



GEO MEMBERS

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Dear _____

My name is _____, and I am a member of the Graduate Employees' Organization at UIUC. I am writing to express my concern over the announced changes in tuition waiver policy for many of the departments in the College of Fine and Applied Arts, which include replacing full tuition waivers with base-rate waivers. As a member of the GEO I believe that the move to offer waivers of only base-rate tuition is not only contrary to the University's public assurances that they would not reduce waivers, and a violation of the GEO's contract with the UIUC Board of Trustees, but it is also deeply threatening to the future of the arts at UIUC.

As you know, many of the graduate employees in these programs are already among the lowest paid graduate students on campus, frequently holding appointments that pay less than \$800 per month. It is untenable for these graduate employees to pay over \$13,000 in tuition (the difference between a full and base-rate waiver) from this meager salary. Additionally, I do not believe it is realistic to expect that prospective graduate students will continue to regard the affected programs as premier destinations for graduate study in the arts, given this change.

I understand that incoming students for AY 2010-2011 will be offered scholarships to offset the tuition differential. If these scholarships will continue indefinitely, I do not understand the reason for the policy change, which would seem to actually cost the Graduate College more money. Given that these scholarships are only guaranteed for one year, I am very concerned that they will not be offered in the future.

As a graduate employee at a premier Research I University, I do not believe that the primary purpose of arts and other academic programs should be revenue generation, but rather the generation of works, research, and art that will help to enrich our local, national, and international communities. I urge you to work with all relevant parties to reverse this decision, and return the affected programs to a policy of offering full tuition waivers to all graduate employees with waiver-generating appointments.