

The Graduate School Annual Report 2004

Highlighted Achievements

The Graduate School saw a 9 percent increase in enrollment among historically underrepresented groups, with African-American enrollment increasing 10 percent.

The University of Georgia and Spelman College extended an agreement to work cooperatively through the UGA Graduate School Feeder Scholars Program to recruit and fund students from Spelman to the University of Georgia Graduate School.

Black Issues in Higher Education ranked the Graduate School 18th in the nation for the number of doctoral degrees conferred upon African Americans.

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) awarded the Graduate School a \$200,000 three-year grant to research completion rates of doctoral students, particularly those among minorities and women.

The Graduate School Teaching Portfolio Program recognized 13 students for completion of the requirements for this honor in its inaugural year.

Other achievements are highlighted in the report.

Strategic Plan Changes

No substantive changes to the strategic plan have been made. A Five-Year Program Plan was recently submitted and approved for the Graduate School.

Strategic Plan Progress (Unit Level)

A Five-Year Program Plan was recently submitted and approved for the Graduate School. In next year's Annual Report details regarding progress directly related to the Five-Year Program Plan will be addressed. The following sections address progress the Graduate School has made in respect to the goals submitted in last year's annual report.

Steps To Enhance Graduate Student Learning Environment

- Expansion and improvement of ongoing professional development for graduate coordinators and assistants who interact daily with graduate students

- Workshops provided for graduate students

Workshops were offered an average of once a week per semester. They were well attended and included the following: Surviving Your First Year in Graduate School; Demystifying the Academic Search Process; Empowerment and Success for Black Graduate Students; Cultural Transitions for International Graduate Students; Pursuing a

Non-Academic Career after the Ph.D.; Writing the Dissertation: Plan, Implement and Complete; Developing and Maintaining Relationships with Your Faculty Advisor and Committee Members: A Recipe for Success; Finding Balance through Intuition: A Seminar for Graduate Women; Documenting Your Graduate Experience for the Job Search; Project Management for Graduate Students: How Do I Manage People and Budgets; Legal Issues with which Every Graduate Student Should Be Familiar.

- 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: providing a mechanism for approval of graduate areas of emphasis to be stated on student transcripts; placing a limit of nine hours of courses taken during non-degree status that can be used on a prospective graduate degree program; revising master's thesis advisory committees to allow for non-UGA members.

- 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. A total of 13 students have been recognized for the completion of an approved teaching portfolio.

Steps To Increase Graduate Enrollment

- Improvements to communication with applicants and departments

Graduate Admissions has refined and customized technology that informs academic departments on applicant processing and improves communication with prospective applicants. These efforts include providing access to departments and advising departments on downloading applicant data directly to their own system and attaching supplemental departmental communication and/or materials to initial electronic messages to applicants.

- Completion of admissions survey to applicants

An evaluation survey was conducted among applicants who chose to accept admission at other institutions, resulting in valuable information that was shared with the Graduate School and the academic departments. The applicant feedback and admissions improvements support departmental recruitment efforts.

- Improvements to application processing

Graduate Admissions has reviewed business processes and continued to refine procedures and improve customer service to applicants and UGA staff. This has resulted in a reduced turnaround time for processing applications and increased accuracy in matching miscellaneous documents and test scores.

- Funding to graduate assistants

Despite budget cuts, the Graduate School was able to maintain the current level of funding.

Steps To Enhance International Learning Experiences

- Development of cross training for staff in international admissions area
Toward the goal of improved customer service and efficient admissions processing, greater effort has been made to familiarize admissions staff with international applicant needs and related admissions processing issues. This cross training has had several positive results. The creative energies of teamwork have helped improve admissions information and communication; the office has responded immediately to international admissions needs when the primary staff member has been unavailable; and these efforts contribute to staff development as a whole.

- Improvements in communication with applicants from other cultures
Admissions activities have centered on international admissions. With the reduction in applications from foreign nationals, efforts have focused on increasing information to current applications on the status of their application and providing additional informational materials to help applicants complete the admissions process.

Information that addresses country-specific requirements and special tips for prospective international applicants is now on the Graduate School Web page. More information is provided to applicants with regard to materials needed to complete their applications.

Steps To Enhance Research Funding and Activity

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.

Strategic Plan Progress (Institutional Level)

Total Graduate Enrollment

The total graduate student enrollment (returning and new students) for Spring 2004 semester was 6,694. This represents an increase of 303 students (4.7 percent) over the total of 6,391 for Spring 2003 semester.

The total graduate student enrollment (returning and new students) for the Fall 2004 semester was 6,792. This represents a decrease of 1.9 percent from the total of 6,922 for Fall 2003 semester.

Diversity

The Graduate School continued efforts to increase enrollment among historically underrepresented groups. There was a 9 percent increase (79 students) in enrollment of students from underrepresented groups, from 799 in 2003, to 878 in 2004. The largest minority group, African-American students, increased from 558 in 2003 to 583 in 2004, a 10 percent increase. The total number of students from underrepresented populations reflects 13 percent of the total graduate student population of 6,792.

