Since the first survey and in particular with the beginning of the 2018/19 academic year, the College has started to address some of the issues of high importance to Ph.D. graduate students in the 4 MCS departments. While there are differences between the survey responses from the different departments, the MCS initiative focuses on providing all MCS graduate students with the same opportunities trying to offer the same resources to all MCS graduate students.

According to the Fall 2017 survey, the following drivers showed low mean ratings and impact weights pointing to areas in need of improvement:

**Professional Development**

MCS offers for the first time a Communication Workshop Series for all MCS graduate students in F18 with self-contained workshops, followed by a workshop series on Scientific Writing and Professional Development for next year spring and summer, respectively. These workshop series are geared to improve the communications, writing and professional skills of graduate students with career plans inside and outside of academia.

With respect to professional development within academia, MCS introduced in F17 the MCS Graduate Student Conference Funding Award to provide supplemental conference travel funding for MCS graduate students enabling them to attend and participate in key conferences and workshops that advance their research. This initiative also relates to the following response.

**Preparation for Future Careers**

Work has started to provide more information about career options outside of academia. While more information about career options in industry is continuously distributed to MCS graduate students, in order to address this issue, career panels are planned for later in F18 consisting of 3 CMU alumni describing their career path followed by a discussion period with Q&A from students and concluding with a social part allowing students to interact with the alumni.

**Work-Life Balance**

Starting in the spring of this year, mental health discussion events for MCS graduate students are offered to provide more information on resources regarding mental health issues. These are led by professional from CMU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS). Similar sessions will be offered for faculty.

Together with the MCS Graduate Student Advisory Council discussion is starting on how to address the general stress culture of students in graduate school. This is a topic where guidance and input from students is essential in aiming to change the university culture.
Besides events such as Oktoberfest, an increase of social events allowing students to interact in a social setting and in particular with students outside the home department is also under discussion seeking student input.

Finally, discussions have started on the university level, led by the Assistant Vice Provost for Graduate Education, to start a graduate student mental health organization.

**Accommodation and Facilities**

The main issue are the facilities in the Mellon Institute related to the age and structure of the building which is no longer suited to host state of the art research facilities. It will likely not be possible to address this issue until the new Science building that CMU is planning to build is ready for move-in. However, with the university's emphasis on Science at CMU, a new building for the sciences has become reality.

**Health Coverage and Costs**

The continued increase and the complexity to compensate graduate students for the cost of their health insurance has been addressed by Dean Doerge in a recent MCS Graduate Student Town Hall meeting. Attempts have been made to compensate the steep annual increases in health insurance costs over the past few years with annual increases in the graduate stipend that cover at least the more expensive health insurance.