

FINAL REPORT:  
2016 GRADUATE STUDENTS WITH  
CHILDREN TASK FORCE

Submitted by  
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on behalf of the Task Force

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Northwestern



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# The Graduate Students with Children Task Force Membership

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## Acknowledgements

As we conclude this assessment, we want to acknowledge, with thanks, the contributions of individuals across the institution. We sincerely appreciate the Northwestern University Student Parent Alliance, a group of students, faculty, staff and community members working to promote better resources for student parents at Northwestern. Members of this group met with the Provost, Executive Vice President, Dean of The Graduate School, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Vice President for Human Resources in 2015 to offer input on resources and policies that would help PhD student parents balance academic and family responsibilities. Following this conversation, the Provost and Executive Vice President appointed the task force and our journey began.

We offer our sincere appreciation to our colleagues across the institution who came together with us to engage in this important work. We thank Dan Linzer and Nim Chinniah for their leadership in convening this group. We also thank Jean Shedd and Pam Beemer for guiding our efforts throughout the year.

We would also like to thank the Graduate Leadership & Advocacy Council, Luke Figora, Marcy Hochberg, John D'Angelo and Carrie West, for their support and advisement as the task force worked to develop the following recommendations.

A special thank you to members of the Office of Human Resources and The Graduate School who provided background and context and discussed with us current challenges and opportunities. A very special thank you to Bridget Resetco for her work to organize and document the work of the task force.

## Executive Summary

Graduate students are requesting access to affordable, flexible, quality childcare and a family-friendly environment. These resources are so integral that they have become a factor in students' selection processing when choosing their graduate school. Many of Northwestern's peer universities offer similar programs and services to support students with families. Graduate student parents are a relatively small, but growing number in our student population. Although Northwestern has seen relatively few undergraduate student parents, we must be prepared to anticipate changes in all aspects of our student demographic. Northwestern has a unique opportunity to position itself as a leader in fostering a family-friendly, inclusive culture by understanding the needs of its' graduate student parents and providing comprehensive support for them.

Many factors contribute to the challenges that graduate student parents face. During their studies, many graduate students are living on limited incomes, are in prime childbearing years, may have limited support systems, such as family living in other states or even countries, and are dedicating considerable time and talent to their academic studies. Considering the length of the path to achieve a PhD, these students are at Northwestern for five to seven years, on average. It is also important to note that the number of international students who have families are on the rise. International students with families feel these challenges more acutely. All students across the institution will benefit from a culture that values and supports both their family needs and scholarly pursuits.

There are many reasons to be responsive to the needs of this group. Graduate students are significant members of the University community. They contribute to the success of the institution through research, teaching, and academic accomplishments. The ability of Northwestern to attract top notch faculty is correlated with the quality of its graduate students. In addition, this is a group with unusually promising futures who will likely become tomorrow's donors. Creating a positive and supportive experience while they are at Northwestern will serve to foster a sense of loyalty and commitment to the future of the institution.

Finally, by providing the necessary support and resources for women and all parents, Northwestern paves the way for them to succeed on a level playing field alongside their peers who do not have family responsibilities. As a leader in creating a family friendly culture, Northwestern not only leads with humanitarian values, it encourages students, regardless of their personal situation, to flourish.

# Introduction

## CONTEXT

In September 2015, Provost Dan Linzer and Executive Vice President Nim Chinniah appointed a task force to assess initiatives in place to support The Graduate School students who are parents, and to develop recommendations for enhancing the overall experience for graduate student parents at Northwestern. This task force is chaired jointly by Sarah McGill, Senior Associate Dean in The Graduate School, and Lori Anne Henderson, Director of Work, Life & Family Resources, Office of Human Resources. Task force members include faculty, graduate students, and administrative staff appointed by the Provost and Executive Vice President. The group engaged in discussion and research throughout the Fall 2015 and Winter 2016 with the charge to provide a report to the Provost and Executive Vice President in Spring 2016 with final findings and recommendations.

As a result of peer benchmarking, conversations with key stakeholders across the university, and an in depth discussion amongst our diverse and informed task force members, a set of findings and recommendations has been established for consideration. Many of the findings of the task force are consistent with recommendations provided by the Student Parent Alliance. The committee aimed to make recommendations that would continue to attract diverse and talented graduate students by offering a more comprehensive package of resources available to assist students with the management of academic and family life. It is our belief that these recommendations will both support our current students and attract a competitive graduate student applicant pool.

## COMMON THEMES

The Graduate Students with Children task force has met seven times. The initial kick-off meeting, held in October, began with a review of the charge by the task force Sponsors, Dan Linzer, Provost, and Nim Chinniah, Executive Vice President. Each subsequent meeting of the task force focused on priority topics, and several consistent themes have emerged throughout our discussions. Topics that emerged as a priority include:

- Consistent branding and clear communication of Northwestern's family support resources;
- Northwestern's family support resources;
- Paid, inclusive accommodations for childbirth and adoption;
- Affordable, flexible childcare;
- Family-friendly campus facilities;
- Affordable health insurance for dependents and financial support;
- A campus culture that supports students who are parents; and
- Better data and overall stewardship of graduate students with children.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Additional attempts were made to secure stakeholder participation and bolster our exploration into graduate student needs. Two focus groups, conversations with faculty, and a site visit to the University of Chicago Family Resource Center proved to be informative to our overall efforts. Twenty-four graduate students across both campuses participated in the focus groups. Overall, students reported appreciation for the opportunity to share their input. Much of the students' feedback reaffirmed the findings and recommendations detailed below. After the focus groups, task force members visited the Family Resource Center at the University of Chicago, which serves as a drop-in center for graduate students who have children. Overall, the task force was inspired by the level of support provided by this center, and we left excited by the possibilities of how we could translate these services at Northwestern. In particular, the task force noted the sense of community that was established through the Family Resource Center. We believe there are steps we can take now, at Northwestern that would offer immediate support for our graduate students. Thoughts and ideas from the task force are further articulated in the "Recommendations" section.

## FINDINGS

We discuss ways in which Northwestern can connect the existing, developed resources and programs that support parents together in a thoughtful way to support graduate student who have children. Further, we are proposing recommendations that will not only enhance resources for graduate students in pursuit of academic and personal goals, but also enable Northwestern to take a leadership role in the support for graduate student parents and families.

A predominant theme consistent in all discussions is the lack of clarity and consistency in how family resources are communicated across the Northwestern community. Graduate students reported that they were often unaware of existing resources because there is not a clearly identified path to locating this information. Indeed, throughout our work, the task force experienced the inconsistency and ambiguity graduate students encounter. Resources are listed on multiple websites, and it is unclear which services graduate students are eligible to use. Going forward, careful thought, coordination, and attention must be paid to the communication of resources so that accessibility is not a barrier to services.

