

June 7, 2023

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# Town Hall on Graduate Funding

**Steve Hranilovic** | Chair, Task Force on Graduate Funding



**McMaster University stands on the traditional territory shared between the Haudenosaunee and Mississauga nations and is protected by the “Dish With One Spoon” wampum agreement.**

# Agenda



- Task Force Membership and Mandate
- University Funding Highlights
- Aggregate Data
- Grad Funding By Faculty
- Community Feedback To Date
- Q&A

# University Funding Highlights

## Tuition

- Tuition was rolled back 10% in 2019-2020, subsequently frozen

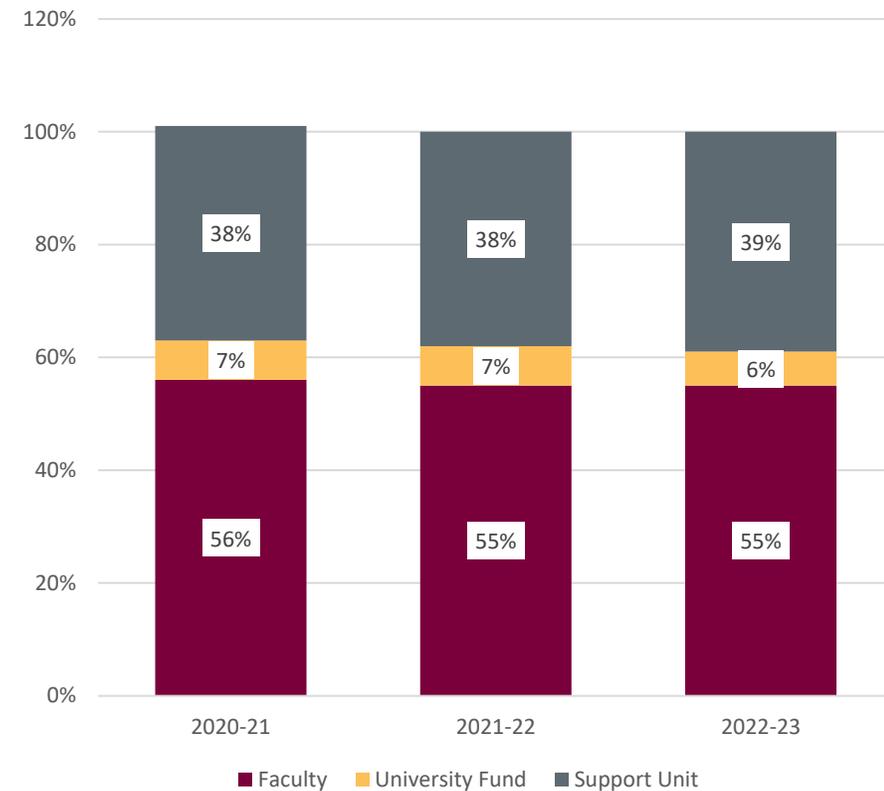
## Government Grants

- Operating grant has been flat since 2016-2017

## Donor Funds

- These are often locked and not at the discretion of a university unit

Where Revenue Goes



# Follow the Funding

## Sources of Graduate Funding

- Competitive internal and external **scholarships**
- **School of Graduate Studies Scholarship Fund** and other departmental sources
- **Research grants** and contracts, primarily these are provided through research funds secured by the supervisor
- **Bursaries**, based on need.
- **Academic grants**, based on need and academic merit
- McMaster **employment**, primarily Teaching and Research Assistantships
- Ontario Student Assistance Program (**OSAP**)

