

Faculty Senate Research Committee  
Report on Three Year Review of the General Research Fund  
Fiscal Years 2016, 2017 and 2018

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## Introduction

This report was prepared by the Faculty Senate Research Committee (Research Committee) to address the specific charge #1 given by the Faculty Senate:

1. Conduct three-year review of the GRF in spring 2019. The FSRC should pay particular attention to the entities' different eligibility requirements for the competition (some entities accept applications from tenured or pre-tenured faculty<sup>1</sup> only while at least one other entity accepts applications from lecturers) in determining the degree to which entities are making effective use of the GRF. Reevaluate the allocation method for the GRF (see analysis in FSRC FY2017 Final Report).

## Background on GRF Review Activities

Below is a description of the activities undertaken to conduct the three-year review of the General Research Fund (GRF).

- KU Office of Research, via Elizabeth Monroe (Associate Director for Budgets and Finance) provided a detailed spreadsheet of GRF unit awards and allocations for FY2010 through FY2019. These data were shared by the Chair with the Research Committee at the October 25, 2018 committee meeting.
- The Research Committee reviewed the previous Three-Year Review Report completed in FY2016 and the Final Reports completed in FY2017 and FY2018.
- Upon review of the FY2016 Three-Year Review Report, the Research Committee decided to modify the data collection tool and administer to all GRF entities as was done for the FY2016 report. Table 1, below, shows the items included for the current three-year review.
- The data collection tool captured data on seven domains: (1) methods and criteria used for selecting GRP proposals to fund; (2) eligibility for GRF funding; (3) graduate and PhD students in GRF unit; (4) faculty in GRF unit, including pre-tenured, tenured, and other types of faculty; (5) number of submitted and funded proposals; (6) GRF priorities; and, (7) GRF accomplishments.
- The data collection tool was sent to all GRF units on December 3, 2018 by Kathy Reed of University Governance. The GRF units include: School of Architecture, Design & Planning; School of School of Business; School of the Arts (CLAS); Behavioral Sciences (CLAS); Humanities (CLAS); Life Sciences (CLAS); Physical Sciences (CLAS); Social Sciences (CLAS); School of Education; School of Engineering; School of Journalism; School of Law; School of Music; School of Pharmacy; School of Social Welfare; and, University Libraries.
- All GRF units provided the requested data to Kathy Reed by February 1, 2019. Kathy Reed compiled the data provided by the units and sent the data to the Research Committee on February 3, 2019.
- Data were analyzed by committee members, a draft report reviewed by the committee on March 4, 2019, and recommendations developed by the committee on March 4, 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> The term "tenure track" refers to both tenured and pre-tenured faculty for the remainder of the report.

**Table 1. Items included in the FY2016-FY2019 GRF Reporting Tool**

<b>1. Methods and criteria used for selecting GRF proposal</b>	
1.1	Describe the process used to call for GRF proposals
1.2	Describe the process to receive and evaluate proposals
1.3	Identify who comprises the review committee of GRF proposals, and how this committee or review body is established
1.4	List GRF proposal review criteria
1.5	Describe any requirements of faculty who receive the GRF funding (e.g., reports, presentations, external funding proposal, etc.)
<b>2. Eligibility for GRF in your GRF entity</b>	
2.1	Pre-tenured faculty members only (yes or no)
2.2	Tenured faculty members only (yes or no)
2.3	Pre-tenured and tenured faculty members only (yes or no)
2.4	Any faculty member, including non-tenure track faculty (yes or no)
<b>3. FY16-FY18 Students in your GRF entity (please provide 3 values for each item)</b>	
3.1	Number of students in the graduate program/s of your unit during FY16, FY2017, FY18
3.2	Number of PhD students in the graduate program/s of your unit during FY16, FY2017, FY18
<b>4. FY16-FY18 Faculty in your GRF entity (please provide 3 values for each item)</b>	
4.1	Number of pre-tenured faculty members in your unit during FY16, FY2017, FY18
4.2	Number of tenured faculty members in your unit during FY16, FY2017, FY18
4.3	Number of all other types of faculty members in your unit during FY16, FY2017, FY18
4.4	Total number of faculty members in your unit during FY16, FY2017, FY18
<b>5. Submitted and funded GRF proposals in your entity during FY16-FY18 (please provide 3 values for each item)</b>	
5.1	Number of proposals <i>submitted</i> for GRF funds during FY16, FY2017, FY18
5.2	Number of proposals <i>funded</i> from GRF funds during FY16, FY2017, FY18
5.3	Number of funded proposals submitted by pre-tenured faculty members during FY16, FY2017, FY18
5.4	Number of funded proposals submitted by tenured faculty members during FY16, FY2017, FY18
5.5	Number of funded proposals submitted by other non-tenure track faculty members during FY16, FY2017, FY18
<b>6. FY16-FY18 GRF Priorities in your entity (please provide 3 values for each item)</b>	
6.1	Number of funded proposals used in early-career (i.e., after receiving New Faculty GRF and while still pre-tenured) during FY16, FY2017, FY18
6.2	Number of funded proposals used in pilot studies during FY16, FY2017, FY18
6.3	Number of funded proposals used for summer salary during FY16, FY2017, FY18
6.4	Number of funded proposals that used the fund to match external funds during FY16, FY2017, FY18
<b>7. GRF accomplishments (please provide 3 values for each item)</b>	
7.1	Number of GRF-related peer-reviewed publications during FY16, FY2017, FY18
7.2	Number of GRF-related peer-reviewed conference presentations during FY16, FY2017, FY18
7.3	Number of GRF-related peer-reviewed creative projects or products during FY16, FY2017, FY18
7.4	Number of GRF-related proposals submitted for external funding during FY16, FY2017, FY18
7.5	Number of GRF-related proposals received external funding during FY16, FY2017, FY18
7.6	Number of any other important GRF-related outcomes (please list or describe) during FY16, FY2017, FY18

## Findings

Below is a summary of findings from each major domain of the data collection tool.

