

**Copy of text of email sent on August 16, 2019 to department chairs**

Dear <department chair>--

I'm writing as IRWG Director because the funding for our very popular [Community of Scholars graduate summer seminar and writing program](#) have changed, and we need to ask departments to help sponsor their graduate students starting in the new 2020 class. You're getting this email because your department or unit has benefited in the last few years from Community of Scholars support for your doctoral students, and you're likely to be asked to cost-share for a student this year or in the near future.

To bring you up to speed on this: IRWG has partnered with Rackham for many years to run and fund the Community of Scholars program. It is an interdisciplinary group of advanced grad students working on gender or sexuality who get summer support to meet with a faculty member (Prof. Victor Mendoza, English and WS), write, and present at a colloquium in the fall. IRWG pays for the faculty member's summer salary, honoraria for the faculty reviewers of all the applications, and handles all the administrative work -- advertising, collecting, processing, and judging applications in a competitive process, etc. Rackham has been covering the costs of the students' stipends (\$8,000 per doctoral student for the summer, with 10 participants).

**Rackham has informed us they will cut their contribution in half starting in summer 2020**, from \$80,000 to \$40,000. In order to keep the roster of students at the same level (necessary to preserve the exchange of an interdisciplinary seminar), **IRWG is pledging to contribute more funding but will need departments to contribute a cost share for their graduate students to participate**. I will split the remaining half of the gap and will ask for a contribution of approximately \$2,000 per doctoral student for the entire summer's participation in COS (per selected student: Rackham: \$4000, IRWG: \$2000, student's home unit: \$2000 = sustaining the current \$8000 cost per student).

I hope you agree this is well worth it to support a doctoral student for the entire summer in a longstanding and valuable seminar experience. I will continue to urge Rackham to fully fund the program again in the future, but this is the best we can do for now.

We will begin to advertise for applications in the fall, and **the new procedure will require the applicants to inform their department chair about the cost sharing and to secure your support**. I don't want to add to your admin burdens by asking for a letter of support, and so we are simply asking applicants to check a box when they apply affirming that they have talked to you, told you about the cost sharing, and you've said it would be paid if the student is selected. If the department can't share the costs with us, we will have to move to someone on the wait list.

I hope this email leaves you prepared for that discussion with your graduate student applicants, and that you will be able to support them at COS if selected.

Enjoy the last bit of our lovely summer--

Anna

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**Anna Kirkland**

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Pronouns: she/hers