programs have trouble achieving desired yield of URM admittees. The
Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force discussed how part of this challenge can be
traced to the fact that many programs are perceived by URM students to have less than
hospitable climates for URM students. GEPA has concrete evidence that admitted URM
applicants speak with current URM students, and that those conversations can be
illuminating for admitted URM applicants. If current students convey to admitted
students that a program is a bad place to be, then no amount of diversity fellowship
money—frankly, no amount of any kind of money—is going to attract that applicant.

The same goes for women in STEM. Recently, one department that enjoyed great
success in admitting a large cohort of women found itself having yielded none of those
admittees. It became evident to that department that the few women matriculants in the
program had warned off the women admittees by relaying that they felt the climate
toward women in the program was hostile.

While such program climate issues were beyond the scope of the Holistic Graduate
Funding Task Force’s conversations about diversity funding, they offered an important
context as we considered why our university has been minimally effective in achieving
its URM diversity goals over the last decade. Sadly, no amount of money, whether
packaged as diversity fellowships or otherwise, will change the fact that far too many of
our URM students (and, not coincidentally, women in STEM) are unhappy, and are
telling applicants to not come to UC San Diego.

Considering the climate issues above, it should come as little surprise that the Holistic
Graduate Funding Task Force began to wonder whether the resources dedicated to
diversity fellowships could, instead, be more effectively used to broaden programs’
capacities to improve diversity, including being able to address issues of climate while
also providing flexibility for programs to augment the financial packages offered to
individual students. This conversation was the seed of what was ultimately announced
in the December 2021 campus-wide memo: to give every program guaranteed
diversity monies, which they could spend in ways that exceeded simply the
recruitment of individual students; and to allow the monies to be spent in
ways that might improve climate. This line of thinking was only possible because
UC San Diego had now moved to five-year funding guarantees for PhD students and
three-year guarantees for MFA students, meaning that the money used for diversity
fellowships could theoretically be repackaged in ways that universally aided all graduate
programs, not just those that happened to receive diversity fellowships.

The Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force also carefully considered URM yield from a
different vantage, as a proxy for assessing the program-level impact of diversity
fellowships on URM yield. As I alluded to earlier, the data in the Tableau dashboard
show (see final column in the dashboard) that most programs’ yields of URM students without the benefit of a diversity fellowship has always been quite high. Most programs yielded 70 percent or more of their URM students without the aid of diversity fellowships. This makes sense given that the overall number of diversity fellowships available in any given year, university-wide, averaged 35 fellowships per year and (as will be discussed below) most programs received few, if any, fellowships each year.

Some might suggest that those programs whose yield without diversity fellowships is low will not be able to achieve any URM diversity without fellowships, and that the $30K in diversity monies offered is simply insufficient to do the job. As I discuss later in this report, data from the most recent year’s admission cycle (the first “post diversity fellowships” cohort), show promising results that unveil more nuance.

**University-Wide Distribution of Fellowships**

The Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force was presented with data showing that a large number of programs received few, if any, diversity fellowships each year. While a small number of programs were successful getting fellowships on a regular basis, the vagaries associated with applicant yield largely drove what a program received. As a result, in some years a program might get one or two fellowships, but in other years they might get nothing. Spanning across the past decade, the distribution of fellowships shows a skew that does little to advance diversity across all programs at our institution. As we can see from the figure below (also in the Tableau dashboard), the previous diversity fellowship strategy privileged some programs while sparsely benefiting others. The impact of diversity fellowships for most programs across a decade was small.

It should be noted that many of the roughly 10, or so, programs that received the lion’s share of diversity fellowships over the past decade were also successful getting awards
associated with the Tribal Membership Initiative (TMI) or the UCOP-sponsored HBCU fellowships. As was announced in the December 2021 campus-wide memo, the TMI awards remain intact. Moreover, UCOP maintains its commitment to HBCU partnerships, including HBCU fellowships, so a commitment to these fellowships also remains.

To illustrate this point, let’s examine the Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO), the largest recipient of diversity fellowships. Of the 33 awards they received over the past decade, internal data show that 13 were either TMI fellowships or awards given to students from HBCUs. Therefore, speaking historically, nearly 40 percent of the fellowships SIO received over the past decade are of a category unaffected by the recent announcement of a new approach to advancing diversity. As these types of fellowships remain intact, the relative impact of the new approach on SIO can be attenuated by their continued success recruiting TMI and HBCU fellowship recipients.

Aside from the about 10 programs that historically received more diversity fellowships than others, most programs received few diversity fellowships, if any. As such, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force had to consider whether receiving, for example, one or two fellowships in any given year was a comprehensive and strategic approach to diversifying an entire program that might be composed of more than a hundred students. The task force was reminded that UC San Diego now ensures all entering PhD and MFA students, regardless of background, receive five year/three year funding guarantees, and that this is a paradigm-shift that can be leveraged as we build our efforts to improve diversity across the board.

**Untended Issues Associated with Diversity Fellowships**

In one meeting of the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force, the process of being considered for a diversity fellowship was discussed. Namely, the demands on applicants to present themselves as qualified for diversity fellowships seemed to evolve into an exercise that, at times, amounted to a burdensome and intrusive request. For example, GEPA has been told stories from applicants, department chairs, and deans about applicants being advised to share “their diversity sob story” or their stories about “overcoming oppression” or of “overcoming adversity” in order to be deemed eligible to be nominated for a diversity fellowship. In some cases, students reported being advised to write narratives that recounted past trauma, which caused them to experience deep psychological pain. It should be noted that this phenomenon has been reported both with the old process in which fellowships were determined using a central faculty selection committee, and in the more recent pilot approach allowing departments to conduct direct nominations.

Many applicants have described this unintended issue as problematic, with some telling GEPA that it felt racist and exploitative. Underrepresented students should not have to bear the burden of proving themselves worthy, or worse, to prove that their particular story meets some predefined standard of what it means to be underrepresented, in order to earn financial support for their graduate studies. This kind of application experience was certainly never intended by anyone at UC San Diego, but we have to be honest with ourselves about the fact that what has evolved over time carries the potential for
applicants to be advised that, in order to “earn” diversity fellowship dollars, they have to write narratives about themselves that feel exploitative. A better approach, as has now been repeated many times in this document and which UC San Diego has adopted, is to ensure that nobody ever has to be subjected to such an exercise, and that all PhD/MFA students, regardless of background, are guaranteed five years/three years of support.