### Item 1: Methods and Criteria for Selecting GRF Proposals to Fund

Most academic entities solicit faculty submissions for their GRF competitions via email in late fall and early winter. In the School of Law, the GRF is distributed as part of summer funding. Law faculty submit summer funding proposals, and no separate GRF proposal call is issued. In all entities, proposals are submitted electronically.

GRF proposals are evaluated and selected for funding by standing or ad hoc faculty committees. The criteria for who serves on these committees varies by academic entity. Committee members are nominated (Education, Pharmacy), appointed (Music), or volunteer to serve (Engineering), and represent all units within the entity (Architecture, Business, Education, Engineering), the entity's most recent GRF recipients (Journalism), or the entity's administration (Law).

Most entities evaluate GRF applications using criteria articulated by the Office of Research in the GRF application document. The four major criteria are (1) research significance, (2) the quality of the research or creative plan, (3) applicant qualifications, and (4) evidence of the applicant's submissions for external funding. The application document provides additional criteria that may be used in evaluating submissions (e.g., faculty rank, pilot study, instructional research, funding record, application readability, etc.). Some entities take into account some of these additional factors (Engineering, Law).

Two entities have specific reporting requirements for GRF recipients (Architecture & Planning, Music), but most entities do not have such requirements. School of Law recipients are expected to present their GRF-funded work either internally or externally. School of Education recipients are encouraged to present their work internally, and to apply for external funding.

### Item 2: Eligibility for GRF

Table 2 (page 8) shows results on eligibility for GRF funding in each of the GRF units. Among the 15 GRF units, 11 indicated that GRF funds are available to pre-tenured and tenured faculty only. Four GRF units (School of Engineering, School of Journalism, School of Pharmacy, and University Libraries) reported that GRF funds are open to any faculty member, including non-tenure track faculty. Thus, the most common approach to GRF funding is to target the funds for pre-tenured and tenured faculty members.

### Item 3: Students in GRF Unit

Excluding University Libraries because they do not enroll students, the three-year average number of graduate students reported for each GRF unit ranged a low of 52.7 (Journalism) to a high of 1,334.3 (Education). Similarly, the three-year average number of PhD students ranged from a low of 12.3 (Journalism) to a high of 401.3 (Education). Figure 1 (page 13) presents data on the ratio of graduate students to tenure-track faculty (i.e., pre-tenured and tenured faculty) and the ratio of graduate students to total faculty for each GRF unit.

PhD and Graduate student data were also observed in relationship to GRF funding. Figure 2 (page 14) shows the three-year averages for FY2016-FY2018 charted by GRF unit. Across GRF units, the GRF funding per

PhD students ranged from a low of \$68.26 (Education) to a high of \$7,253.20 (Life Sciences). Similarly, the GRF funding per all graduate students ranged from a low of \$20.53 (Education) to a high of \$881.42 (School of the Arts).

#### Item 4: Faculty in GRF Units

As displayed in Table 4 (page 9), the number of faculty per GRF unit was collected in three categories: (1) pre-tenured faculty, (2) tenured faculty, and (3) other types of faculty. Across GRF units, the three-year average of pre-tenured faculty ranged from 1.3 (Law) to 38.3 (Engineering); the three-year average of tenured faculty ranged from 19.7 (Journalism) to 160.7 (Humanities); and, the three-year average of other types of faculty ranged from 1.0 (Journalism and Libraries) to 112.7 (Humanities). The total faculty ranged from 24.3 (Journalism) to 310.7 (Humanities).

#### Item 5: Submitted and Funded GRF Proposals

Item 5 and its sub-items gathered two types of information (see Table 5 on page 9). First, GRF units reported the total number of proposals *submitted*. These data show that the three-year average for the total number of proposals submitted ranged from 3.3 (Journalism) to 35.3 (Humanities). Second, GRF units reported the total number of *funded* proposals by type of faculty. The three-year average of funded proposals ranged from 1.0 (Journalism) to 12.7 (Humanities). Again, using the three-year average, Figure 3 (page 15) shows the percentage of funded proposals out of those submitted for each GRF unit. These percentages range from 29% to 100%. Further, the ratio of funded proposals to tenure track faculty and ratio of funded proposals to all faculty are displayed in Figure 4 (page 16). Regarding the ratio for tenure track faculty, four GRF units were at the low end with .04 funded proposals per tenure track faculty (Journalism, Libraries, Behavioral Sciences, and Physical Sciences). Regarding the ratio for all faculty the lowest ratio was observed at .03 for Pharmacy and Physical Sciences; a clear mode was found at .04 for seven GRF units; and, the highest ratio was observed in two units at .11 (Law and Music).

Item 5 data, as reported by GRF units, were also analyzed in concert with funding data provided by the Office of Research (KUOR). Table 8 (page 12) presents the GRF annual allocation amounts for each GRF unit as provided to the FSRC by KUOR. Analyses of the annual funding per all faculty and per tenure track faculty are shown in Figure 5 (page 17). These data were at the center of the FSRC's discussions and recommendations. They show that notable differences exist in the GRF funding levels per all faculty and per tenure track faculty. Regarding tenure track faculty, the per faculty funding rates range from a low of \$130.45 (Libraries) to a high of \$1,376.76 (Life Sciences). Regarding all faculty, the per faculty funding rates range from a low of \$127.69 (Libraries) to a high of \$1,276.31 (Life Sciences).

Next, Figure 6 (page 18) compares each GRF unit in terms of the percentage the unit represents among tenure track faculty and among all faculty to the percentage the unit received in GRF funding. The chart's green line reports the percentage the unit received in GRF funding for FY2016 to FY2018, noting that the allocated amounts did not change during this three-year period. When the green line is *below* the unit's percentage for faculty (tenure track faculty represented by blue bar and all faculty represented by red bar), it indicates that the GRF unit receives a proportion of the GRF funding which is smaller than the proportion the GRF unit represents in the total of GRF eligible faculty. In contrast, when the green line is *above* the unit's percentage for faculty, it shows that the GRF receives a proportion of the GRF funding which is larger than the proportion the GRF unit represents in the total GRF eligible faculty. For example, the Libraries' tenure track faculty represent 4% of all tenure track faculty but the Libraries receive 1% of GRF funding. On the other side,

Life Sciences' tenure track faculty represent 7% of tenure track faculty and Life Sciences receive 16% of GRF funding.

