



The University of Cincinnati
Graduate College

Report of the Doctoral Funding Task Force

Published January 10, 2025

Executive Summary

Our doctoral students are an integral part of UC's R1/very high research status. Doctoral programs are under pressure to recruit, retain, and graduate top-tier students. Doctoral students and graduate programs alike report non-competitive financial packages as a barrier to meeting recruitment, retention, and graduation goals. This task force committee calls on the university to centrally invest in doctoral funding by providing more funding for stipends, scholarships, and other student financial needs.

In this report, the task force outlines four recommendations, aimed at increasing the minimum stipend rate to a competitive level; providing doctoral programs with additional funding through a competitive analysis process to support doctoral student recruitment and retention; and overhauling policies and procedures to promote student success, reduce confusion, and improve reporting capabilities.

Recommendation 1: All Graduate College financial policies should apply equally to all doctoral students

Recommendation 2: Increase stipend rates and develop new policy for funding limits

Recommendation 3: Competitive analysis for additional funding

Recommendation 4: Changes to and standardization of award processes and policies across university graduate programs

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Task Force Membership.....	4
Task Force Charge.....	5
Background and Discussion.....	6
Doctoral Student Population at UC	6
Formation of Doctoral Funding Task Force	6
Data Gathering	7
Community Open Forums.....	7
Institutional Data	8
Benchmarking Data.....	8
Challenges in Recruitment at UC	9
Financial Constraints.....	9
Administrative and Structural Issues.....	10
Competitive Factors	10
Summary.....	11
Current Student Financial Challenges	12
Basic Living Expenses	12
Inflation and Stipends.....	13
Pressing Need for Relocation/Start-Up Funding	13
Current Doctoral Funding Policies and Practices at UC	14
A “One-Size-Fits-All” Funding Model Not Appropriate for UC.....	16
Recommendations	17
Recommendation 1: All Graduate College Financial Policies Should Apply Equally to All Doctoral Students	17
Recommendation 2: Increase Stipend Rates and Develop a New Policy for Funding Limits	18
2.A. The Minimum Stipend for “Fully Funded Students” Should Be Increased to Meet Cost of Living for Cincinnati, and the Minimum Stipend Rate Should Be Re-Assessed Annually.....	18
2.B. Replace Rigid and Complicated “174 Rule” with Policy Based on Terms of Funding Received	20

Recommendation 3: Competitive Analysis for Additional Funding.....	22
Recommendation 4: Changes to and Standardization of Award Processes and Policies Across University Graduate Programs	23
Conclusion and Next Steps	25
Appendices	26
Supplemental Table: Fall 2023 Doctoral Graduate Assistantship and Fellowship Funding.....	26
Supplemental Table: Benchmarking Big 12 Institutions.....	27
Supplemental Table: Benchmarking Top UC Doctoral Competitors	28
Fall 2023 Doctoral Counts by College and Degree Type.....	29
Fall 2024 Doctoral Counts by College and Degree Type.....	30
Health Sciences Graduate Student Association (HSGSA) 2024 Survey: Cost Breakdown of Graduate Students at UC CoM	31

Task Force Membership

- Alessandro Giovanni Battaglia, graduate student, Department of Classics, College of Arts and Sciences
- Ryan Boyd, Associate Director of Admissions, National Recruitment, Office of Admissions, Enrollment Management
- Robert Buckingham, Professor and Graduate Program Director, Department of Mathematical Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences
- James Bunte, Co-Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, College-Conservatory of Music
- Angela Cannata, graduate student, Immunology Doctoral Program, College of Medicine
- Amanda Carlisle, Program Manager, School of Human Services, College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services
- Megan Carroll, Program Director, Graduate College
- Tai Collins, Associate Dean, Graduate College
- Amy Farley, Associate Professor, School of Education, College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services
- Matt Huml, Associate Professor, Sport Administration, Doctoral Program Coordinator, School of Human Services, College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services
- Henry Levesque, graduate student, School of Planning, College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning
- Sarah Matthews, Senior Data Reporting Analyst, Graduate College
- Michael Odio, Associate Professor, Sport Administration, School of Human Services, College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services
- Claudia Rebola, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Programs, College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning
- Emilee Suchomski, Director of Admissions, Recruitment & Strategic Initiatives, Office of Admissions, Enrollment Management
- Noah VanBergen, Associate Professor of Marketing, Carl H. Lindner College of Business
- John Wang, Professor, Accounting, Carl H. Lindner College of Business
- Ryan White, Divisional Dean, Natural Sciences, Professor and Ohio Eminent Scholar, Chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences

Task Force Charge

As part of its mission to advance graduate student success and the [NEXT Graduate Scholars pathway](#), the Graduate College established the 2024 Doctoral Funding Task Force for the purpose of assessing doctoral funding across the university and making recommendations that will support the recruitment and retention of high-quality doctoral students at UC.

The task force was asked to address the following specific questions:

1. What are the funding model options for doctoral programs, and which model might work best at UC to support recruitment and retention of doctoral students?
2. What should the minimum doctoral student stipend be? Should there be a university minimum or a minimum for each college?
3. How might we increase our five-year graduation rates and/or shorten the time to degree for doctoral students?
4. What should be standardized across all doctoral programs (e.g., appointment dates; offer letters; stipend and scholarship)? Are there considerations based on the type of degree award (e.g., AuD, DMA, DNP, DPT, EdD, OTD, and PhD)?

Scope:

1. Focus on the issues central to doctoral student funding
2. Shape our recommendations without regard for any specific funding mechanisms

Background and Discussion

Doctoral Student Population at UC

As of Fall 2023, UC had 2,418 enrolled doctoral students. Of these students, 1,692 are considered “research” doctoral students (PhD and EdD programs) and 726 are considered “professional” doctoral students (AuD, DNP, DPT, DMA, and OTD programs). The task force used the Fall 2023 numbers in its work throughout the Summer 2024 semester. Please refer to the charts in the appendices for [doctoral student numbers by UC college](#).

In discussing our doctoral student population and doctoral student funding, we must acknowledge the small number of doctoral students (3.6%) who are first and foremost employees and are therefore using their tuition remission benefits to pursue a doctoral degree via part-time enrollment. This task force did not take these students into consideration for the purpose of this report, as their primary relationship with UC is through their full-time employment.

Formation of Doctoral Funding Task Force

The Summer 2024 Doctoral Funding Task Force evolved out of the work being done by a [subcommittee of Graduate Council, the Graduate Student Compensation and Awards Committee](#). This committee, co-chaired by Graduate College staff members Megan Carroll and Sarah Matthews, undertook a benchmarking project for graduate student stipend pay, scholarship support, other benefits, and graduate education costs. The committee found it difficult to make generalized comparisons between universities (comparing “apples to oranges” in terms of different types of programs, cost of living differences, etc.). Nonetheless, the information collected highlighted both gaps in student funding and opportunities to make UC more competitive.

As part of this benchmarking project, the committee reviewed efforts by other institutions to improve graduate student funding. The [OSU Graduate Associate Compensation & Benefits Committee \(GCBC\)](#) included in their [2022-2023 Annual Report](#) a report on their own doctoral funding task force. This inspired committee co-chairs and Graduate College Dean Rose Marie Ward to form the UC Doctoral Funding Task Force for Summer 2024.

Data Gathering

Community Open Forums

The Doctoral Funding Task Force hosted three community open forums to hear from UC graduate students, faculty, and staff about their experiences and priorities for doctoral funding. The first open forum was held on July 10, 2024, in the Health Sciences Building on the UC Medical Campus, the second was held on July 16, 2024, in Clifton Court on West Campus, and third was held virtually on July 18, 2024. Present at each forum were task force members to share the charge, facilitate a series of questions, and take notes to be used in the final report.

There were 58 attendees that joined the community open forums from the following colleges and units:

- Carl H. Lindner College of Business
- College of Allied Health Sciences
- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning
- College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services with the School of Information Technology
- College of Engineering and Applied Science
- College of Medicine
- College of Nursing
- Graduate College
- Enrollment Management

Open Forum discussions focused on the following four topics:

- Student financial challenges and unexpected costs associated with graduate education/attending UC.
- Competitiveness of stipend as compared with peer and aspirational institutions.
- Challenges specific to international students.
- Making the financial case for investing additional funds in doctoral education.

We thank the UC graduate students, faculty, and staff who attended the forums and shared their first-hand experiences about doctoral funding challenges and opportunities. Findings and insights shared by the graduate education community were crucial to the development of this final report and will be referenced many times throughout.

Institutional Data

The Graduate College's senior data reporting analyst gathered and analyzed available data from central UC systems on doctoral student funding. See [Table 3. Funding for Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships for the 2,418 doctoral students as of the fall 2023 semester](#) for a high-level review of the funding status of UC's doctoral population.

In a previous analysis of institutional funding data, the Graduate College's senior data reporting analyst noted significant limitations in the available data on graduate student financial aid. Stipend data lives in the payroll system, but given that there is no central repository for stipend offer letters, it is not possible to check payroll data against offers, or to gather additional data that is not captured by the payroll system. These payroll payments are entered locally at the unit level. The previous analysis of stipend data in payroll revealed inconsistencies in data entry by unit (e.g., for the hours field, some units would enter weekly total hours, while others would enter the biweekly total).

Similarly, scholarship data is entered into Catalyst (the student information system), as a specific semesterly amount, on a yearly (or in some cases, semesterly) basis. No information is captured in Catalyst to note which fees are and are not covered by the tuition award. Given that there is also no central repository for scholarship offer letters, it is not possible to check Catalyst scholarship data against offers.

