

Important Message from Dean Schulze

Email to all CAS faculty

December 4, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to share with you today an important PhD Excellence Initiative update. In order to allow for a robust process of discussion and decision making to take place, I am committing the College to maintaining current cohort levels of PhD enrollment for fall 2020. This means, for example, that if a department funds 17 PhD students in fall 2019, that department may fund up to 17 PhD students in fall 2020. This is a one-time only decision that commits the College to creating budget space to carry the cost of one additional year of status quo department cohorts.

I appreciate the important work and [recommendation](#) of the PhD Excellence Bridge Committee, under the leadership of Professor Stephen Tiffany, in helping me to arrive at this decision. I appreciate, as well, the Bridge Committee's concern that the question of how to assess the quality of programs and allocate PhD resources is complex and that the timing of the raise of the stipend floor made it difficult to make informed conclusions in the allotted time frame.

Our goal is to become a top 25 AAU institution. We need to keep pace with our peers and work to surpass them. We need to create a great professionally satisfying future for every PhD student we train. This initiative is designed to make our programs more competitive as we face a number of new realities in higher education, including declining state funding for higher education, contracting tenure-track job markets, and dramatic shifts in undergraduate student demand. Our next task is to assess the quality of our PhD programs in terms of time to degree, completion rates, job placements, relation of current curriculum to job outcomes, and cohort diversity and inclusion. We will be working to collect, create, and develop proposals to garner resources to improve the quality of our PhD programs, department by department and at the level of the College, that will be due to the Provost by April 20, 2020. This new round of competitive investment constitutes an unprecedented opportunity to move the College forward in supporting the university's quest to be a top 25 AAU institution.

Take Care,

Robin