

March 1, 2017

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Ryan Julian, Chair  
Graduate Council



RE: New Graduate Program Proposal: Biophysics Interdepartmental Graduate Program

Graduate Council discussed the proposal for a new interdepartmental graduate program in Biophysics at their last meeting. The Council is supportive of the program and believes the area of focus to be important and needed on campus. However, based on experiences with other similar programs on campus, the Council has several concerns regarding funding. The current proposal solicits only a stipend for the program Chair/Director, but the source of this funding is not outlined. Furthermore, should the program experience growth (as occurred with Materials Science and Environmental Toxicology), then additional resources may become necessary, such as program staff, teaching release for graduate advisors, etc. Given the campus-wide nature of the program, the Council feels that funding should be defined and commitments outlined at inception. This could involve discussion and commitment among the deans of the various colleges (who have all indicated support of the proposal), or perhaps funding of these programs could be best managed at the provost level. Either way, budget support should be determined in detail, including provisions for future expansions, before the program begins. Given the present fluidity of the university budget model, it may be an appropriate time to revisit/restructure the funding for all interdepartmental programs, which are vital for campus success, yet operate largely between the lines.

Finally, the Council suggests that the diversity of faculty and cooperating faculty should be considered more carefully.