# Graduate Council Meeting

**Wednesday, 4/15/20**
**9:00 - 10:30am**
**umd.zoom.us/j/624841737?pwd=YXdRVnNqMXp5eWIrcnEyNGNTL0lZZz09**
**Meeting ID: 624 841 737**
**Password: GradSchool**

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome, announcements, and discussion
    a. Thank you to exiting members and welcome to our new members!
    b. GAAC meeting debrief
    c. Community meetings debrief
        i. Wed 4/8: Master's (9am), doctoral (10am), and international (11am)
        ii. Recordings to be posted when captioned: gradschool.umd.edu/coronavirus/frequently-asked-questions
    d. Questions on S/F policy?
    e. COVID-19 questions/concerns? Feedback on the Graduate School's COVID-19 response so far?
2. Fall 2020 & beyond
    a. April 15 deadline
    b. Tuition fellowships
    c. English proficiency testing
3. Action - Proposed Leave of Absence policy (see attached)
4. Action - Advisor policy (see attached GS policy, sample unit policy)
5. Faculty mentoring circles
6. Ph.D. student support and student success


| **ATTACHMENTS** | **PAGE** |
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| Proposed Policy on Advisor | 6-7 |
| Financial Support and Doctoral Student Success | 8-18 |

## RATIONALE FOR POLICY REVISION

The Graduate School receives leave of absence requests for a variety of reasons (see Table 1). These include financial hardships relating to dependent care (e.g., students who need to find affordable childcare before resuming their studies). Such financial hardships are a grey area in our current policy. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will result in an increase in the number of students experiencing financial hardships. The Graduate School would like to recognize this with proposed revisions in the leave of absence policy.

**Table 1. 2019-2020 *Academic Year* Leave of Absence Requests**

| | Number of Requests | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Reason for Leave** | **One Semester** | **Academic Year** | **Total** |
| Mental Health | 4 | 12 | 16 |
| Dependent care: Financial hardships and childcare | 1 | 8 | 9 |
| Dependent care for child | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Medical Issues | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| Military Leave | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Childbearing/Adoption | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| Total | 20 | 30 | 50 |

*Note: These data are from the start of the fall 2019 semester through March 2020.*

Another concern with the current policy is that the timing of leave requests needs greater clarity. These concerns are addressed below in the proposed policy revision below.

Our current system uses a paper form and requests letters from the advisor and director of graduate studies. We will revise the application process, moving to an online system with check boxes for advisors and directors of graduate studies to identify the reason for the leave. This will standardize the process for everyone. For leaves due to medical issues, we will maintain the current requirement to submit documentation from a healthcare provider.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR CHILDBEARING, ADOPTION, SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION,DEPENDENT CARE, OR FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

In recognition of the effects that childbirth, adoption, serious health condition (mental and/or physical), caring for incapacitated dependents (such as children, ill or injured partners, or aging parents), and situations that present financial hardship may have on the time and capacity that graduate students have to devote to their educational programs, the University allows students in such circumstances to apply for a leave of absence of up to two semesters or up to three 12-week terms during which time

they do not intend to make academic progress toward the completion of their degree. The time taken on an approved leave of absence is not included in the time limitations for degree completion and advancement to candidacy. For the Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy, which provides students the option to maintain full-time enrollment status rather than take a leave of absence, see the Parental Accommodation Policy.

# LENGTH OF LEAVES

Application for a leave of absence may be made either on a one- or two-semester basis or on one- or two- or three 12-week term basis. A leave of absence ordinarily will not be granted for more than one academic year. Leaves requested for a longer period are approved only in exceptional circumstances; if the absence exceeds a total of two years, the student should withdraw from the program and reapply when capable of returning to active graduate study. An approved leave for one semester will be extended to two semesters as needed or an approved leave for one 12-week term will be extended to two and will be extended to three, if so requested by the applicant prior to the expiration of the approved one- term (semester or 12-week) leave of absence.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURES

A leave of absence normally must be requested and approved prior to the beginning of the academic term for which it is being requested.If a leave of absence is submitted during a term, the policies for Withdrawal from Classes and Grading Systems (i.e., assigning a grade of “incomplete”) apply. The Petition for a Waiver of Regulation can be employed after the add/drop period for approved leave of absences. A leave of absence can not be requested retroactively after a term ends (i.e., the last day of classes in a semester).