Throughout our conversations, task force members articulated the need for students to have access to a dedicated staff member, such as a family resource advocate, to assist in navigating family-related issues and locating resources available throughout Northwestern. Given the decentralized structure of a university setting, the task force has recommended that a single point of contact be established to ensure better access to services. Through benchmarking and conversations with other institutions we learned of other universities that have identified one point of contact to assist graduate student parents. In some cases, the individual not only works to attend to issues and support graduate students with children, but also provide other kinds of mentorship to graduate students. For instance we learned that the University of Chicago provides a "sounding board" session for graduate students to discuss how to approach conversations and situations with their advisor. This model of mentorship responds to the feedback that we heard from Northwestern graduate students during the

focus groups. For example, many said that they did not feel comfortable discussing maternity and parental concerns with their advisor, even when such matters were related to care of a sick dependent or personal health following delivery complications. They reported feeling concerned about how issues such as parental leave, balancing family and research demands, etc. would impact the advisor's perception of their level of commitment to their studies. Having a dedicated staff member who can advise students on how to navigate these conversations will not only support graduate student parents during time at Northwestern, but may also prove valuable to students in personal endeavors and as they move into professional roles beyond Northwestern.

A key issue identified is the current structure and location of the Office of Work/Life & Family Resources. Most graduate students look to The Graduate School or their department for information, rather than Human Resources. Internet links connecting these resources and offices are often inadequate. It is important to consider creating a structure that allows students to easily identify how to access family resources because some resources requested by graduate students with children, such as financial support for dependent care during conference travel or professional development, are currently available through Northwestern. Additionally, programs and services that support graduate students with family concerns can be more effective if there are regular channels of communication between The Graduate School and the Office of Work/Life & Family Resources.

Members of the task force agreed that in order to fulfill their charge, emphasis on the following recommendations would be critical: communication, staff resources, and location of programs and services. In addition, the task force has set forth recommendations to support topics previously identified, such as access to: paid, inclusive accommodations for childbirth and adoption; affordable, flexible childcare; family-friendly campus facilities; and a campus culture that supports students who are parents.

Following is an overview of findings and recommendations by priority topic areas reviewed by the task force. The task force has considered the following as it relates to preliminary recommendations for each of the topic areas, below.

- A. Communication and Outreach
- B. Campus Facilities
- C. Flexible, Affordable Childcare
- D. Parental Accommodation
- E. Health Insurance & Supplemental Funding

## Recommendations

### **A. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH**

*Recommendation: Establish a single point of contact to ensure better access to family resource services. Clearly communicate resources so that graduate students understand what family support services and programs are available to them.*

#### **Summary of Current Situation**

Communication and branding around the family resource supports available to graduate students were overarching themes throughout the committee's work. Throughout our research and discussions, graduate students expressed confusion about the resources available to support students with children. Websites of various offices that provide resources, such as The Graduate School, Work/Life & Family Resources, and the Women's Center, are inconsistent or unclear about available services or the eligibility requirements for resources. In addition, many graduate students are not aware of the support and resources offered through the Office of Work/Life & Family Resources. Students who were aware of this office expressed confusion about services offered to graduate students; often mistaking the office as a resource only available to staff and faculty. Further confusing graduate students, The Graduate School does not direct students to the Office of Work/Life and Family Resources or Human Resources for resources and support, providing inconsistent messaging around resources available to graduate student parents.

#### **Discussion Points**

Throughout our conversations, task force members articulated the need for students to have access to a trained professional, such as a dedicated family resource advocate, to assist in navigating family-related issues and locating resources available throughout Northwestern and the surrounding community. Given the decentralized structure of a university setting, it can be challenging for students to understand all of the resources available to them when they have a family need, such as childcare or related financial concerns. Students could further benefit from an advocate who can continually assess the changing needs of graduate student parents and advocate within the university system for appropriate resources and benefits. Currently, there is no mechanism for tracking graduate students have with children and assessing their needs. As efforts are made to support this population of students and their families, attention must be paid to developing a way to gather metrics to help evaluate the effectiveness of these current programs resources and the future demand for programs and services.

The task force emphasized the importance of highlighting the services of Work/Life & Family Resources for graduate students, making them convenient and easily accessible.

#### **Moving Forward**

Identify a single point of contact for graduate student parents. Either re-purpose existing resources or recruit for a family resource coordinator position, reporting to the Work/Life & Family Resources office, to work directly with graduate student parents to assess their individual needs, provide education and linkage to resources available through

Northwestern and help students successfully navigate their family/life needs in conjunction with their academic requirements. Consideration should be given to ensure a strong partnership between the family resource coordinator and The Graduate School to help ensure that the family resource coordinator remains informed about applicable policies and processes to support graduate students with work/life issues. This individual can also assist with quantifying the number of graduate student parents who are impacted by these matters and better understanding the scope of these issues.

Going forward, careful thought, coordination, and attention must be paid to the communication of resources so that it is clear what resources graduate students can access. It is recommended that communication materials highlight the services of Work/Life & Family Resources for graduate students. Work is currently underway to refresh the Work/Life & Family Resources communication materials. A targeted communication is being developed specifically for graduate students. By the Fall of 2016, the Work/Life & Family Resources website will identify its programs and services by audience, for example, faculty, staff, post docs, and graduate students. It will also be important for the TGS website to clearly identify all resources for student parents and link to the Office of Work/Life & Family Resources.

### **Further Consideration**

In order to be more strategic about the ways that the Office of Work/Life & Family Resources serves graduate students and the broader university community, it is important to establish channels of communication that can help inform trends and needs among all these diverse groups. Identifying and opening these channels of communication also allows for improved communication about new programs and their impacts. The director of Work/Life is already meeting regularly with the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council and the Faculty Senate Benefits Committee, so it would make sense to identify those meetings and channels of communication that can help inform the work/life strategy as it relates to graduate students. Additionally, this task force recommends that Northwestern consider expanding the existing oversight committee to include representation from The Graduate School and the Provost's Office to provide ongoing feedback and ensure alignment across the University.

## **B. CAMPUS FACILITIES**

*Recommendation: Improve access to lactation spaces on both campuses for graduate student parents.*

### **Summary of Current Situation**

At the time that the task force launched, there were eight lactation rooms serving approximately 3,300 faculty, 6,000 staff and over 10,000 graduate students (includes professional schools). During the past year, three new lactation rooms have been added. One is at 2122 Sheridan Road, near the Graduate Student Commons. There are two rooms now available at 1240 Davis. Lactation rooms are included in plans for the following new buildings: Kresge, Mudd Library, Walter Athletic Complex, Kellogg, Simpson Querry and any planned new construction. The Office of Work/Life Resources has also become aware of many ad hoc lactation rooms that are in place, but not available for broader use. Capacity should be significantly enhanced if these rooms are opened up to the entire Northwestern community.

Although the initial eight lactation rooms are centrally advertised, there is not a consistent practice for accessing these lactation spaces. The current lactation spaces have various procedures for scheduling and entering the rooms. Additionally, there is not currently a registration system that would allow for tracking current usage and areas of high demand. Nursing mothers indicated that lactation spaces are not conveniently located, not easily accessible and sometimes overcrowded. From benchmarking information collected, it is clear that relative to its' peers, Northwestern has fewer lactation spaces available on its campuses.