## Distribution of Funding

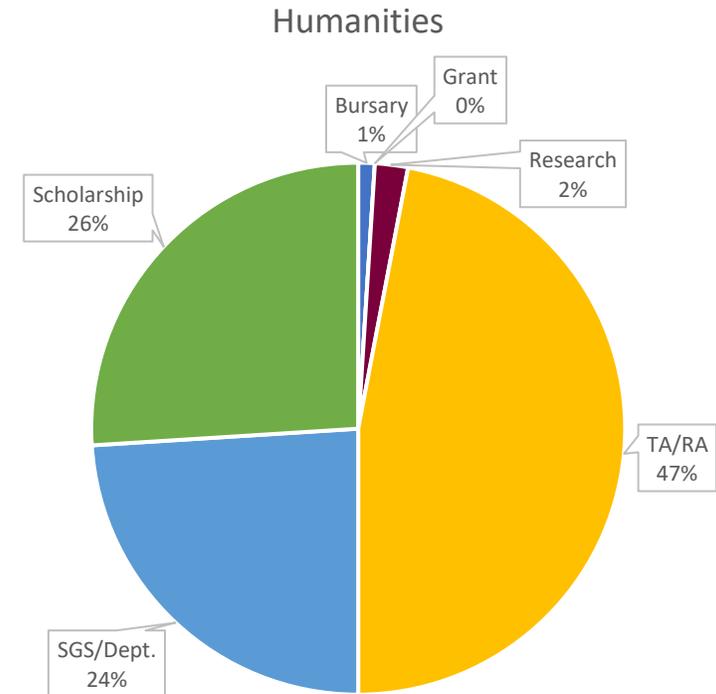
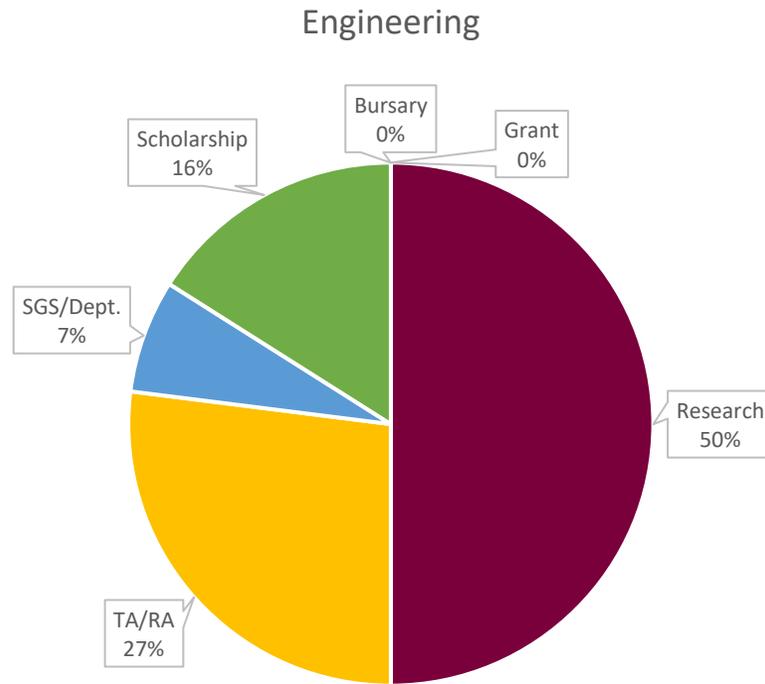
- Funding varies by Faculty and by department
- Faculties, departments decide how to allocate funds to Masters and PhD students

# 2003

- Canada's grants for Masters and PhD students have not increased since 2003.
- The Canada Graduate Scholarships are provided by three federal research funding agencies.

# Graduate Funding by Faculty

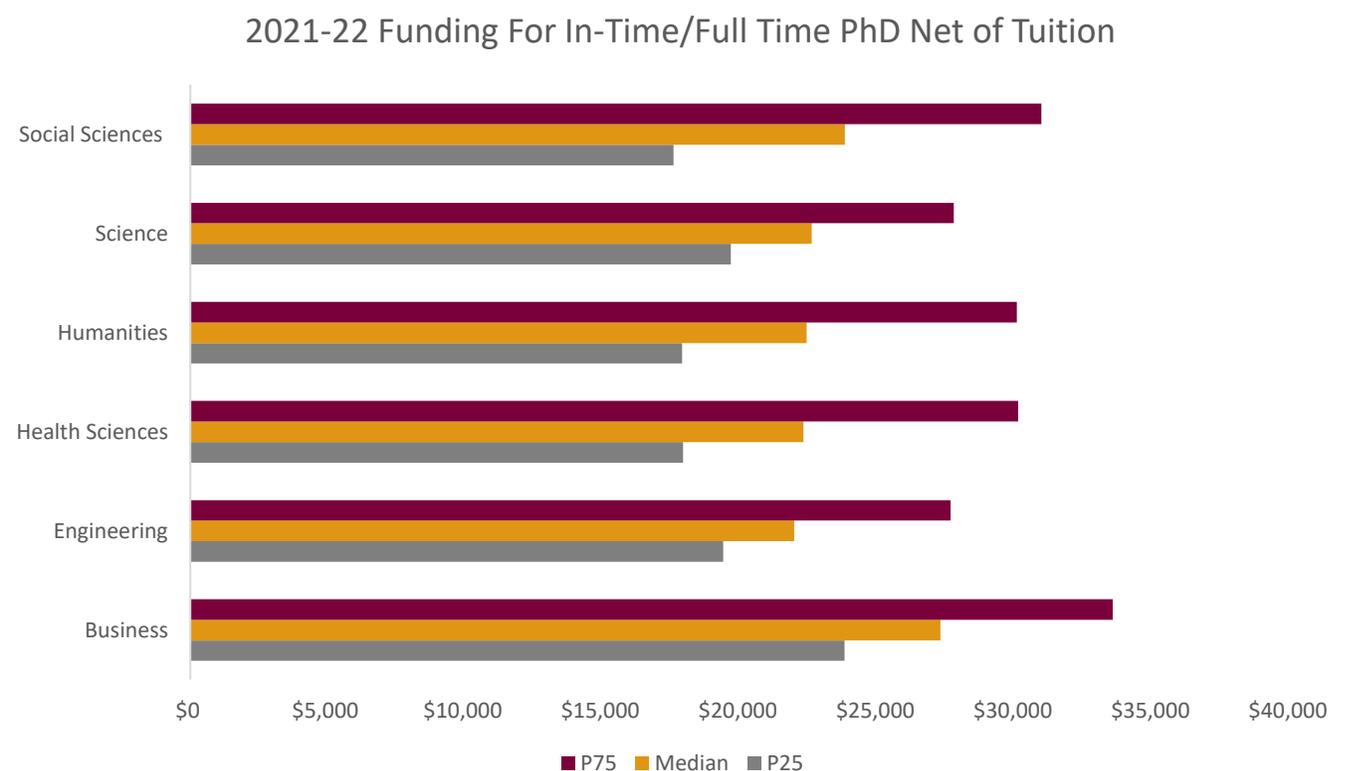
Example of how funding varies across McMaster



