We are grading-in in Provost McInnis’ office right now! Read our full statement on why:

On May 1st we delivered our petition (http://bit.ly/trbpetition) to Provost McInnis demanding that no graduate student be forced to pay for Tuition Reduction Benefit gaps beginning this fall, as a first step in ensuring that UT graduate workers are paid a living wage for their labor. The petition was signed by 3,776 people.

We are disappointed and dismayed by Provost McInnis’s May 8th response to our petition. In her response, Provost McInnis:

• **Refuses to meet our demand to cover TRB gaps beginning this fall.** This is an urgent need for graduate workers, many of whom are being forced to cover up to $1,071 of the TRB gap themselves. 65% of UT graduate workers are already paid less than $18,000 a year, well below the university’s $25,000 calculation of the cost of living in Austin.

• **Asks us to put our faith in yet another task force.** We support comprehensive solutions to the crisis of graduate funding at UT, and we are grateful for the efforts of our faculty and staff allies sitting on the Task Force. However, the Graduate Education Task Force will not submit recommendations until December 2019 and there is no guarantee of whether or when those recommendations will be implemented. Over the past 15 years multiple task forces across the university have identified the urgent need to raise stipends to competitive levels, yet graduate workers remain paid at rates significantly behind peer institutions.

• **Deflects responsibility to colleges and departments for covering TRB gaps.** This is a university wide problem that requires a centralized solution. As the University Budget Council sets both the graduate tuition and TRB rates, there is no reason that a gap should exist or be passed on to individual departments and students.

• **Declines to meet with graduate workers to discuss possible solutions.** Provost McInnis and the University Budget Council are the key stakeholders with power to mobilize existing discretionary funds to cover the gap this fall, while a sustainable solution can be identified.

To convey our dismay at the inadequacy of Provost McInnis’s response (available here: http://bit.ly/provosttrb), graduate student workers are “grading in” at the Office of the Provost today, Monday May 13th. We are demonstrating the crucial labor we provide to the university -- grading final exams and essays, corresponding with students, calculating and inputting grades to Canvas, crunching and analyzing research data, and writing award-winning research publications -- in order to remind Provost McInnis and other members of the administration how important our work is to the functioning of this university.

Join us at our grade-in happening now, Monday morning, in the Main Building, and check our updates on the Underpaid@UT Facebook and Twitter (@underpaidatut) pages to follow along.

UT Austin graduate workers deserve to be paid a living wage for their work. UT works because we do.

In solidarity,
Graduate Student Workers of Underpaid@UT