The student can request the Leave of Absence by completing and submitting the Leave of Absence Form. Requests for medical leaves of absences require a supplemental form to be completed by the student’s health care provider. The request must be approved by the student's faculty advisor and Graduate Director prior to submission to the Graduate Dean. Approved leaves will stop the student's "time-to-degree clock." At the end of the leave of absence, the student must complete and submit the Return from Leave of Absence Form prior to the beginning of the term the student intends to return to active study. Students who were on a Leave of Absence for medical reasons will be required to submit a supplemental form completed by the student’s health care provider. Students will not be eligible to register until they have requested to return from their leave of absence.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Registration Requirements.** Students on approved leaves of absence are not registered at the University and, therefore, do not have the rights and privileges of registered students. Students must be registered during a term (semester or 12-week) in which they fulfill a University or departmental degree requirement, such as taking qualifying exams or

submitting a dissertation/thesis. In addition, students must also be registered in order to be eligible for any form of University financial aid (e.g., a teaching or research assistantship) and to be certified as full-time students.

- **Impact on Funding.** When contemplating a leave of absence, graduate students are advised to consult with the sources of their funding to determine potential financial implications. Because academic programs and financial aid packages may be constructed and sequenced over a period of years, individual interruptions to the normal sequence of academic progress and scheduled employment may result in a loss of future funding and a slower time to completion of degree. In some programs, a leave of absence may mean that students have to join a new project upon return, with the likelihood that their research may take longer to complete. Whenever a leave of absence is being considered, a student should meet with the advisor to develop a plan for resumption of study and gain a clear understanding of future funding opportunities. Some outside funding agencies disapprove of interruptions to a degree program. Some only allow leaves for medical reasons or military service. Others require prior approval of the fellowship agency.
- **Students with outstanding educational loans** need to consider the effect of taking a leave of absence on their loan status. For some student loans, a grace period for repaying the loan begins once the student stops registering. If the leave period is longer than the grace period, then the student may have to begin repaying the loan while on a leave of absence. Prior to taking a leave, students should arrange to meet with a Student Financial Aid officer, and/or contact their lenders.
- **International students.** Non-immigrant F-1 and J-1 students and their dependents must maintain legal immigration status at all times. Students with F-1 or J-1 visas must be enrolled full-time every term (semester or 12-week) at the University while they remain in the United States. The only possible exception that might allow a student to remain in the United States while on an approved leave of absence might be a serious illness or medical condition. Students are advised to consult with International Student and Scholar Services for more information when considering a leave of absence.
- **Student Accounts.** Students are advised to check with Student Financial Services and Cashiering prior to taking a leave of absence in order to determine the status of their student accounts. Students are advised that accounts that are overdue will be subject to regular procedures in accordance with University guidelines, notwithstanding any approved leave of absence: specifically, late fees and finance charges will continue to accrue, students will be blocked from future registration upon their return, and accounts will be referred to the State Central Collection Unit, with the imposition of additional collection charges, for non-payment in accordance with regular time frames.
- **University Housing.** The University's general policy is that students must be registered to be eligible for University housing. For specific information about continued eligibility for University housing during an approved leave of absence, students are advised to contact the Department of Resident Life. Additional restrictions may apply to students leasing housing through Southern Management Corporation or other third-party entity. For specific information, students should contact the appropriate rental agent.

- **Access to University Resources.** Students who are on a leave of absence do not have a valid University of Maryland Identification card and therefore are not entitled to use University resources, such as the libraries, recreational centers, shuttle buses, and other services covered by mandatory fees. Students seeking information on the use of the libraries may check lib.umd.edu/access/access-privileges, or contact the McKeldin Library Circulation Department, Community Borrowers Office, Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

## Proposed Policy on Advisors

An advisor is responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies and for supervising a student's degree program, including research. In some cases, particularly for incoming students, the program may assign an advisor. The advisor usually serves as chair of a student's thesis or dissertation examination committee. Every student required to do thesis or dissertation research must have an advisor who is a Full Member of the Graduate Faculty. A faculty listing is available here. When engaged in thesis or dissertation research, the student enrolls in the advisor's section of 799 (master's thesis research), 898 (pre-candidacy doctoral research), or 899 (doctoral dissertation research). With approval from the program, students may have a co-advisor/co-chair.

### Procedures for Changing Advisors

The advisor-student relationship is one of mutual agreement. Either party may request termination of the relationship. A change of advisors may occur for a variety of reasons, such as students and advisors having different research interests or work styles, or if faculty retire or leave the university (see the Graduate Faculty Members Policy for emeritus and former faculty who can chair thesis and dissertation committees).

If both parties agree to terminate the relationship and the student has secured a satisfactory arrangement with a new advisor, no further action is necessary. In extreme circumstances when a change of advisors can not be resolved amicably, the following procedures support students and faculty in the change of advisors process.