### Item 6: GRF Priorities

Item 6 asked GRF units to report the number of funded proposals that aligned with four categories of priorities, including funded proposals that were used for: (1) early career faculty (i.e., after new faculty have received the New Faculty GRF and while still pre-tenure), (2) pilot studies, (3) summer salary, and (4) matching funds for external funding. The three-year averages of these data are reported in Table 6 (page 10), and presented visually in Figure 7 (page 19). The most commonly reported among the GRF priorities was using the funds for early career faculty. Also common was using the funds for summer salary. Less common was using the funds for pilot studies and matching funds for external funding proposals.

### Item 7: GRF Accomplishments

Item 7 was designed to solicit information on potential accomplishments or outcomes that resulted, at least in part, due to GRF funding. Table 7 (page 11) presents the three-year average data as reported by GRF units. Six categories of accomplishments were used: (1) peer-reviewed publications, (2) peer-reviewed conferences, (3) peer-reviewed creative projects, (4) submitted proposals for external funding (5) receipt of funding from submitted proposals and, (6) other important outcomes as defined by the GRF unit. The most frequently reported accomplishments were peer-reviewed conferences and peer-reviewed publications, with the three-year averages summing to 118.3 conferences and 82.3 publications across all GRF units. Next, the most common reported accomplishment was submitted proposals for external funding (sum of three-year average = 52.3 across all GRF units). The least common accomplishments were peer-reviewed creative projects and receipt of external funding (sum of three-year average = 25.0 and 22.0, respectively). Finally, GRF units also reported on other important accomplishments that did not fit into the first five categories (sum of three-year average 29.0). Examples included public facing events, internal funding, invited talks, research workshop, international residencies, new course, publication of book, data collection, invitation to national advisory board, establishment of collaborative project.

## Additional Background Information on Review of GRF Allocations

### FY2020 Allocations

The FSRC was given a specific charge from the Faculty Senate to “reevaluate the allocation method for the GRF” in consideration of the FSRC’s FY2017 Final Report. We discussed the FY2017 Final Report, particularly its recommendations for addressing disparities in allocations among the GRF units. The Office of Research provided the FSRC with historical data on GRF allocations, showing that the total amount (\$632,100) and the specific amounts to GRF unit had not changed for more than 10 years. We were unable to locate information that provided a rationale for the specific allocation amounts to each GRF unit. After discussing several allocation options, the FSRC voted on November 6, 2018 (7-1 vote) to adopt a proposal from the FY2017 Final Report and to revise the allocation method to be based on a *per faculty rate*. Kathy Reed, from University Governance, assisted us in getting updated data on faculty counts and these numbers were used to calculate the percentage of faculty for each GRF unit. Due to discrepancies in how GRF units reported faculty numbers (e.g., at least one GRF unit was including non-tenure track lecturers), we decided to use a uniform metric to calculate the percentage of faculty for each GRF unit. Thus, we used faculty counts of pre-tenured and tenured faculty to determine the percentage of faculty for each GRF unit.

After submitting the FSRC’s recommendations for FY2020 Allocations, which were based on a per faculty rate, the FSRC was informed by Dr. Kirk McClure, Professor and Faculty Senate President that in FY2015 the Faculty Senate Executive Committee voted that the percentage of a decrease in a GRF unit’s funding was capped at 10%. Increases were not constrained but decreased were constrained at 10%. Given this information, the FSRC revisited its FY2020 Allocation recommendation to constrain all cuts to 10% per GRF unit.

### Comment on Three-Year Review

In conducting the Three-Year Review for FY2016 to FY2018, the FSRC was challenged by a lack of information on how each GRF unit defined the purpose and objectives of the GRF funds. As indicated in the Findings section under Item 1, most GRF units use criteria for funding decisions provided by the Office of Research. However, little information exists on the desired objectives preferred or prioritized by individual GRF units.



## Recommendations

### Recommendation 1:

Future FSRCs should continue to adjust the GRF unit allocations to establish allocations based upon *per tenure-track faculty rates*<sup>2</sup>. GRF units should receive a proportion of the GRF total allocation that is consistent with the GRF units proportion of all tenure-track faculty. While GRF allocations should be set by a per tenure-track faculty rates, GRF units may continue to set their own eligibility standards, based on units' priorities and needs, that are consistent with the purposes and guidelines of the GRF funds.

### Recommendation 2:

Following recommendation 1 and with regard to concerns of how long it could take to address current differences in GRF allocations across units, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee should review the procedure that caps the percentage of a decrease in a unit's funding to 10%. After the GRF allocations have been leveled to a per tenure-track faculty rate, then the 10% cap may be reinstated.

### Recommendation 3:

Future FSRCs should continue to review the GRF funds regarding their purpose and objectives. The FSRC should request information from GRF units to determine individual GRF unit's preferences and priorities for the GRF funds. Sample questions include: What are the funding priorities for the GRF unit? What objectives does the GRF unit want to achieve with the GRF funds? Are these objectives being met currently? What data support that the objectives are being met?

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<sup>2</sup> Tenure track refers to tenured and pre-tenured faculty.