As such, it is not possible to project at the beginning of an academic year how much stipend and scholarship support will be provided to graduate students, including doctoral students, for the academic year. Please see [Recommendation 4: Changes to and Standardization of Award Processes and Policies Across University Graduate Program](#), in particular items 2, 4, 5, and 6, for recommendations that will promote transparency and collaboration across the multiple units that field graduate student financial aid and billing questions, and will improve data analysis and reporting capabilities.

Benchmarking Data

Members of the task force conducted benchmarking against members of UC's athletic conference—the [Big 12 Conference](#)—and top doctoral competitors. Data was gathered from publicly available websites and focused on university-wide policies and practices. See appendices, [Table 4. Big 12 Benchmarking of 9 Month 0.5 FTE Stipends and 9 Month Cost of Housing from MIT and EPI Cost of Living Calculators](#), and [Table 5. University of Cincinnati Doctoral Top Competitors Benchmarking for 9 Month 0.5 FTE Stipends and 9 Month Cost of Housing from MIT and EPI Cost of Living Calculators](#).

Challenges in Recruitment at UC

Recruiting high caliber doctoral students at the University of Cincinnati is critical for maintaining and enhancing the university's academic and research reputation. However, several significant challenges must be addressed to continue to attract high-caliber candidates across doctoral disciplines. These challenges encompass financial constraints, administrative and structural issues, and competitive pressures from peer institutions.

Financial Constraints

One of the primary hurdles in recruiting doctoral students is the financial limitations associated with graduate funding. Prospective students often compare the financial support packages offered by different institutions, and competitive stipends are essential for attracting top talent. UC faces the challenge of providing stipends that meet students' living expenses while remaining competitive with those offered by peer institutions. Additionally, the lack of mechanisms for regular cost of living adjustments exacerbates financial insecurity among students, particularly as living costs continue to rise.

Many doctoral students at UC also face hidden costs, such as [program fees](#), learning technology fees, and/or [course fees](#) that are not covered by the tuition scholarship. It is possible that these additional expenses can significantly impact the overall financial well-being of students, particularly first-generation students who report higher concerns of running out of money than non-first-generation students.¹ In 2023, 30.5% of research doctorate recipients nationally were first generation students.² Without centralized funding to cover these fees, the financial strain on students can be a deterrent to continuing in the program and graduating.

Another significant financial challenge can be the lack of guaranteed summer funding. Participants in the Open Forums reported that in many fine arts, humanities, and social sciences fields, the norm is that graduate assistantships are offered 9 month appointments at the point of offering admissions or writing annual stipend renewal letters. In some cases, programs secure additional funding later in the year to offer summer support, but this is not guaranteed. This leaves students without assured funding during the summer months. Given their already low-income level during the 9 month contract, this gap creates financial instability and forces students to seek

¹ Mitic, R. (2022, March). *Insights into First-Generation Doctoral Students*. Council of Graduate Schools. https://cgsnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CGS_CP_First-Gen-Doc-Students_ForWeb.pdf

² National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Survey of Earned Doctorates, 2023, Table 1-14, <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf24336/table/1-14>

additional employment, which can detract from their academic and research responsibilities.

Administrative and Structural Issues

Another significant challenge is the complexity and inconsistency in administering funding offers. Prospective students seek clarity and transparency in the financial and academic support they will receive, yet variations across colleges and departments can lead to confusion and uncertainty. Creating a reliable and attractive recruitment environment is challenging without standardized language and policies related to funding offers and guarantees.

Graduate students often incur significant out-of-pocket expenses for professional development, conference travel, moving costs, and necessary equipment. The lack of centralized funding pools to assist with these expenses can impose a considerable financial burden on students, affecting their decision to choose UC over other institutions.

Competitive Factors

UC's doctoral programs operate in a highly competitive landscape. Benchmarking minimum stipend rates for Big 12 Conference members show that UC's minimum doctoral rate is middling within the group, with a minimum 9 month 0.5 FTE stipend (\$16,999.20) slightly above the mean (\$16,894.48) for the publicly available rates. (See [Appendices, Table 4.](#)) Benchmarking minimum stipend rates for UC Top Doctoral Competitors revealed that UC landed at the bottom of the group in regard to university-wide minimum stipend rates. (See [Appendices, Table 5.](#)) In addition to stipend, the competitive pressure includes financial support for tuition, other fees, and health insurance, as well as access to essential resources such as affordable housing and childcare, which are critical considerations for many doctoral students, as reported in the Open Forums.

As noted later in the [Current Student Financial Challenges](#) section, award packages offered by UC doctoral programs vary in stipend amount, coverage of tuition and fees, and other financial support. As such, doctoral program applicants compare the specific financial packages offered by admitting programs. Of note, though, Open Forum participants shared that cost of living estimates did not figure into their decision-making process as they weighed these offers, and no program representative reported offering specific cost of living estimates to contextualize the stipend offer. Open Forum participants shared that the total "sticker price" number of the financial award package was the deciding factor in terms of evaluating the financial award package.

The overall support structure for graduate students, including health (dental, vision, general health) and counseling services, also plays a crucial role in recruitment. While including dental and vision coverage is not standard practice within Big 12 and UC's top competitor institutions, a few noteworthy exceptions include Iowa State University³, the University of Utah⁴, and Ohio State University⁵.

Prospective students assess the quality and accessibility of these services when choosing an institution. Enhancing these services is essential for maintaining the attractiveness of UC's programs. Robust health benefits, mental health resources, and comprehensive dental and vision care are vital for supporting the well-being of doctoral students. To remain competitive, UC as a whole, as well as individual graduate programs, must continually benchmark against peer and competitor institutions.

Summary

The challenges in recruiting doctoral students at the University of Cincinnati are multifaceted and significant. Addressing financial constraints, administrative inconsistencies, and competitive pressures are essential for attracting high-caliber candidates. These challenges highlight the need for a strategic approach to improve the university's appeal and competitiveness in the landscape of graduate education.

³ A portion of single-student dental coverage is paid by ISU. The dental coverage provides two free check-ups/cleanings per calendar year, and a large portion of routine services like cavity repair are covered, although there is limited coverage for more significant services. [Student & Scholar Health Insurance Program, Graduate Assistants](#).

⁴ "Graduate students may be eligible for the University of Utah's Graduate Subsidized Health Insurance Program (GSHIP). To qualify, you must be supported as a Research Assistant (9314), Teaching Assistant (9416), Graduate Assistant – Research Focus (9330), and Graduate Assistant – Teaching Focus (9417), and receive a 100% tuition benefit. GSHIP includes (...) dental and vision insurance (...). The University of Utah pays 100% of the premium at the start of the semester." [Graduate Subsidized Health Insurance Program \(GSHIP\)](#)

⁵ The OSU Student Health Insurance Benefits Plan provides both vision and dental coverage. The single-student coverage (Tier One) includes 100% coverage on annual vision exam after \$15 copay and \$100 eyewear allowance, and a range of dental coverage based on provider, with eligible services performed at Student Health Services or College of Dentistry Student Clinic covered at the highest rate. [Ohio State Student Life Student Health Benefits Plan Member Overview 2024 – 25 \(PDF\)](#).

Current Student Financial Challenges

Graduate students in the Open Forums shared their and their peers' financial challenges that impacted their academic success, quality of life, and in some cases, their ability to continue in and complete their program.

Basic Living Expenses

Typical expenses for doctoral students include housing and utilities, food and household supplies, healthcare, and transportation. Some doctoral students are paying tuition expenses every semester on specific fees, such as the Information Technology and Instructional Equipment (ITIE) Fee. Outside of the College of Medicine who covers all of their doctoral students' fees, nearly every doctoral student is paying for at least one fee that is not covered by their tuition scholarship, and this out-of-pocket semesterly expense can range for a full-time student from a little under \$200 to over \$1,000.

Additionally, given that the average age of UC doctoral students is 30.3, a fair number of doctoral students enter their degree program with caregiving responsibilities or start a family while in their program. A recent (fall semester 2024) [Graduate Pulse Survey](#) conducted by the Graduate College found that 43.4% of graduate student respondents were parents or caregivers. Of the students who responded as being a parent or caregiver, 68% reported that financial support was their most pressing need.

The Health Sciences Graduate Student Association (HSGSA) conducted a study of UC College of Medicine (COM) graduate student costs in 2024. ([See appendices for full summary of survey results.](#)) The majority of COM students in on-campus programs are full-time doctoral students. As such, we expect full-time doctoral students in on-campus programs in other UC colleges would have similar expenses.

COM students have some of the highest stipends in the university. For survey respondents, rent is on average 35% of their annual expenses, and rent is steadily increasing each year. From the survey data, the HSGSA calculated the following:

- Average Rent (2022): \$10,533
- Average Rent (2023): \$11,586
- Average Rent (2024): \$12,984

Students also reported in the survey whether they considered their neighborhood safe or unsafe. Students who reported that they lived in a "safe" neighborhood paid a higher rent compared to those reported that they lived in an "unsafe" neighborhood. Moreover, 17% of survey respondents reported they had one or more dependents. The average annual dependent-related expenditure was \$9,420.

Graduate students who attended the Open Forums reported that for many programs, the stipends provided were not sufficient to cover basic living expenses and the “hidden costs” of graduate education, such as fees not covered by tuition scholarships, conference travel expenses, and parking. Not to mention that not all students receive a 20 hour/week stipend for all years of their degree – especially in the professional doctoral degree programs, some students receive no financial support at all.

