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Policy to Supplement Stipends for Academia Sinica Ph.D. Students

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Dear Colleagues,

I trust this message finds you well and in good spirits. As we witness a resurgence of global interaction in the wake of the pandemic, there emerges a fresh perspective on our scholarly pursuits. Across scientific research institutions in Europe, the United States, and neighboring Asian countries, the adoption of competitive and stable stipends for Ph.D. students has become a prevailing recruitment norm.

Recognizing the pressing challenge of brain drain and the imperative to groom successors in higher education, Academia Sinica, as a premier national research institution of Taiwan, must shoulder the responsibility to amplify the allure of Ph.D. programs to exceptional minds. To provide an enabling environment for our Ph.D. students to wholeheartedly engage in their research, we are pleased to announce that, effective September 1, 2023, Academia Sinica will raise stipend funding for our salaried Ph.D. students.

During a March 2023 session of the Legislative Yuan, Academia Sinica put forth a proposal to elevate Ph.D. stipends and increase researchers' remuneration, as strategies to combat brain drain and the dearth of suitable successors in the higher education sphere. A positive response was garnered from the Executive Yuan, leading to the June 1 announcement of a 15% augmentation in the Research Allowance for university professors and Professional Allowance for Academia Sinica researchers. Moreover, the Ministry of Education, the National Science and Technology Council, and several national universities have voiced their support for our policy initiative to boost Ph.D. stipends, accompanied by strategic plans to nurture, attract, and retain talent within Taiwan's scientific research ecosystem.

Present survey reveals a significant variation in stipends available to Ph.D. students across Taiwan, averaging below NT\$30,000 per month (with exceptions for higher amounts). The average monthly stipend for Ph.D. students at Academia Sinica stands at approximately NT\$34,000. In view of the relatively low stipend compared with international competitions and the rising living cost in Taipei, we have formulated a plan to elevate stipend support for Ph.D. students presently under the Academia Sinica payroll. In addition to the existing stipend, we intend to supplement NT\$6,000 per month for first and second-year Ph.D. students, and NT\$16,000 per month for third to fifth-year Ph.D. students who have successfully passed their qualifying examinations (see [DIA website](#) for details). We anticipate that such supplements will raise the average stipend to NT\$40,000 (for first and second-year students) and NT\$50,000 (for third to fifth-year students).

Funding for this program will be sustained by Academia Sinica. Additionally, we will seek to enhance a win-win spirit with the universities and departments to which our Ph.D. students are affiliated. Furthermore, given the diverse nature of Ph.D. programs across our Divisions, conversations are underway with the Directors of the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences to tailor a proposal aligned with their distinct needs. Together with related initiatives proposed by the Ministry of Education and the National Science and Technology Council, we aspire to foster a virtuous cycle, in which an increased incentive offered to Ph.D. students nationwide attracts a greater cohort of exceptional students, who then generate more outstanding results to allure even more PhD students.

It is our firm conviction that talent stands as one of Academia Sinica's most important assets, warranting our utmost support and cultivation. And talent mobility is a global competitive challenge; only by establishing a good hardware and software environment can we attract talent to accomplish the three major goals of our institution: 'Achieving world-class research,' 'fulfilling critical social responsibilities,' and 'recruiting and cultivating outstanding talent.' We hope that through breakthrough scientific thinking, we can solve critical issues and create new prospects for Taiwan's future."

Warm regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jalin'.

James C. Liao
President