Tables of Findings

**Table 2. Faculty Eligibility by GRF Unit**

<b>2. Eligibility for GRF in your GRF entity (use only one of the options below)</b>		Sch of Arch Desgn	Sch of Busin	Sch of Educ	Sch of Engn	Sch of Journ	Sch of Law	Sch of Music	Sch of Pharm	Univ Libr	Sch of Arts CLAS	Beh Sci CLAS	Hum CLAS	Lif Sci CLAS	Phy Sci CLAS	Soc Sci CLAS
2.1	Pre-tenured faculty members only (yes or no)	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
2.2	Tenured faculty members only (yes or no)	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
2.3	Pre-tenured and tenured faculty members only (yes or no)	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2.4	Any faculty member, including non-tenure track faculty (yes or no)	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N

**Table 3. Three-Year Average Number of Graduate and PhD Students in GRF Unit, FY2016 to FY2018**

<b>3. FY16-FY18 Students in your GRF entity</b>		Sch of Arch Desgn	Sch of Busin	Sch of Educ	Sch of Engn	Sch of Journ	Sch of Law	Sch of Music	Sch of Pharm	Univ Libr	Sch of Arts CLAS	Beh Sci CLAS	Hum CLAS	Lif Sci CLAS	Phy Sci CLAS	Soc Sci CLAS
3.1	Number of students in the graduate program/s of your unit during FY16, FY2017, FY18	142.3	657.3	1334.3	646.3	52.7	331.7	217.3	107.7	0.0	37.7	153.7	250.7	114.7	296.7	207.0
3.2	Number of PhD students in the graduate program/s of your unit during FY16, FY2017, FY18	16.3	34.7	401.3	234.0	12.3	20.7	117.0	73.0	0.0	24.3	75.3	225.0	13.7	84.3	178.7



**Table 6. Three-Year Average on GRF Priorities (Early Career Support, Pilot Studies, Summer Salary, Matching External Funds), FY2016 to FY2018**

<b>6. FY16-FY18 GRF Priorities in your unit</b>		Sch of Arch Desgn	Sch of Busin	Sch of Educ	Sch of Engn	Sch of Journ	Sch of Law	Sch of Music	Sch of Pharm	Univ Libr	Sch of Arts CLAS	Beh Sci CLAS	Hum CLAS	Lif Sci CLAS	Phy Sci CLAS	Soc Sci CLAS
6.1	Number of funded proposals used in early-career (i.e., after receiving New Faculty GRF and while still pre-tenured) during FY16, FY2017, FY18	2.3	4.0	2.0	5.7	0.3	0.3	1.7	1.0	0.0	0.7	0.3	2.3	0.0	0.3	0.7
6.2	Number of funded proposals used in pilot studies during FY16, FY2017, FY18	1.7	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.3	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.7	1.3	0.7
6.3	Number of funded proposals used for summer salary during FY16, FY2017, FY18	2.0	0.7	3.0	0.0	0.3	4.0	2.7	0.3	0.0	0.7	0.3	2.3	0.7	0.0	2.0
6.4	Number of funded proposals that used the fund to match external funds during FY16, FY2017, FY18	1.3	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3

**Table 7. Three-Year Average on GRF Accomplishments (Publications, Conferences, Creative Projects, Funding Proposals, External Funding, Other), FY2016 to FY2018**

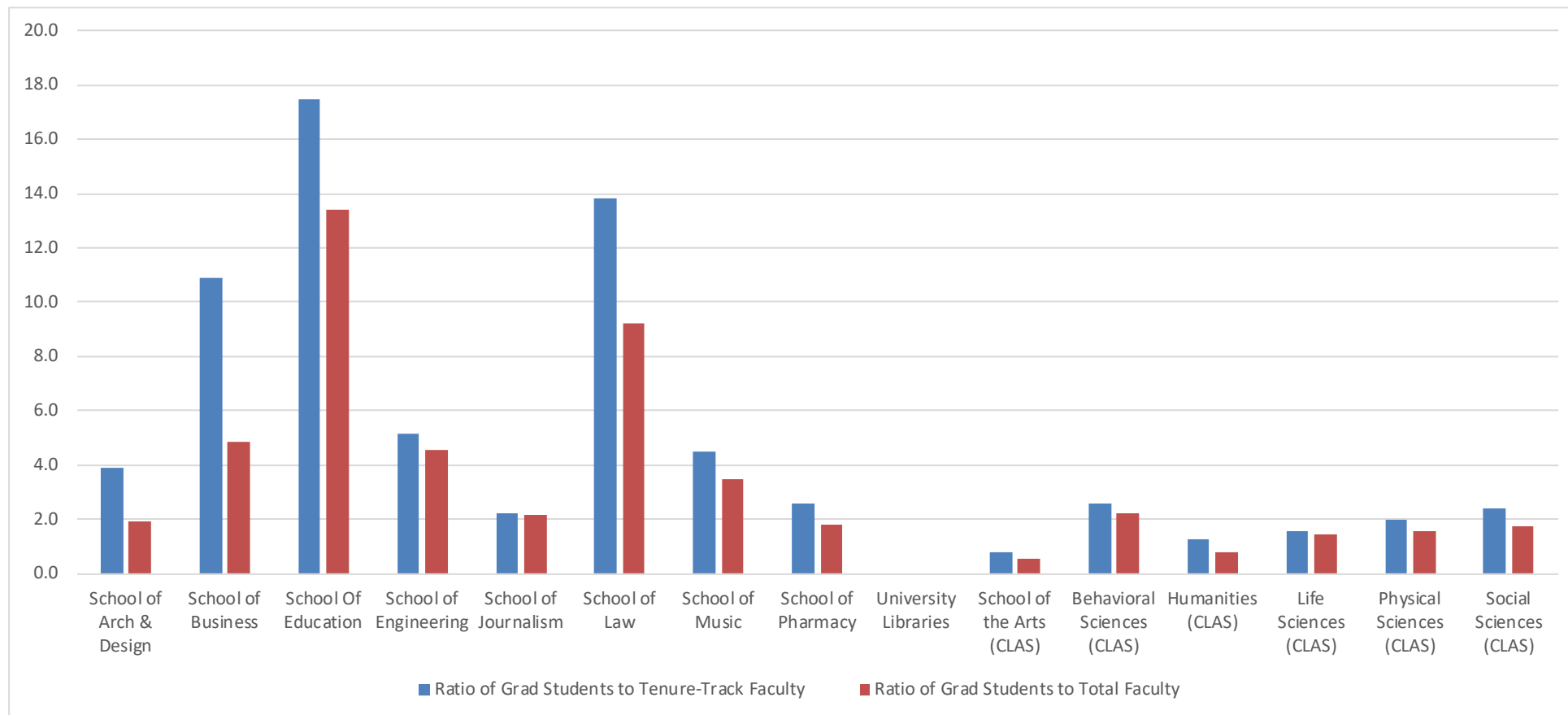
<b>7. GRF accomplishments</b>		Sch of Arch Desgn	Sch of Busin	Sch of Educ	Sch of Engn	Sch of Journ	Sch of Law	Sch of Music	Sch of Pharm	Univ Libr	Sch of Arts CLAS	Beh Sci CLAS	Hum CLAS	Lif Sci CLAS	Phy Sci CLAS	Soc Sci CLAS
7.1	Number of GRF-related peer-reviewed publications during FY16, FY2017, FY18	3.3	2.0	2.3	17.0	0.0	15.7	3.7	3.7	0.3	7.0	0.3	13.0	0.7	7.7	5.7
7.2	Number of GRF-related peer-reviewed conference presentations during FY16, FY2017, FY18	7.3	2.0	5.0	13.0	0.3	29.7	4.3	4.0	0.3	13.0	1.0	16.0	5.7	9.3	7.3
7.3	Number of GRF-related peer-reviewed creative projects or products during FY16, FY2017, FY18	2.3	0.7	0.0	5.0	0.3	0.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	5.3	0.7	1.3	0.0	0.0	5.3
7.4	Number of GRF-related proposals submitted for external funding during FY16, FY2017, FY18	2.3	0.0	3.0	19.3	0.0	0.0	1.7	3.0	0.0	1.0	0.3	9.7	3.7	6.7	1.7
7.5	Number of GRF-related proposals received external funding during FY16, FY2017, FY18	2.0	0.0	2.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.7	0.0	1.3	1.3	2.7	2.0	2.7	0.3
7.6	Number of any other important GRF-related outcomes (please list or describe) during FY16, FY2017, FY18	14.7	1.3	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	1.7	0.7	3.3	0.3	0.0	2.7