Other feedback shared with the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force, was rooted in conversations the GEPA Dean has had with numerous past fellowship recipients, and several faculty members, that revealed other unintended consequences of receiving a diversity fellowship. For example, although on the surface receiving a diversity fellowship appears to be a great opportunity as it relieves students from having to work for their financial support, many students who received diversity fellowships reported being left out of important professional socialization activities such as working in the lab, working on faculty projects, or gaining valuable teaching experience. And, for every story GEPA has heard about diversity fellowship recipients being left out of important graduate student professional experiences, it has also heard stories of diversity fellowship recipients being expected to work in labs or on faculty projects “for free” during their diversity fellowship years.

**The Theory of Action Behind the Prong 1 Recommendation**

In consideration of the above challenges, the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force revisited two questions with which they were charged:

1. *In a new era of universal funding guarantees for all PhD and MFA students, might it be possible to try a different approach when it comes to advancing diversity?*

2. *Is it possible that a new approach might be more equitable across programs, focused not only on recruitment; and might this new approach be fundamentally rooted in the expectation that programs should leverage the entire corpus of funding available to them, not just special set-aside fellowships they might happen to receive in a given year?*

Answering those questions led to the Prong 1 Recommendation, which distributes a sum of flexible, reliable, and predictable diversity funds to departments. The criticism that $30K is not enough to recruit students may be true, but such criticism fails to account for point 2, immediately above. As a university, we are trying to encourage all programs to use the entire corpus of their resources, not just this $30K, to achieve their diversity goals (what I labeled the “whole resources” frame, above). The notion that it is impossible to recruit students because there exists only $30K to do so suggests limited thinking about what resources are at our disposal to achieve our diversity goals. It also does not comport with earlier presented data, which clearly showed that a large number of our programs have already been using the whole resources frame as they have historically yielded large percentages, if not most, of their URM students without the benefit of diversity fellowships.
The $30K in annual diversity funds is intended to further advance program goals, not be the sole source of diversity resources. For many programs, getting a distribution of $30K is more money than they ever reliably received on an annual basis under the old diversity fellowship strategy.

Moreover, as the December 2021 campus-wide memo clearly describes, the $30K can be used creatively to help advance a host of diversity-promoting goals, not only recruitment. And as the memo made clear, when the $30K is distributed departments can retain the monikers of Cota Robles Fellowship or San Diego Fellowship, allowing recipients to list the award on their CVs. Coupled with five-year/three-year PhD/MFA funding commitments, GEPA’s commitment to infuse direct support to the schools via an expanded diversity climate intern program and new services offered through its new OAR² office, and the university’s overall expectation that PhD and MFA students have the opportunity to earn a minimum stipend of $30K across 12 months, the hope is that we can begin to focus on chipping away at some of the broader climate challenges programs are facing, as described above.

Admission and Yield Data a Year Into Prong 1 Implementation

What did the first year under the new pilot effort look like? The Tableau dashboard shows the admission and yield data for every program, juxtaposing the most recent year (the first year without traditional diversity fellowships, which appears at the bottom of the page for any given program) against the historical annual average of URM yield (which appears in the middle of the page for any given program).

Overall, with limited exceptions, the data show that programs’ successes recruiting and yielding URM students mostly held steady with the past, with a handful of programs dramatically increasing their URM yield. No programs have shown a drop in their URM yield that cannot also be explained by other possible factors, such as a smaller pool of applicants or a smaller cohort of students admitted, overall.

In an effort to demonstrate what the “one year out” data look like, you are invited to log into and follow along in the dashboard as this document describes a handful of departments’ data. The description of these examples focuses on the raw numbers of URM students yielded relative to the average number across a decade because percentages are easily skewed given the relatively small numbers or URM students.

A Few Examples

The first department described is Anthropology. As we can see, this year’s most recent yield shows 7 new URM PhD students. This is substantially greater than the historical average yield of 2.8 URM students per year. We also see that the year-by-year distribution of fellowships to Anthropology was small over the past decade, and on average, this department was able to historically yield 64.3 percent of its URM students without the aid of a diversity fellowship.

Biology is another interesting case, which we will want to watch over the next few years. Specifically, they yielded 6 new URM PhD students, an amount slightly under the
historical average of 6.5 URM PhD students per year. Focusing only on PhD students for this program (because they never received diversity fellowships for the master’s students), over the last decade, they received 12 diversity fellowships. Year-by-year, the URM yield without the aid of a diversity fellowship ranged from a low of 50 percent to a high of 100 percent. Although there is no dramatic downward shift in URM yield, it is nonetheless a slight decrease we will want to watch over the next few years.

The next example is **Electrical and Computer Engineering**. As we can see, this year’s most recent yield shows 2 new URM PhD students, and 12 new URM master’s students. The PhD URM yield for this most recent year is about as big as the historical average of 1.5 URM PhD students per year. For master’s students, this year’s yield of 12 URM students is nearly twice the historical average of 6.6 URM master’s students. With this department, we should also consider the minimal impact that diversity fellowships have had on URM yield. First off, we see that a total of 5 diversity fellowships were awarded to this department over the last decade (3 for PhD, 2 for master’s). Considering that this department, over the last decade, admitted a total of 8,444 PhD and master’s students, the relative impact of five diversity fellowships is quite small. The same logic holds true if we limit this analysis to only URM students: a total of 191 URM PhD and master’s students were admitted over the past decade, and only 4 diversity fellowships were awarded to URM students over this period of time. We can also see in the final column that this department was not heavily reliant on diversity fellowships to achieve its URM yield, as practically every year 100 percent of the URM students who yielded came without the aid of a diversity fellowship and, over a decade, 86.7 percent of URM PhD students and 97 percent of URM master’s students yielded without the aid of a diversity fellowship.

Let’s look at **Neurosciences**. This department, over the last decade, received a total of 10 diversity fellowships. This year’s yield of 6 URM PhD students is greater than the historical average of 4.4 URM PhD students per year. This department has, except in 2013, always yielded a large majority of its URM students (ranging from a low of 66.7 percent to a high of 100 percent) without the aid of diversity fellowships. So, the overall number of actual URM students who yielded relative to the overall size of the cohort can conservatively be described as doing slightly better than holding steady, with no dramatic decline in URM yield.