# Aggregate Data on Graduate Funding

## Full figures posted on the Task Force's website

- Students may also receive additional fellowships, scholarships, and bursaries that are not administered by McMaster
- 3% of in-time PhD students received near the minimum compensation net of tuition of between \$13,500 and \$15,500 in 2021-22
- Most Faculties are in the \$22K-\$23K range of median funding for in-time/full time PhD net of tuition



# Feedback From Graduate Community

## Task Force Website: 30 Responses To Date

- McMaster community invited to provide feedback online starting March 2023
- Feedback was shared with the Task Force in anonymized form
- Feedback received from:
  - 13 Graduate Students
  - 10 Faculty Members
  - 7 Staff

Average time to complete submissions

17.20  
minutes

Thank you for being thoughtful!

We continue to listen

Task Force's Website



**The Task Force Wants To Hear From You**

Use the link below to share with Task Force members your thoughts, comments and the questions you would like explored.

Speak Your Mind



# Roundtable Consultations

## May 11 and 12

- 12 Faculty Meetings
- Masters Students Meeting
- PhD Students Meeting
- International Students
- GSA
- CUPE
- MUFA
- Additional roundtables to be scheduled as needed



95

Participants to date

15

Consultation  
hours to date

# 5 Key Themes: Roundtables + Online

01

## Financial Struggles

- Graduate students feel pressure to balance studies and research work, often with employment inside and outside of McMaster

# 5 Key Themes: Roundtables + Online

02

## Transparency | Communication & Action

- Graduate students reported having difficulty finding information on funding
- For example, offer letters must be continually reviewed to ensure clarity on funding provided, duration of funding and that they contain links to current information on cost of living in Hamilton

# 5 Key Themes: Roundtables + Online

## International Students | Additional Barriers

03

- International students add to our research capacity and to the richness, diversity of graduate programs
- These students often do not have a network of support in Canada

# Consultation Themes Cont'd

04

## Policies: Major Scholarships and Total Funding

- Often termed “clawback”
- Wide variety of approaches per Faculty and often per program
- Clarity on policy is essential

05

## Four-Year Model for PhD Students

- Provincial funding is tied to timeline
- Carefully examine curricula to ensure it remains streamlined and does not pose a barrier to timely completion

# Current Actions

- Removal of limits should students desire more on-campus employment
- Increasing awareness of emergency bursary funds for non-tuition issues
- Review of offer letters to improve linkage to external information guides to help students understand funding package
- Greater communication and regular touchpoints with graduate students
- Provost-funded project to explore a shorter PhD curricula in Humanities

## Next for the Task Force

- Aggregate data will be regularly updated and made public
- Ongoing consultations with McMaster's graduate community
- Feedback will act as the basis of recommendations formulated by the Task Force
- Final report with recommendations to Provost and Graduate Council

# Sept. 1

Effective September 1, the minimum funding for full-time/in-time PhD students will be raised to \$17.5k+tuition from \$13.5k+tuition

This will benefit 7% of PhD students

A scenic view of a park with cherry blossom trees in the foreground and a building in the background. Two people are sitting on a bench in the distance.

**Thank You**