Title: Tuition Waivers for Research Assistants

Initiative Description, including statement of purpose and anticipated outcomes:
Teaching Assistants at Western receive tuition waivers concomitant to their service: Full waiver for full time, half waiver for half time. Our Research Assistants provide an invaluable role in departments, supporting their faculty in their area of academic research. Most aspirational peer institutions provide tuition waivers to their Research Assistants, but the Graduate School lacks adequate funding to do so. Because of this, principal investigators who require graduate student researchers must request money in their proposal to fund full tuition. The effect is less competitive grant proposals, and as a result, it is more difficult to recruit the best possible graduate students. We propose to provide tuition waivers to all RA’s at Western that are funded from external sources. This will allow departments to recruit and retain high quality graduate students, which supports the undergraduate mission. In a pilot program, we would require $200,000 in tuition waiver funding and with guidance from the Graduate Council, select programs will be targeted for support, and we will evaluate accordingly.

What University units (depts., colleges, etc.) will be involved?
Research Assistants are predominantly found in the College of Science and Engineering and Huxley College, but all programs could ultimately be impacted: Accounting, Anthropology, Biology, Business Administration, Chemistry, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Computer Science, Educational Leadership, Elementary Education, English, Environmental Science, Environmental Science, Environmental Studies, Geology, History, Human Services and Rehabilitation, Kinesiology, Mathematics, Music, Psychology, and Secondary Education.

How does the initiative support the University Mission and Strategic Plan?
Building upon Western’s strengths, addressing critical needs of the State; Serve as a model of institutional effectiveness and innovation; Applying Western’s expertise and collaborative approach to scholarship, creativity, and research in ways that strengthen communities beyond campus.

Are there potential partnerships with external organizations/institutions?
Targeted academic departments

Anticipated new positions needed to implement the initiative:
  Faculty: None
  Staff: None
  Graduate Students (supported): None

Space needs (boldface one; attach note from Space Administration):
  • Existing space is sufficient
  • Existing space will be sufficient after modification
  • New space may be required

New equipment or other one-time costs: $200,000
Recurring operating costs: $200,000 if pilot successful

Estimated timeline for implementation: FY 17

Potential funding sources (boldface all that apply; attach notes from University Advancement and University Relations)

- State operating budget (decision package)
- New enrollments (tuition-based)
- External Education (fee-based)
- Reallocation
- Federal Support (agency: ________)
- Grants
- Partnerships (organizations/institutions: ________)
- Private Funds
- Other (please specify)