1. A change of advisors begins with an open and honest conversation among the student, current advisor, potential new advisor, director of graduate studies, and/or the department chair. Each situation is unique, but the important part is to have confidential conversations with the appropriate stakeholders. Before such conversations, it may be helpful to prepare a document briefly identifying reasons for the change of advisor.

   If a department, school, or college has an ombudsperson, that person can also be included in confidential conversations, at the discretion of graduate students or advisors. For students, The Graduate School Ombudsperson provides confidential and informal assistance in resolving conflict and promotes fair and equitable treatment within the university. For extreme situations, the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy outlines the formal grievance procedure. Departments may have their own grievance policies, which should also be consulted. When mental health challenges contribute to difficulties with advisors, the Graduate Academic Counselor is available to consult with students and faculty and can provide referrals to campus and other resources.

2. If agreement is not achieved or the student is unable to secure a satisfactory arrangement with a new advisor, the student, advisor, director of graduate studies, and/or department chair should discuss potential faculty members to serve as the new advisor. Once a new advisor is secured, a transition plan should be created for completing work with the

former advisor and starting work with the new advisor. The transition plan must include any implications of the advisor change for coursework, exams, advancement to candidacy, and other program requirements. For students with funding, the transition plan must also address how students' funding will be maintained. Finally, the transition plan must address intellectual property concerns (e.g., ownership of data, authorship on completed or ongoing research, etc.). The student, former advisor, new advisor, and director of graduate studies must sign the transition plan.

**Funding Considerations**

For graduate students with research, teaching, or administrative assistantships, funding typically will be maintained to support graduate students who change advisors.

Research Assistants

Funding will be maintained for research assistants while they change advisors, including when graduate students are supported by their advisors' external funding awards. Advisors will give at least one month's notice prior to terminating a student's support. The advisor or graduate program will typically continue to support the student through the end of the semester if the support is during the academic year as long as the student is making satisfactory contributions to assigned research duties. If the support is over the summer, the advisor or graduate program will typically continue to support the student over the summer as long as the student is making satisfactory contributions to assigned research duties. If extraordinary circumstances compel the advisor to consider terminating the student with less than one month's notice, the director of graduate studies must approve the early termination.

Teaching Assistants

Funding will be maintained for teaching assistants while they change advisors. The instructor of record or course supervisor will give at least one month's notice prior to terminating a student's support. Typically, a graduate student will complete their instructional duties through the end of a term as long as the student is satisfactorily completing teaching duties. If extraordinary circumstances compel the instructor of record or course supervisor to consider terminating the student before the term ends, the director of graduate studies must approve the early termination.

Administrative Assistants

Funding will be maintained for administrative assistants while they change advisors. Typically, the assistantship sponsor will continue to support the student through the end of the semester if the support is during the academic year as long as the student satisfactory completes the assigned administrative duties. If the support is over the summer, the assistantship sponsor will continue to support the student over the summer as long as the student satisfactory completes the assigned administrative duties. If extraordinary circumstances compel the supervisor to consider terminating the student with less than one month notice, the director of graduate studies must approve the early termination.

# Financial Support and Doctoral Student Success

Steve Fetter and Tianqi Gan

The Graduate School

# Introduction

- What is the relationship between financial support and success (probability of completion and time to degree)?
- Data
  - Ph.D. students beginning Fall 2009 – Fall 2014
    - Full-time Ph.D. students
    - Students surviving at least 5 years (n=3,653; 406 dropped)
  - Graduation status
    - 1,318 received Ph.D. degree by 2019 Spring
  - Financial support received in the first 5 years
    - GA, GRA, internal fellowships
    - External fellowships awarded through student account

# Model Specification

- Dependent variables
  - Probability of graduation
  - Time to degree
- Explanatory Variable
  - Number of semesters (Fall & Spring) with full support
- Control Variables
  - Demographic: gender, age, international, prior education
  - Ability proxies: GRE, TOEFL, offer order, 1st year GPA
  - Number of semesters of partial financial support
  - Fixed effects: College, large programs, enrollment year
- Models
  - Linear regression
  - Survival analysis

# Effects on Graduation Rate

- Increasing support from 0-2 years to 3 years of full support increases probability of graduation by 20-30%

## Survival analysis

| | Grad. in 5 years | Grad. in 6 years | Grad. in 7 years | Grad. in 8 years | Grad. in 9 years | Grad. in 10 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 yr full supp. | -4% | -8% | -10% | -11% | -11% | -11% |
| 2 yrs full supp. | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 3 yrs full supp. | 15% | 25% | 28% | 28% | 28% | 28% |
| 4 yrs full supp. | 41% | 54% | 52% | 49% | 49% | 49% |
| 5 yrs full supp. | 53% | 61% | 57% | 52% | 51% | 51% |