**Table 8. Annual GRF Allocation for Each GRF Unit, FY2016 to FY2018**

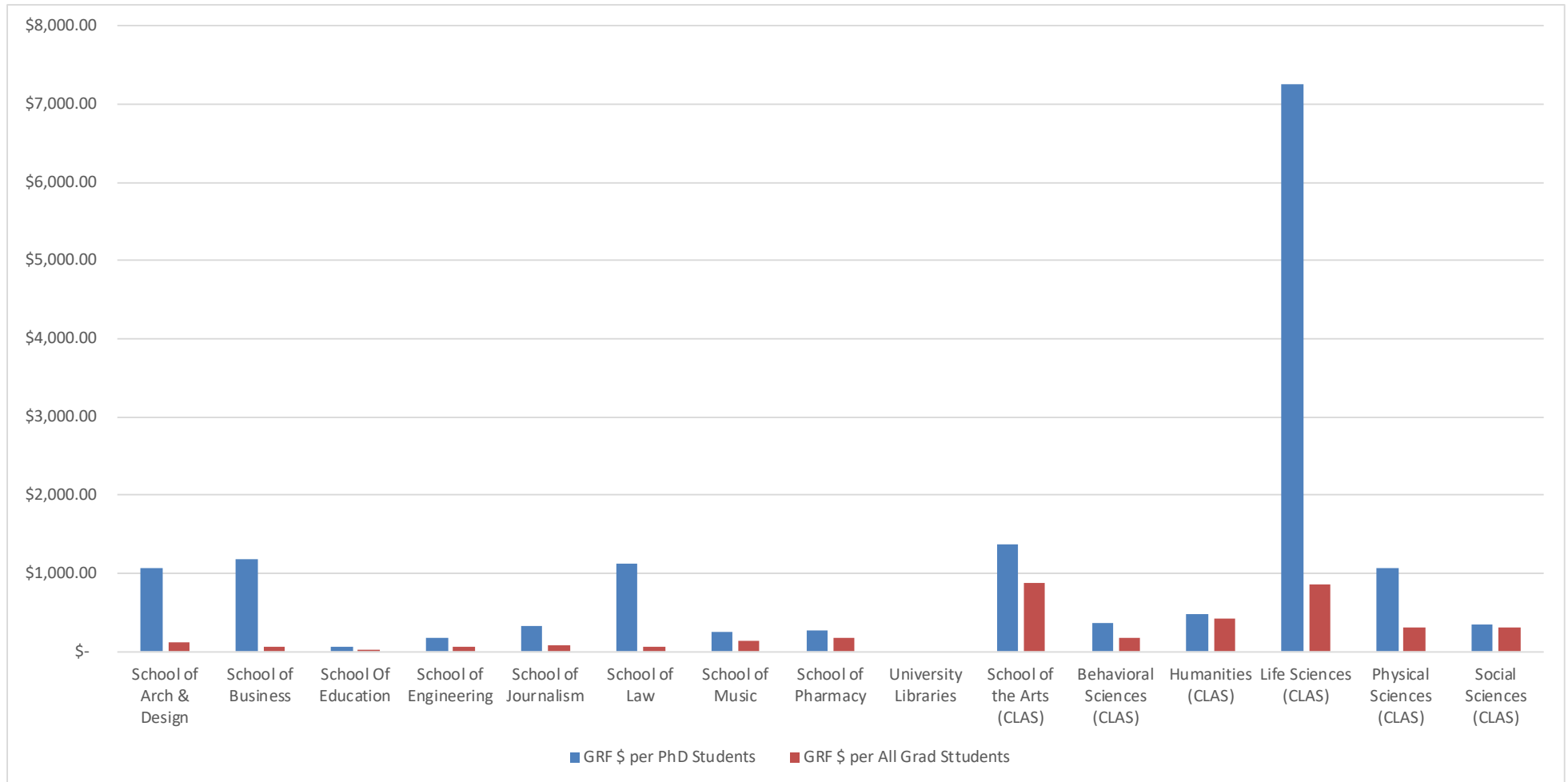
<b>GRF Unit</b>	<b>Per Year GRF Allocation, FY2016 to FY2018</b>
<b>Architecture &amp; Urban Design</b>	\$ 17,596.00
<b>Business</b>	\$ 41,023.00
<b>Arts</b>	\$ 33,200.00
<b>Behavioral Sciences</b>	\$ 27,089.00
<b>Humanities</b>	\$ 107,614.00
<b>Life Sciences</b>	\$ 99,127.00
<b>Physical Sciences</b>	\$ 90,549.00
<b>Social Sciences</b>	\$ 63,629.00
<b>Education</b>	\$ 27,395.00
<b>Engineering</b>	\$ 42,254.00
<b>Journalism</b>	\$ 4,016.00
<b>Law</b>	\$ 23,251.00
<b>Music</b>	\$ 29,642.00
<b>Pharmacy</b>	\$ 19,671.00
<b>Social Welfare</b>	\$ -
<b>Libraries</b>	\$ 6,044.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 632,100.00</b>