Another example is **Political Science**. This department, over the last decade, also received a total of 10 diversity fellowships. This year’s yield of 5 URM PhD students is greater than the historical average of 1.4 URM PhD students per year. This department has a history of yielding primarily the URM students who were awarded diversity fellowships, but this year—as I learned in conversations with the outgoing chair—the department leveraged the entire corpus of its resources, which are slightly greater because of the new block grant and TA formulae applied to a smaller yield, along with using the $30K in diversity monies to augment the packages for students who contribute to diversity. The chair cautioned that they believe the strategy they used this year may not be sustainable, long term. Another few year’s worth of data will be telling, and this is a department to watch and learn from in the future.
Finally, let’s look at **Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO)**, which has already been highlighted above. SIO is the largest historical recipient of diversity fellowships over the last decade. As previously mentioned, of the 33 diversity fellowships SIO has received over the past decade, 13 were in a category of fellowship that still exists. So, the campus change in diversity fellowship strategy does not have an impact on nearly 40 percent of the kinds of diversity awards SIO has historically received. That said, the PhD yield of 4 URM students for the most recent year is slightly under the historical annual URM PhD student yield average of 6. On the other hand, SIO yielded 9 URM master’s students, which is substantially greater than their historical annual average of 2.9 URM master’s students. Like many other programs, SIO—even as the campus leader in receiving diversity fellowships—has each year, over the past decade, successfully yielded URM students without the aid of diversity fellowships. With the exception of 2013, SIO has ranged from a low of about 33 percent to a high of 70 percent of their URM admittees yielding without the aid of a diversity fellowship.

The Tableau dashboard is illuminating on many levels. As we assess the pilot effort over the coming years, we will continue to look at the overall numbers of URM applicants in programs to see if opportunities emerge for increasing the pool of URM applicants, especially now that all PhD and MFA admittees are guaranteed multi-year funding. We will also examine relative yields of URM students, compared to the previous decade and year-over-year, to monitor any improvements or declines. Overall, the examples provided above offer a glimpse into the kinds of data we will be carefully monitoring. Should we see downward trends in URM yield, we intend to have conversations with those programs to try and better understand what they believe is happening as these departments may offer clues for further reforms in the future. Conversely, where we see notable successes we will want to learn from those programs in an effort to identify practices that can be applied at scale.

Certainly, one year of data does not constitute a trend. But the Tableau dashboard shows the kind of data we, and the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force, will continue to monitor together with you. GEPA will also carefully monitor how the $30K diversity allocations are being used. In later parts of this report, the overall assessment plan will be described in detail.

**Summary: The Question of Incentives, or Prong 1 Theory of Action, Reprised**

As stated earlier, though it is worth restating, legitimate concern has been raised, since the December 2021 campus-wide memo was released, that departments will lack the necessary incentives to admit and/or successfully recruit URM students without the availability of diversity fellowships. This is worth teasing out for a moment.

At first blush, this argument makes evident a logic of sorts: that the primary mechanism to attract and support a URM student is a diversity fellowship. If this were true, in practice, then we might expect no programs to be awarding these fellowships to non-URM students. Of course, that phenomenon is mostly visible as a university-wide data point, as many departments awarded diversity fellowships only to URM students. Nonetheless, if diversity fellowships were universally perceived to be the singular
resource for advancing URM diversity, as the above logic might imply, then no programs would have been using this highly-limited resource to advance other forms of diversity. Moreover, the limited number of available fellowships (again, about 35 university-wide), and the fact that there was never a guarantee to any program that it would yield a fellowship-awarded student, made it impossible for any department to overly rely upon diversity fellowships as their primary strategy for URM diversification. This is perhaps why the data show so many departments yielding high percentages of their URM admittees without the aid of a diversity fellowship.

The campus is trying to engender an alternative logic. Namely, that the entire sum of resources we use to fund any other student—what I have termed the whole resources framing—should be viewed as money that can also be used to also achieve diversity goals. This alternative logic suggests that, even though $30K in diversity incentive money may not seem like a lot, it is in fact more money than most departments ever reliably received in the past when considering not only the few diversity fellowships available, but also the fact that fellowships have historically been awarded in skewed fashion across the university. Finally, this alternative logic pushes us to ask ourselves a hard question: if diversity is really as important to us as we publicly pronounce, then are we willing to use all our resources to achieve it? Or are we only willing to pursue diversity when special additional set-aside funds are made available?

Even if one accepts the alternative logic the campus is trying to engender, we must still contend with the possibility that the new approach offers insufficient incentive to programs to promote diversity. There may be programs that simply will not work hard to achieve diversity unless fellowships and set-aside monies are available. But rather than risk arriving at this conclusion prematurely, let’s watch the data closely. So far, after one year, the data collected are not ringing any alarm bells. Future years’ worth of data will clarify the picture. If, in the future (after taking into account universal PhD/MFA funding guarantees, the reliable and annual distribution of $30K diversity incentive money, and GEPA’s efforts to help programs increase the numbers of URM applicants while simultaneously working on program climate change) data indicated no improvement, or worse—harm to our URM numbers—then we should all stand ready to recommend the need for a pivot toward a new approach.

One final note about incentives. At the risk of sounding alarmist, it is important to point out that graduate deans across the nation have been actively discussing how to respond to the highly likely United States Supreme Court rulings in the coming years that may prove hostile to any form of affirmative action, including special fellowships or incentives that are aimed at increasing diversity. Although the broad criteria historically used by our previous diversity fellowship approach may comply with the law as it evolves, nobody knows for certain whether special diversity fellowships or incentives are a mechanism for advancing URM diversity, among other kinds of diversity, will even be legal down the road. Please understand that this was not at all part of the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force’s conversations, but it is nonetheless important to raise here. Even if, as a worst case scenario, the legal environment evolves in such a way as to eliminate our capacity to offer diversity fellowships of any kind, we rest assured that guaranteeing five years of funding to all incoming PhD students, and three years to all
MFA students will never be a strategy that is challenged by affirmative action opponents because it is inherently fair in its universal application to all students.

Now, let’s turn to a discussion of the Prong 2 Recommendation in the December 2021 campus-wide memo.