Open Forum participants pointed out that some students were able to afford attending graduate school only because of family support (e.g., partner, parents, or other family members). Students who did not have access to regular or intermittent family support faced a more precarious situation. Even with taking on work in addition to the GA position, some students reported barely making ends meet, with no savings to cover unexpected expenses (such as medical emergencies, car repairs, etc.). For international graduate students with a spouse and/or dependent(s), the GA stipend may be the only source of income, as international students cannot work off campus, and their spouse is often not authorized to work in the U.S.

Graduate students at UC are turning to the [Bearcats Pantry](#), various emergency funds at UC, and/or credit card debt so they can keep their housing and eat. According to information provided by the Bearcats Pantry to the Graduate College, during the fall 2024 semester there were 5,241 total student visits to the Bearcats Pantry and 73.5% (n=3,851) of services went to graduate students. Of the graduate students that used the Bearcats Pantry services, 77.3% (n=2,978) were international students.

Inflation and Stipends

As noted below in the [Current Doctoral Funding Policies and Practices at UC](#) section, the Graduate College sets only the minimum hourly stipend rates. When the Graduate College raises the minimum rates, only the lowest-paid students see an increase in their stipend payments as a direct result of these new rates. As noted in the section above, the results of the [HSGSA's survey](#) indicate that the cost of rent is increasing significantly year-to-year in Cincinnati and is outpacing the rate of inflation. GAs who receive no increase, or an increase at or below the rate of inflation, are facing decreased buying power with their stipend

Pressing Need for Relocation/Start-Up Funding

In the Open Forums, one of the reoccurring themes was the lack of relocation/start-up funding, and the financial burden students faced when first starting their graduate program. Relocating to another city – and especially another country – is expensive.

Students may need to cover apartment application fees, security deposits, pay first/last month's rent; students may need to purchase new furniture and household supplies; and students who do not have a car may need to incur additional expenses for transportation around the city and/or delivery of necessary household furnishings. In addition, many students (even doctoral students) are paying some balance on their fall term bill, usually due at the end of August. Even for those students with GA appointments, the first paycheck may not arrive until early September.⁶ Many doctoral students need to find a way to pay large bills and expenses related to moving to Cincinnati and starting their doctoral program, which are due before they see their first stipend payment. Students without family support or significant savings must resort to taking out loans or accruing credit card debt.

This financial burden places significant stress on students at the very beginning of their academic program. Not only would providing relocation/start-up funding serve as a compelling recruitment tool to increase the financial package, but it would alleviate the financial burden and stress faced by many new students. This would allow new students to focus on acclimating into their new programs, engaging in coursework, and networking, rather than scramble for additional sources of funding in their first semester.

Current Doctoral Funding Policies and Practices at UC

University-wide [graduate student funding policies are housed within the Graduate College's Graduate Handbook](#). These policies set minimum requirements for all UC graduate programs, with the exception of the JD, MD, and PharmD programs.

Most notably, the minimum stipend rates for graduate assistantship appointments are set by the Graduate College dean: "The minimum stipend for a graduate assistant, as set in **July 2024**, must be the equivalent of a minimum of **\$17.99** per hour for all master's and doctoral students except those in PhD programs. Graduate assistants enrolled in PhD programs have a minimum of **\$23.61** per hour."⁷ GA stipends are processed via payroll, and payment entry is handled locally by college or program business officers.

In its benchmarking work, the task force found that very few peer or aspirational institutions framed the minimum stipend requirement in an hourly equivalent rate. For

⁶ The fall 2024 semester began Monday, August 26. Students who began their GA appointment the week before or the first week of classes received their first paycheck from pay period 19 (pay period begin 8/18/24 and end 8/31/24). The pay date for this pay period was 9/10/24. [2024 Payroll Processing Schedule \(PDF\)](#).

⁷ Graduate Handbook: Graduate Assistantships, paragraph 3, <https://grad.uc.edu/fac-staff/handbook/financial-support/assistantships.html>.

the majority of the institutions examined in the benchmarking work, the minimum rate was presented as a 9 month or 12 month stipend for a 0.5 FTE (20 hour/week) appointment. For comparison, UC’s minimum rates as 9 month and 12 month stipends for a 0.5 FTE (20 hour/week) appointment are provided below.

Table 1. UC’s Doctoral GA Stipends at Minimum Rate, 0.5 FTE (20 hour/week) appointment, FY25

	9 Month Stipends Minimum (18 pay periods)	12 Month Stipends Minimum (26 pay periods)	Bi-Weekly Payments Minimum	Hourly Minimum
Non-PhD ⁸ , Current FY25	\$ 12,952.80	\$ 18,709.60	\$ 719.60	\$17.99
PhD, Current FY25	\$ 16,999.20	\$ 24,554.40	\$ 944.40	\$ 23.61

Not all doctoral students receive GA appointments, and of these GA appointments, not all are 20 hours/week. Some doctoral students are supported via fellowships, with fellowship funding coming from various internal and external sources. Of the 2,418 doctoral students in the fall 2023 semester, 39.5% (n=955) received neither an assistantship nor fellowship stipend. The remaining 1,463 received assistantship funding, fellowship funding, or some combination of assistantship and fellowship funding. (See appendices, [Supplemental Table: Fall 2023 Doctoral Graduate Assistantship and Fellowship Funding](#), for more information.)

Of the 955 students without stipend funding, one third of the students were PhD and EdD students, with the vast majority of these students enrolled part-time and only a small number (n=70) enrolled full-time. Two thirds of students without funding were seeking a professional doctoral degree (AuD, DMA, DNP, DPT, OTD).

Additional policies set [minimum requirements for graduate award eligibility](#), such as GPA and registration. Furthermore, UC’s [174 Graduate Credit Rule](#) limits doctoral funding from “general funds,” on the basis of the student’s total attempted graduate credit hour enrollment at UC. (See [recommendation 2.B.](#) for a discussion of UC’s 174 rule.)

Colleges and programs may enact requirements above or in addition to these minimum requirements. As such, doctoral funding offers vary widely across the university. Where this is most apparent is with graduate assistantship offers and tuition scholarship offers. For GA positions, this goes beyond a wide range in pay rate. At UC there are no university-wide standards or guidelines in place for:

⁸ The current non-PhD degrees offered by UC are the AuD, DMA, DNP, DPT, EdD, and OTD.

- Appointment length
- Appointment start dates and end dates
- Minimum number of hours per week
- Assessing if a proposed job should be a GA position or hourly student worker position
- Assessing if the assigned work can reasonably be achieved within the weekly work hours
- Scholarship support to accompany a GA appointment

To be clear, programs are *not* required by the university to provide scholarship support to GAs. Colleges, units, and programs set their own standards regarding scholarship support for their doctoral students. In the Community Open Forums, we learned from doctoral students, program directors, and program staff that doctoral scholarship offers vary in the amount/percent covered, which fees are or are not covered, and the number of years of scholarship support typically provided.

A “One-Size-Fits-All” Funding Model Not Appropriate for UC

Currently, funding models for graduate programs vary widely across the university. This is due to the type of degree, availability of national grants for field, typical time to degree for program, etc. Moreover, each college within UC has its own structure and its own challenges and opportunities. Even within fields with more substantial grant support, some of these funding avenues are not open to international graduate students (i.e., international students are not eligible for certain federal funds) — a critical factor to consider, as some doctoral programs at UC have large populations of international students. Models such as guaranteeing funding for a standard number of years for all doctoral programs, or fixing cohort size, or switching students to grant-supported funding after year one (as typical in the College of Medicine and the College of Engineering and Applied Science) do not make sense as an across-the-board solution.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: All Graduate College Financial Policies Should Apply Equally to All Doctoral Students

The University of Cincinnati offers nearly 100 doctoral degrees. These degree programs include AuD, DMA, DNP, DPT, EdD, and OTD, in addition to the PhD. All of these programs fall under the jurisdiction of the Graduate College and its [Graduate Handbook](#). Currently, the policy for stipend minimum rates differentiates between PhD programs and non-PhD programs:

UGA funds are awarded for designated periods of time by the graduate programs. Graduate Assistants are considered exempt from minimum wage and overtime requirements, and they are paid on a salaried basis. Minimum stipends are set by the Dean of the Graduate College. The minimum stipend for a graduate assistant, as set in **July 2024**, must be the equivalent of a minimum of **\$17.99** per hour for all master's and doctoral students except those in PhD programs. Graduate assistants enrolled in PhD programs have a minimum of **\$23.61** per hour.⁹

The committee recommends that all doctoral students¹⁰ have the same stipend minimum in terms of the hourly equivalent rate, and we recommend that any future financial policies apply equally to all doctoral students for the doctoral programs overseen by the Graduate College.

Note: Graduate College policies *do not* apply to MD, JD, nor PharmD degrees, and financial policies regarding these programs should still be overseen and managed by respective colleges.

⁹ Graduate Handbook, Graduate Assistantships, paragraph 3, <https://grad.uc.edu/fac-staff/handbook/financial-support/assistantships.html>.

¹⁰ Currently, the AuD, DMA, DNP, DPT, EdD, OTD, and PhD programs.

Recommendation 2: Increase Stipend Rates and Develop a New Policy for Funding Limits

2.A. The Minimum Stipend for “Fully Funded Students” Should Be Increased to Meet Cost of Living for Cincinnati, and the Minimum Stipend Rate Should Be Re-Assessed Annually

At UC, a “fully funded student” is considered one awarded, at minimum, a 9 month 0.5 FTE (20 hour/week) stipend, with a tuition scholarship covering, at minimum, 100% of the instructional fee and (if applicable) non-resident surcharge. The task force proposes a 9 month 0.5 FTE minimum stipend of **\$23,368.00**.