### Figures of Findings

**Figure 1. Ratio of Graduate Students to Faculty, by Tenure-Track Faculty and Total Faculty, FY2016 to FY2018**

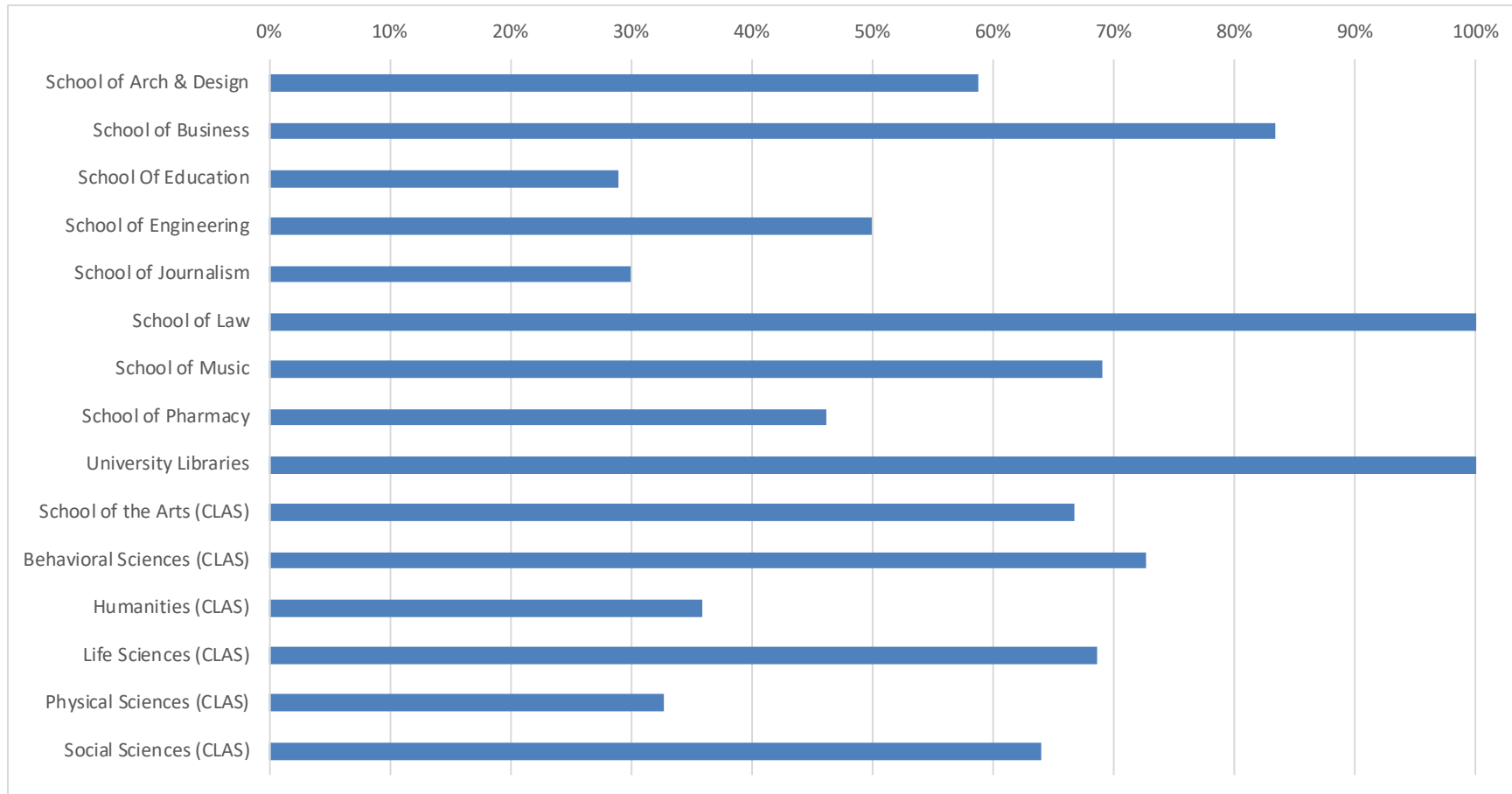


**Figure 2. GRF Funding by Number of PhD Students and Number