Feedback from the Student Parent Alliance and the focus groups revealed that a number of graduate student parents resorted to breastfeeding in places that are clearly not adequate for nursing mothers. A few graduate students who work in lab environments, indicated that not having access to an available lactation room sometimes interfered with their research. Others reported that valuable study/research time was spent (sometimes unsuccessfully) trying to access a private lactation space.

Work is underway to improve access to lactation spaces. Prior to the launch of the task force, the University appointed a Common Space Committee, led by Facilities Management. The Common Space Program has engaged a consultant to analyze and improve many common spaces throughout the Evanston and Chicago campuses. This space includes lactation rooms and existing restrooms, with a goal of identifying ways to make them more family-friendly. The Common Space Program aims to set standards for both current and new spaces that will improve accessibility and serve the needs of the community. The Work/Life Director serves on this committee to provide a voice that represents community members with families.

### **Discussion Points**

In addition to the feedback from Student Parent Alliance Report, Graduate Leadership and Advocacy Council Survey and the focus groups, the committee reviewed the current locations and basic guidelines for lactation spaces on campus. Committee members agreed that better metrics about usage are necessary to inform plans for adding lactation spaces on campus. Thought was given to the standards and amenities that should be included in these rooms.

While the committee was encouraged by long-term plans to improve both the amenities offered in lactation rooms as well as the number of rooms available, the committee urged Facilities Management to develop interim/short term solutions that would provide better access for nursing mothers more immediately.

In addition, the committee discussed the challenges that many graduate students face with not having access to other family-friendly facilities on campus, such as family-friendly restrooms or play areas for children while parents are attending meetings on campus. Students who participated in the focus groups said that if there were a family-friendly space on campus, it would allow them to use their time more efficiently and manage both academic and family responsibilities with less stress. Many indicated that the lack of family-friendly spaces and the limited number of lactation rooms on campus created an impression that graduate students who have families are rare, and perhaps even discouraged. These perceptions were reported to contribute to a common feeling of isolation among members of this group. These discussions highlighted the important role that these types of spaces play in creating a positive culture that fosters a sense of community.

### **Moving Forward**

The task force endorses the work and priorities of the Common Space Committee to collaborate with campus partners that are addressing similar challenges.

The following recommendations are supported by the task force:

- It is recommended that the University create new lactation room spaces on campus (both short term and long term) to meet need.

### **Short Term:**

- Develop a set of guidelines and standards for all Northwestern lactation rooms (Complete).
- Encourage adhoc lactation room owners to publicize their spaces so that the entire university community can benefit.
- Identify existing swing spaces in key high volume areas that could be interim lactation rooms.
- Implement WildCARD readers on each of the lactation rooms to ensure a consistent means of access, and to begin to develop metrics to better understand the needs and usage patterns. (The Common Spaces Program is funding this and it is slated for Fall 2016).
- Design a map of lactation rooms that can be overlaid on the existing University maps.
- Request a specific staff/office serve as a central administrator for these spaces.
- Identify opportunities to add changing tables to existing restrooms and identify them as family restrooms. (The Common Spaces Program is evaluating the following restroom spaces for the installation of changing stations: Swift-Cresap, Frances Searle and Annenberg per the task force request).
- Incorporate changing stations into the Common Spaces Standards & Guidelines moving forward.

**Long Term:**

- Through the Common Spaces Program, develop a long term plan to substantially enhance the number of lactation spaces available for the Northwestern community. Leverage the Common Spaces Program to help incentivize the schools and units to appropriate lactation room space.
- Any new construction plans should include a lactation room. (Work is currently underway for lactation rooms in Kresge, the Mudd Library, Walter Athletic Complex, Kellogg, and Simpson Querry.
- Create or use an existing app that identifies lactation spaces on both campuses.
- Designate parking spots for pregnant individuals or individuals with young children.

**Further Consideration**

Consider locations for on-campus drop-in, child care space for graduate students with children. Should the university move forward with introducing a family resource advocate to work with and steward graduate students with children as the task force recommends, this new staff member should be charged with assessing the need for additional programming and services for the drop-in child care space including the establishment of one or more family-friendly meeting spaces where graduate students can meet with advisors/others and bring their child(ren). This individual work under the direction of the Office of Work/Life & Family Resources.

## **C. FLEXIBLE, AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE**

*Recommendation: Offer access to flexible, affordable childcare*

### **Summary of Current Situation**

The Office of Work/Life & Family Resources, currently located within the Office of Human Resources offers many childcare programs for graduate students, including access to a childcare specialist (through a local not-for-profit agency) who can provide referrals and information. As has been previously cited, one of the key challenges identified consistently with regard to these services, is that graduate students are not aware of them and don't know how to access them. Again, graduate students don't typically look to the Office of Human Resources for services.

In addition, although Northwestern currently offers childcare arrangements and subsidies to off-set the high cost of childcare for graduate students, feedback from conversations with graduate students, the Student Parent Alliance, and the Graduate Leadership Advisory Council point to challenges in finding flexible, affordable childcare. Current University-sponsored childcare is not affordable, even with the Northwestern subsidy. Most students don't require full-time care and may be able to find more affordable care closer to home. In addition, many international students are not eligible for childcare subsidies under the current program.

### **Discussion of Proposed Program Enhancements**

After a thorough review of the existing childcare resources, the Student Parent Alliance Report, the Graduate Leadership Advisory Council Survey, benchmarking data and feedback from graduate student focus groups, multiple options to address the existing gaps were discussed. Because each family's need may differ, consideration was given to programs that would provide the most flexibility with regard to the type of care, the location of care and hours of care. Several options were explored and the committee recommends that Northwestern offer portable childcare subsidies that can be used for any licensed childcare center or provider. This option provides graduate students with the possibility of choosing more affordable care beyond what is currently offered through the existing University agreements. When considering the amount of the subsidy, the committee recommends that consideration be given to area market rates, so that students are not spending over 30% of their income on childcare.

### **Proposed Voucher**

- Establish amounts and limits to be used for any licensed care provider or in-home care provider;
- Determine best sliding fee scale model; and
- Determine whether this could be used in conjunction with the Northwestern fee assistance programs.

### **Moving Forward**

Upon program approval and funding allocation, the vouchers could be implemented in the Fall of 2016. The administration of this program would be handled through the Office of Work/Life & Family Resources. This would also reinforce the availability of services for graduate student parents through this office.

### **Further Consideration**

Given the financial circumstances of many graduate students, a model that does not have a reimbursement requirement would be preferable, if possible. It may place a financial burden on the family to have to pay for services and await reimbursement.

As with all of the work/life support programs, attention needs to be given to the communication of these programs so that it is clear, and easily accessible for those who need it. It is recommended that the first year be a pilot year to establish better metrics about the needs and usage.

