**FINANCIAL AID ISSUES FOR HSU GRADUATE STUDENTS**

***State University Grant 125% Rule****:* *Graduate Students are only eligible for SUG for 125% of the MINIMUM number of completed units needed to complete a graduate degree. While some campuses allow less, 125% is standard for SUG eligibility.*

* For a 30 unit masters degree, students lose SUG after taking 38 units.
* Students taking several prerequisite courses in addition to officially required courses may run out of financial aid before they can complete their degree.
* Programs “unofficially” requiring coursework in addition to officially required courses disadvantage students on financial aid.

***Half-time enrollment minimum****: Graduate students enrolled in fewer than 5 units (or half-time enrollment in a semester system) receive no financial aid.*

* Students must start paying off their student loans 6 months after graduating, withdrawing, or enrolling in fewer than 5 units. Thus, students working only on their culminating experience, lose most, if not all, of the 6-monthgrace period after degree completion before they must start paying off their loan.

***Graduate Student receiving a Stipend or Fee Waiver:*** Notification must be sent toFinancial Aid ASAP. If notification does not occur well before students receive their financial aid, federal law requires our Financial Aid Office to retroactively bill those students for over payment.

***Satisfactory Academic Progress*** must be met annually to keep financial aid. Graduate students who fail to meet any of the criteria below automatically lose their financial aid:

* + GPA less than 3.0 (probation or disqualification)
  + Attempt more than 125% (or less on some campuses) of the minimum number of units needed for the degree.
  + Fall below 80% pass rate (# course units passed/# course units attempted)

***Graduate student decisions*** that send them down a financial hole:

* While full time graduate tuition/fees cost less than $10,000/year, graduate students can borrow up to $20,500/year (cost of attendance). Many graduate students fail to realize the crippling long-term consequences of borrowing an extra $10.5k/year at 5-8% interest.
* Some students never quit graduate school to avoid paying back their loans.
* While some campuses allow students in good standing to stop out for 1 year, these students must start paying back their student loans after 6 months off.

**Other Facts:**

* **More than half** of CSU graduate students receive some kind of financial aid.
* Unlike undergraduates, graduate students are **ineligible for Pell grants**.
* Unlike undergraduates, graduate students can **only receive unsubsidized loans.**
* Graduate students can borrow Graduate PLUS Loans. These have **higher interest rates** than undergraduate financial aid, **accrue immediately**, and **depend upon a student’s credit rating**.