

A resolution of the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) in support of late-stage PhD students without fellowship support

Sponsored by:

GPSG Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

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Whereas, the vast majority of humanities and interpretive social science PhD programs at Duke have a median time to degree of greater than six years (Appendix 1); and

Whereas, humanities and social science PhD students beyond their sixth year of study without fellowship support are often forced to pay tuition and fees out of pocket, imposing a significant financial burden on them; and

Whereas, humanities and social science PhD students beyond their sixth year of study without fellowship support are also required to purchase health and dental insurance independently, imposing an additional financial burden on them; and

Whereas, these costs represent a barrier to accessible and equitable doctoral education, especially for international students, whose options for raising funds are severely limited; and

Whereas, a number of peer institutions already guarantee tuition and health coverage for all PhD students beyond their sixth year of study (Appendix 2); and

Whereas, Duke's tuition and fees for PhD students beyond their sixth year of study are some of the highest among peer institutions that continue to levy such payments (Appendix 2); and

Recognizing that the Graduate School has implemented [a scholarship program to cover tuition and fees](#) for PhD students in their sixth year of study without fellowship support; and

Recognizing that the Graduate School has temporarily extended this scholarship program to cover some students in year seven as part of Duke's [COVID-19 PhD Funding Extensions](#);

Now, therefore be it resolved by the GPSG that the graduate and professional student body of Duke University:

Calls for the extension of the Sixth-Year Tuition and Fees Scholarship to cover all PhD students without fellowship support.; and

Calls for the provisioning of health and dental insurance coverage through the Duke Student Medical Insurance Plan for all PhD students, regardless of fellowship support status.

Appendix 1: Median Time to PhD (in Years) for Humanities and Interpretive Social Science Programs at Duke (Arranged in Descending Order of Median Time to Degree)

Program	Median Time to Degree (Years)
Art and Art History	6.7
Classical Studies	6.7
Cultural Anthropology	6.7
English	6.7
History	6.7
Literature	6.7
German (Carolina-Duke German Program)	6.4
Philosophy	6.3
Religious Studies	6.3
Romance Studies	6.0
Music	5.7

Source: <https://gradschool.duke.edu/about/statistics/all-departments-phd-time-degree-statistics>

Appendix 2: Survey of Tuition Costs for Late-Stage PhD Students Among Peer Institutions (Arranged in Ascending Order of Tuition Charged)

University	Tuition Per Semester (US\$)	Health Coverage
Brown	0	Yes
Chicago	0	Yes
Yale	737.50	No
MIT	1335 (for first three semesters, then 4010)	No
Princeton	1950.50	No
Pennsylvania	2354	No
Columbia	2414	No
Harvard	2595	No
Stanford	3531	No
Duke	4000	No
Northwestern	4672	No