



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Howard Hu, M.D, M.P.H., Sc.D.

Dean

Professor of Environmental Health, Epidemiology and Global Health

Dear DLSPH PhD Students,

Many thanks for the Open Letter you sent to me on August 25 regarding the funding of PhD students at DLSPH.

We in the Dean's Office and the Grad Office have been discussing the change in the basic funding package for PhD students in the Faculty of Arts & Science and implications for DLSPH ever since we learned of the plan in late May. I also acknowledge the brief email received by Professor Jan Barnsley (the Interim Associate Dean for Academic Affairs until this past July) and Professor Nancy Kreiger (Director of PhD programs for PHS students) from Fady Shanouda and Nakia Lee Foon on this same subject on June 20. Although we were slowed down by several transitions in DLSPH leadership this summer (as well as the usual vacations and faculty travel that prevail during the summer months), our new Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Professor Nancy Baxter, has made consideration of this topic a priority and has already been delving into the many issues involved.

In particular, given the concerns brought forward by your letter we have reviewed our funding policy as it pertains to the student contribution through TA and RA work. Although the funding policy had been developed with student input, communicated to the student body, and is available online, we agree that the implementation of the policy was unfair to students; we did not provide access to work opportunities for all students without awards or stipends. Because of this, we will reimburse students who had funds withheld over the past 2 years. However, even with the "clawback" we have one of the most liberal policies with respect to student contribution to base funding at the University of Toronto, and it is therefore challenging to match the Faculty of Arts and Sciences increases (the median student contribution to base funding in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences is \$8,834¹). We look forward to working with your representatives from the Public Health Students' Association to find a solution that is equitable, fair, and fiscally responsible. We commit to providing opportunities for the entire student body to provide input and give feedback prior to moving forward.

Many thanks for the considerable time and effort you clearly put into organizing yourselves and your ideas into this thoughtful document. We look forward to engaging with you on this critically important topic in the very near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Hu'.

Howard Hu
Dean, Dalla Lana School of Public Health

¹<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/gradfunding/Pages/ARTSC.aspx>. Accessed August 31, 2016