of Graduate Students, by GRF Unit, FY2016-FY2018**

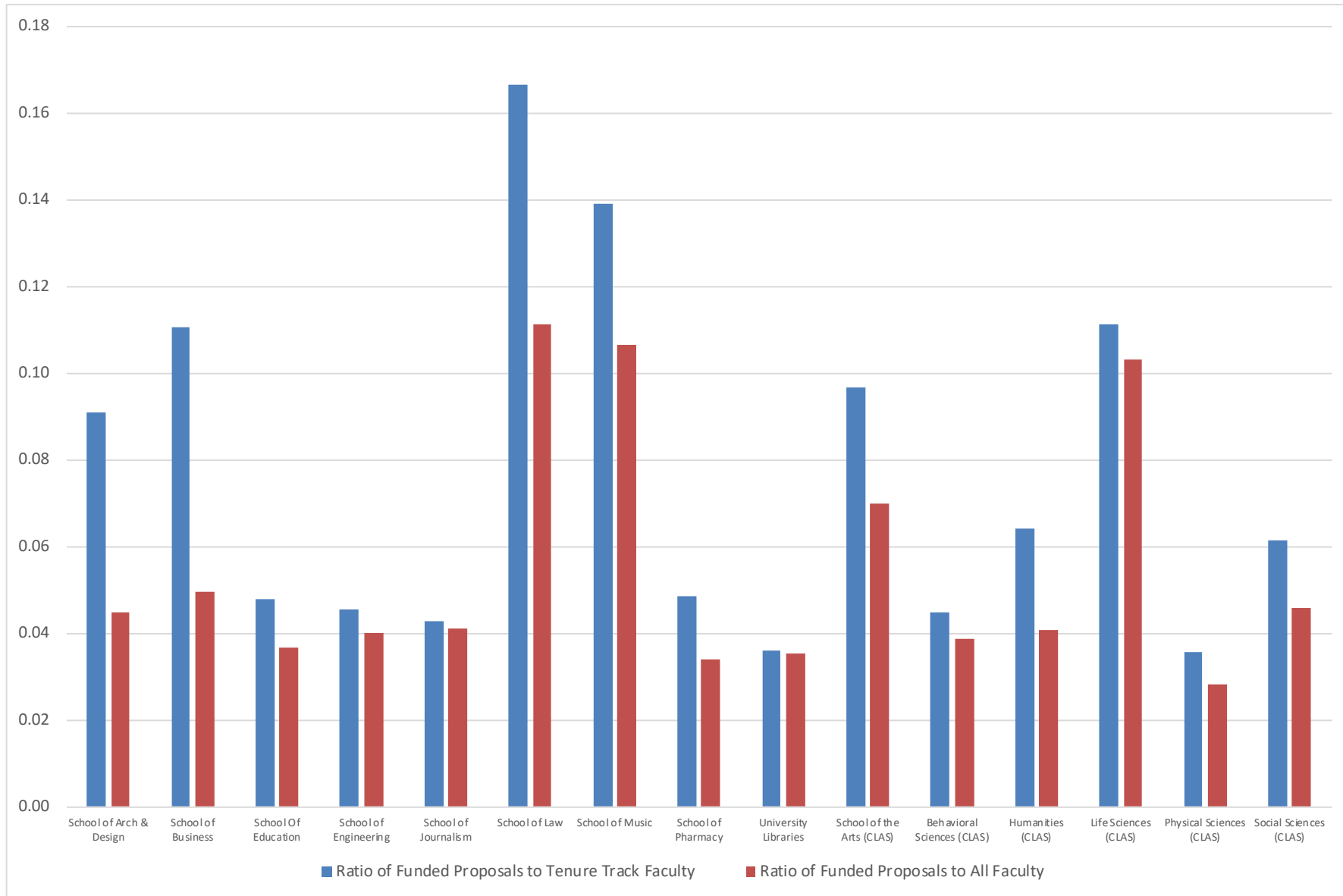




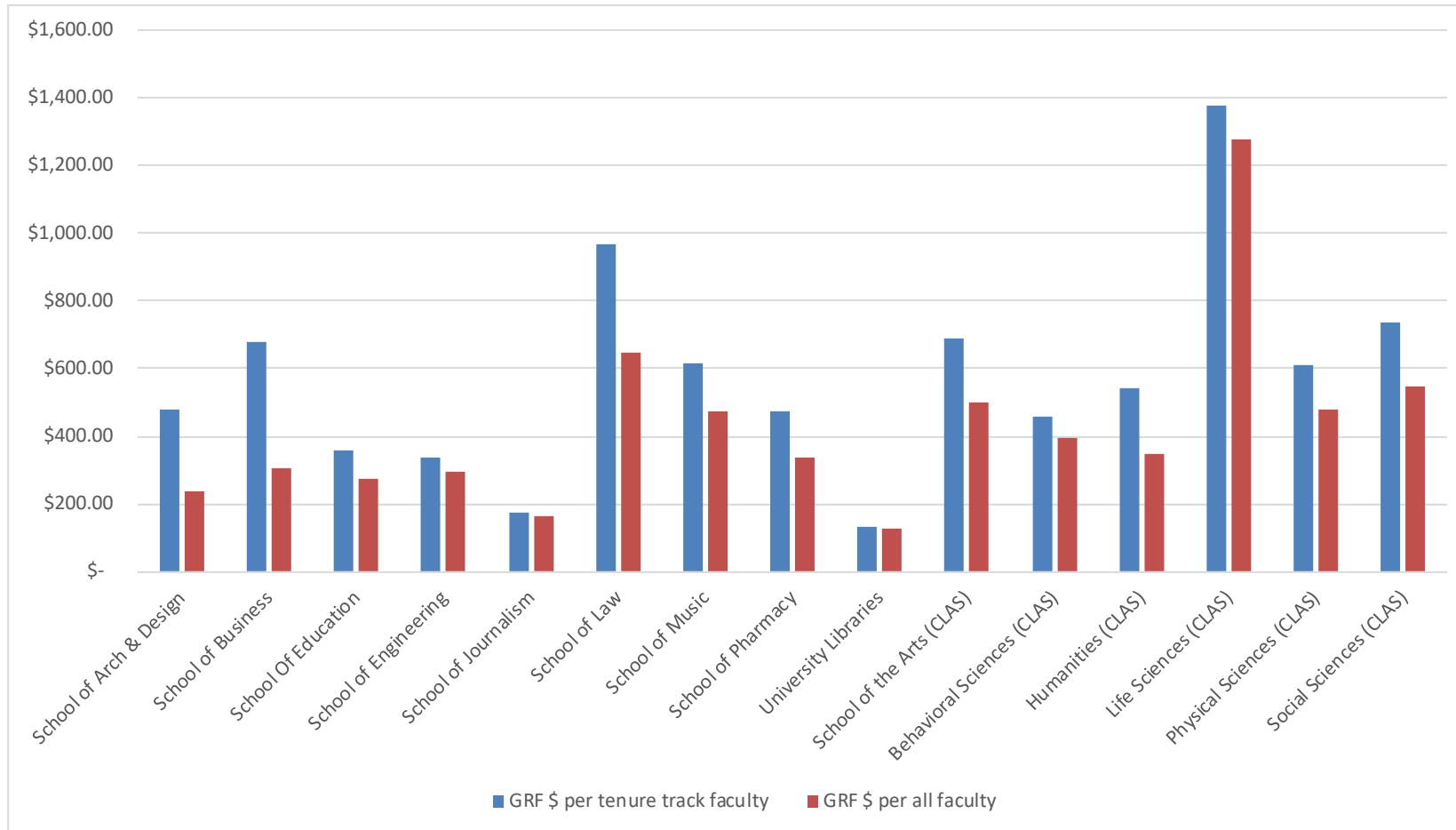
**Figure 3. Percent of Funded GRF Proposals Out of Submitted GRF Proposals by GRF Unit, FY2016-FY2018**



