

The Graduate School Annual Report 2003-2004

Highlighted Achievements

The Graduate School implemented the Graduate School Teaching Portfolio Program, which recognizes graduate students' contributions to the teaching mission at UGA and encourages students to reflect on and document their teaching development in the form of a teaching portfolio, thereby enhancing the graduate teaching experience.

A Graduate School feeder school agreement was established with Spelman College.

A UGA-MCG agreement was signed to facilitate student learning and research between the two campuses.

Other achievements are highlighted in the report.

Strategic Plan Changes

No substantive changes to the strategic plan have been made.

Strategic Plan Progress (Unit Level)

Steps to enhance graduate student learning environment

- Implementation of ongoing professional development for graduate coordinators and assistants who interact daily with graduate students. These workshops and seminars provided an opportunity for discussion on mentoring with new faculty members and all graduate coordinators.

- Development of online graduate student handbook for ready access to procedures and policies. This service was designed to assist graduate students in achieving success in their graduate studies by providing information on a variety of topics that are an integral part of graduate programs.

- Improvements to orientation program for new graduate students. The Graduate School adapted an orientation model of excellence from one of the top-tier graduate schools the dean visited. The format to the existing orientation program was expanded to offer more information and to heighten awareness of services available to graduate students. Other improvements were based on information collected from a survey of participants of last year's orientation.

- Workshops provided for graduate students.

The topics of these workshops that were offered by the Graduate School included the following: "Navigating Graduate Study at UGA"; "Introduction to UGA Computer Resources" (two sessions); "Stop Procrastinating and Start Writing: Strategies for Productivity"; "Developing and Maintaining Relationships with Your Faculty Advisor and Committee Members: A Recipe for Success"; and "Dissertation Writing." These workshops were well received and well attended by students.

- Examination of all policies affecting graduate education.

The Graduate School began a self-evaluation of all policies with a goal to recommend areas for streamlining and simplifying. Proposals for policy modifications that have been submitted to the Graduate Council include the following recommendations: that departments revise course numbers to reflect the actual level and type of instruction in course curriculum; that the policy be simplified for undergraduates within three to six hours of completing their bachelor's by allowing them to register for a course to be used toward a master's degree at the graduate level; that the minimum requirement for the number of semesters for which doctoral students must enroll following admission to candidacy be eliminated; and that the number of hours an in-service class can meet per session be increased.

- Agreement signed between the Medical College of Georgia and UGA.

This agreement will provide a waiver of graduate tuition at MCG and UGA for doctoral students classified as Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) or Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) at the other institution. On a space-available basis, GRAs and GTAs at one institution (the home institution) will be allowed to enroll in courses offered by the other institution (the host institution) without payment of additional tuition. Under the provisions of this agreement, the number of credit hours earned at the host institution that may be applied to the student's course of study may not exceed the number of hours allowed by the home institution's current policy.

- Implementation of the Graduate School Teaching Portfolio Program.

The program recognizes graduate students' contribution to the teaching mission at UGA, the development of the scholarship of teaching, and the documentation of the graduate teaching experience.

Steps to increase graduate enrollment

- Improvement of communication with applicants and departments.

Electronic strategies have been implemented to increase and improve communication with prospective and current applicants and to provide more specific support for academic departments' admissions and recruitment efforts. Efficiency in multiple areas has resulted in reduced processing time and more prompt and complete information being forwarded to departments.

- Completion of admissions survey to applicants.

This survey was conducted to gather information about applicants' experiences during the admissions process and how they made their decision to enroll at UGA. Information was shared with academic departments to help in recruitment decision-making.

- Improvements to application processing.
Technology improvements made to the online application system have allowed departments to make earlier decisions and to compete for applicants who are considering other institutions. Customization is now available for individual departments.

- Increase in funding to graduate assistants.
Overall, the number of graduate assistants employed campus wide increased by 5% from FY03. Funding increased by over \$1.8 million. The Graduate School increased the budgeted dollar amount for Graduate School assistantships by 4% for FY04 by using internal resources.

