

Departmental Plan for AGEP-NC

Department of Mathematics

North Carolina State University

- **Graduate application fee waivers**

Rationale: Fee waivers can diversify the graduate applicant pool by removing an economic barrier to applicants.

Initiative: Implement a process to waive fees for 10 applicants per year, based on need.

Status: The process is in place and funding has been committed by the department.

- **First-Year Grad Course and Grad Resource Teaching Assistant**

Rationale: Graduate students need support through all stages of the program, but particular attention must be paid to supporting first-year students through the transition into graduate school. Special attention should be paid to mental and emotional well-being, training and troubleshooting for our students' teaching assignments, professional development, and the transition from classwork to research work.

Initiative: Implement a full-year course (1 credit per semester) for incoming graduate students and a Grad Resource TA position dedicated to supporting the course and serving as a resource for graduate students.

Status: In place. The course ran in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 and is running in 2023-2024.

- **Stop decreasing the TA stipend for 6th year students**

Rationale: Lack of funding for the 6th year is a disadvantage to students entering the program without the traditional background and to students whose economic status prevents them from staying a 6th year when a 6th year is the best option.

Initiative: Immediately stop lowering our already-low TA stipends for PhD students who take a 6th year.

Status: Implemented.

- **Improve mentoring of graduate students**

Rationale: Mentoring of graduate students is an essential part of our department's mission. However, most faculty have no formal training in mentoring.

Initiative: Offer formal and informal training for faculty mentors of graduate students, within the department and in cooperation with other units such as the Graduate School.

Status: To be implemented by the departmental DEI committee.

Discussion: Training resources on campus include the Office for Faculty Excellence. Topics for training might include mentoring basics, university regulations and

departmental policies, individual development plans, cross-cultural mentoring. Activities might include informal brown bag lunches and meetings with outside experts.

- **Strengthen social connections between faculty, postdocs, staff and students**

Rationale: Positive social interactions will improve departmental climate.

Initiative: Establish a Social Committee, including staff, faculty, and students, to plan regular social events, such as holiday gatherings, departmental picnics, ice cream socials, and lunch groups.

Status: Implemented. The first departmental picnic after Covid restrictions was held Fall 2023.