Table 2. Current (FY25) doctoral minimum stipend rates compared to proposed (FY26) doctoral stipend rate

	9 Month Stipends Minimum (18 pay periods)	12 Month Stipends Minimum (26 pay periods)	Bi-Weekly Payments Minimum	Hourly Minimum
Non-PhD ¹¹ , Current FY25	\$ 12,952.80	\$ 18,709.60	\$ 719.60	\$17.99
PhD, Current FY25	\$ 16,999.20	\$ 24,554.40	\$ 944.40	\$ 23.61
Proposed FY26, all doctoral students	\$ 23,368.00	\$ 33,753.78	\$ 1,298.22	\$ 32.46

In line with [recommendation 1](#), the task force recommends that all doctoral students with graduate assistantship appointments receive the equivalent of \$32.46 per hour. Colleges and graduate programs may pay a higher stipend, and they may set their own minimum stipend above the university-wide minimum.

The committee researched minimum cost of living calculators, such as the MIT [Living Wage Calculator](#) and Economic Policy Institute [Family Budget Calculator](#). These cost of living calculators have been used by other graduate task forces such as the Ohio State University and the University of Utah to inform funding recommendations. The numbers provided by these calculators vary, but they can be helpful in understanding students’ recurring monthly expenses for necessities, such as housing and groceries. In addition, UC International sets a cost of living amount for undergraduate and graduate students.

UC boasts a large number of international graduate students (in fall 2023, 30.0% of the graduate student population and 37.4% of the doctoral population). For international graduate students seeking admission for the 2025-26 AY, they must demonstrate *at*

¹¹ Currently, the AuD, DMA, DNP, DPT, EdD, and OTD programs.

least \$23,368 in funding to cover living expenses¹² to request an I-20 form and secure a visa. (This is in addition to the cost of tuition and other fees and the student health insurance premium.) The committee's consensus is that at the bare minimum, a stipend for a "fully funded student" should meet the cost of living amount set by UC International.

It is worth noting, however, that even at this rate, the student may still need to pay some tuition fees out-of-pocket. As noted above, some programs only cover the instructional fee and non-residential surcharge, leaving the student to pay the ITIE fee, campus life fee, general fee, and (if applicable) a program fee and/or international student fee. Moreover, this amount does not take students' moving expenses nor any other one-time expenses associated with starting a new graduate program into consideration. Furthermore, there are limited resources at UC to support graduate students' professional development. For example, at the Open Forums, students, administrators, and staff reported that even with the Graduate Student Government's conference travel award and college/program funds, many students are incurring out-of-pocket expenses for conference participation.

A minimum stipend of \$23,368.00 for 9 month, 0.5 FTE appointment also has the benefit of putting UC on par with the Ohio State University, at least in terms of the doctoral minimum stipend. The current minimum stipend at OSU for *all* graduate assistantship appointments (including master's level GAs), as of the current FY25, is \$22,347 for a 9 month, 0.5 FTE GA appointment.¹³ As of the publication of this report, OSU has not yet announced their FY25 minimum stipend. As such, a minimum stipend of \$23,368.00 for doctoral students at UC in no way guarantees that any UC doctoral program will be able to provide a competitive financial offer against any OSU doctoral program.

The minimum stipend should be re-assessed annually. The task force proposes that the Graduate Student Compensation and Awards committee, a [Graduate Council committee](#), will review and make a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate College. The committee's recommendations will be based on [UC International's cost of living number](#), cost of living calculators, and other data points. While the proposed minimum stipend for FY26 is on par with OSU and meets the cost of living estimate set by UC International, it falls below other cost of living calculators investigated by the task force. The task force urges that the UC International cost of living figure should be

¹² UC International, Cost and Finances, Graduate Programs, by college, <https://www.uc.edu/about/international/admissions/cost.html#grad>

¹³ OSU Graduate School Handbook, GSH Section 9 - Graduate Associates, Terms of Appointment, Reappointment, or Termination - 9.2, Stipend. <https://gradsch.osu.edu/graduate-school-handbook-gsh/gsh-section-9-graduate-associates>

considered as a starting point for this annual re-assessment, keeping in mind that benefit to academic progression, teaching, and research that comes from a student who may devote their undivided effort to these pursuits, rather than seeking piecemeal financial support to pay for basic necessities and expected academic expenses (such as a conference presentation).

University investment is absolutely necessary for this raise to move forward. To reach the proposed minimum stipend amount will require the university to provide additional funds for University Graduate Assistantship (UGA) stipends, as well as short-term gap funding to raise stipends for any grant-supported student paid below the proposed minimum. Colleges and programs who are already paying the current (FY2025) minimum cannot afford to raise stipend rates while maintaining their current number of funded students.

The option of cutting GA positions as a way to raise GA stipends without increasing the budget would result in decreased enrollment, especially in PhD programs. Moreover, given that GA stipends fund graduate students' research and teaching work, to cut the number of funded students would cut UC's research productivity and programs' course offerings. To ensure that UC doctoral programs are able to offer competitive stipends to attract the top graduate student talent, critical to fulfilling research and teaching missions, it is imperative that the university invest in doctoral funding.

2.B. Replace Rigid and Complicated "174 Rule" with Policy Based on Terms of Funding Received

Many university graduate awards are underwritten by university funds allocated by the Graduate College ("general funds") to each college, which are then awarded to students by the individual programs. These "general funds" include "Graduate Scholarship (GS)" funds and "University Graduate Assistantship (UGA)" funds.

The current policy to limit financial support from "general funds" is known as the [174 Graduate Credit Rule](#). The 174 rule is a UC-specific policy made in reaction to the eligibility criteria for State of Ohio graduate student subsidy funds:

Subsidy Ineligible, Graduate Student Exceeding Credit Hour Limit (IG):
Enrollments by graduate students who, by the preceding term, have earned more than 260 quarter or 174 semester credit hours are designated ineligible. A student will be credited with 51 quarter or 34 semester credit hours if that student

has already earned a master's degree from another institution. Note professional level credit hours are not included.¹⁴

It is unknown when UC implemented the university-wide policy that, “Any student who becomes ineligible to receive state subsidy is not eligible to receive general funds financial aid (i.e., a university stipend and/or tuition).” We are not aware of any other public institution in the state of Ohio with a similar policy.

Many students are unclear where they stand regarding this limit, and program directors and staff members are often unsure how many semesters of funding their current students have left. The policy is lengthy, with many factors to consider when calculating how many semesters of financial support a student may be able to receive. As the policy centers on total credit hours, a student who takes additional course work above the required minimum to maintain funding (for example, to earn a graduate certificate) may be unaware that they have shortened their eligibility to receive financial aid for general funds. For programs with limited grant funding and/or endowed funding, students may be entirely funded through these general funds, including their stipend, tuition scholarship, and [GSHI Award](#) to cover their student health insurance premium.

A policy to limit funding from general funds is still needed, but any replacement must be easier for students, program directors, and program staff to understand where students stand in terms of eligibility and when they can expect to hit the limit. In tandem with a new funding limit policy, the university should invest in programming and other tools to increase the number of grants and improve grant success for securing funding for graduate student financial support.

The task force proposes limiting stipend support from general funds by the number of terms, not by the number of credits as in the current 174 rule. Furthermore, the task force recommends that separate limits be set up for master's degrees, terminal degrees (i.e., EdS, MFA, and MSW), and doctoral degrees.

Under the new policy, programs would be able to fund students who have reached the general funds funding limit with other monies, such as grants, external fellowships, endowed funds, etc. In addition, students who receive external funding in the early years of graduate program would still be eligible to receive the set years of general funds funding in the later years, allowing for flexibility not offered under the current 174

¹⁴ State of Ohio, Department of Higher Education, Student Enrollment (SN) File, Definitions and Descriptions of Data Fields, Student Subsidy Eligibility Status, <https://highered.ohio.gov/data-reports/hei-system/hei-file-doc/hei-enrollment/hei-sn#DefinitionsandDescriptionsofDataFields>.

rule. We recommend that an extension option should also be available to accommodate unexpected situations.

Note: Following the conclusion of the task force's work, the Graduate College Policy Committee, another [Graduate Council subcommittee](#), continued to work on a funding limitation policy to replace the 174 rule.

Recommendation 3: Competitive Analysis for Additional Funding

The UC College of Medicine completed a competitive analysis for their doctoral programs in October 2023, and as a result of that analysis, many graduate programs raised their GA stipends. The funding for these higher stipends was handled internally to the college. The task force recognizes that many doctoral programs at UC are not in the financial position to fund higher stipends for their new and returning students, nor are they in the position to fund other strategies that would improve their recruitment and retention efforts.

It is imperative that the university invests additional funding to support doctoral programs and their students, and this task force recommends that these funds be allocated through a competitive analysis program:

1. Each doctoral program should conduct a competitive analysis that compares the program's funding to the funding of 5-10 peer institutions.
2. Programs that do not compare favorably to peers should apply for a pot of additional short-term (4-year) funding. The application should articulate and justify the need for additional funding, along with suggestions for metrics that can be used to assess the success of the additional funding at the conclusion of the additional funding period.
3. During the fourth year of receiving this additional funding, programs should provide a report that assesses the success of the additional funding along with a revised competitive analysis.

This process would allow programs to advocate for financial support where it is most needed and would be most impactful – for example, funding for additional students to allow program growth; funding for higher stipends and scholarships; funding to provide additional part-time scholarships in non-PhD programs; funding for student relocation; and funding for student conference travel and other professional development.