## D. PARENTAL ACCOMMODATION

*Recommendation: Access to paid, inclusive academic leave for childbirth and adoption.*

### Summary of Current Situation

In summer of 2015, in response to feedback from the Student Parent Alliance, The Graduate School reviewed the current Childbirth Accommodation Policy and obtained benchmarking data from peer institutions on similar policies. The Student Parent Alliance identified that the current policy, implemented in 2013, was restrictive and did not provide appropriate support to new parents. Eligibility was limited to female students who gave birth only, and allowed for only six weeks of leave.

From benchmarking information collected, feedback from the Student Parent Alliance, and conversations with faculty and administration, a revised Parental Accommodation Policy was drafted. The proposed policy covers both parents, including same-sex couples, and extends to both child birth and adoption. In the reviews of the revised policy there was unanimous support for Northwestern assuming a leadership role, comparable to Princeton, in supporting graduate students with children. Conversations endorsed a recommendation to provide students with one quarter of funding, in addition to the standard funding package, as well as a one-year extension of milestones. The recommended approach will ensure that students across all disciplines will have both milestones and funding extended, providing a true accommodation. Further, it was recommended that the institution fund leaves for students funded from external sources, as well. Northwestern senior leadership endorsed the approach.

The revised Parental Accommodation Policy has been shared with the The Graduate School Graduate Student Funding Council, Student Affairs Council, as well as the Graduate Students with Children Taskforce for further input.

### Discussion of Proposed Policy Changes

**Eligibility:** The proposed Graduate Student Parental Accommodation will apply to active students of all gender identities and gender expressions in The Graduate School who experience the birth or adoption of a child for whom they have parental responsibilities. The current policy, updated 5 years ago, was applicable to female students who give birth.

**Funding:** Funded graduate students (graduate assistants, research assistants, teaching assistants, trainees, fellows) who receive tuition and stipend from the University at the time of the requested accommodation, as well as graduate students who are funded from an external source, may request paid leave from their duties for a 12-week accommodation period. The Graduate School will provide all funded students, regardless of funding source, with up to a quarter of additional funding to support the accommodation period.

## **Moving Forward**

The Administrative Board of The Graduate School approved the revised Parental Accommodation Policy in May 2016 and the new policy will go into effect in Fall 2016. The Graduate School will work closely with Directors of Graduate Study, students, and graduate program staff to communicate changes and work thoughtfully through the implementation of the new accommodation.

## **Further Consideration**

Some graduate students have taken some type of parental academic leave during their time at Northwestern. In many cases, the leave was handled internally by the department and was not even reported to The Graduate School. This occurs because the department graduate chair was not aware of the Parental Accommodation. There is a need to better educate departments on policies related to graduate student leave at Northwestern.

Students expressed the need for a support person to help them navigate the accommodation process, including issues such as informing and communicating with professors and making arrangements for concerns such as health insurance and parking. Graduate students reported anxiety about initiating conversation with their professors and advisers about needed flexibility due to pregnancy and parenting. Focus group data revealed that students do not know how to discuss family matters with their advisers. They reported concern about how sharing news about pregnancy, doctor's appointments, or other important milestones such as children's birthdays with advisers, fearing that advisers would question their level of commitment to their studies. Students requested assistance in understanding how to have these conversations. Students, especially female students, noted that knowing how to have these conversations is a life skill that will help them now and in the future. Should Northwestern move forward with identifying a single point of contact for graduate student parents, as suggested earlier, this individual could also coach and mentor students on how to have these conversations.

## E. HEALTH INSURANCE & SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

*Recommendation: Assess supplemental funding and dependent health insurance offerings*

### **Summary of Current Situation**

Northwestern offers various forms of financial support available to graduate students with children. Offerings like The Graduate School Dependent Care Grants and emergency loans are available to provide additional financial assistance. The Dependent Care Grant provides funds to assist PhD and MFA students with dependents so that they may participate, as fully as possible, in professional development opportunities such as learned society meetings, academic conferences, workshops or other Northwestern University events. An emergency loan is intended to assist students in unexpected short-term financial situations. This loan is not related to the student's financial aid award nor the direct expenses associated with attending Northwestern University.

The total number of graduate students applying for and/or receiving dependent care grants each year is surprisingly low, only thirteen in Academic Year 2016. Conferences may last from two to five days (requiring several days of childcare). Given the estimate that there are approximately one hundred graduate students with children, usage for the dependent care grants should be much higher. The low usage is likely due to gaps in the communication and marketing of this resource to students who may want to utilize it. In a previous Graduate Leadership and Advocacy Council survey, it was suggested that not many students knew that this resource was available. Unfortunately, specific data that can distinguish how many The Graduate School students who have children utilize the emergency loan is not available. The lack of information makes it difficult to assess whether the need for this service is met. A financial aid staff member noted that the numbers across campus are generally very low for emergency loan usage. Low usage may be due to the students-in-need requiring larger loans, or may be because they are not able to pay back loans in the sixty-day requirement.

Northwestern provides all graduate students with a platinum level health insurance plan. This is the same plan that is available to dependents of graduate students. The plans for dependents, however, are not subsidized and graduate students must pay annual costs up front in a lump sum. The cost of the plan in 2015/16 is \$3,692. This is a significant amount of funds, at one time, for students. While many students can, and do, put their children on public insurance plans, some international spouses and children are not eligible.

### **Discussion of Proposed Policy Changes**

**Dependent Care Grants:** The group made several suggestions to improve communication and marketing for the Dependent Care Grants. Easy to implement ideas such as linking the application for the Dependent Care Grants to similar applications for Travel Grants, and the like, so that students who apply for one are aware of the other. The task force felt that a review of the process for applying for both Travel Grants and Dependent Care Grants should occur to align the two processes. Finally, examples of 'professional development' should be clearly articulated to help students understand the scope of what Dependent Care Grants can be used to support.

The task force noted that the Faculty Dependent Travel Care Grant offers a max of \$750 per year while the graduate student Dependent Care Grant maxes out at \$500 per year. Since faculty and students are often attending the same types of conferences, the task force recommends that, at a minimum, the student rate be increased to match the faculty rate. Interestingly, usage of this grant by both populations is surprising low.

**Emergency Loans:** The lack of usage and specific information on the individuals utilizing the emergency loans makes it difficult to assess what changes may be needed. As a starting point, the task force recommends that Northwestern look to extend the 60-day repayment period. Benchmarking information suggests that six months to a year seem to be standard, and provide students with flexibility to repay the amount borrowed. Further, efforts must be made to better understand the need for additional financial resources. The task force understands that graduate students with children, especially for international students whose spouses are not permitted to work, do have higher living expenses. What is unclear is the ability of the students to meet the increased costs and understanding of what types of financial support are needed. For instance, grants are more appropriate than loans for students in serious hardship. While The Graduate School, schools, and programs have worked together to provide emergency relief funds on an ad-hoc basis, the task force recognizes that this is not a sustainable solution and often causes the student distress. Further analysis must take place to determine how to move forward.

**Health Insurance:** The task force recognizes the financial burden the large, upfront cost for the dependent health insurance plan places on graduate students. It is recommended that the upfront payment requirement be removed and replaced with a payment plan.

