

The Graduate School Annual Report 2005

Highlighted Achievements

Since 1999, the Graduate School has seen a 100 percent increase in enrollment among African-American students. Three hundred sixteen African-American graduate students enrolled in 1999, and 635 enrolled in 2005.

The University of Georgia signed agreements to work cooperatively through the UGA Graduate School Feeder Scholars Program to recruit and fund graduate study at UGA for students from Morehouse College, Albany State University and Florida A&M University. UGA extended its agreement with Spelman College to continue the feeder program for Spelman students seeking graduate degrees at UGA.

Black Issues in Higher Education ranked the Graduate School 11th in the nation for the number of doctoral degrees conferred upon African Americans, up from 18th in the 2004 rankings.

The Graduate School introduced a Certificate in University Teaching. Applications for this new program are now being accepted and reviewed.

The Interdisciplinary Toxicology Program is now housed in the Graduate School, beginning in July of 2005, reflecting a national trend of graduate school leadership of interdisciplinary programs at universities.

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 submitted and approved for the Graduate School last year. It continues to serve as the guiding document for the Graduate School.

Strategic Plan Progress (Unit Level)

This year's Annual Report details progress directly related to the Five-Year Program Plan. 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

- Workshops provided for graduate students to enhance their graduate experience
The Graduate School offered an average of one workshop a week per semester designed to address the multi-faceted needs of today's graduate students and included the following: *The Electronic Library: It's Not Your Father's Library*; *How Universities are Organized, Governed and Managed: Implications for New Faculty*; *Institutional Diversity: A Typology of Universities and Colleges for Aspiring Faculty*; *Developing and Maintaining Relationships with Your Faculty Advisor and*

Committee Members: A Recipe for Success; Documenting Your Graduate Experience for the Job Search; Nutrition: How to Eat Well on a Tight Budget. Particularly popular was the workshop *Legal Issues in Higher Education*, which attracted a large number of both graduate students and faculty members.

- Examination of all policies affecting graduate education

The Graduate School performed a self-evaluation of all policies to identify areas for streamlining and simplifying. The Graduate Council approved the following proposals stemming from this evaluation: graduate areas of emphasis under any graduate major may be stated on student transcripts; no more than nine hours of courses taken during non-degree status may be used on a prospective graduate degree program; master's thesis advisory committees may include non-UGA members.

- Graduate School Certificate in University Teaching

This new interdisciplinary program offered through the Graduate School prepares doctoral and other terminal degree students for their teaching responsibilities in teaching assistantships as well as in future academic positions.

- 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. Now in its second year, the program has had 25 students to complete approved teaching portfolios.

- Graduate School Future Leaders Program

In its second year, this invited leadership workshop sponsored by the Graduate School is a two-day, off-campus opportunity for graduate students to explore their leadership styles and professional goals. Twenty-eight diverse students representing a range of disciplines and backgrounds participated in this intensive training.

Steps To Increase Graduate Enrollment

- Improvements to application processing

Graduate admissions modified its application and document-tracking systems to better serve academic departments in their admissions processes. Now departments may view all applicants' data regardless of whether the prospective students applied online or through the mail and at any point during the application process. Through these technological enhancements, the Graduate School offers departments accurate data earlier in the application process.

The Graduate School now receives directly all graduate applications (except MBA) to the Terry College of Business programs, eliminating processing time and enabling quicker turnaround of application materials and file completion, as well as more timely and frequent communication with applicants regarding their status.

- Initiatives to improve support for international applicants

Graduate admissions staff participated in training from external consultants to increase knowledge of international credentials evaluation particularly with regard to the European Union systems of higher education. Staff surveyed peer institution standards and established new guidelines for equivalencies in undergraduate degrees for international applicants to ensure competitiveness.

International admissions counselors have begun meeting monthly with the Office of International Education staff to quickly resolve problems related to international applicants, thus facilitating the final admissions processing for international students.

- Improvements in communication with applicants from other cultures
The graduate admissions and Graduate School information technology units collaborated to develop creative solutions to restrictions by the Chinese government with regard to the UGA Web pages. Prospective students in China now have multiple avenues for obtaining information through improved Internet search tools.

Graduate admissions and graduate communications collaborated to create an international student brochure for recruitment. The Graduate School continues to explore and implement effective strategies to reach prospective international students and serve currently enrolled international students, particularly through innovative use of technology, such as the Graduate School Web site.

- Funding to graduate assistants
Despite budget cuts, the Graduate School was able to maintain the current level of funding. Travel funding also remained at the previous year's level.

- Strategy to optimize graduate enrollment
The Graduate Council approved a new enrollment policy for graduate students requiring students pursuing graduate degrees to be enrolled two out of three semesters per year. This policy, effective Fall 2006 semester for new students and phased in by Fall 2007 semester for current students, will encourage students to complete their degrees in a timely manner, reduce use of university resources by students and provide improved accounting and planning information regarding use of university resources for graduate education.