## Linear regression

| | Grad. in 5 years | Grad. in 6 years | Grad. in 7 years | Grad. in 8 years | Grad. in 9 years | Grad. in 10 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 yr full supp. | 4% | 6% | 5% | 3% | 0% | 0% |
| 2 yrs full supp. | 8% | 9% | 10% | 13% | 14% | 8% |
| 3 yrs full supp. | 14% | 24% | 27% | 32% | 31% | 27% |
| 4 yrs full supp. | 22% | 40% | 53% | 61% | 55% | 42% |
| 5 yrs full supp. | 18% | 47% | 61% | 69% | 62% | 44% |

*Numbers in red are statistically significant at 5% level

# Effects on Graduation Rate

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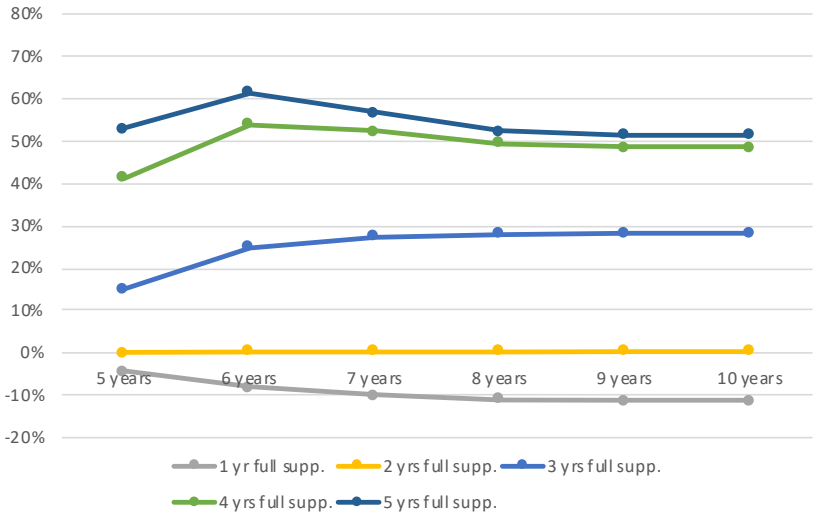
Survival analysis

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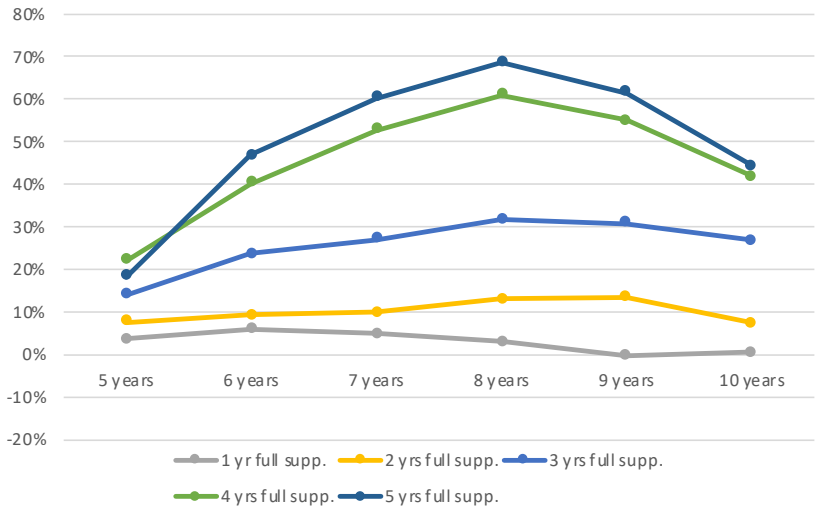

# Effects on Time to Degree

- Increasing support from 0-2 years to 3 years of full support decreases time to degree by about 1 year

## Survival analysis

| | Estimate | CI | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 yr full supp. | 0.56 | -0.12 | 1.08 |
| 2 yrs full supp. | -0.01 | -0.79 | 0.63 |
| 3 yrs full supp. | -1.52 | -2.28 | -0.72 |
| 4 yrs full supp. | -2.94 | -3.26 | -2.48 |
| 5 yrs full supp. | -3.26 | -3.46 | -2.95 |

## Linear regression

| | Estimate | CI | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 yr full supp. | -0.06 | -0.33 | 0.22 |
| 2 yrs full supp. | -0.27 | -0.56 | 0.03 |
| 3 yrs full supp. | -0.78 | -1.10 | -0.46 |
| 4 yrs full supp. | -1.49 | -1.87 | -1.11 |
| 5 yrs full supp. | -1.83 | -2.18 | -1.48 |