### **Moving Forward**

There are several recommendations that can, and should, be implemented immediately. Improved communication and marketing, alignment of applications and processes, as well as clarifying eligibility requirements can be implemented immediately by The Graduate School. Further, assistance should be provided to graduate students to navigate other options, through the government or private sector, for health care providers.

Items for consideration in the short term include parity between the funding provided to graduate students in receipt of a dependent care grant (\$500) and faculty in receipt of a faculty dependent care grant (\$750). The task force would advocate that a higher rate should be available to graduate students. Similar to the points raised in the section responding to “Flexible and Affordable Childcare,” graduate students are at a different point in their lives related to careers and earning potential, and these differences should be recognized in the

financial support provided. Terms for the emergency loan should also be reviewed and updated to reflect an extended period for repayment. Finally, we recommend that the upfront payment requirement for dependent health insurance be removed and replaced with a payment plan.

### **Further Consideration**

Should the university move forward with introducing a family resource advocate to work with and steward graduate students with children as the task force recommends, this new staff member should be charged with assessing the need for additional financial resources, including subsidies for dependent health insurance to support low-income students, international students, and other financial hardship cases.

## Conclusions and Next Steps

Graduate education is a key component of Northwestern's research mission and graduate students are critically important members of the community, contributing creativity and innovation to our research and academic environment. Graduate students teach and mentor undergraduate students, support faculty research, and contribute to the discovery of new knowledge. As Northwestern makes efforts to cultivate an environment that allows students to do their very best work, it is essential that the resources and support provided to graduate students are evaluated and strengthened.

Recommendations and ideas to build an inclusive, family-friendly campus culture for graduate students were inspired by changes in to the graduate student body throughout the last decade. These changes include increases in the number of women PhD students, including mothers, as well as in the number of fathers and single-parent families. Recognizing these changes to the student body, Northwestern can make it possible for graduate students to be both good researchers and scholars, as well as good parents. It makes good sense to provide such flexibility and recognition as it helps with recruitment and retention of students. While the task force focused on recommendations appropriate to students in The Graduate School, it is reasonable to expect that there will be applicability to Northwestern community more broadly. For instance, staff, faculty, as well as other students would benefit from the recommendations.

The task force presents the recommendations and summary of our work for consideration. We stand ready to engage in further conversation, as well as to work to implement the findings as appropriate. We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this discussion. Thank you for trusting us to move forward with this important work.

## Appendices

### TIMELINE

August 31, 2015	Task Force Membership Confirmed
October 12, 2015	Preview proposed Parental Accommodation Policy changes with TGS Funding Council
October 14, 2015	Preview proposed Parental Accommodation Policy changes with TGS Administrative Board
October 15, 2015	Kick-off Meeting with Task Force Sponsors
November 23, 2015	Task Force Meeting – Parental Accommodation
December 17, 2015	Task Force Meeting – Childcare
January 14, 2016	Task Force Meeting – Campus Facilities
February 11, 2016	Review Preliminary Findings with Task Force Advisors
March 3/4, 2016	Focus Groups with Graduate Students
March 11, 2016	Site Visit to University of Chicago Family Resource Center
April 5, 2016	Task Force Meeting – Health Insurance
May 3, 2016	Task Force Meeting – Supplemental Funding
May 5, 2016	Task Force Members serve on panel @ Sociology Spring Salon
May 18, 2016	TGS Administrative Board Approves new Parental Accommodation Policy
May 31, 2016	Final Recommendations to Task Force Sponsors

## **CHARGE**

### **Desired Outcomes**

Develop recommendations to build an inclusive, family-friendly campus culture for TGS students who are parents and pursuing a terminal degree, as well as the broader Northwestern community. These recommendations will enhance resources for graduate students in pursuit of academic and personal goals while enabling Northwestern to take a leadership role in the support for graduate student parents and families.

### **Objectives**

- Assess the needs of TGS student parents (and others) across campus and develop recommendations to address these needs within both the comprehensive campus facilities plans and other applicable strategic plans.
- Identify the services and programs currently available to TGS student parents who are pursuing terminal degrees. Identify the populations served by the current model, as well as the unmet need. Review best practices for graduate student parent programs and policies at peer institutions to prepare to position Northwestern as a leader in graduate student parent support.
- Identify options for affordable and flexible childcare targeted to graduate students. Review existing childcare resources and identify better ways to offer accessible childcare support for graduate student parents.
- Identify ways to educate and encourage school, department, and program leaders to enhance their knowledge of, and ability to, connect graduate students to the resources currently in place to help support them. Promote best practices that align the university community in creating and sustaining a family-friendly culture.
- Develop a communication strategy to clearly and effectively promote programs and services available to student parents across the graduate community.
- Explore options for leveraging existing parent support resources within the communities surrounding each campus.
- Identify a set of metrics by which to measure the impact of the recommendations that are adopted.

## **MEETING AGENDAS**

### **October 15, 2015**

- Welcome and Introductions
- Discussion about Task Force Purpose with Sponsors
  - › Dan Linzer, Provost
  - › Nim Chinniah, Executive Vice President
- Review Task Force Charge Document
- Share Report from NU Parents Alliance
- Housekeeping Items (frequency of meetings, discretion, etc.)

### **November 23, 2015**

- Welcome and Updates
  - › Review Survey Data
- Summary of Data Related to Parental Accommodation
  - › GLAC Survey
- Parental Accommodation Policy
  - › Institutional Benchmarking for Parental Accommodation
  - › Current Policy
  - › New Policy Draft
  - › Discussion
- Wrap Up

### **December 17, 2015**

- Welcome and Updates
  - › TGS Day Out – Dependent Care Grant Survey
  - › Peer Updates (Columbia)
- Childcare
  - › Review of Childcare Data/Feedback
  - › Overview of Current Northwestern Childcare Resources
  - › Gaps and Recommendations
  - › Discussion
- Focus Group/Town Hall for Graduate Students with Children
- Wrap-Up

## **January 14, 2015**

- Welcome and Updates
  - › Update on Parental Accommodation Policy
  - › Moving Forward with Focus Group Discussions
- Guest Presentation from Facilities Leadership John D'Angelo, Vice President, Facilities Management and Carrie West, Associate Director, Facilities Planning
- Overview of Current Northwestern Lactation Spaces and Support
- Discuss Gaps and Recommendations
  - › Other Facility Needs?
- Wrap-Up
  - › Preview Approach for Next Meeting

## **February 11, 2016**

- Welcome
- Discuss Preliminary Findings and Recommendations with Advisors
  - › Jean Shedd, Associate Provost for Budget, Facilities and Analysis
  - › Pam Beemer, Vice President of Human Resources
- Housekeeping
  - › Dates for Focus Groups
  - › Dates for Site Visit
  - › Meeting Schedule Moving Forward
- Wrap-Up

