

January 22, 2018

Dear future colleague,

Congratulations on your acceptance to Emory! We hope that you'll come and we look forward to studying with you. There are, however, a few things that we think you should know when making your decision—none of which are mentioned in your official acceptance letter.

- **The Pay Gap:** You will have to make it through your first two months in Atlanta without any pay from Emory. **Although orientation and classes start in mid-August, you will receive your first paycheck on the last business day in September.** In addition to facing moving expenses, two months of rent, the cost of textbooks, and other living expenses, you can **expect to pay Emory your first student fees payment when you arrive in August.**
- **Atlanta's living wage** is \$24,930/year, but many graduate students only make \$24,000/year, and that's before the **\$1,118/year we pay back to Emory for student fees** (this amount is reduced when you finish coursework). The neighborhood around Emory is expensive and public transportation in Atlanta is notoriously insufficient. As a result, many graduate students are forced to drive to campus where **a yearly parking pass costs \$672.**
- **Many departments place restrictions on holding a second job.** Your department may limit the number of hours you can work, what type of employment you can hold, or they may bar you from working altogether. **International students should know that there is not enough on-campus employment** (permitted by your visa) to meet demand.
- Many, if not most, Ph.D. students take more than five years to finish their degrees. **Most students who apply for sixth-year funding fellowships will receive only \$18,000/year.** In the sciences, some students are forced to take an extra year because they are required by their advisors to complete research for grants unrelated to their dissertation.
- **You will be responsible for a significant portion of your medical expenses.** Our health plan includes a **\$150 deductible** and **10% co-pay** (full details [here](#)). Some dental work will require you to pay an even higher percentage. There is **no vision coverage.**
- Because we have no contract, **all of this can be changed unilaterally by the administration without warning. Entire departments or graduate programs have been eliminated**, pursuant to decisions made behind closed doors by administrators. In the past five years, our vision, dental, and dependent coverage was

taken away from us. It was only after years of efforts by graduate students that we got our dental and dependent coverage back.

That being said, Emory can be a wonderful place to study. It is unfortunate that the administration does not do more to support its graduate students, but you will find similar problems at many other institutions. We don't want to deter you from coming—we just want you to have the information you need to make an informed decision.

Sincerely,

EmoryUnite!

Emory's Graduate Student Union

<http://emorygradunion.org>