**Prong 2: Graduate Council Diversity Incentive Money**

Each year, the Graduate Council reviews a subset of programs that had recently undergone academic program review, with the goal of assessing progress on a host of metrics. These mid-cycle check-in periods allow the Graduate Council the opportunity to offer programs feedback on their progress since the last review. Historically, after assessing programs based upon a series of metrics defined by the Graduate Council, recommendations for augmentations to a program’s block grant were made to the senior administration. If funds were available, those recommendations were enacted. It should be noted that in the past couple of years, uncertainty about the university's budget made enacting those recommendations impossible.

Since the 2019-2020 academic year, Academic Senate and the Graduate Council, along with the GEPA Dean, have wondered how the above-described process might need to evolve as the campus moved in the direction of universal funding guarantees for all PhD and MFA students and a revised formula for the block grant. Specifically, we wondered whether any suggested augmentations to block grant allocations the Graduate Council might recommend, outside of the new block grant cohort-size driven formulation, could lead to difficult-to-track changes in block grant allocations and, in time, create unintended inter-departmental resource compression issues when comparing department block grant distributions across the university. Regardless, the Graduate Council has done excellent work, together with the GEPA team, to modify the kinds of metrics collected for its annual review and to streamline the requests made of departments being reviewed.

Recently, the annual Graduate Council review of programs was temporarily placed on hold, both because of pandemic demands on programs and because of the looming changes being discussed within the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force regarding the block grant formula. The idea here was that once clarity on the block grant was achieved, then the Graduate Council would resume its work.

The Prong 2 recommendation outlined in the December 2021 campus-wide memo, which proposes that the Graduate Council receive a sum of formula-calculated monies to distribute each year upon completing its annual reviews, emerged out of conversations within the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force about how we might further strengthen the Graduate Council’s capacity to help the university effect progress on diversity, specifically. This recommendation had nothing to do with the Graduate Council’s review process, per se. It simply assumed the Graduate Council would appreciate having a predefined tangible sum of money it could reliably use to incentivize programs to improve and promote diversity. As stated above, in times of financial distress, it has not always been possible to enact the Graduate Council’s recommended augmentations. The Prong 2 recommendation was attempting to provide a layer of
financial certainty to the Graduate Council by enshrining a fixed amount of dollars that could reliably be used each year.

Notwithstanding the original intention described above, and after considering the feedback Senate Leadership has given so far, I have concluded it is no longer prudent to pursue the Prong 2 recommendation, as proposed. **I hereby withdraw the Prong 2 recommendation, and ask that we return to the previous way of doing things, for now.** This will give us time to work together, and with the senior administration, to devise a better idea. This conclusion is arrived at for several reasons.

First, the proposed Prong 2 solution does not actually solve the problems of difficult-to-track changes in block grant allocations and, in time, may lead to the very compression issues we are trying to avoid with the new formulaic block grant. When comparing department block grant distributions across the university it will be hard, after a handful of years, to really explain the deviation from formula-calculated block grant amounts that will emerge when the Graduate Council augments given departments’ funding as a result of its reviews. In essence, the Prong 2 proposal would pass along the same challenge in this regard that we have always had.

Second, the Prong 2 proposal positions the Graduate Council reviews as being singularly focused on diversity when, in fact, their reviews are comprehensive and take into account a host of other important Graduate Council-defined metrics, as well.

Third, the legacy system whereby the Graduate Council made recommendations to the senior administration on block grant augmentations, leaving the final decision to the senior administration, evolved that way for an important reason. Namely, it is not possible for the Graduate Council to be aware of all the details that define a particular program’s financial environment—such as special agreements or arrangements a program has made with its cognizant dean, carry-forward funds that have not been spent, or financial conversations a cognizant dean might be having with the EVC’s office about a particular program. The Prong 2 proposal, as it was written, might complicate very important financial conversations the senior administration, deans, and department chairs are having with one another on a variety of fronts. We would be well advised to not inadvertently place the Graduate Council in the position of complicating, even possibly confounding, such matters.

Given the above, a better approach is to table the Prong 2 proposal (thereby resuming the previous way of doing things) and, instead, work with the Graduate Council and the senior administration to think through a mechanism for incentivizing program success that fits more neatly into the new cohort-size driven block grant formula.

An example might be that the Graduate Council, rather than suggesting percentage changes to block grants (which have historically ranged between 0% and 10%, although there have likely not been many examples of 0% recommendations; whereas, conversely, there have been numerous examples of 10% recommendations) might recommend plus/minus adjustments to the approved cohort size for a program. This could be an intriguing way to incentivize programs to achieve the metrics that are part of the Graduate Council reviews, because it fits neatly into the new way block grants are
calculated. However, among several potential drawbacks to this idea are: (1) a program should never be admitting a larger cohort simply because they have been rewarded in this fashion; cohort size should be a function of capacity to advise students, demand present within the field, and the prevailing labor market for graduates (among many possible drivers); and (2) as previously stated, the new cohort-size-driven block grant formula does not yet apply to most of our STEM programs; until that particular challenge is solved, which has already been stated is a goal, having a Graduate Council outcome of recommended plus/minus changes to cohort size may have unintended differential impacts on programs across the university.

Another idea might be that the Graduate Council does choose to focus specifically on diversity and might make recommendations to temporarily augment, or decrease, the $30K diversity incentive funds that are annually awarded to programs. Such an idea can be pursued using a “conservation of energy” approach, in which any increase in one program’s distribution can be matched by an equal and opposite decrease in one or more other programs’ distributions. The advantages here might be that this prevents uncontrolled growth of the overall diversity incentive budget, and that the adjustments are temporary. Of course, there are also many challenges to such an approach. One, of many, drawbacks would be how to determine which programs would receive a decrease given that not every program is reviewed each year. Hypothetically any recommended augmentations in the diversity allocations could, theoretically, come out of new monies allocated by senior administration when there is modest growth in the overall budget. But this cannot be guaranteed and should not be assumed.

In any case, the upshot here is that we step back from the Prong 2 proposal, for now, and give ourselves time to think about what makes most sense. The ideas presented above are not firm proposals, but reflect what we’ve discussed together at various times. In partnership with senior administration, there is little doubt we can jointly arrive at a way to best incentivize the Graduate Council’s annual program review work. My recommendation is that the Graduate Council’s reviews commence again, even if we do not yet know what the financial outcomes of their recommendations might be. After all, the reviews still have merit. The Graduate Council has already worked on making the required materials for these mid-cycle reviews easier to collect, and the temperature-checks these mid-cycle reviews provide to programs is important for their work and constant improvement.