Steps to enhance international learning experiences

- Development of cross training for staff in international admissions area.
This initiative has resulted in equal processing times for both domestic and international applicants, an accomplishment that has not occurred in the Graduate School for at least 15 years.

- Improvements in communication with applicants from other cultures.
New e-mail messaging is now being sent with country-specific guidance for applicants from major countries such as China and India. The goal is to have files completed earlier in the process, thus allowing adequate time for accepted students to obtain travel documents and visas.

- Promotion of international learning.
Efforts by the Graduate School included providing additional training for faculty and staff on international student issues and collaborating with campus international leaders to promote graduate student exchange agreements. The Graduate School invited International Education staff members to present a workshop, "SEVIS and Its Impact on Admission and Enrollment of Graduate Students," which was open to all UGA faculty and staff. The Graduate School has also worked collaboratively with UGA faculty and administrators in reviewing exchange agreements and developing clear exchange agreement guidelines with minimal graduate admissions requirements. The goals are to facilitate the development of new international exchange agreements and to encourage participation in existing exchange programs.

Steps to enhance research funding and activity

- Increase in funding for graduate research assistantships.
The Graduate School provided additional funding for graduate research assistantships as part of matching funds with proposals to external agencies. This enhanced the prospect of funding. Supplemental funds were also allocated to existing research assistantships.

- Contribution of funding for assistantships by the Graduate School to assist departments in writing external grants.

Strategic Plan Progress (Institutional Level)

Increase in Total Graduate Enrollment

The total graduate student enrollment (returning and new students) for Fall 2003 semester was 6,895. This represents an increase of 439 students (6.8%) over the total of 6,456 students enrolled for Fall 2002.

The total graduate student enrollment (returning and new students) for the Spring 2004 semester was 6,689, representing an increase of 298 students (4.6%) over the total of 6,391 for Spring 2003 semester.

Diversity

The Graduate School continued efforts to increase enrollment among historically underrepresented groups. There was a 21% increase (138 students) in enrollment of students from underrepresented groups, from 661 in 2002, to 799 in 2003. The total number of students from underrepresented populations reflects 11.9% of the total graduate population.

The Graduate School established a Graduate School Feeder Program with Spelman College, which is the top producer of baccalaureate degrees for African-American women in the United States.

Public Service and Outreach Contributions

Recruitment

- Presentations by senior administrators of the Graduate School. Dean Maureen Grasso presented "The Why, How, and When of Graduate Education" to high achiever and honor students at Pennsylvania State University, Abington. She also presented "External Forces Impacting Graduate Education and the Role of Transformative Faculty Leaders in Influencing the Next Generation of Graduate Students" to the faculty at Pennsylvania State University, Abington.

Senior Associate Dean Michael Poock presented "Recruiting a Diverse Student Body and Creating a Climate of Inclusiveness at the University of Georgia" at the Second National Conference on Best Practices of Black Student Achievements at Clemson University.

- Presentations by recruiters from the Graduate School. The workshop, "How to Prepare for Graduate School," was presented at numerous institutions around the country. These workshops included helpful tips on how to prepare

a statement of purpose, how to prepare for the GRE, how to ask for a letter of recommendation, and how to find out about financial opportunities. Some of the institutions and sites visited for workshops and recruitment include the following: Florida-Georgia Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (FGLSAMP) Conference, Miami, FL; Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), Albuquerque, NM; North Carolina A&T National McNair Conference, Greensboro, NC; and the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minorities in Science (ABRCMS), San Diego, CA.

An on-campus Junior/Senior workshop on graduate education was held for UGA upperclassmen and students from nearby institutions.

The Graduate School participated in the ASPIRE-Athens High School and Local Colleges Networking event held at the Tate Center at UGA.