In the summer of 2004, the Graduate School piloted the Summer Bridge Program, an initiative to assist incoming graduate students from underrepresented populations as they transition into graduate school. Three students participated in this inaugural program.

In August 2004, *Black Issues in Higher Education* ranked the University of Georgia 18th in the nation for the number of doctoral degrees conferred upon African Americans.

In September 2004, the University of Georgia and Spelman College extended an agreement to work cooperatively through the UGA Graduate School Feeder Scholars Program, which recruits and funds students from Spelman to the University of Georgia Graduate School. Three students from this program enrolled in the Graduate School in Fall 2004.

In November 2004, the Graduate School was awarded a \$200,000, three-year grant from the Council of Graduate Schools to fund research on completion rates of doctoral students, particularly those among minorities and women. The University will work in conjunction with the University of Florida and North Carolina State University in this initiative.

Public Service and Outreach Contributions

Recruitment

- Presentation 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.

- Presentations by recruiters from the Graduate School Throughout the year, recruiters visit and present workshops at a variety of institutions. Included, but not limited in these visits is the workshop, How to Prepare for Graduate School, which was presented at numerous institutions around the country, including seven accredited Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCUs) in the state of Georgia and four Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) in Puerto Rico. A workshop on graduate education was presented at the Florida-Georgia Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Conference and Brenau College.

The Graduate School participated with other UGA academic departments at conferences that supported students of color in the sciences: the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS); the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minorities in Science (ABRCMS); and McNair conferences at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Penn State University, North Carolina A&T University and the University of Maryland.

- Recruitment programs of the Graduate School In the spring of 2004, an on-campus Junior/Senior workshop on graduate education was held for UGA upperclassmen and students from nearby institutions.

In the summer of 2004, the Graduate School held its fifth annual Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP), a program designed to introduce undergraduates from

historically underrepresented populations from institutions around the nation to graduate-level research by pairing them with faculty mentors in their labs.

- Attendance by Graduate School recruiters at college fairs throughout the region

Research and Student Learning

- Dissemination of scholarly work of 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 850 electronic theses and dissertations, which are available to the public online through the library.

- Dissemination of Graduate School seminars and workshops

Seminars and workshops sponsored by the Graduate School are videotaped and available through its Web site for viewing by students and other interested parties who were unable to attend the event in person.

Additional Outreach Contributions

Dean Maureen Grasso served as president of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (2004-2005).

Dean Grasso started a student chapter branch of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). The membership is comprised of graduate students in the Department of Food Science and Technology and undergraduate majors in engineering. She served as the Student Activities Chair of the Atlanta Chapter of ASHRAE.

The dean served as associate editor of the *Clothing & Textile Research Journal*.

The dean also gave a presentation at the CGS Conference in Washington, D.C. on the Ph.D. Completion Project, an initiative for which the Graduate School received a grant in fall 2004.

Short-Term Goals (FY06)

Goal 1: The Graduate School will increase efforts to provide additional professional development opportunities and financial resources to graduate students.

Goal 2: The Graduate School will increase visibility of graduate education at UGA.

Goal 3: The Graduate School will serve as a catalyst to increase diversity.

Goal 4: The Graduate School will improve administrative support provided to departments and offices across campus.

Goal 5: The Graduate School will assist department in optimizing graduate enrollments.

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 e-mail discussion group for the Graduate School. 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.

Technology improvements were made in the online application system, fee processing and communication tools to enhance services provided by graduate admissions. Departments can now customize applicant communications based on enhancements made in the Graduate School application system. Departments can also request specific data and receive written materials on how to evaluate the data.

Staff development and training sessions, specifically with regard to cross training of responsibilities, has improved efficiency, resulting in significant gains in processing time for admissions. Documentation of work processes has aided in analysis and adjustments to accommodate high volume during peak times. The turnaround time on reviewing and setting up applications was reduced from four weeks in January 2003 to one week in January 2004.

The Graduate School has resumed primary responsibility for managing applications to the Graduate Legal Studies program in the Law School and is phasing in managing initial admissions processing for all College of Business graduate programs. These changes will result in increased efficiency with regard to amount of time needed to acknowledge and advise students about initial applicant materials.

- Evaluation of recruitment programs
The participants of the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) completed mid-summer and end-of-summer evaluations. Their feedback was used to implement improvements to the current and future programs.

Changes to the Visitation Days program were implemented for 2004 based on evaluations from the 2003 program attendees. The program has yielded an increasing number of admissions to graduate programs. For example, 11 of 25 students who participated in the Visitation Days in 2003 were admitted for fall 2004, a 44 percent acceptance rate, up from a 27.8 percent acceptance rate for the year before.

Student Retention and 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 third year, is used to facilitate graduate students in the arts, humanities and social sciences as they move toward completion of the degree by helping to finance their research. Twenty students were funded in 2004.

- 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.

- Awarding of travel funds

These awards are made to students to help them in travel required to conduct research for their dissertation or thesis. The dollar amount awarded was reduced due to budget cuts.

- Focusing on the future

The Graduate School orientation, entitled "Destination Graduation," continues to include an evaluation process in which participants are encouraged to offer feedback for improvements for future orientations.

The Graduate School will continue to offer professional development seminars to enhance retention and success for graduate students.