Recommendation 4: Changes to and Standardization of Award Processes and Policies Across University Graduate Programs

To promote student success, reduce confusion, and improve reporting capabilities, the task force recommends the following changes and standardizations for graduate student awards across the university:

1. Require that assistantship funding comes with a scholarship. Currently, there is no university-wide requirement that a graduate assistantship stipend must include tuition support, and college-level policies vary widely. For all graduate assistantship appointments (regardless of student's degree level), the GA must receive a tuition scholarship that is at least commensurate with the assistantship load. For a 0.5 FTE (20 hour/week) appointment, the student would receive a tuition scholarship that covers 100% the instructional fee, campus life fee, general fee, non-resident surcharge (if applicable), and international student fee (if applicable); the ITIE would not be covered, and it would be the cost for the student to pay out-of-pocket. For a 0.25 FTE (10 hours/week) appointment, at minimum, a tuition scholarship would be provided to cover half of all fees other than the ITIE fee; and so on.
2. Standardize GA appointment periods, with set start/end dates. In general, these standardized lengths and start/end dates should only be deviated from due to compelling, unavoidable reasons, such as international student who arrives late, due to a visa delay.
3. Provide new GAs with their first stipend payment earlier. As noted in the [Pressing Need for Relocation/Start-Up Funding section](#), graduate students face steep start-up costs when relocating to Cincinnati and starting a graduate program. They often incur these costs in July and August, while not receiving their first paycheck until early September, causing many students to incur debt while also navigating challenging transitions. This delay in payment is especially burdensome for international students and any out-of-state students arriving via plane (and thus are severely restricted in what they can bring), as well as students lacking financial support from family or other means to cover these expenses up front. Any solution to this issue would require partnering with UC Central Human Resources.
4. Establish standardized language (scholarship, fellowship, stipend, TA v. RA v. administrative GA, graduate assistantship versus graduate assistant, etc.) for awards to

provide clarity and establish clear expectations for programs to manage these awards and enforce university eligibility criteria. As part of this, minimum requirements for a position to be categorized as a graduate assistantship, as opposed to an hourly graduate student worker, must be established.

5. Require standard offer letter templates for all tuition scholarships and GA appointment awards. While a requirement currently exists for awards from “general funds,” this requirement is currently unenforceable due to no central repository of offer letters to audit. No requirements exist for awards funded via other sources. As such, students may be unclear on award terms, such as funding amount and duration, eligibility for the [GSHI Award](#) to cover the student health insurance premium, and award eligibility criteria.

6. Establish a central repository of offer letter data, which will capture information in searchable fields. This lack of central repository hinders efforts to address graduate student questions and concerns. When students seek assistance with their financial aid and bill, they often reach out to offices, faculty, and staff members who do not have access to the award offer letters.

For example, when students contact Enrollment Services with question about their financial aid and bill, the staff can only report on what has been entered into Catalyst, and other questions must be directed back to the program (ex., verifying award amount is correct, clarifying out-of-pocket expenses, confirming eligibility criteria has been met). In these cases, the student is often unsure who to direct their questions to within the program. Unresolved issues with financial aid can lead to late fees, registration holds due to unpaid balances, and in the most extreme circumstances, revocation of an international student’s visa due to the inability to register as the result of a registration hold due to an unpaid bill.

Establishing a central repository will benefit students and graduate programs (especially during transitions in program leadership or staff members), and it will allow units including Enrollment Services, Financial Aid, the Bursar, and HR to operate more efficiently and take more proactive measures to manage graduate students’ financial aid and GA employment. A central repository will allow for accurate reporting and data analysis, which the Graduate College and academic colleges need to manage award funds and advocate for additional graduate student support.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The University of Cincinnati is one of a small number of universities still seeing enrollment growth. UC's growth in doctoral programs is small, and not across the board (see [Doctoral Counts, by College and Degree Type](#) for Fall 2023 and Fall 2024). Doctoral education is necessary for UC's research mission and classification. For the [2025 Carnegie Classifications](#), "the threshold will be set at \$50 million in total R&D spending and 70 doctoral research degrees." UC awarded 280 research doctorates in the 2022-2023 academic year and UC's [research expenditures](#) were \$615 million in FY22 and [\\$699 million](#) in FY23. In addition, UC professional doctoral programs play a key role in educating professionals in the Cincinnati region.

As part of Next Lives Here, the [NEXT Graduate Scholars pathway](#) "focuses on partnering across the institution to innovate in the graduate education space. Examining our student needs and institutional structures, supporting student success, and pursuing opportunities to strategically enhance graduate education are foundational to creating a new paradigm for public research education." Key to this task force are the directives to focus on "Recruitment & Onboarding: Create a frictionless experience for students before and after they arrive at UC," and "Student Success: Support students in all aspects of graduate life through efforts such as stipends, mental health support, mentoring, and international student services." As noted earlier in this report, one of the critical points of friction for recruitment and onboarding is the financial offer, both in terms of the amount and in terms of the lack of timely funds to support students in their relocation to Cincinnati and onboarding into the new doctoral program. The recommendation to raise doctoral stipends is in line with the student support directive to support graduate students, not only in terms of their financial wellness, but also to alleviate the impact that financial burdens can take on mental and physical well-being.

UC cannot maintain its doctoral enrollment, teaching and research efforts, and graduation numbers without investing in doctoral education. This investment must come centrally. While some of the task force's recommendations, especially those regarding changes to policy and procedure, can be taken up by the Graduate College (and there is already movement on some recommendations via Graduate Council subcommittees), existing funding sources for doctoral students are already stretched too thin. Changes to policy and procedure alone cannot overcome issues caused by a lack of funding.

Our doctoral students getting by on meager financial support are not thriving – they are struggling to make ends meet and focused on how they will pay their bills, draining their time, energy, and attention from their doctoral program. UC has a choice to scramble to maintain the status quo, or to invest in its doctoral students and the university's future – for when our doctoral students thrive, our university will thrive.

Appendices

Supplemental Table: Fall 2023 Doctoral Graduate Assistantship and Fellowship Funding

Table 3. Funding for Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships for the 2,418 doctoral students as of the fall 2023 semester.

	No Fellowship Funding	1 Semester Fellowship Funding	9 Month Fellowship Funding	12 Month Fellowship Funding
No Assistantship Funding	39.5% (n=955)	1.0% (n=25)	0.5% (n=12)	1.7% (n=42)
1 Semester Assistantship Funding*	6.2% (n=149)	0.6% (n=15)	0.3% (n=8)	0.4% (n=10)
9 Month Assistantship Funding*	10.5% (n=254)	2.1% (n=50)	0.7% (n=17)	0.3% (n=8)
12 Month Assistantship Funding*	30.1% (n=728)	2.4% (n=9)	2.8% (n=68)	0.7% (n=18)

*This includes all GA appointments from 1-20 hours/week (0.025-0.5 FTE).

Supplemental Table: Benchmarking Big 12 Institutions

Table 4. Big 12 Benchmarking of 9 Month 0.5 FTE Stipends and 9 Month Cost of Housing from MIT and EPI Cost of Living Calculators

	9 Month 0.5 FTE Minimum Rate (24-25 AY)	MIT 9 Month Cost of Housing (2024)	EPI 9 Month Cost of Housing (2024)
University of Cincinnati	\$16,999.20	\$7,266.75	\$6,579.00
Big 12 - 1	\$26,141.02	\$14,338.50	\$12,573.00
Big 12 - 2	\$25,565.00	\$13,208.25	\$12,096.00
Big 12 - 3	\$24,000.00	\$9,936.75	\$9,459.00
Big 12 - 4	\$21,750.00	\$8,196.00	\$7,074.00
Big 12 - 5	\$19,594.16	\$6,984.00	\$6,777.00
Big 12 - 6	\$19,100.00	\$7,218.00	\$7,200.00
Big 12 - 7	\$15,000.00	\$7,752.75	\$7,029.00
Big 12 - 8	\$12,000.00	\$14,094.75	\$12,042.00
Big 12 - 9	\$8,500.00	\$7,156.50	\$6,939.00
Big 12 - 10	\$7,784.42	\$7,015.50	\$6,534.00
Big 12 - 11	\$6,300.00	\$9,639.75	\$9,270.00
Big 12 - 12	vary by department	\$9,824.25	\$9,009.00
Big 12 - 13	vary by department	\$6,730.50	\$6,282.00
Big 12 - 14	vary by department	\$12,401.25	\$11,331.00
Big 12 - 15	unknown	\$7,781.25	\$6,390.00

Notes: Big 12 Universities are masked and sorted descending by highest 9 Month 0.5 FTE. Stipend minimums were sourced by public websites and were adjusted to standardize as best as possible to a 9 month 0.5 FTE stipend total given the variability of ways stipends are presented. Cost of housing from the MIT and EPI cost of living calculators represent estimates of housing costs for 1 adult and no children. The 9 month cost of housing from the MIT calculator was calculated as the (annual rate / 12) * 9. The 9 month cost of housing from the EPI calculator was calculated as the monthly rate * 9.