Workshops were held on graduate education at graduate fairs at all eight Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Georgia (Savannah State University, Albany State University, Fort Valley State University, Paine College and the Atlanta University Center: Spelman College, Morris Brown College, Morehouse College and Clark Atlanta University), as well as Augusta State University, Valdosta State University and the Annual Leadership Development Seminar for Minorities in Georgia in Macon, GA.

Research and Student Learning

- Dissemination of scholarly work of its students.
An important part of Graduate School outreach, this is done primarily through electronic theses and dissertations. This year, the Graduate School received and processed over 800 electronic theses and dissertations, which are available to the public online through the library.
- Production and distribution by the Graduate School of over 20,000 copies of the 2003 Graduate Bulletin on CD-ROM.

Additional Outreach Contribution

The Dean was elected President of the Conference of Graduate Schools (2004-2005).

The Dean gave a presentation entitled "Transformative Leadership in an Environment of Change" at the American Conference of Academic Deans in Washington, D.C.

Short Term Goals (FY05)

Goal 1: Increase enrollment of underrepresented populations through recruitment, assessment, development and implementation of on-campus programs.

Goal 2: Establish a formal development effort to cultivate relationships with alumni and to further the funding capability of the Graduate School.

Goal 3: Increase graduate enrollment by using innovative technology, by offering competitive services to students such as subsidized health insurance and by collaborating with departmental graduate coordinators to explore creative funding opportunities.

Goal 4: Enhance graduate student experience by providing professional development workshops, non-academic programs and leadership and travel opportunities.

Goal 5: Develop a comprehensive database to better meet the needs of all units.

Assessing Effectiveness

- Feedback concerning graduate admissions and enrolled student services. Graduate coordinators and their assistants provide feedback on graduate admissions processing at annual meetings and periodic workshops and through the graduate coordinator and assistants listserves. From this verbal and written feedback, graduate admissions practices have been modified to increase departmental flexibility in meeting Graduate School guidelines for admission. These changes have resulted in applicants' being accepted more quickly or given provisional admission until missing requirements are satisfied.

Newly accepted students completed a survey on their admissions experience and the most important factors that they considered in selecting UGA for graduate study. Admissions and recruitment procedures have been modified as a result of this survey. Participants of the Graduate School orientation completed surveys that have aided in modification of future orientations to better serve this population. Students who participated in Graduate School workshops throughout the year completed evaluation forms that were used to refine other workshops.

- Evaluation of recruitment programs. The Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) participants complete a mid-summer evaluation and a final evaluation at the end of the program to document their progress and to provide insight into ways to improve the program.

Based on evaluation forms submitted by attendees, the annual "Visitation Days" program was revised to assist prospective students with their applications by reviewing their statement of purpose. Other changes to the program included offering assistance with application materials and focusing on higher quality students accepted to participate in the program versus higher quantity.

Student Retention/Graduation

- Monitoring of the Graduate Recruitment Opportunities (GRO) assistantship recipients.

This program requires that first-year recipients provide monthly reports to peer mentors who are second-year recipients. The peer mentors meet several hours a month to discuss their graduate school experiences and report their progress as well as the progress of the first-year recipients to the Recruitment and Retention office at the Graduate School.

- Continuation of Graduate School Dean's Award program.

This program, now in its second year, is used to facilitate doctoral students' move toward the completion of the degree by helping to finance doctoral dissertation research.

- Promotion of an inclusive environment.

The Graduate School worked closely with other minority-serving units at UGA to provide an inclusive environment for graduate students from underrepresented populations. These units include the Minority Services and Program Office, the Office of Institutional Diversity, the Office of Diversity in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, USDA-Affirmative Action office and programs, Graduate and Professional Scholars and the Black Faculty and Staff Organization.

- Focusing on the future.

The Graduate School orientation, entitled "Destination Graduation," revised its format to focus on long-term strategies to aid students in completing their degrees by raising awareness of services and opportunities for graduate students at the University.