*Numbers in red are statistically significant at 5% level

# Effects on Time to Degree

- Increasing support from 0-2 years to 3 years of full support decreases time to degree by about 1 year
- Increasing support from 3 years to 4-5 years of full support decreases time to degree by about an additional 2 year

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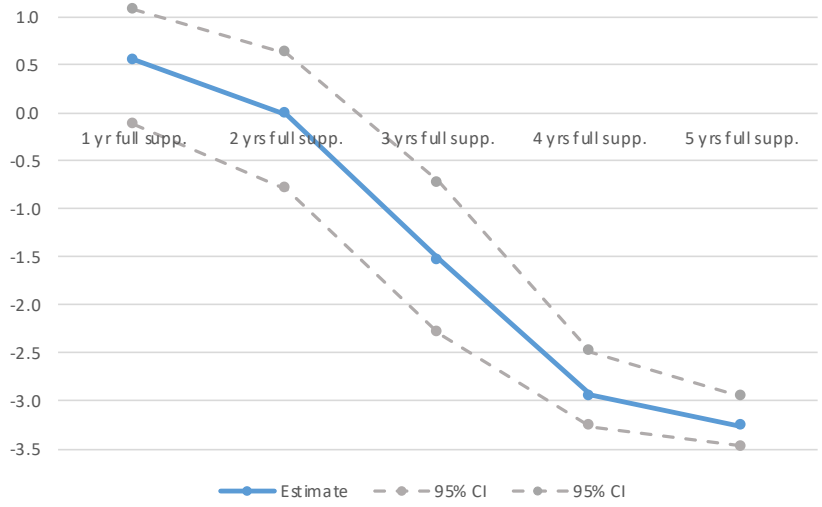


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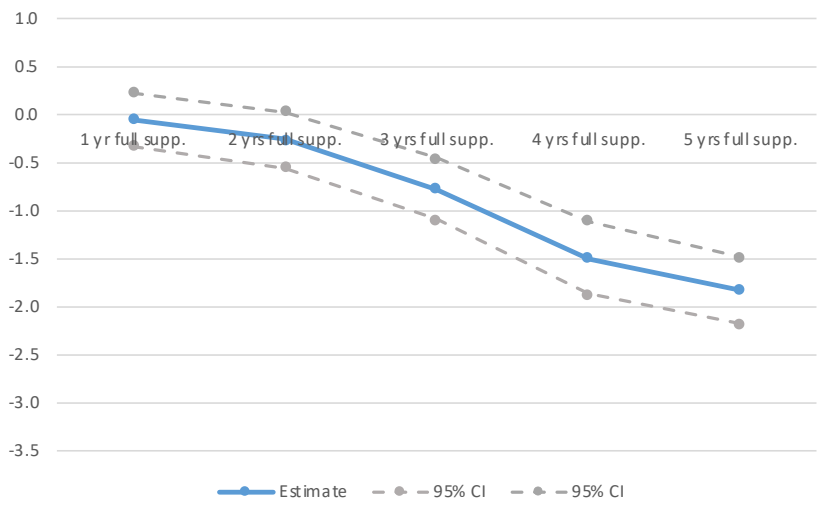

# Are Some Colleges or Programs Different?

- No evidence of significant differences between colleges or large programs in the effect of financial support on graduate rate or time to degree
  - Separate regressions for individual colleges with significant numbers of students with less than three years of full support (e.g., EDUC) showed no evidence that support was less important
  - Interaction terms (college/program * years of full support) are not statistically significant
- We observe differences in probability of graduation and TTD
  - Graduation rate and TTD varies across colleges and programs, but the effect of financial support is not statistically different

# Recommendations

- Reduce program size to allow all full-time Ph.D. students to receive at least 3 yr full support, given satisfactory progress
  - Part-time students, and full-time with external support, exempted
  - AGNR (NUTR), ARCH, ARHU (FRMS, SLPH, CAUD), BSOS (SURV), EDUC (EDHI, EDPS, EDSP, HIED, HIEP, HISA), ENGR (ENAE, ENCE, ENNU, ENRE), PLCY, and SPHL (FMSC, MCHS, PHHS) provided 3 yr to 23-67%
- Strongly recommend program 4 years of full support
  - In addition to above: AGNR (NRSC, PLSC), ARHU (CMLT), EDUC (TLPL), JOUR, and SPHL (BCHL, EPID, PCHL) provided 4 yr to 0-69%