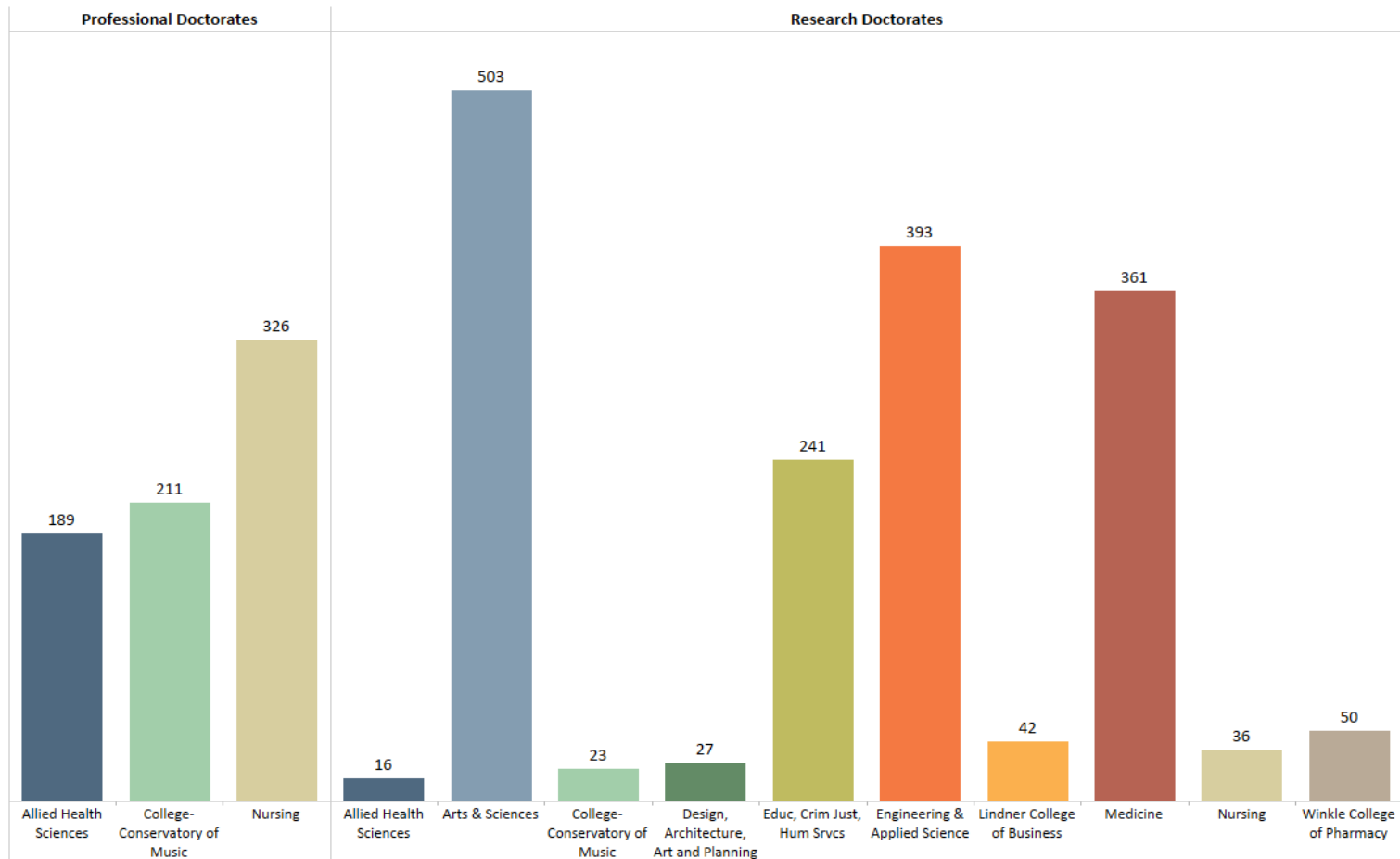
Supplemental Table: Benchmarking Top UC Doctoral Competitors

Table 5. University of Cincinnati Doctoral Top Competitors Benchmarking for 9 Month 0.5 FTE Stipends and 9 Month Cost of Housing from MIT and EPI Cost of Living Calculators

	9 Month 0.5 FTE Minimum Rate (24-25 AY)	MIT 9 Month Cost of Housing (2024)	EPI 9 Month Cost of Housing (2024)
University of Cincinnati	\$16,999.20	\$7,266.75	\$6,579.00
Top Doctoral Competitor - 1	\$34,000.00	\$17,468.25	\$19,107.00
Top Doctoral Competitor - 2	\$30,732.75	\$18,047.25	\$18,225.00
Top Doctoral Competitor - 3	\$25,565.00	\$13,208.25	\$12,096.00
Top Doctoral Competitor - 4	\$25,500.00	\$12,371.25	\$10,962.00
Top Doctoral Competitor - 5	\$24,056.00	\$11,055.00	\$10,332.00
Top Doctoral Competitor - 6	\$22,347.00	\$ 8,679.75	\$7,578.00
Top Doctoral Competitor - 7	\$22,000.00	\$7,472.25	\$7,353.00
Top Doctoral Competitor - 8	\$21,913.23	\$6,886.50	\$7,146.00
Top Doctoral Competitor - 9	\$20,600.00	\$8,225.25	\$7,758.00
Top Doctoral Competitor - 10	\$19,000.00	\$12,401.25	\$11,331.00
Top Doctoral Competitor - 11	\$17,100.00	\$7,476.75	\$7,533.00
Top Doctoral Competitor - 12	\$17,000.00	\$ 9,079.50	\$7,686.00

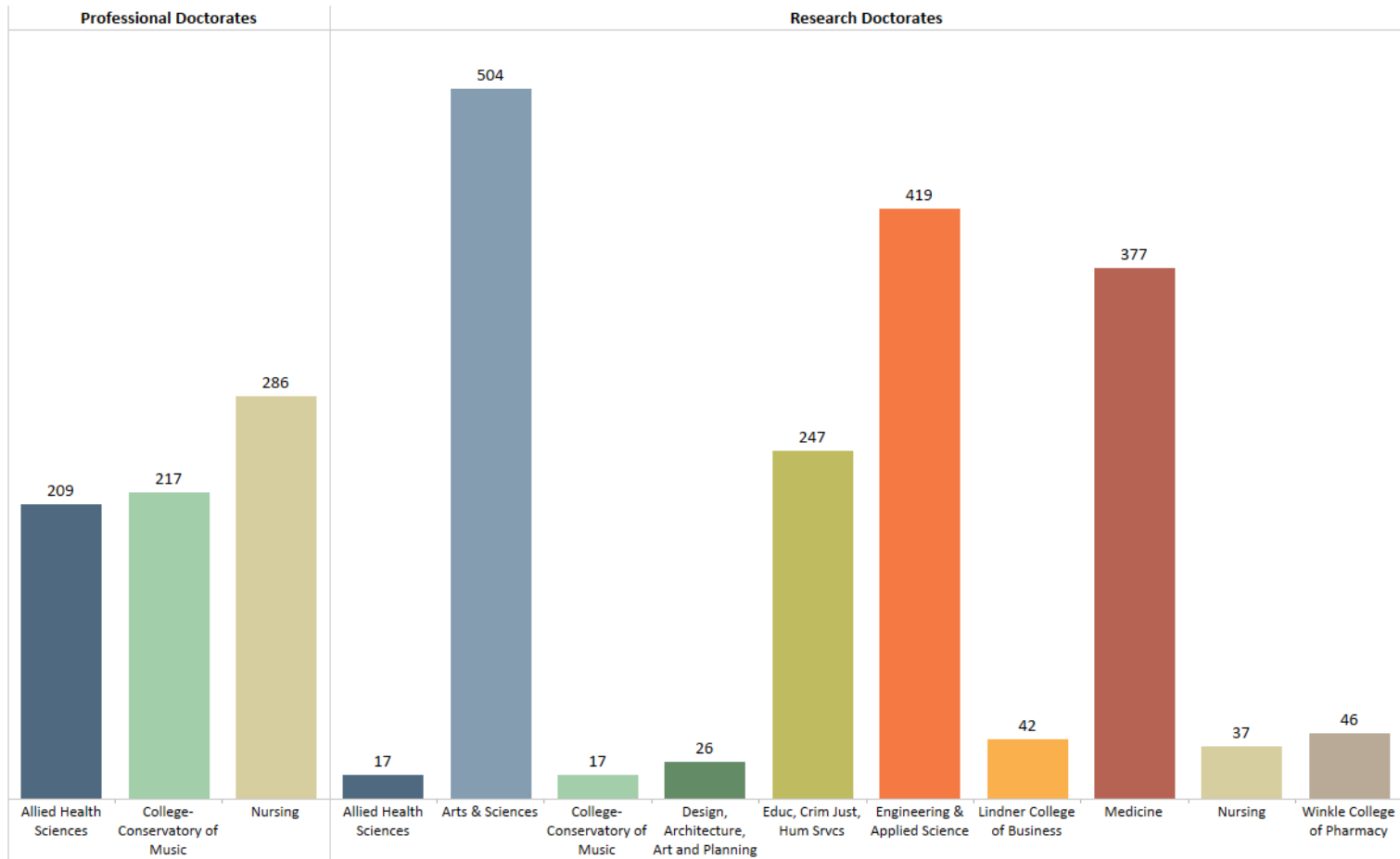
*Note that Top Doctoral Competitors are masked and were determined as universities with the highest enrollment for UC-admitted doctoral students within the last three years from the National Student Clearinghouse. Stipend minimums were sourced by public websites and were adjusted to standardize as best as possible to a 9 month 0.5 FTE stipend total given the variability of ways stipends are presented. Cost of housing from the MIT and EPI cost of living calculators represent estimates of housing costs for 1 adult and no children. The 9 month cost of housing from the MIT calculator was calculated as the $(\text{annual rate} / 12) * 9$. The 9 month cost of housing from the EPI calculator was calculated as the $\text{monthly rate} * 9$.