The next section of this document addresses the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force’s conversations about the implementation of the $30K initiative, and the recommendations that have been made to the senior administration.

**Implementation of the $30K Initiative**

The Graduate Funding Holistic Task Force met twice, over the spring quarter of 2022, to finally get to the task of making recommendations to the senior administration about how to implement the $30K initiative. In the interest of consistency and transparency, the appendix of this document includes the formal report to the EVC and CFO delivered on August 15, 2022.
The upshot of the report is this:

- The task force believes, for the immediate summer we have been in, there exist adequate resources (via block grant and projected TA slots) to meet the $30K initiative for the new cohort of first-year PhD and MFA students who fall within this initiative. The need to immediately add new employment positions for the present summer is relatively small in scale and, depending on how departments use their resources, may in fact be non-existent. This conclusion is bolstered by the fact that, as of the writing of this document, no students under the commitment have reported being held short on an opportunity to earn $30K this year. However, down the road, the task force stressed the idea that additional employment opportunities may need to grow each year, which is why it recommended an analysis be conducted annually.

- Keeping in mind the medium-term and long-term need to create net-new employment opportunities for students, the task force outlined possible new types of employment opportunities outside of instructional roles. It suggested guidelines that might help campus offices consider what constitutes an engaging employment opportunity that simultaneously helps develop our students in positive ways. It also offered suggestions for how to incentivize offices across campus to create such employment opportunities for graduate students. Finally, it suggested codifying expectations for advertising all employment opportunities using unified distribution methods already in existence.

**Overall Assessment and Accountability Plan**

As indicated in my conversation with the SAC during the spring quarter of 2022, and in our July 13, 2022 follow-up meeting, we will ask the existing Holistic Funding Task Force to aid us in assessing the effectiveness of the block grant funding formula and Prong 1 of the diversity initiative. This work has already begun, as evidenced by the data presented above. And, the Tableau dashboard shared herein partially depicts the kind of data we are immediately prepared to monitor.

In addition to continually examining the data presently contained in the dashboard, GEPA will ask the Holistic Funding Task Force to continue refining these data elements, and to guide us in determining what additional data we may need to collect in an effort to better understand the impact of our recent decisions. We also intend to invite you into this work by transparently sharing what we uncover, and asking for your advice and feedback.

In addition, we will also do the following:

- **Examine how each program is spending the $30K diversity incentive money, and assessing impact at the departmental and student levels.**
  We have set up a specific budget number against which all departments must charge their expenditures, and this will enable us to specifically identify the
students who benefit from any awards, the extent to which they benefit, and to track the progress of those students. We can also follow up with those students to ask them questions about the impact of the funding they received.

- **Assess the relative progress of URM graduate students, from time of entry through major milestones.** The university has an active quasi experiment underway that can teach us a great deal about the efficacy of our five-year/three-year funding guarantees and the impact of the $30K stipend guarantee. Specifically, because both of those reforms were instituted only recently, we presently have cohorts beginning with the 2021 entering cohort that are subject to these reforms, and cohorts of students who entered in prior years that are not. Comparative analyses of students can teach us a great deal about the efficacy of the reforms, especially as it relates to student success, and we intend to conduct such analyses.

- **Survey and interview department chairs at the close of each admission cycle.** We will build a brief survey instrument, together with Holistic Funding Task Force members, that will enable us to learn more about how programs are experiencing the process of recruiting and yielding URM applicants. We will specifically ask them about their most recent admission cycle and ask them to reflect on the data for that year. If they have improved URM representation, we will want to know what strategies they have used. If URM representation has gone down, year over year, we will want their impressions about why, and their suggestions for what might help to improve their success. All chairs will be surveyed, and select chairs and admission committee members will be invited into focus group conversations so that we can obtain more qualitative impressions.

- **Assessing impact of climate intern programming.** GEPA is investing in the placement of two climate interns at each school. These interns, who will be paid graduate students who are supported by GEPA’s OAR² staff, will develop climate-improvement-oriented programming at the school level, and within constituent departments. We will have a common array of programs that can be offered across schools, but will also empower interns to create customized programs that make sense at the school and department levels. We will assess the efficacy of this programming to determine if it has helped departments’ URM students increase their sense of belonging, among many metrics.

- **Assess, and scale, lessons from a pilot program aimed at improving mentoring.** GEPA has been invited to prepare a proposal for a foundation to invest in a pilot program aimed at improving mentoring of graduate students. The idea is simple. We will incentivize faculty conversations about best practices in mentoring, and what they most expect from mentees. We will enable these faculty to work together to write a draft of their own program-level faculty mentor norms and faculty expectations of mentees. Simultaneously, we will incentivize students in those same programs to have conversations with one another about how to be an effective mentee, and what they most want out of
their faculty mentors. We will enable these students to work together to write a draft of these norms and expectations. Finally, we will bring the two constituent groups together to share with one another, learn from one another, and use that learning to revise their own respective documents with two goals: (1) committing to publish their respective documents on a departmental website, and (2) agreeing to revisit those documents no less than every other year, with a goal of refining and reaffirming. The idea is to do this at pilot scale, with six programs. Lessons learned will then be used to make this a common practice across all programs. The assessment involved in making this pilot successful will have the added benefit of teaching us about what is happening within programs with respect to mentoring, and how both faculty and students feel about the way mentoring can be improved. It should be noted that this pilot is also consistent with what many of our life sciences programs are beginning to think about as they address mandates for training grant support. Specifically, both Health Sciences and Biology (perhaps others, too) have begun undertaking formal faculty mentor training programs. It is great to see so much energy around these important issues.

Conclusion

As stated at the beginning, the intent of this document is to serve as an invitation to you to work with GEPA, and the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force, to actively assess the impact of the reforms we have made to graduate funding, overall, and to specifically assess the reforms announced in the December 2021 campus-wide memo.

