

School of Nursing  
Funding Plan for the Implementation of a Continuous Enrollment Policy for Students in Ph.D. Programs

September 2009

The School of Nursing is supportive of the Continuous Enrollment Policy for Students in Ph.D. programs that will be implemented in Fall Term 2010. We have a long-standing School of Nursing policy that has required all of our Ph.D. candidates to register every Fall term. This was implemented to ensure that all candidates make progress on their dissertations and stay in touch with their advisors. The new Rackham policy extends that practice into Winter term as well and creates consistency across the University's Ph.D. programs. Our program and our students will benefit from the University changes that come with the implementation of the new policy. An important component of the plans for this change is the identification of University sources to pay any new tuition costs that arise due to the policy. This document contains a description of the School of Nursing's funding plan.

### **Student Support**

Students in the Nursing Ph.D. program generally are expected to pay a portion of their own tuition costs unless they have a fellowship or grant which pays their tuition. The School has not had sufficient funds to support all doctoral students throughout their doctoral work. This will continue to be the case, although the School is working toward finding more support for Ph.D. students and lowering the amounts that students pay themselves. When the Continuous Enrollment Policy takes effect, the candidacy tuition rate will be lowered and this will result in direct savings for students who have attained candidacy status in the terms when they pay their own tuition.

The School will provide tuition-only fellowships to the degree possible to candidates, if they are not otherwise supported, who are making satisfactory academic progress and are required to register under the Continuous Enrollment Policy when they would not have registered under our current practices. The tuition-only fellowships will provide either partial or full support, as is the current practice. In addition, fellowships, dissertation grants, NRSA grants, and one-term dissertation grants will continue to be used where possible, as is the current practice.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Satisfactory progress toward the degree is assessed by the program faculty working most closely with an individual student. It will not mean the same thing for every area of study within the Nursing Ph.D., nor does satisfactory progress mean the same thing for every student in a given program. Individual circumstances affect the pace at which students can work, and graduate program faculty are best qualified to make decisions about students' progress.

Currently, all doctoral students and candidates complete an annual evaluation which is signed by both the student and advisor. These are then submitted to the PhD Program where they are reviewed by the assistant dean for graduate programs. Each evaluation is assessed in terms of progress toward degree completion. Students who are not making satisfactory progress are met with individually. The meeting discussion is summarized in writing and the student is provided recommendations and guidance on what needs to be accomplished in a given time period in order to return to satisfactory progress status again. Students who are given notice of a lack of

satisfactory progress will remain eligible for additional terms of tuition-only fellowship support, when they meet the general eligibility requirements that the School has set, in order to provide them the opportunity of making the necessary progress to regain satisfactory standing. Students who do not meet the agreed-on progress milestones will not be eligible for further tuition support until they complete them and have developed an approved plan for continued progress.

### **Estimate of Increased Terms of Registration**

The School's active Ph.D. students all register in the Fall semester in accordance with current School policy. The increase in enrollment due to the new Continuous Enrollment policy will be evident in the winter semester registrations. Based on current enrollment levels and an analysis of the registration patterns of current and past candidates, we expect to see an increase of 14 to 18 registered candidates in the winter semesters. Coverage for the tuition costs associated with these increased registration will come from the School of Nursing to the degree possible from allocations made to the School from the Rackham Graduate School, and will be provided through the award of fellowships that cover only tuition costs, either full or partial.

### **Funding Available for Tuition Payments**

The School of Nursing's ability to fund these tuition-only fellowships will come from expected increases in its General Fund Allocation and from the savings associated with the expected change in the candidacy tuition rate.

The University uses an activity-based model to develop General Fund Budget Allocations to academic units. Due to the activity-based formulas, the increase in registrations results in an increase in the School of Nursing's General Fund Budget Allocation. This funding will be budgeted for tuition fellowships.

At the effective date of the new policy, the candidacy tuition rate will be reduced in direct proportion to the expected increase in registration. This reduction results in savings in the School of Nursing due to the current levels of support for candidates in our Ph.D. program. These savings will continue to be directed to student support and will fund a portion of the needed tuition fellowships.

Supplementing the School's resources will be an allocation of tuition fellowships through a new Rackham financial aid program designed for this purpose.

### **Process**

Faculty advisors should inform the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs when a candidate working with them appears eligible for tuition support from the School. The Assistant Dean will work with the School's Financial Aid Office to confirm eligibility and process the awards. Guidelines for allocation of financial assistance for PhD Students have been developed by the Doctoral Program Steering Committee and those will continue to be used in the review of requests for financial assistance submitted by students.