Fall 2023 Doctoral Counts by College and Degree Type



Total of 2,418 doctoral students enrolled in the fall 2023 term.

Fall 2024 Doctoral Counts by College and Degree Type



Total of 2,444 doctoral students in the fall 2024 term.

Cost Breakdown of Graduate Students at UC CoM

Fady Eid

3rd year PhD Student | Neuroscience Graduate Program | HSGA President

Office of Graduate Education (OGE) Meeting

Survey Questions

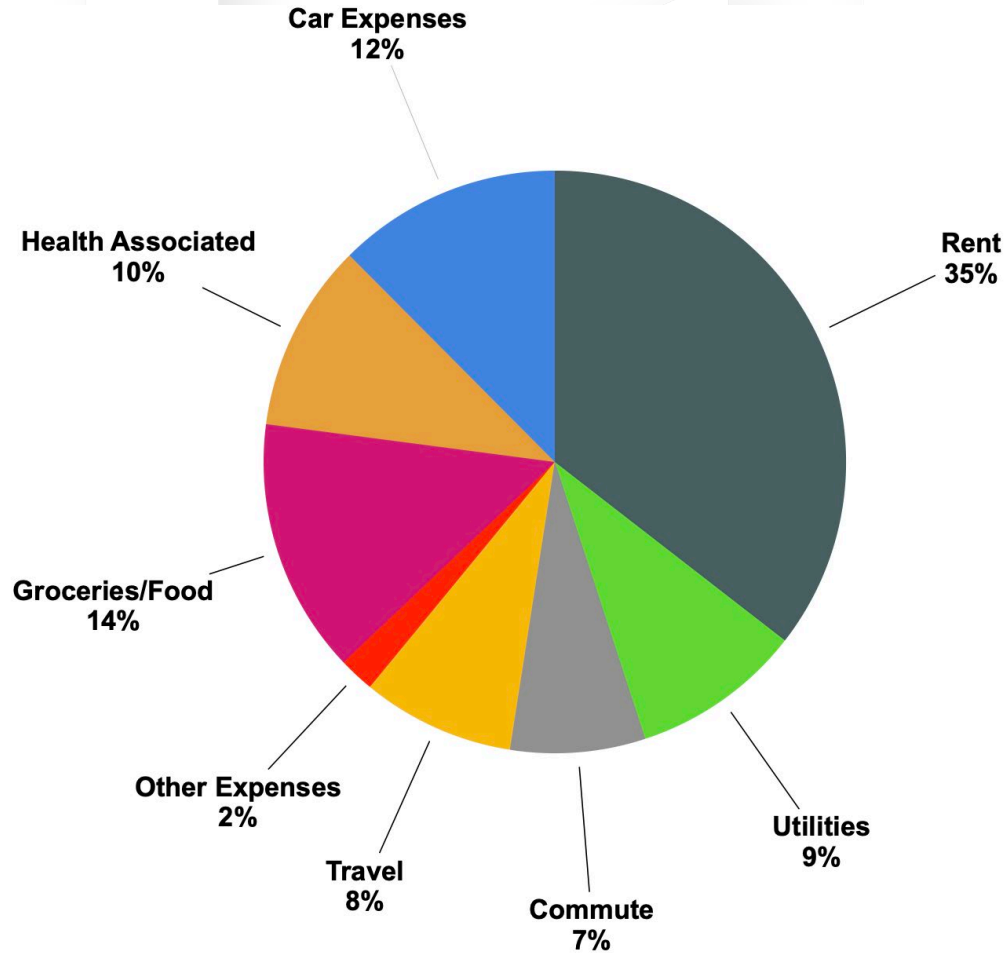
Demographic Questions

- What is your program?
- Are you an international student?
- Do you consider your neighborhood to be a safe environment? Elaborate on your point.
- On average, how much time do you spend **one-way** commuting on a **daily basis**? Please specify walk, drive, and/or public transportation.

Cost Questions

- Rent (2023)
- Rent (2024)
- Utilities (gas/electric/renter's insurance/trash/internet/water...)
- Groceries/food
- Work commute costs (gas, public transportation, travel)
- Car payments (insurance, maintenance, parking)
- Health costs (medications, copays, procedures)
- Travel commute costs

Average Living Cost of a Student (per year)

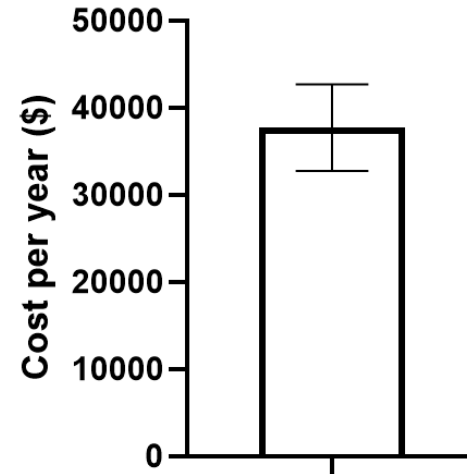


Additional Expenses (per year)

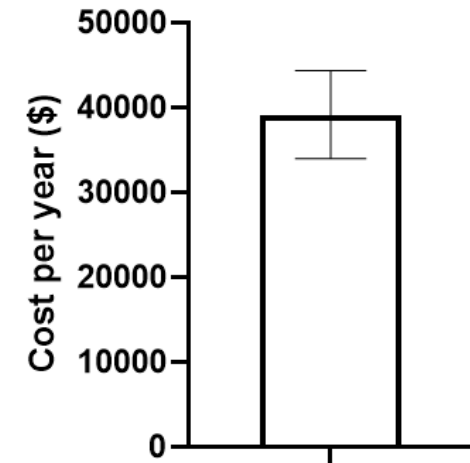
Private student loans (deferment runs out after 4 years): \$2,000

Pet Costs: ~\$1,209 (33% of students)

Dependents: ~\$9,420 (17% of students)



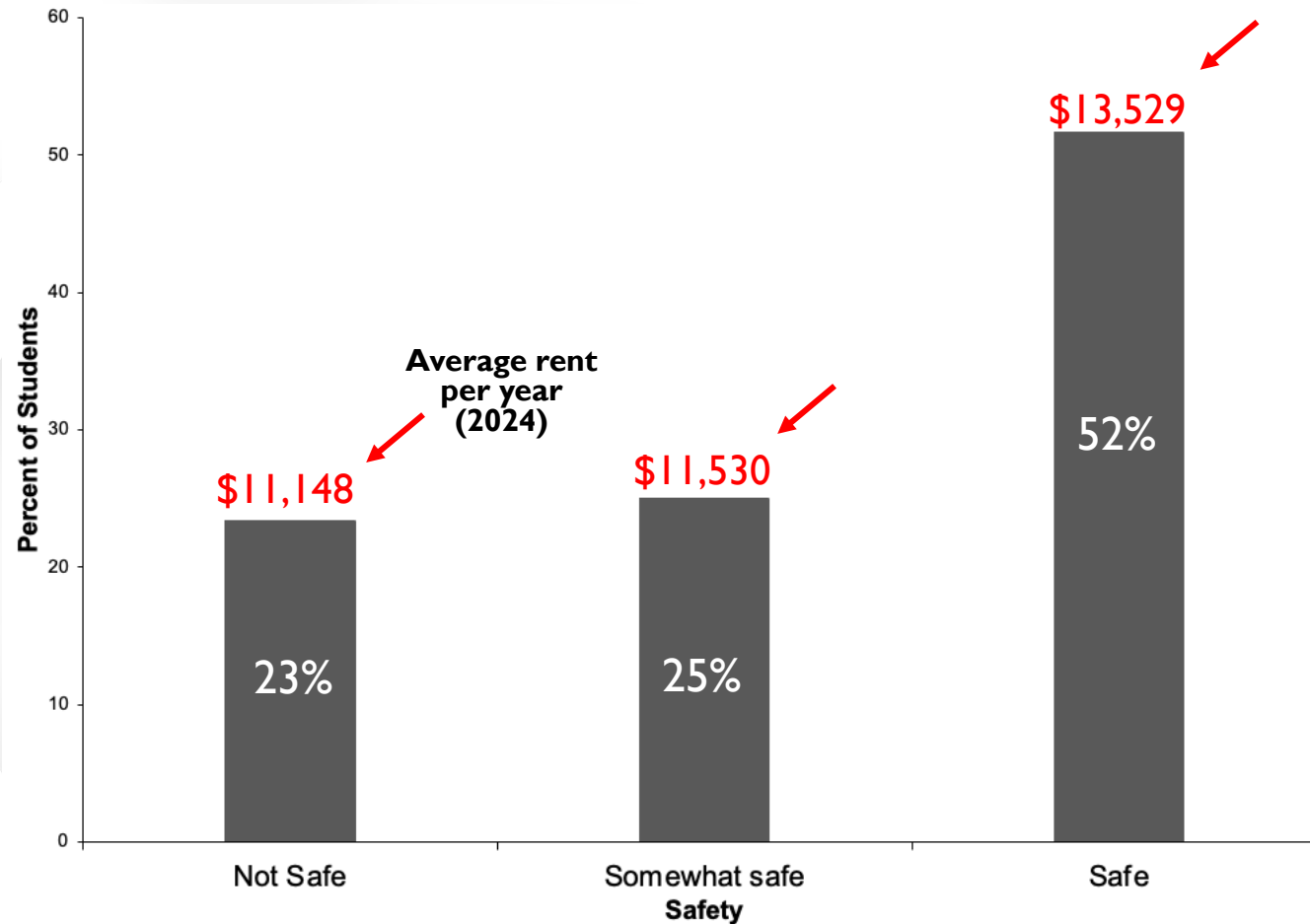
Average total cost per student: \$36,295



Average total cost per student with additional expenses: \$39,668

Rent comprises 35% of the stipend allocation.