In many ways, UC San Diego is far ahead of peer universities across the nation, and especially across the UC system, in its approach to graduate student support. Only a handful of peer institutions can say they have instituted five year funding guarantees for entering PhD students. And nearly no peer universities can say they have instituted three-year funding guarantees for MFA students. UC San Diego is at the forefront in both regards. In a similar vein, our assurances of a minimum 50% appointment in any academic-year quarter, coupled with our guarantee of the opportunity to earn at least $30K in stipend across 12 months, distinguishes UC San Diego even further.

These reforms emboldened us to recommend a pivot away from the traditional diversity fellowship strategy which, as has been argued in this document, had limited effectiveness in terms of improving URM diversity. The new effort underway is possible only because there is little to no harm to any given student, as all incoming students have received five-year/three-year funding guarantees and all previously-awarded diversity fellowships are being honored. It is therefore an opportune time, with minimal risk, to see if trying something different can yield better URM diversity results.

Like with all our graduate funding reforms, overall, we are guided by a desire to be bold in designing an environment for UC San Diego students to thrive. We are asking hard questions, and reviewing data carefully. We will get things wrong from time to time. But fear of getting things wrong should not prevent us from trying new approaches. With that said, we are not stubborn. If, together with the Holistic Graduate Funding Task
Force and you, we see the data telling us that our theory of action is inadequate, then we will revise and pivot. Our hope, as this document has attempted to communicate, is that you will join us in our efforts to assess and improve. When all is said and done, we want the same thing—to create the very best environment for our students to succeed.
Executive Summary

We have met twice as a group to discuss a framework for determining what constitutes a sufficient number of graduate student employment opportunities (mostly, but not exclusively, during summers) so that the university can meet the obligations of the $30K initiative.

One goal of this report is to outline our methodology for estimating what constitutes a sufficient number of employment opportunities. Our assessment of the current data attempts to project the impact of the now-reformed block grant and graduate funding resources as well as to project academic year and summer TA position availability. We will share these data, and our impressions, in this report and provide a sense of what we see as the conservative annual demand for employment, net of these block grant and TA resources.

The upshot of the above analysis: we believe, for the immediate summer upon us, there exist adequate resources (via block grant and projected TA slots) to meet the $30K initiative for the new cohort of first-year PhD and MFA students who fall within this initiative. The need to immediately add new employment positions for the present summer is relatively small in scale and, depending on how departments use their resources, may in fact be non-existent. However, down the road, the need for additional employment opportunities will grow each year, which is why we recommend this analysis be conducted annually.

Keeping in mind the medium-term and long-term need to create net-new employment opportunities for students, another goal of this report is to outline possible new types of
employment opportunities outside of instructional assistantships. We suggest guidelines that might help campus offices consider what constitutes an engaging employment opportunity that simultaneously helps develop our students in positive ways. We also offer suggestions for how to incentivize offices across campus to create such employment opportunities for graduate students. Finally, we suggest codifying expectations for advertising all employment opportunities using unified distribution methods already in existence.

**Projecting Employment Demand and Supply**

**Description of Analyses**
These programs received an increase in Block Grant funds: Arts & Humanities, Social Sciences (minus Psychology), Math, JDP Clinical Psychology, and Rady. There are 223 first-year students in these programs.

Two analyses were performed to project the financial status of these 223 first-year students in programs included within the 30k initiative:

1. What is the anticipated salary/stipend for these 223 first-year students at the end of SP22? For first-year students who are projected to earn less than 30k by the end of SP22, what is the projected total dollars needed to bring them to 30k?
   - The actual salary/stipend for FA21 and WI22 was considered. Because SP22 salary/stipend information was not yet available at the time of the analysis, we assumed that payment in SP22 is identical to WI22.
   - For students who engaged in SU21 research prior to formal matriculation in their program, the salary/stipend paid in SU21 was considered.
   - Third-party billing was not considered.
   - All students were characterized by the salary/stipend they are anticipated to receive by the end of SP22, e.g. less than $25k, $25k-$28k, $28k-$30k, above $30k.
   - The amount projected to bring the student to $30k was estimated and a total amount of summer support was calculated.

2. What is the projected employment opportunity from Summer Session (i.e., as TA, Associate-in)?
   - The SU22 TA allocation is based on data available on 8/8/22.
   - For a given TA allocation to a program, it was assumed that 20% of those funds would be used to employ first-year students; the remaining 80% of funds will employ 2nd-5th year students.

**Detailed Spreadsheet of Analyses**
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Uy4fwoW2wFJSgBzxJGIERbcBGHrvkf_i/edit#gid=53328819](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Uy4fwoW2wFJSgBzxJGIERbcBGHrvkf_i/edit#gid=53328819)

**Results**
Of the 223 first-year students, 173 are anticipated to earn less than $30k by the end of SP22.
The average summer salary/stipend that would bring the 173 students to $30k is $5,225. Thus, the total amount to meet the $30k initiative is $904k.

- Summer Session is projected to provide an employment salary of approximately $314k to first-year students. In other words, of the 173 students, 60 students will be employed by summer session and 113 students will need summer funds to meet the $30k initiative.
- For the remaining 113 students, the net new block grant funds are sufficient to meet the $30k initiative. If all 113 students were to be supported by Block Grant (e.g., in the form of a stipend or GSRship), the percentage of the net new Block Grant funds dedicated to these first-year students is 30% (A&H), 15% (SS), 2% (Math), 35% (JDP Clinical Psych), and 2% (Rady).

### Projected Summer Session Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/Program</th>
<th>Projected summer support</th>
<th>Projected employment from Summer TAship</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Increase in BG for AY 22-23, starting July 1, 2022</th>
<th>Fraction of new BG dollars to cover the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;H</td>
<td>$396,000</td>
<td>$100,811</td>
<td>$295,1899</td>
<td>$969,371</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>$387,000</td>
<td>$149,967</td>
<td>$237,033</td>
<td>$1,587,248</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>$62,000</td>
<td>$52,254</td>
<td>$9,746</td>
<td>$525,523</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JDP Clin Psych</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td>$119,729</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rady</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
<td>$11,308</td>
<td>$5692</td>
<td>$255,715</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$904,000</td>
<td>$314,340</td>
<td>$589,660</td>
<td>$3,457,586</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Two Caveats:**

1. The data for Summer TA allocation is an estimate as of 8/8/22; the final allocation will be known after completion of Summer Session.
2. The Task Force agrees with the basic assumption of the above analysis, which assumes that the $30K earnings potential of a student is not just met via summer opportunities. The Task Force agrees that a program should be allowed to give a student additional employment or other funding during the academic year (for example, via a small overload in percentage time for an additional TA or Reader role, or with a small hourly-paid GSR-like role, or via a fellowship top-off using block grant). If, after using such strategies, by the end of Spring term all the student’s compensation adds up to $30K, then the minimum stipend obligation for that student has been met and the student does not need to be offered additional summer opportunities. Programs may proactively choose to do things this way in order to relieve students from having to do any summer work at all—in essence, by paying students earlier in the year, the students’ $30K minimums have been met. Many on the Task Force see this as an ideal outcome.