## **April 5, 2016**

- Welcome and Updates
  - › New addition to the Dolinskaya family!
  - › Lactation Room Standards
  - › Focus Groups & Site Visit Recap
- Graduate Student Health Insurance Overview
  - › Luke Figora, Assistant Vice President, Risk Management & Environmental Health & Safety
  - › Marcy Hochberg, Student Health Insurance Program Manager
- Outline for Final Report
  - › Key Areas
    - » Communication and Outreach
    - » Campus Facilities
    - » Flexible, Affordable Childcare
    - » Parental Accommodation
    - » Health Insurance
  - › Gaps and Recommendations
    - » Financial Support: Hardship loans, Dependent Care Grants, etc...
  - › Proposed Timeline for Report
    - » Draft sent to Task Force on 5/2, comments by 5/6
    - » Updated Draft sent to Task Force Advisors on 5/11
    - » Final Draft sent to Task Force on 5/23, final comments by 5/25
    - » Final Report sent to Provost and Executive Vice Present by 5/30

**May 3, 2016**

- Welcome and Updates
  - › Reminder – Spring Sociology Salon, Thursday 5/5: 12:30-2pm, Location: Chambers Hall, Ruan Conference Center, Lower Level
- Gaps in Recommendations – Financial Hardship and Dependent Care Grants
  - › Discuss Current State
  - › Review Peer Benchmarking, Excerpts from SPA Report, & Faculty/Staff Comparison
  - › Discuss Recommendations
- Final Report Updates

## **NEW PARENTAL ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

**TITLE:** Parental Accommodation Policy for Students in The Graduate School

### **OVERVIEW and PURPOSE:**

The parental accommodation policy aims to support active graduate students of all gender identities and gender expressions in The Graduate School who become new parents (whether by childbirth or adoption) by providing a period of parental accommodation, roughly equivalent to the length of a quarter, during which funding may continue (for funded students) and TGS milestone deadlines will be extended (for all parents). This policy is separate from any student absences that are medically necessary due to pregnancy or childbirth – all such absences are accommodated at Northwestern through The Graduate School's Leave of Absence policy.

### **ELIGIBILITY:**

- The Graduate Student Parental Accommodation applies to active students of all gender identities and gender expressions in The Graduate School who experience the birth or adoption of a child for whom they have parental responsibilities.
  - › Those adopting children over the age of 18 or a spouse's or partner's child are not covered by this policy.
  - › Those residing in localities where legal adoption is not an option but who are assuming parental responsibilities and otherwise meet the eligibility criteria are covered by this policy.
- Students are eligible who have not utilized a parental accommodation during the previous 12 months before the requested accommodation start date.
- All students in The Graduate School, both funded (regardless of funding source) and unfunded, are eligible for the minimal parental accommodation of 12 weeks of unpaid leave and a one-year extension of milestones. Accommodation options vary depending on funding status and source.

### **ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS:**

Accommodation options vary with the student's funding status and funding source:

1. Funded graduate students (graduate assistants, research assistants, teaching assistants, trainees, fellows) who receive tuition and stipend from the University at the time of the requested accommodation as well as graduate students who are funded from an external source may request paid leave from their duties for a 12 week accommodation period.
  - › Those adopting children over the age of 18 or a spouse's or partner's child are not covered by this policy.
  - › Additional funding will be provided for the 12 week accommodation period
  - › If a student is not receiving funding as of the start date of the parental accommodation, none will be provided by this accommodation.
  - › Graduate students who are funded from an external source supported on external fellowships or awards are obliged to inform their funding agency and should consult Financial Aid staff in The Graduate School.
2. Unfunded graduate students may request unpaid leave from their studies for up to a 12 week accommodation period.

3. Funded or unfunded students may request registration for up to one year in TGS 512 Continuous Enrollment in order to remain a full-time student with access to University services and resources. Students in this status are enrolled only in TGS 512 (no coursework) and must work with the advisor and Director of Graduate Study (DGS) to devise a modified schedule for making progress toward the degree. During this time, students would not be eligible to receive funding. Students may defer funding for the period of time enrolled in TGS 512. Students would assume responsibility for the tuition and fees associated with TGS 512 during this time.

Students may utilize one of these options. In the case of two eligible graduate student parents, each parent is entitled to choose one option.

Any of the above options will result in the extension of outstanding TGS milestone deadlines (qualifying exam, prospectus, degree deadline) by one year (four quarters). Programs must extend program-specific deadlines by the same length. Students, Directors of Graduate Study (DGSes) and advisors are expected to discuss a timeline for meeting requirements well in advance of the start of the accommodation period.

To ensure that programs have ample time to arrange coverage during the accommodation, students must request the accommodation at least 60 days in advance of the accommodation start date. In unforeseen circumstances, students must provide as much notice as possible.

#### **STIPULATIONS:**

- Individual students may request one accommodation per childbirth or adoption event.
- Students who have had a prior parental accommodation within the past 12 months may not request another accommodation, but may request a medical or family leave of absence.
- Students must begin the accommodation period within the first 30 days of the birth or adoption, or prior to the birth/adoption if medically necessary.
- The period of accommodation applies to calendar weeks. If a Parental Accommodation overlaps with an academic break, the break period will still count toward the 12-week period of accommodation.
- Whichever accommodation option students choose, students will be eligible to maintain their student health insurance. Depending on a student's funding status, the health insurance subsidy may or may not be applied. If the health insurance subsidy is not applied, a student will have the option to purchase coverage in fall quarter and may be eligible for a prorated subsidy depending on timing of return and funding status at the time of return. The Graduate School Student Services Staff will be able to assist in this process.
- Students accommodated under this policy will retain access to the following services:
  - › NetID and email
  - › WildCARD access and related privileges
  - › Northwestern Library access o Graduate student housing
  - › Health Services and Counseling and Psychological Services
- Students may wish to utilize a Leave of Absence in addition to (either before or after) a Parental Accommodation. Students who require medically necessary time away due to pregnancy or childbirth may request a Medical Leave of Absence. Students who wish to have additional time for the care of a child may request a Family Leave of Absence. See the [Leave of Absence policy](#) for additional information.

- Students who are enrolled in coursework at the time of an accommodation may work with instructors to take incomplete (Y or X) grades if a substantial amount of work has already been completed in the course. Students should arrange a timeline for completion of coursework with the course instructors. If students anticipate taking a parental accommodation at the start of or early in the quarter, it is recommended that the student not enroll in coursework and instead arrange for enrollment in a research course or other non-classroom based course. Students who are beyond coursework should enroll based on their funding status and in consultation with their program and The Graduate School Student Services unit.
- Students who are utilizing a parental accommodation are not expected to fulfill any degree requirements or make significant progress toward degree during the accommodation period. Programs (including instructors and advisors) may not require fulfillment of requirements or progress toward degree completion during the accommodation period.