Neighborhood Safety



Data suggests a relationship between neighborhood safety and housing costs.

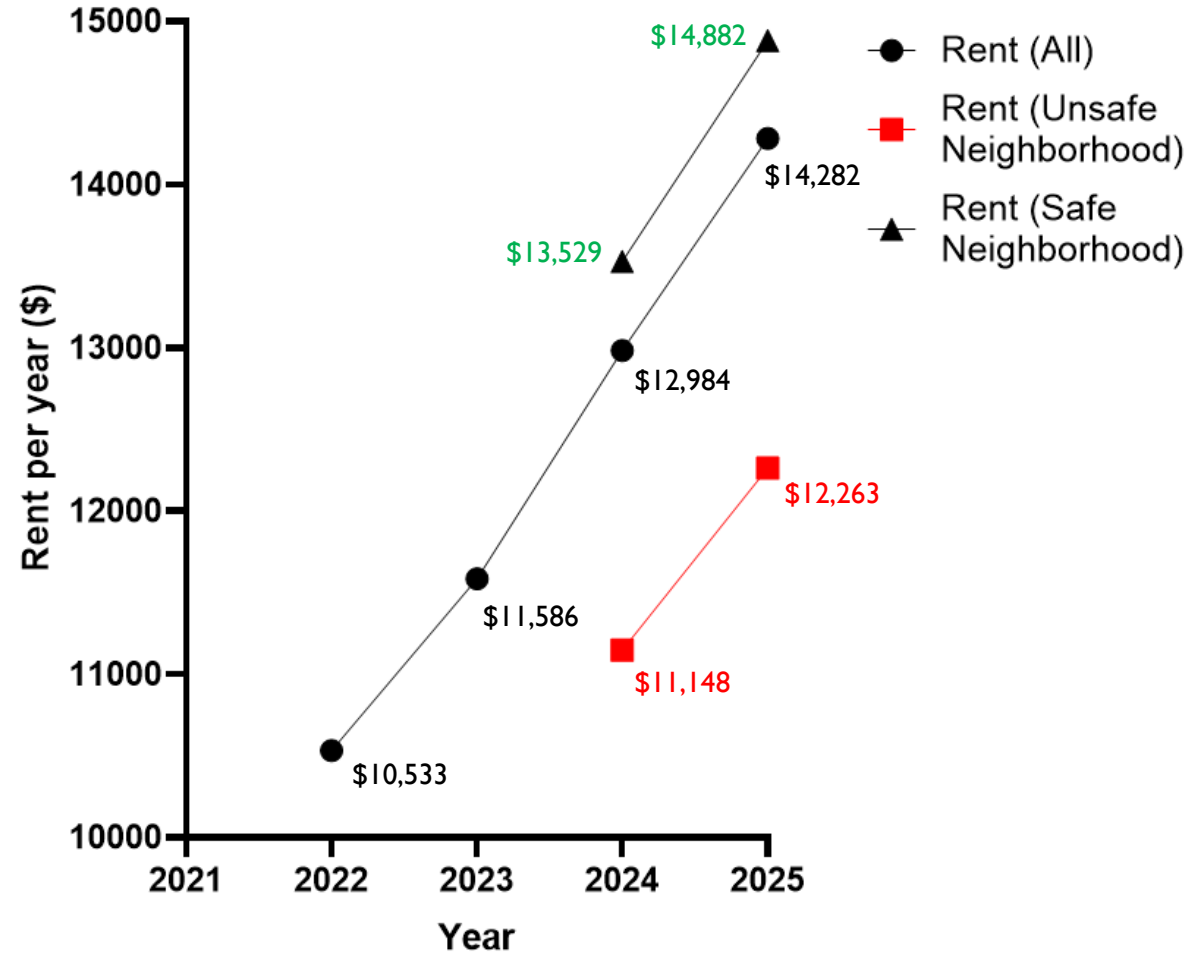
Neighborhood Safety – Testimonies

- “**No**, there are a lot of car theft. They raised the rent by 30% at our previous place so we moved to a cheaper apartment that has a lot more crime.”
- “**No**. It’s not inherently unsafe, but it does not feel safe. I wouldn’t walk around alone at night. My car has been broken into before. My neighbor’s window was shot around Thanksgiving 2 years ago from misdirected gang violence.”
- “**No**, there is typically a shooting every 3-4 months on across the street.”
- “Yes and **no**. I am near christ but the park down the street has recently had a few disturbances, like a drive by shooting and the on the Fourth of July some kids shot roman candles at my apartment while I was outside.”
- “Clifton is **okay**, it’s well-lit and there are lots of people around (many are students), but there’s a lot of robbery, car theft, and shootings around the campus. As a female runner, I wouldn’t run around here after dark by myself.”

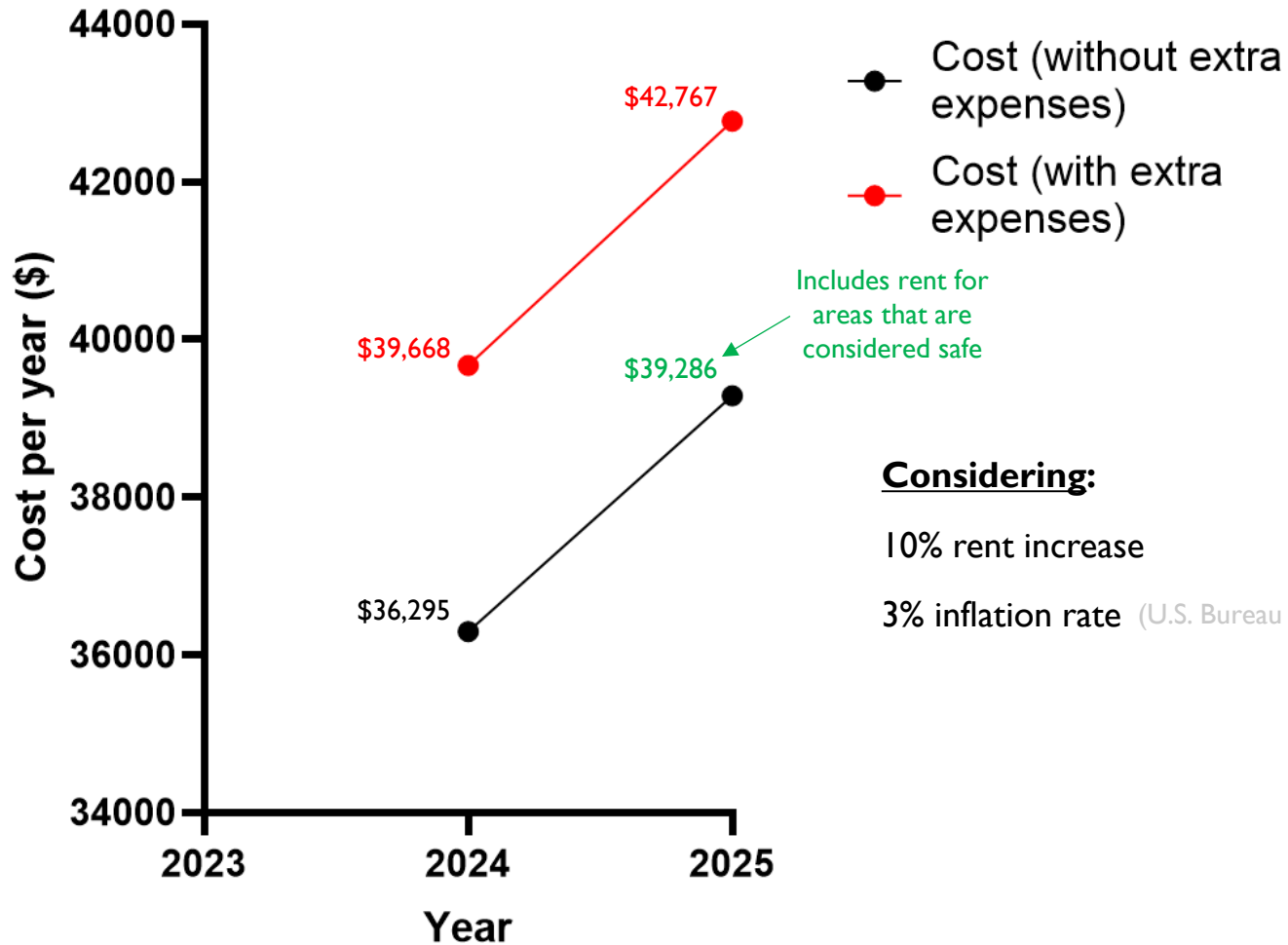
Projected Rent Costs

Average Rent (2022): \$10,533
Average Rent (2023): \$11,586 } ↑ 9.97%
Average Rent (2024): \$12,984 } ↑ 11.37%

Students in safe neighborhoods pay higher rents compared to those in unsafe neighborhoods.



Projected Living Cost of a Student (2025)



Additional Expenses (per year)

Private student loans (deferment runs out after 4 years): \$2,000

Pet Costs: ~\$1,209 (33% of students)

Dependents: ~\$9,420 (17% of students)

Conclusion(s)

- Rent comprises 35% of the stipend allocation.
- A relationship exists between neighborhood safety and housing cost.
- Rent increases by ~10%.
- Inflation rate ~3%.

Proposed increase: \$36,295 – \$39,286