

"I take home \$1263/month. In chemistry, you work 60 hours/week. That means I take home \$5.26 per hour after taxes." (Less than NC minimum wage) - Chemistry PhD student

MAKE GRADUATE EDUCATION AT UNC SYSTEM SCHOOLS A BUDGETARY PRIORITY

Graduate education at North Carolina's public universities is in danger. UNC-Chapel Hill alone has suffered \$231 million in cuts over the last four years. As the main representative body of graduate and professional students at UNC-CH, **we are feeling the severity of these cuts!** This document outlines the negative changes in the NC system due to these cuts.

Loss of Key Faculty Members – In 2011 alone, among those faculty receiving offers to join another university or institution, UNC-CH lost nearly 75% of those individuals. **As graduate students, this means we are not only losing our teachers, but our professional mentors and national leaders.** In a 2012 UNC faculty survey, compensation and teaching work load were among the top answers for leaving. Both stem from salary freezes and added classroom time imposed on faculty largely due to the repeated state budget cuts.

Frozen Graduate Student Teaching Assistant Compensation – The base compensation for teaching assistantships at UNC-CH has been stagnant at \$14,700/yr for four years due to cuts in the state supported instructional budget. Cost of living is always increasing, and many students and their families are finding it difficult to make ends meet. Many are forced to take out federal loans which are now unsubsidized - in addition to those from their undergraduate education. Moreover, upfront tuition costs and ever-increasing debt to follow is making graduate education less of a possibility for North Carolinians.

Shrinking of our Strongest Programs – Departments at UNC have less money to support graduate students on teaching assistantships with institutional budget cuts. As a result, departments such as Chemistry, English, and Political Science have begun admitting fewer graduate students. With fewer incoming students, current students are required to teach more course sections without diminishing their research responsibilities. Beyond delaying their own graduation, **graduate students are necessary to perform the research funded by millions of dollars in federal grants** - research that creates new products, medicines, and companies.

WHY SUPPORT GRADUATE EDUCATION IN NORTH CAROLINA?

Jobs, Jobs, Jobs – Discoveries from institutional research have led to countless start-up companies and new products. **New enterprise from research means new jobs for the state of North Carolina.** For this reason, graduate education has proven positive returns on investment.

Filling Voids in the Workforce – Many companies, especially STEM-related companies like those in Research Triangle Park and Charlotte, require employees with highly specific skills set and knowledge. **Graduate school provides the knowledge that enables these jobs to be filled.** Thus, funding graduate education ensures the persistence of these companies.

We make just enough to live on, but not much beyond (and certainly not enough to buy each semester's books). For those of us without family support (who can't afford a car, much travel, or television), even a small increase is an extraordinary amount of money." - Religious Studies PhD student