**PROCEDURES:**

- Eligible students will complete a Parental Accommodation request form.
  - › This form must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the accommodation start date (or as soon as possible in unforeseen circumstances).
- Upon submission of the form, The Graduate School will review the request to ensure that the eligibility criteria are met and to identify what financial and academic accommodations will be necessary.
- TGS will notify the appropriate Director of Graduate Study (DGS) to communicate the approved accommodation period and related accommodations.
- TGS will update the student's record to reflect the extension of milestones and make any other necessary changes to the record.
- At the end of the 12 week period, students will resume their studies. If additional time away is needed, students must file for the appropriate leave of absence.
  - › If students are returning mid-quarter, the appropriate TGS staff will work with program staff to make changes to funding and enrollment as needed.
  - › If students wish to return prior to the end of the 12 week period, they must first consult with TGS staff.

# PARENTAL ACCOMMODATION BENCHMARKING

## Peer Benchmarking on Parental Accommodation

Institution	How long can academic responsibilities be suspended?	Are students Paid during this time?	Do milestones extend?	Does funding extend? (past original funding package)	Who is eligible?	Other
Princeton	12 weeks	Yes	Yes	Yes, by one semester	Applies to men and women, birth and adoption	
Columbia	12 weeks	Yes	Yes	No	Applies to men and women, birth and adoption	
Dartmouth	12 weeks	Yes	Yes, by one quarter	No	Applies to men and women, birth and adoption	
Stanford	2 quarters of 'rescheduled requirements' around birth of child	Yes (6 weeks)	Yes, by one quarter	No	Paid accommodation only applies to women experiencing a birth	Students may also take an unpaid Leave of Absence (which is the only option for men or parents experiencing adoption)
U Chicago	1 quarter of modification for pregnancy; 1 quarter of modification for childcare	Yes (one quarter)	Yes, by one quarter	No	Applies to men and women, birth and adoption	Students may also take an unpaid Leave of Absence
Duke	7 weeks	Yes	N/A	No	Applies to men and women, birth and adoption	
Harvard	6 weeks	Yes, plus a one-time payment equal to 2/5 teaching for 6-weeks	Yes, by one year	No	Applies to men and women, birth and adoption	Students may also take an unpaid Leave of Absence
Cornell	6 weeks	Yes	N/A	No	Applies to men and women, birth and adoption	
Northwestern (proposed)	12 weeks	Yes	Yes, by one year	Yes, by one quarter*	Applies to all gender identities and gender expressions, birth and adoption	Students may also take an unpaid Leave of Absence

\*pending approval by C. Bina

Updated 1/12/16

# SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING BENCHMARKING

## Peer Benchmarking on Supplemental Funding\*

Institution	Conference Travel Grant/Dependent Support	Emergency Loan	Other
Columbia	Conference Matching Travel Fund: not specific to students with children, matches funds provided by department, up to \$250	N/A	
Cornell	Research and Conference Travel Grants: not specific to students with children, up to \$675 (depending on location)	Students are forwarded to the Financial Aid to apply for emergency loans funded by the 'Students Helping Students' fund. No specifics about max amount.	
Duke	Conference Travel Grant: not specific to students with children, up to \$525 domestic/\$700 international, can only be used once per year, post prelim exam.	Emergency Loan fund provides up to \$1,000 for up to 12 months of repayment at 3.5% interest rate. Cannot request more than 3 loans per academic year.	Student Assistance Program (Partner with Duke Credit Union): short-term loan package for PhD students in need of funds on a short-term basis (i.e. computer or unexpected emergency). Up to \$2500 for up to 12 months.
Northwestern	Conference Travel Grant: all active students eligible for up to two \$600/\$800 grants per year Dependent Care Grant: provides funds for PhD and MFA students with dependents to support childcare costs while pursuing professional development opportunities. Funds can only be applied to childcare, up to \$500/year	Emergency Loan: Apply for up to \$500/quarter, must be repayed in 60 days or by end of quarter. Cash Advance: available for students whose loans have not yet dispersed.	
Princeton	Dean's Fund for Scholarly Travel: not specific to students with children, all students past year 3 presenting research are eligible for up to \$600	Short-term contingency loans are available to students coping with unexpected financial emergencies. Typically no more than \$500, they are repayable through deduction from stipend checks or federal loan disbursements.	Special funds exist to assist enrolled graduate students with unreimbursed medical expenses that create a financial hardship for them. Assistance takes the form of a grant to reimburse expenses not covered by insurance; therefore, you must first submit insurance claims and determine your out-of-pocket expenses before you can apply for reimbursement through these funds.
Stanford	No central administrative funds for conference travel - referred to individual schools for funding.	Graduate Student Aid Fund: specifically covers Campus Health Service Fee and Cardinal Care Insurance costs for specific populations, included students with children. Emergency Grant-In-Aid Fund: all graduate students experiencing financial hardship (medical, dental, legal) are eligible to apply for up to \$5,000 per year. This is a grant, not a loan.	Graduate Housing Loan: loan funds to cover move-in costs. New for 2016-17 (just announced on 4/27/16). \$6,000 lifetime limit - 10 year repayment.
U Chicago	Conference Travel Award: not specific to students with children, facilitated by Graduate Council (GC), \$300/\$500 per year - can only use once in academic tenure	N/A	

\*Benchmarking specifically for conference travel and emergency/short-term financial hardship (i.e. medical, legal, family expenses)

4/28/16

## CHILDCARE VOUCHER BENCHMARKING

### Portable Childcare Vouchers Benchmarking (11/2015)

Institution	Offers Portable Vouchers	Funding Source
University of Pennsylvania	\$4000 for PhD Students	Provosts Office and Student Fees
Emory	Does not offer	N/A
Duke	Yes	Offered through Financial Aid*(unfortunately, none of the contacts listed are still with the University)
University of Michigan	Yes – One Child - \$2530 per term Two Children - \$3700 per term Three Children - \$4880 per term	Office of Financial Aid and the Provost's Office.
University of Chicago	\$2000 annually to eligible PhD students. Priority to those with the greatest need. (pre-tax income under \$50K per year)	Provosts Office ( U of C Grad) is situated there
University of Iowa	Yes – Infant – Age 2 - \$310 per month Age 2 – 6 - \$215 per month Also funds childcare for evening and weekend study program -\$60 per semester for one child \$100 per semester for two children.	Financial Aid and General Family Services Funds
Brown University	Yes – up to \$4000 per year (part of program for faculty and staff, as well)	Fringe
University of California, Davis	Infant to age 2 - \$1300 per child, per quarter 2-5 years - \$1100 per child, per quarter	Student Services Fees, Student Housing, Financial Aid and General Fund
Berkeley	Up to \$5000 per academic term Can be used for childcare, healthcare, housing, tuition, living expenses.	Graduate Division from a total return to aid funds (all of which may be used for direct graduate student financial support in some form.
Oregon State University	Varies by need. Most it pays is 50% of childcare costs.	Student Incidental Fees (funded through student contributions)

# UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Executive Summary 2014-15: Family Resource Center

**Overview** In 2014-15, the Family Resource Center (FRC) continued to be a leader in family-focused resources among Ivy-plus peers and served as a national model for university family support services and programming. In 2014-15 the FRC moved to a larger space which served as a vibrant hub for graduate student parents and postdoctoral parents to network and engage with each other. Family visits averaged 90 per week (+35% change from 2013-2014). The FRC offered 44 children's classes, 22 special family events, and hosted 42 Student Parent Group Dissertation write-ins (+139% change from 2013-2014). The FRC facilitates family networking by maintaining the Student Parent Listserv.