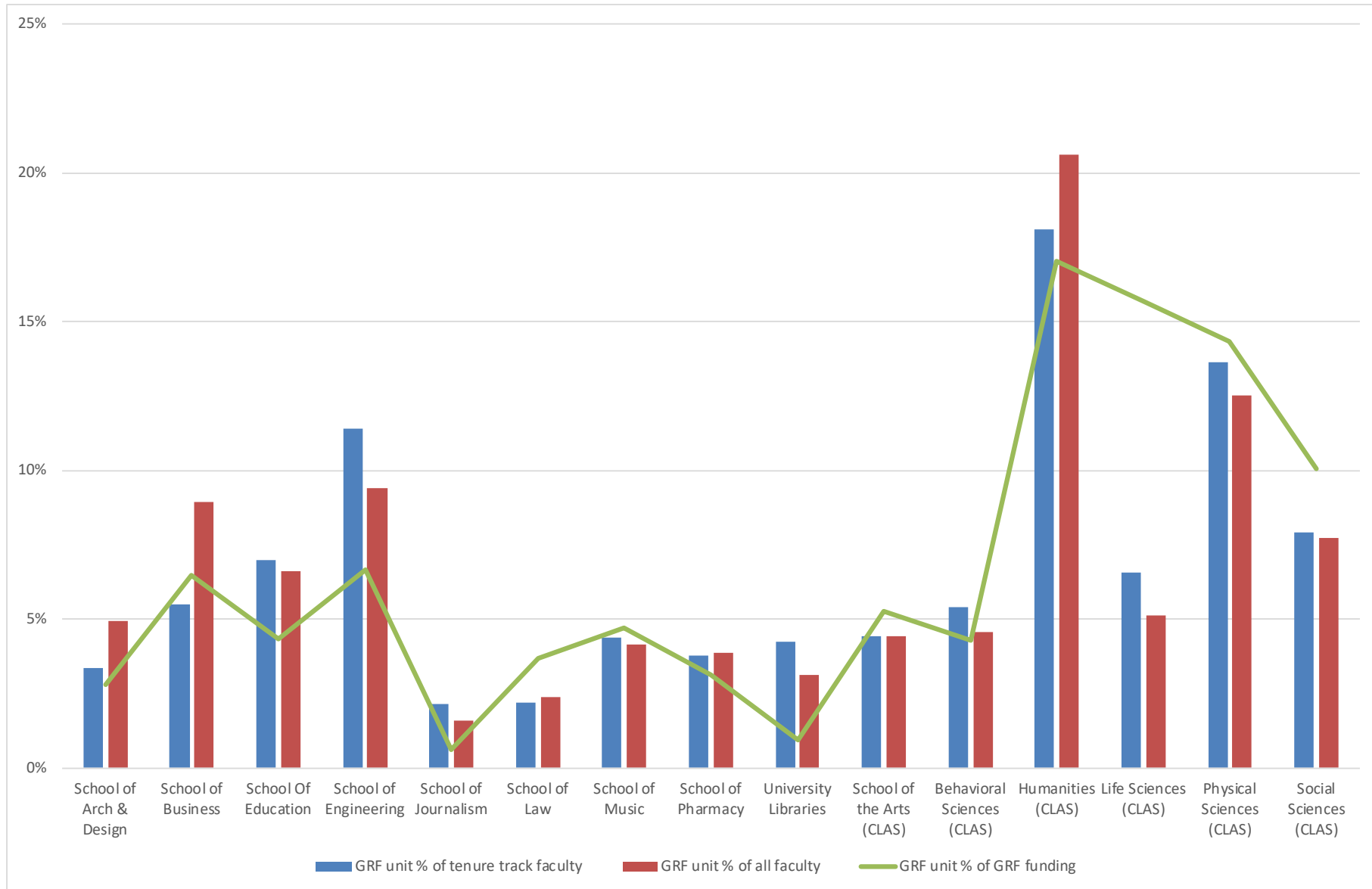
**Figure 4. Ratio of Funded Proposals to All Faculty and Ratio of Funded Proposals to Tenure Track Faculty by GRF Unit, FY2016-FY2018**



**Figure 5. GRF Funding Per Faculty, by Tenure-Track Faculty and Total Faculty, FY2016 to FY2018**



**Figure 6. Comparison of GRF Unit's Percent of Faculty (Tenure Track and All Faculty) to GRF Unit's Percent of GRF Funding, FY2016-FY2018**



**Figure 7. Reported Number of Funded Proposals Addressing Four Priority Areas by GRF Unit, FY2016 to FY2018**

