University Budget Committee
Minutes of October 20, 2014

Members in attendance: Michael Ambroselli, Rajeev Bansal, Thomas Bontly (chair), Norma Bouchard, Janine Caira, Erika Elechicon, Jim Marsden, Jeanne Martin, Suresh Nair, Katrina Spencer. Guest: Kent Holsinger, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School.

The meeting came to order at 3pm.

1. The minutes of the previous meeting (September 22, 2014) were approved as edited.

2. Review of the policy of charging graduate assistant tuition to grants
Kent Holsinger, Dean of the Graduate School, provided the Committee with an update on the results of charging tuition for graduate assistants to the grants on which they work.

Dr. Holsinger first reviewed the policy's guidelines. Since July 1, 2009, all proposals by OSP include in their budgets a line item for 60% of the full time in-state graduate tuition for each graduate student assigned to the project, except when prohibited by the sponsor. The tuition charge is included as a direct cost and is not subject to fringes or indirect costs. When tuition charges are prohibited by the sponsoring agency, there is no charge to the PI, department, or school/college.

Next we reviewed the program's goals and the ways in which the funds collected under the policy are actually being used. The original goal was set forth in a memo dated March 20, 2009 from Provost Peter Nicholls to deans, directors, and department heads: "The money collected will be used entirely for support of research programming at the University." Since then, funds collected under the policy have been pooled in an account held by the Graduate School. The funds are used primarily to cover the portion of tuition and health benefits not covered by institutional allowances for students with nationally competitive fellowships and awards from federal agencies and private organizations, as set forth in the relevant policies.

At present, the Graduate School supplements tuition and health benefits for more than 100 students, including:

- 9 National Science Foundation Graduate Research fellows
- 1 NIH NRSA fellow
- 1 Eisenhower Transportation fellow
- 2 EPA STAR fellows
- 1 Mellon fellow
- 92 students funded by training grants:
    - 19 students on NSF Bridge to the Doctorate
    - 5 on Department of Homeland Security
    - 33 on DOE GAANN
    - 7 on NSF GK-12
    - 16 on NIH training grants (2 projects)
    - 7 on NSF IGERT
    - 2 on NIOSH

- 3 on USDA NN

Graduate students on training grants are eligible for such support because they are classified as "fellows" rather than graduate assistants. Because these students do not have work responsibilities to the University, their funding is deemed non-compensatory under the so-called Bingler Test. Many of the training grants are highly prestigious awards won by UConn faculty. However the indirect cost rate is substantially lower, and IDCs do not go to the VPR but to the central budget. (Correction: in a follow up email dated 10/31/14, Katrina Spencer explained that training grants are not uniform. "Training Grants can have IDC's and may be treated like any other grant in this respect. If they are designated as Research (1171) then the IDC's will go to the Dept/Dean/PI etc. This determination is made at the time the award is received by grants officers in OVPR (based on criteria by people in OVPR/Mike Glasgow). If they are not designated as Research, based on the criteria of the grant amount and restrictions, the IDC/F&A amount would go centrally to cover Admin costs just like any other Grant/IDC. Training grants only account for a small percentage of the overall amount.")

In addition to support for fellows, the Graduate School now provides $500K per year from this account to support pre-doctoral fellowships and $200K per year from this account to support doctoral student travel.

We next reviewed revenues and expenditures under the policy. These are summarized here, in tables provided by Dr. Holsinger:

Summary of cash flow since inception

	Funds received	Expenditures	Balance
FY 2011	$424,689	$146,034	$278,655
FY 2012	$1,125,983	$168,385	$1,236,253
FY 2013	$1,350,089	$457,757	$2,128,586
FY 2014	$2,182,585	$1,833,361	$2,477,810
FY 2015 (projected)	$1,626,718	$1,895,797	$2,208,730

Expenditures detail

	Tuition	Health insurance	Other graduate support	Doctoral dissertation fellowships	Doctoral student travel	National fellowships
FY 2011*	$146,034					
FY 2012*	$168,385					
FY 2013*	$457,757					
FY 2014	$678,414	$137,521	$6,427	$796,000	$200,000	$15,000
FY 2015 (projected)	$720,373	$432,591	$6,500	$500,000	$213,333	$23,000

*Tuition and health insurance subsidy combined

Discussion followed. Here are the highlights.

Why is projected revenue FY 2015 down from FY 2014? Because the Central Administration has reallocated $700,000 for deficit mitigation. Does this reallocation violate the policy regarding the use of these funds? The understanding when the policy was implemented was that the funds were to be used

exclusively for research and graduate education. Bontly agreed to follow up on this with the Senate Executive Committee and the Research Advisory Committee.

Has the policy had an adverse effect on the number of GAs in certain departments or at the University overall? Not clear. The number of GAs depends on many factors, especially the amount of funding coming into the University. Since that amount has dropped (due to changes at the federal level), it is difficult to assess the impact of the policy GA numbers.

Can we find out how many GAs PIs are putting on proposals? It is not clear we have that data. OSP tracks funded proposals, not all proposals. Are fewer proposals budgeting for GAs? Again not clear, but the Graduate School is trying to find out. Anecdotally, Dr. Holsinger has heard from at least one or two faculty members that they are no longer taking grad students and only writing postdocs on grant proposals. Maybe we can get from InfoED how many grants have GA money in the budget.

Has the number of postdocs at the University increased significantly? This is also not clear, because postdocs can have so many different titles.

Should the University be taxing research in order to support people who already have support in the form of a fellowship? Debatable. If the University doesn't provide supplementary support for fellowship students, we won't get those students to come here. Prior to the advent of these policies, no such support for fellowship students was available, and relatively few national fellowship students enrolled at the University.

What is the future of this policy? Will it be affected by the unionization of the grads? Unionization could have an indirect effect in that changes to their health insurance plan could make fringe rates go up. But at this point there would seem to be no direct impact. One sticking point is the question of who is in and who is out of the new graduate student bargaining unit. The union wants to draw it as widely as possible, the State as narrowly as possible. In 2003 the State of CT decided that graduate assistants were not state employees and could not be covered in the state employee health plan. The State was persuaded to cover graduate students in an employer-sponsored plan, but more recently the State decided not to pay for graduate student health insurance at all. Another problem is that premiums on the plan had not gone up to cover costs. The University therefore had to purchase a new plan at cost, which was much more expensive than what had been in place. What would be the effect if graduate students were as a result of unionization to be reclassified as state employees? The fringe rate for them would roughly double. But graduate students do not get retirement benefits, so the costs would not be the same as for other state employees.

Can the departments afford fellowship students? NSF and NIH training grants usually pay for a year or two of support, after which the department must find funding for them. But the departments are now being asked to return money due to the structural deficit. So how can they support such students?

Are the federal grants on this list all equally worthy of support? This is a good question which should be referred to the RAC.

Is there any evidence that the tuition charges generate any *net* revenue for the University? It is impossible to tell.

What should the UBC's next step be in the monitoring of this policy? It was suggested that we should next poll the department heads about the effect, if any, on research and graduate education in their departments.

3. Agenda items for next meeting
Several possible agenda items for future meetings were mentioned:

- Financial aid and work-study
- Rescission plans
- Enrollment
- Research funding
- The Foundation/fundraising

It was suggested that the Committee should meet next with Vice President for Research Jeff Seemann to discuss research funding and the rising cost of doing research at this university.

In addition there were many lingering questions about the actual number of faculty hired in the last year. Bontly was asked to follow up with Dr. Thulasi Kumar, Assistant Vice Provost for Institutional Research and Effectiveness

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.