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*Campus Memorandum*

From: Greg F. Burton

To: Faculty/Graduate Students

Date: July 26, 2012

Room: C104B BNSN

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Re: Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry Policy on Graduate Student Awards and Fellowships

Recently there has been some confusion regarding the department's long-standing policy on awards to graduate students. Because we have a number of new students and for that matter, new faculty, I thought it might be helpful to reiterate our policy with the intent of avoiding future misunderstanding.

Graduate students receive a yearly stipend (currently set at \$21,250). This stipend is provided in the form of either a research assistantship (RA) or teaching assistantship (TA) and continues for a specified period of time as long as the student is making satisfactory progress in their program. The definition of "stipend" is: a fixed sum of money paid periodically for services or to defray expenses (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Students perform at different levels, however, the base stipend for each is identical while they are making consistent progress in their program.

When a graduate student is nominated for a department award or applies for and receives university-based awards, these awards replace the base stipend paid by the department. In this manner, the base stipend remains constant regardless of the source of its funding. Some intradepartmental awards, in recognition of outstanding performance, include a cash amount that is added to the base stipend for a specified period. Examples of awards that follow this pattern include the BYU Cancer Center Fellowships, which replace departmental RA or TA stipends for the spring and summer terms, and the departmental Roland K. Robins Awards, which replace the departmental stipends for a year and provide cash supplements to the recipients.

In the case of a BYU Graduate Studies Award, which changed in its form last year, this support also takes the place of department support. However, because we recognize that the student developed and submitted the fellowship application, we provide an additional incentive of \$2000, an amount consistent with our most prestigious intra-department awards. Thus in this latter instance, the first \$2000 of the \$15,000 Graduate Studies award goes to the student as incentive and the remaining \$13,000 then replaces the equivalent portion of the base department stipend.

Recently, Graduate Studies, has provided an alternative way in which a student can receive her/his award. This new option allows the student to have the award deposited into a department account (BYU account) that they can draw from for travel to conferences, stipend, insurance and any other acceptable research-related item. Stipends drawn from this department account will be subject to the restrictions outlined above. There are a number of benefits from choosing the department account option, including tax liability for the student. Most importantly, having the award in a BYU account ensures that the money is used in accordance with department and university regulations. We ask that all graduate students applying for a Graduate Studies Graduate Fellowship select the department account option.

In addition to internal awards, there are a number of external awards (e.g., ACS, NSF, etc.), each having its own set of regulations. When these awards provide a stipend or its equivalent, these funds will again supersede department support. In the instances we are aware of, external support is greater than what we would normally provide thus offering an additional incentive to students to apply.

I hope that this restatement of what has been policy in the department for many years is helpful and might avoid future misunderstandings by either faculty and/or students. Should questions arise about the policy or if students wonder about some specific aspect of the policy, such as how an award will affect their base stipend, please contact one of the chairs, who can provide further clarification.