Steps To Enhance Research Funding and Activity

The Graduate School fulfilled a key objective of its Five-Year Plan by establishing a formal development program with measurable outcomes. The new program includes the following:

- Graduate School Advancement Board – a nine-member board of alumni and friends of the Graduate School to encourage donations to graduate education
- *Graduate School Magazine* – a means to communicate to alumni and potential donors about the research performed by current graduate students and the opportunities for funding future scholarship

Strategic Plan Progress (Institutional Level)

Total Graduate Enrollment and Degrees Awarded

The total graduate student enrollment (returning and new students) for Spring 2005 semester was 6,629. This represents a decrease of 65 students (1 percent) over the total of 6,694 for Spring 2004 semester.

The total graduate student enrollment (returning and new students) for the Fall 2005 semester was 6,835. This represents an increase of 43 students (0.6 percent) over the total of 6,792 for Fall 2004 semester.

In 2005, 1,739 students were awarded graduate degrees. This number represents an increase of 192 (12.4 percent) over the total of 1,547 graduate degrees awarded in 2004.

Diversity

The Graduate School continued efforts to increase enrollment among historically underrepresented groups. The largest minority group, African-American students, increased by 8 percent over last year.

In the summer of 2005, the Graduate School welcomed six students to its second Summer Bridge Program, an initiative to assist incoming graduate students from underrepresented populations as they transition into graduate school.

In August 2005, *Black Issues in Higher Education* ranked the University of Georgia 11th in the nation for the number of doctoral degrees conferred upon African Americans.

UGA recruits and funds students from Morehouse College, Albany State University and Florida A&M University through its newly signed agreements between these institutions and the UGA Graduate School Feeder Scholars Program. UGA extended its agreement for the feeder program with Spelman College.

The Graduate School is in its second year of 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 of Georgia hosted a conference in June 2005, bringing together faculty and administrators from the two other institutions participating in this grant research. The University continues to work in conjunction with the University of Florida and North Carolina State University in this initiative and has created a Web site to facilitate exchange and dissemination of data.

Public Service and Outreach Contributions

Recruitment

- Recruitment presentations

Throughout the year, recruiters from the Graduate School visited and presented workshops at a variety of institutions.

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

In the spring of 2005, the Graduate School held its annual on-campus Junior/Senior workshop on graduate education for UGA upperclassmen and students from nearby institutions.

In the summer of 2005, the Graduate School held its sixth 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. Approximately 40 percent of SURP participants eventually enroll at UGA for graduate study.

- Recruitment visits

Graduate School recruiters attended college fairs throughout the region to build relationships with prospective students and disseminate information regarding programs at UGA.

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 more than 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 on professional development are videotaped and available through its Web site for viewing by students and other interested parties unable to attend the event.

- The Graduate School has prepared four research briefs as part of the Strategic Intervention for Doctoral Completion grant from the Council of Graduate Schools, posted on a Web page, www.gradsch.uga.edu/cgs. This site was created and is maintained by the Graduate School specifically to share the research findings.

Additional Outreach Contributions

Dean Maureen Grasso served as 2005 Conference of Southern Graduate Schools liaison representative to the Council of Graduate Schools Board of Directors.

The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) presented the Lamp of Knowledge Award to Dean Grasso for her outstanding role as chair of the Student Activities committee for the Atlanta chapter. A major

achievement in this role was starting a student (graduate and undergraduate) chapter of ASHRAE on the UGA campus.

Dean Grasso also lectured at the Bryn Mawr Summer Institute for Women in Higher Education Administration.

The Graduate School continues to raise its visibility to the community, current and prospective students, faculty, staff and donors through communications tools such as new brochures, enhanced Web pages, a new recruitment CD, a Graduate School magazine and news releases to media outlets.

Short-Term Goals (FY07)

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 at UGA.

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

Goal 5: The Graduate School will assist departments 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. Based on 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.

The Graduate School has collected five-year enrollment data for all programs and will communicate with departments with declining enrollments to offer assistance in increasing new student numbers. In addition, the Graduate School offers assistance to all new graduate programs to help with enrollment needs.

Technology improvements were made in the online application system to enhance services provided by graduate admissions. Departments can now electronically access information about applicants whether they applied online or through the mail. This immediate sharing of information speeds turnaround time of application materials.

Staff development and training sessions, specifically with regard to international student credentialing, has improved admissions processing for this group of applicants.

The Graduate School has resumed primary responsibility for managing applications for most College of Business graduate programs. These changes are resulting in increased efficiency with regard to amount of time needed to acknowledge and advise students about 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.

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. Thirty students were funded in 2005.

- 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.

- Rewarding of faculty

The Graduate School established a mentoring award program to recognize outstanding faculty members who have been exceptional in guiding their students through their degree programs.

- Focusing on the future

The Graduate School will continue to offer professional development seminars to enhance retention and success for graduate students. New formats of the information from these seminars will soon be available in electronic and condensed paper versions.