**Medium- and Long-Term Goals**

The good news is that, if we accept the above findings, there is no immediate crisis upon us to produce a large number of net-new employment opportunities, and it appears that, in the
immediate sense, programs will have sufficient new block grant resources (which begin to flow after July 1) to meet the projected demand within their programs among students who still need to earn a minimum of $30K for the year. These departments, as many have told us, may choose to package their students with summer fellowships. Others may choose to create summer GSR-like appointments. Programs enjoy flexibility.

In the medium- and long-term, however, we suspect that—with more students entering each successive cohort who will fall under the $30K initiative—the campus will need to create more net-new employment opportunities. Some of this demand will be met by what appears to be a more robust summer enrollment, which could produce more TA slots. But the demand might also be met by having other offices across campus create employment opportunities. We now turn to our recommendations for what such net-new non-instructional employment opportunities might look like, and what guidelines might help offices when they go about creating these opportunities.

New Non-TA Employment Opportunities

The Task Force agrees that new employment opportunities do not always need to take the form of traditional instructional roles (TA, Reader, etc.). There are many ways in which individual graduate programs, and the university overall, might go about creating net-new employment roles. For example, graduate programs or campus offices might choose to create hourly-compensated roles (internships, consultancy roles, or even research mentorships to undergraduates) that leverage graduate students’ expertise to meet program or office needs, but also help to develop students’ professional skill sets.

A great example of this is what the Division of Graduate Education & Postdoctoral Affairs is going through with the expansion of its Climate Intern Program. Via highly-paid hourly roles, the Division will be hiring two students to serve as Climate Interns in each school, and one in each campus community resource center. There will also be a wrap-around support structure for the interns, so that they form a community with one another and learn higher-order skills together, such as event planning and basic program assessment. The goal is to benefit from the expertise of these students, to use their talents to help the university promote a more positive climate in the schools, and to grow the interns themselves, as many of them may wish to pursue careers in higher education student affairs after they complete their degrees.

The Task Force discussed that campus offices are not currently incentivized to hire graduate students during the academic year because of the tuition and fee implications, so at best they hire students into hourly appointments. For the summer, campus offices may not want to employ graduate students and invest in their training for only a summer job, so this also needs to be examined as potential tension.
The university might consider creating consultancy roles, in which they hire graduate students to help the university, or individual offices, with specific tasks of import. Or perhaps these consultants could serve on working groups or task forces the university defines. Anything might suffice in such hourly-paid consultancies, and the Task Force is really excited about this idea.

Student members of the Task Force strongly recommended that the university consider creating paid roles that offer compensation for existing needs that graduate students are presently volunteering for, such as their involvement in program development, program reviews, search committees, and a whole host of other activities that students are invited to participate in but that some students see as unpaid requests for labor.

Another idea is to create roles that leverage graduate student expertise to be mentors of our undergraduates, whether as supervisors on faculty's organized research opportunities; as PIs on their own projects, where undergraduates serve as research apprentices; as career advisors; or as other types of mentors. Such an effort could dovetail nicely with the university’s current push to provide mentoring to all undergraduates.

Still, we would be remiss to leave out the possibility that the university would simply fund (many) faculty to hire graduate students as summer GSRs. This would help faculty and students in departments where large, ongoing grants are not the norm. It would create co-authorship opportunities, which bolster students' CVs and put them in a better position to get academic jobs. Many members of the task force wish to convey that this was something that was repeatedly said would be the ideal.

The Task Force encourages creativity, both on the part of individual programs and university offices, when it comes to the creation of engaging new employment opportunities for graduate students. It is the sentiment of the Task Force that the best kinds of roles for our graduate students are those that center research as the primary work, or that leverage our students’ capacity to think and perform as researchers to accomplish work tasks. We believe that such positions will be most attractive to our students, and that these types of positions will allow the university to benefit the most from our students’ potential contributions.

Our students are dynamic and smart, and they have a lot to offer. But many offices may not have ever created jobs for graduate students. The Task Force felt that offices could benefit from some general guidance when creating positions. What should be the goals that offices keep in mind, and how might they craft their position descriptions to benefit from graduate students’ unique skill sets while also maximizing their ability to positively impact graduate students’ professional development? It is to this we turn next.
**Guidelines for Offices when Creating New Positions**

Graduate students are looking for employment opportunities that do more than just offer a wage. They want positions that help advance their professional goals, expand their skill sets, and allow them to use their talents to make positive contributions to the university’s multi-faceted mission. Many times, the types of positions that graduate students report getting the most out of are those that open up new post-degree career possibilities. The Task Force understands that offices need to prioritize meeting their own particular workplace needs when creating any kinds of positions. That said, we encourage offices to remember that UC San Diego is an educational institution, first and foremost, and that every office that is interested in hiring students has a wonderful opportunity to think strategically about creating employment opportunities that advance the university’s education mission while also meeting their workplace needs. But what does this mean, and how might offices think about creating roles that accomplish these goals?

Below are some general guidelines the Task Force offers that might help offices think strategically when creating roles for graduate students:

- Graduate students bring a diverse array of skills to any role. They understand how to think as researchers, and can therefore work with complex data/information when attempting to address challenges. Roles that ask students to think critically, to use data and information to solve problems, and to advance new solutions based on students' abilities to analyze complex situations will be attractive to students.

- Graduate students are excellent communicators. Many students have significant teaching experience, so they understand how to convey complex ideas in ways that are digestible and accessible. Our students are also excellent writers, and have the ability to present ideas (both in written form and in presentations) in ways that are advanced. Positions that tap into these communication competencies, and perhaps advance students' communication strengths in ways that broaden their skills, will be beneficial to students.

