

## Stipend Bridge-funding Program

The Graduate School would like to inform you of a new Program to provide bridge-funding to help support graduate research assistants who are supported by sponsored projects that have encountered funding difficulties that endanger the continuation of stipend support. This Program is not meant to replace the internal mechanisms that have historically been used to address this critical issue, but is offered in recognition of the extra financial pressures that are associated with the current funding climate.

Stipend bridge-funding will be made available as a loan to the Graduate Program that is responsible for the student who needs stipend support. Loans are available to Graduate Research Assistants only, as the seed funds to operate this program are available through the tuition that is being charged for Graduate Research Assistants supported on research grants. It is anticipated that most loan requests will be for support of senior students (advanced to candidacy) as faculty with uncertain support should not take on the responsibility of providing stipend support for new students.

Requests for a stipend bridging-fund loan should be generated by the pertinent Graduate Program Director and submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School. The request should include the name of the student and a brief summary of the student's prior financial support that explains how the need for bridging funds arose. The request should also include a brief synopsis of the student's progress in the Program that includes a plan and a proposed timetable for the completion of the degree Program. Finally, the loan request should include a statement from the student's thesis advisor and the appropriate Department Chair confirming that the student will receive adequate support from the Department and other sources to insure the student is in an environment that is conducive to the progress and completion of their thesis research. It is anticipated that bridge funding of stipends will typically be for a maximum period of one year, but justifiable exceptions will be considered. The exact dollar amount of the loan is flexible, although the funds requested should be justified based on standard Program policies and practices. Temporal flexibility will be offered by considering requests for loans on a rolling basis.

Graduate Programs will retain primary responsibility for employment appointment and will receive a transfer of funds for the loan amount, or will be provided with an account number to use on the appointment paperwork. Repayment of the loan will be the responsibility of the Graduate Program and will be through a mechanism that involves a deduction from the annual distribution of tuition dollars to the Program from the Graduate School. The deduction schedule will be flexible in order to not jeopardize the continued operation of Program, and will be negotiated between the Graduate Program Director and the Dean of the Graduate School.