

STAND UP FOR GRAD STUDENTS!

Background:

On Friday, April 18, 2014, the Graduate School sent notices to students regarding their Dissertation Completion Proposals (DCP) for sixth year funding. This year, more students than ever before were unfunded despite being in good standing and having the support of their departments and advisors.

The Problem:

Graduate students at Brown University lack the protections necessary to graduate with quality degrees that make them competitive on their respective job markets. We feel that the most current situation regarding funding of advanced students communicates a complete disregard for the realities facing graduate students in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

WHO WE ARE: A coalition of students from across the University committed to ensuring that Brown supports and prioritizes its graduate students.

1) VARIATIONS IN TIME-TO-DEGREE The average time to degree varies across disciplines. Statistics indicate that the national average time to complete a Ph.D. is 7 years in the sciences, and 9 years in the humanities. The Graduate School continues to deny these facts in favor of forcing all Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines into a five year time-to-degree.

2) HIGH QUALITY SCHOLARSHIP As Brown works to grow its Graduate School and recruit top-quality applicants it must prepare to financially support the high quality scholarship produced by both current and future students

3) COMPETITIVE JOB PLACEMENT By treating funding beyond the fifth year as a reward rather than a necessity, the Graduate School ignores the reality that students in good standing from many disciplines require more than five years in order to produce work that will enable them to be competitive on the job market.

4) TRANSPARENCY There was an unacceptable lack of transparency around the decision-making and announcement process. There needs to be greater transparency in the criteria the Graduate School uses to determine “meritorious” applications across disciplines. Furthermore, students were waiting for weeks in limbo, unsure if they’d be able to finish the program to which they’ve dedicated five years of hard work or need to find alternative sources of income, health insurance, etc.

5) SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS The delay in informing applicants about the outcome of their funding beyond the fifth year makes deportation an imminent possibility for international graduate students and also makes it extremely difficult to make progress on their dissertations under such economic uncertainty.

6) OUR INTEGRAL ROLE AT BROWN More than half of our PhD programs require teaching undergraduate courses as a condition of our funding. We also perform cutting-edge research projects that sustain innovation and help generate lucrative grant dollars.

WHAT CAN YOU DO???

EVERYONE:

- **Sign our Change.org petition!:** <http://goo.gl/aAza0>
- Join our Facebook group, “Stand Up for Brown Grad Students”
- Check out our Tumblr site, “Stand Up for Grad Students” (standupforgradstudents.tumblr.com)

UNDERGRADS:

If you have ever had a productive/enjoyable/informative experience with a graduate student instructor, talk to your TAs, your professors, the administration and your parents about the University’s failure to support its graduate students.

- Ask your TAs about their research and their experience at the University.
- Ask your favorite faculty member how long it took *them* to get their PhD.
- E-mail President Paxson, president@brown.edu, as well as the Dean of the Graduate School, Peter Weber, Peter_Weber@Brown.edu, to express your support for graduate students.
- Tell your parents that the Graduate School is divesting from your TAs, your primary interface with many courses, and encourage them to contact the administration to express their support for graduate students.

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GRAD STUDENTS:

- Get together with your cohort and talk about what's going on.
- Post your story on our Tumblr for our first publicity campaign "What's Taking You So Long." We're asking you to re-answer the Dissertation Completion Proposal questions, this time with a slightly different take. See our Tumblr for more details! <http://standupforgradstudents.tumblr.com/>
- Email a friend at one of Brown’s “peer institutions” and ask about their experience with post-5th year funding. Send your information to standupforgrads@gmail.com.
- Come to a SUGS organizing meeting!!