Statement by Dean R. Victor Jones

Complex problems of financial aid for graduate students have come before this community in force during the last few weeks. Threading through the somewhat technical discussions of forms and amounts of financial aid are deeper, more fundamental issues relating to the role of graduate education in this Faculty. Consideration of these fundamental issues is in my view overdue, but the structure of the current debate has been less than productive. I must accept the responsibility for allowing this unfortunate situation to develop, but I hope I won't be held accountable for all the misconceptions which have recently emerged. It would appear, however, that I have been unsuccessful in communicating to both students and faculty the really difficult problems that we face. In an attempt to bring order to the discussion, I should like to recapitulate briefly what has happened and to summarize where we stand at the present moment.

During the 1960's outside funding sources, the federal government and private foundations, bore a major share of the costs of graduate education. If we were not already aware of the impact of outside support at Harvard, the tables recently released by Dean Dunlop amply demonstrate the point. As late as in 1969-70, for example, over 60% of all graduate support was externally funded. Changing national attitudes towards graduate education have, however, produced a rapid erosion in these external bases of support. For instance, we expect that the number of NDEA Title IV grants will decline from 160 in 1969-70 to 54 in 1972-73 and that the number of Ford grants will decline over the same period from 220 to 80; both programs will virtually disappear one or two years later.
All of the major graduate institutions in the United States have been confronting similar problems, and each institution in turn has had to examine its financial aid practices to insure that scarce university resources are used in the most effective and equitable manner. All institutions have or are developing new programs and policies, some of which may prove to be only interim arrangements as the financial crisis deepens.

Let me now turn to the specific arrangements we have been making here at Harvard for next year; I will talk first about scholarship monies:

For the entering first-year class to whom we have mailed offers of admission on April 1, the situation is quite encouraging. This year for the first time we over-awarded our scholarship funds expecting that the acceptance ratio would be such that the number of scholarship students registering in the autumn would approximately equal available resources. Accordingly, we offered $1.5 million to just under 400 students, and we know that in addition somewhat over 100 admittees have outside sources of support. Admissions offers were made to a total of almost 1100 applicants; the current rate of acceptance of our offers suggests that we will have an entering class of around 550 in the autumn, which is about the size of the current first-year class.

As for continuing students, by 5 p.m. last Friday, the Graduate School office had written letters to virtually all present first-year students to whom we had commitments and who were making satisfactory progress, renewing their scholarship aid for next year, the dollar figure of which has been increased to take account of the rise in tuition. A few remaining cases lie on my desk and will be resolved as soon as I have the time to give them my attention. We have also written making awards to all persons in good standing
holding continuing restricted awards or general scholarships, again increasing the stipend to take into account the tuition increase. Further, save for a very few of the smallest departments, all the continuing Ford GPF money has also been awarded. In all, over 500 offers of continuing aid have been made. The Faculty has therefore been able to honor its scholarship commitments to continuing students.

With regard to Teaching Fellows, the situation is as follows: When the Staff Tuition Scholarship system was established over ten years ago, it was perceived as a special limited form of assistance for those Teaching Fellows who were experiencing financial difficulty. In recent years, however, the program has grown rapidly and it became apparent that some departments were appointing Teaching Fellows, not exclusively on the basis of the teaching needs of the department but individual financial need had become a factor.

We have attempted during the present academic year to devise a new and more equitable means of dispersing these funds, but unfortunately our efforts have, for many, created further confusion. The Committee on Fellowships and Other Aids to Graduate Students now has, with my full support, determined that the funds previously dispersed through the STS program will now be available through a centrally administered program of tuition remission to all Teaching Fellows, based on an established criteria of need.

We are asking all departments to get to us as soon as possible a list of the individuals they hope to appoint as Teaching Fellows next year. As soon as these lists are received, we will notify the students of the tuition abatements they may expect. I would hope that, if we receive lists by April 21, we should be able to notify all prospective Teaching Fellows of their
eligibility for tuition remission by May 1. This new program may cost us more money than the previous STS arrangements, and Dean Dunlop has agreed to fund such additional costs beyond the previously budgeted amounts. An appellate procedure will be developed for individual Teaching Fellows who wish a review of the Graduate School's judgment of their need, and in this regard I would like to say how important I feel it is to have graduate student participation in these issues. I am convinced that under these new policies the Teaching Fellowship will remain an attractive activity for our graduate students.

Finally, I should report that the details of the new Harvard GILP loan program are now available, and that there seems to be considerable interest in this new source of educational financing.

I believe that through the above arrangements we have made provision for the best possible distribution of our resources next year. Financial aid for graduate students is going to continue to be a source of concern to all of us, however, and I welcome suggestions which will ease our difficulties.

The foregoing is an attempt by me to summarize the detailed financial arrangements we have been attempting to work out for present and incoming students. I hope you will allow me to return for a final moment to some of the major issues I perceive to be facing the Graduate School.

1) The first and certainly the most important of these is the continuing questions of size of the Graduate School, not only in over-all terms, but also department by department and specialty area by specialty area. We must look carefully into the issue of how the number of graduate students bears on the academic vitality of each discipline, an issue which might be described as one of intellectual criticality. Inextricably bound up with the question of size
is the issue of distribution of teaching responsibility within the Faculty and in particular, the important role Teaching Fellows perform in the education of undergraduates. I hope that as a Faculty we can continue to consider these problems.

2) Second, I believe we are overdue for review of the structure of the Ph.D. program and require a consideration of the various alternatives to the conventional Ph.D. which now exist. I am not at all convinced that we can continue to devote virtually all of our graduate education resources to the confines of a single degree structure.

3) And finally, it is perfectly clear to me that, if the levels of support for graduate education which we and our students have become accustomed to are to be maintained, vast new sources of revenue will have to be found. Quite frankly, I do not believe such new sources are available nor will they become available in the foreseeable future. I have come to hold the view that it will become increasingly necessary to join judgments of financial need with judgments of scholastic merit throughout the Graduate School’s financial aid programs, but I recognize that my opinion may not at present be broadly shared.