### Program Highlights

- 3000 Family Visits
- 80 New Family registrations
- 445 Dissertation Write-In Group Participants
- 215 Class registrants
- 325 Event registrants

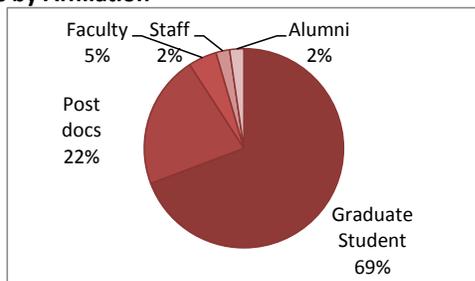
### Auxiliary Services

- 841 Student Parent Listserv members
- Child care cooperative facilitation
- Family Resource Guide creation and maintenance

### Comparisons over Last Year

- 90 Family visits per week (vs. 58 in '13-'14)
- 41 Writers Groups (vs. 32 In '13-'14 )
- 91% Student or post doctoral users (vs. 86% in '13-'14)

### Use of Resources by Affiliation



Division	2014-15
SSD	651
HUM	833
PSD	187
BSD	291
DIV	165
SSA	109
Harris	22
Graham	45
Booth	198
IME	19
Pritzker	321
Law School	85
Lab School	6
Alumni	68

### Goals for 2015-16

- Develop a strategic plan for new membership
- Design programming to encourage summer attendance
- Host graduate student and postdoctoral parent socials quarterly
- Establish student parent support groups
- Increase family visits per week to 100
- Market Lizanne Phalen as a student parent consultant
- Develop multiple lactation stations on campus

# REPORT ON THE STATE OF GRADUATE STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE

Presented by Luke Figora on April 5, 2016

## Aetna Student Health Plan

Year	Deductible	OOP Max	Coinsurance	Premium
2016-2017	\$250	\$1,300	20%	\$3,799
2015-2016	\$250	\$1,300	20%	\$3,692
2014-2015	\$250	\$1,800	20%	\$3,449

- Approximately 8,000 enrollees (3,000 TGS)
- “Platinum” Plan, fully subsidized by Northwestern for funded TGS students
- Policy year - September 1 through August 31
- Enrollment window:
  - July 1 – Oct 1
  - Additional windows for new enrolling students for winter, spring, summer

Northwestern

## Aetna Student Health Plan

- Coverage for “essential health benefits” as required by the ACA
  - Outpatient and inpatient care
  - Emergency services
  - Mental health and addiction
  - Prescription drugs
  - Maternity and newborn care
  - Rehabilitation services
  - Lab services
  - Preventative and wellness services
- Preferred Provider Network
- Coordination with NUHS and CAPS
- On-Call supplemental benefits

Northwestern

## Dependents

- Eligible to add coverage for the following (if residing with the student):
  - Lawful spouse, civil union partner, domestic partner
  - Dependent children up to the age of 26
- Dependents are enrolled directly with Aetna
  - Open enrollment ends October 31
- Qualifying event coverage is available after October 31
  - Birth
  - Loss of other coverage

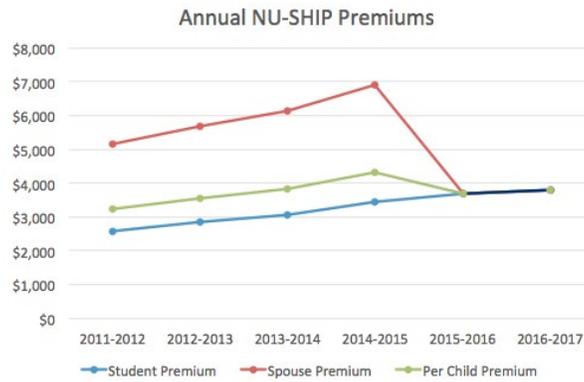
Northwestern

## Dependents

- Before the Affordable Care Act (ACA), schools could elect to charge higher premiums for dependents to offset the increased utilization
- ACA now requires the same premium for all enrollees under the plan
- Dependents benefit from the same low deductible and out-of-pocket as students, but without the cost/quality control requirements for NUHS/CAPS that apply to students
- Out-of-pocket maximum limited to \$2,600 for entire family (\$1,300 individual)
  - Generally significantly lower than what is available on the exchanges
- Premium is now assessed on two children max (previously unlimited)

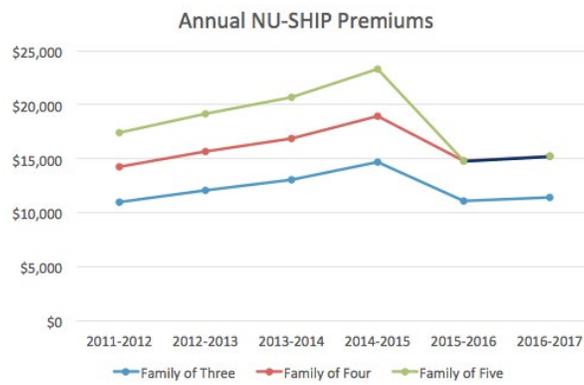
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## Student and Dependent Premiums



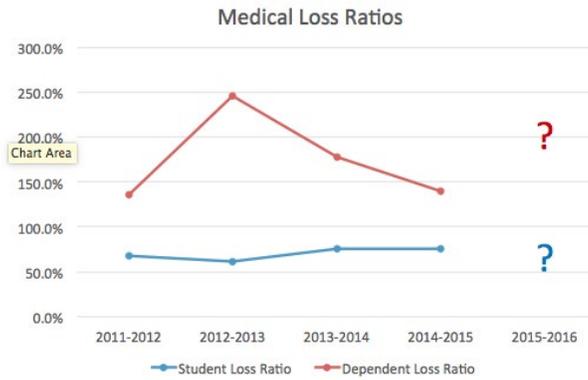
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## Dependent Premiums



Northwestern

## Dependent and Student Loss Ratios



- Medical Loss Ratio represents the \$ paid out for every premium \$ taken in

Northwestern

## Dental Plans

- Offered on a voluntary basis to NU students and dependents; DPPO and DHMO options
- Enrollment window in August for September 1 effective date; enroll with Garnett Powers
- DPPO annual premiums
  - \$361 (student)
  - \$711 (student + spouse)
  - \$837 (student + children)
  - \$1,323 (family)
- DHMO annual premiums
  - \$143 (student)
  - \$241 (student + spouse)
  - \$297 (student + children)
  - \$423 (family)

Northwestern

## Other Discussion Points

- Alternative health insurance options for dependents
  - Exchange plans
  - Spouse employer plans
  - Medicaid / IL All Kids
- Tax reporting requirements (1095-B forms)
- Dental and vision options
- Assistance Plans