- Graduate students are training in specific areas or disciplines, which make them experts in their field. That said, most of our students are interested in solving the world’s problems using interdisciplinary approaches, which will require them to learn the field-specific or disciplinary language, methods, and conventions of other areas. Positions that ask students to think out of the box, that expose them to new areas or disciplinary traditions, and that allow them to tap into their own disciplinary expertise while also expanding their knowledge in new areas will enhance the students’ education.

- Post-degree employability is a concern for all our students. And while many wish to pursue positions as researchers and academicians, a sizable number of our students wish
to pursue careers in the private sector, in public service, or in applied areas. Positions that expose students to the possibilities of a career in an office’s respective area will give students the opportunity to consider professional roles in these areas. Helping our students develop a record of accomplishments within an office’s professional domain gives our students the possibility to consider a career within the area represented by that office. Offices should consider ways in which they can proactively teach students about the ins and outs of that office’s work, allow supervisors to engage in exploratory conversations about what it means to have a career in that area, and encourage students to learn from as many people in the office as possible. Such a mentoring approach may open new doors for students.

- Obviously, graduate students are students first. They are busy, but are also extremely hard-working professionals who know how to multitask. That said, offices should mindfully create positions that fit into the busy lives of students, without demanding excessive hours. Positions should give students flexibility to complete tasks in ways that are project driven with clear deliverables, and that do not ask students to do rote administrative tasks that fail to tap into the students’ creativity and expertise. Although every role will always have a degree of “busy work” associated with it, we encourage offices to proactively create positions that are not solely composed of this kind of work.

Suggested Incentives to Stimulate Office Creation of Employment Opportunities
The Task Force encourages all programs and departments to consider using their own resources to create opportunities for students to earn more money. Many programs are tapping into their increased block grant to create research or fellowship opportunities for students that bring those students up to the $30K compensation level. Even though the present summer seems adequately resourced to meet the goal of ensuring all students in the current cohort have the opportunity to earn $30K, as this report suggests, future years will require more employment opportunities be created.

We believe there are things the university can do to incentivize offices to create the kinds of roles that will be attractive to students, grow students professionally, and allow students to positively aid offices in meeting their workplace goals. Here are some ideas:

- Explore using the federal work study mechanism, as we do for aid-eligible undergraduate students, to incentivize offices to create roles for graduate students. This possible approach will require additional steps for students, such as filing for federal aid, and will also require us to explore more deeply with AVC Jim Rawlins and his team the policies, rules, and regulations governing this federal aid program. If feasible, however, this could be a meaningful incentive for offices as it may allow them to create roles that are partially
subsidized through federal aid. Of course, not all graduate students are eligible for federal aid, so this idea may have limited applicability.

- Central subsidies to offices via the CFO, or other respective Deans and VCs, could offer the right incentive for offices to create roles. With minimal investment, the CFO/Deans/VCs might consider targeted infusions of support to any of their offices that these offices can then use to hire graduate hourly-compensated students. Offices might pay, for example, half of the hourly rate to hire a student with the other half coming from a central pool of resources specifically created to incentivize graduate student hiring.

- Creation of a new title code for graduate students who do work that is neither teaching nor research could give the university increased flexibility to appoint students in roles that are not just hourly-compensated roles. Many universities have three general title codes for graduate students: Teaching Assistants, Graduate Research Assistants, and Graduate Staff Assistants. The last title code compensates students in the same fashion as the first two (stipend, tuition, and fees) but allows students to work in ways that are not instructional or research specific. Many offices at other universities like the idea of hiring a graduate student for 20 hours per week and, in return, pay those students their stipend, with tuition and fees being paid out of a central pool similar to how we currently handle tuition and fees for Teaching Assistants.

Advertising Employment
The university currently has a robust system (known as the IA System) through which all IA positions are advertised and processed. The university also has a robust system for advertising roles for undergraduates via the Handshake system. It is unclear to the Task Force whether both of these systems are being fully deployed in service of advertising all roles available to graduate students. We recommend more investigation of this, with the goal of ensuring that these two existing systems are fully leveraged so that—in the future—every single employment opportunity is advertised in a predictable and reliable manner.

Conclusion
Our hope is that our empirical analysis of employment supply and demand will form the basis for a similar annual exercise, conducted perhaps each winter term by the Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs. The results of such an analysis can help the campus strategically plan for employment in each coming fiscal year. Additionally, we hope that the suggested guidelines for employment will be useful to offices as they imagine the creation of roles that are attractive to students, will grow students professionally, and will allow students to positively aid offices in meeting their workplace goals. Finally, we offered a small number of incentive ideas that we believe could catalyze the creation of employment opportunities for
students. The Task Force looks forward to discussing its recommendations with you in a future meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

James Antony

on behalf of the Holistic Graduate Funding Task Force whose members include:

- James Soto Antony - Dean, Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA) (co-convener)
- Judy Kim - Senior Associate Dean, GEPA (co-convener)
- Lihini Aluwihare - Professor, Scripps Institution of Oceanography
- Becky Arce – Director, Summer Session
- Amy Binder – Professor, Department Chair, Sociology
- Steve Boggs – Dean, Physical Sciences
- Arshad Desai - Professor, Cell & Developmental Biology
- Adam Diprofio - Director Budget & Financial Mgmt, Resource Administration
- Olivia Graeve - Professor, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
- Barbara Jackson – Chief Administrative Officer, Music
- Samira Khazai – Asst Dean, Education Administration, School of Medicine
- Christina Knerr Frink – Chief Admin Officer, Linguistics
- Hema Kopelle – VP-Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, Grad & Professional Student Assoc
- Wendy Matsumura - Associate Professor, History
- Kwai Ng – Professor, Sociology
- Lucila Ohno-Machado - Professor, Medicine
- Alma Palazzolo – Assistant Dean, Arts & Humanities
- Nieves Rankin – Assistant Dean, Social Sciences
- Jasmine Sadler – Candidate, EdD in Education Leadership
- Jonathan Shurin – Professor, Chair, Ecology, Behavior & Evolution
- Tiffany Swiderski – Director, Financial Support Unit, Graduate Division
- Tana Troke Campana – Sr Assistant Dean, Chief of Staff, Jacobs School of Engineering
- Judith Varner - Professor, Pathology
- Edward Watts – Professor, Department Chair, History