

The University of Georgia The Graduate School Annual Report 2006

Highlighted Achievements

The Interdisciplinary Toxicology Program came under the auspices of the Graduate School this year and is comprised of graduate students, faculty, staff and post-doctoral fellows from departments within the University of Georgia. Spanning seven colleges and 11 departments, it promotes strong interdisciplinary graduate training, research and service initiatives in toxicology.

The Graduate Education Advancement Board continued to add members and create exciting new funding opportunities for graduate students across campus through fellowships, scholarships and other gifts. Notably, this board established a \$100,000 fellowship in spring 2006.

Diverse Issues in Higher Education (formerly *Black Issues in Higher Education*) ranked the Graduate School 13th in the nation for the number of doctoral degrees conferred upon African Americans.

The University of Georgia participated in the National Research Council Study of Research Doctorate Programs. The Graduate School coordinated data collection from 52 doctoral programs selected for the study and achieved 100 percent participation at the program and institutional levels. Faculty response was above the national average.

The Graduate School prepared to move from Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, where it had been housed for almost 40 years, to the Michael Brothers Building in downtown Athens. The process involved reorganizing staff structure and implementing technological enhancements for more efficient use of resources with regard to admissions and student services. The new space was designed to complement the new workflow.

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 two years ago. It continues to serve as the guiding document for the Graduate School. A revised version is attached.

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

- Professional Development Seminars

The Graduate School offered workshops to graduate students throughout the spring and fall semesters to enhance their academic experience at UGA. Topics included academic culture, formatting and submitting electronically theses and dissertations and business etiquette for interviewing.

To facilitate access to the information offered in the on-campus workshops, the Graduate School created an online, printable version of the workshops, called the *5 Minute Mentor*. The workshop synopses allow anyone to access information covering professional, research and personal enrichment topics. The Graduate School continued to offer the workshops in video-streaming format through the Web site.

- Continuous Enrollment Policy

In early 2006, 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. The policy, effective Fall 2006 semester for new students and phased in by Fall 2007 semester for current students, encourages students to complete their degrees in a timely manner, reduces use of university resources by students and provides improved accounting and planning information regarding use of university resources for graduate education.

- Graduate School Future Leaders Program

In its third year, the invited leadership workshop is a two-day, off-campus opportunity during fall semester for graduate students to explore their leadership styles and professional goals. Twenty-eight students representing a range of disciplines and backgrounds participated in this intensive training.

Steps to Increase Graduate Enrollment

- Improvements to application processing

The Graduate School implemented the processing entirely online of applications for admission to graduate programs. The application was modified to provide academic departments with more information so that admissions decisions could be made more quickly. These enhancements included adaptive display for areas of emphasis within programs, self-reported entrance test scores and grade point averages and online letters of recommendation. As of 2006, the Web application tracking system now includes entire application forms so that departments can print applications as soon as they are received by the Graduate School rather than waiting to receive them in the mail. These enhancements have allowed admissions decisions to be made earlier to increase the numbers of applicants who accept admission offers.

- Initiatives to improve support for international applicants

The Graduate School's international admissions counselor attended the National Association of Foreign Students Advisors Regional Conference in 2006. She also participated in the invitation-only Baden-Württemberg Seminar in Germany in the fall of 2006 to enhance knowledge of international education requirements and relations with German universities.

The international admissions counselor continued to work closely 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
In September 2006, the assistant dean visited Shanghai, China to meet with prospective graduate students. During the visit, representatives from three U.S. universities (including UGA) and the president of the Council of Graduate School met with representatives from the American Consulate to discuss China's policy of blocking access to certain universities' Web sites. Since that visit, several key administrators at UGA have worked with government agencies in China in a continued effort to seek resolution.

The Graduate School continued to seek innovative 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.

- Funding to graduate assistants
The Graduate School was able to secure funding for more than 300 graduate students for assistantship support. Travel funding remained at the previous year's level.

Steps to Enhance Research Funding and Activity

The Graduate School continued to fulfill a key objective of its Five-Year Plan with measurable outcomes through its formal development program. The year 2006 represented the second full year of the program. Initiatives included the following:

- The Graduate School Advancement Board grew from nine to 17 members, alumni and friends of the Graduate School, to lead the historic effort to build a foundation of financial support for graduate education at UGA. This board established a \$100,000 fellowship and began working toward a "10 in 10" goal: \$10 million by 2010, the centennial of the formal establishment of the Graduate School.
- The *Graduate School Magazine* published two editions in 2006 to communicate to alumni and potential donors about the research performed by current graduate students and the opportunities for funding future scholarship.
- A meet-and-greet event was held in Birmingham, Alabama for area graduate alumni. Additional events have been planned for the future for other regions.
- Three fellowships were established, and many unrestricted gifts were received in 2006. Corporate sponsorships and individual donations continued to increase.

Strategic Plan Progress (Institutional Level) **Total Graduate Enrollment and Degrees Awarded**

The total graduate student enrollment (returning and new students) for Spring 2006 semester was 6,676. This represents an increase of 47 students (1 percent) over the total of 6,629 for Spring 2005 semester.

The total graduate student enrollment (returning and new students) for Fall 2006 semester was 6,918. This represents an increase of 83 students (1 percent) over the total of 6,835 for Fall 2005 semester.

In 2006, 2,032 students were awarded graduate degrees. This number represents an increase of 293 (16.3 percent) over the total of 1,739 graduate degrees awarded in 2005.

Diversity

The Graduate School continued efforts to increase enrollment among historically underrepresented groups. The office formerly known as Recruitment and Retention was renamed the Outreach and Diversity office, reflecting efforts to promote a more inclusive environment for graduate students at the university.

Since 1999, the Graduate School has seen a more than 100 percent increase in enrollment among African-American students, the largest minority group at UGA. Three hundred sixteen African-American graduate students enrolled in 1999, and 664 enrolled in 2006. This number represented a 5 percent increase from 2005.

In August 2006, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* (formerly *Black Issues in Higher Education*) ranked the University of Georgia 13th in the nation for the number of doctoral degrees conferred upon African Americans.

UGA continued to recruit and fund students from Albany State University, Florida A&M University, Morehouse College and Spelman College through signed agreements between these institutions and the UGA Graduate School Feeder Scholars Program.

The Graduate School completed the second full 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. In 2006, the deans of the grant's three collaborating institutions' graduate schools (UGA, University of Florida and North Carolina State University) worked with participating departments and programs on the self-assessment stage. The Web site (www.uga.edu/cgs) created by the Graduate School to facilitate exchange and dissemination of data continues to offer updates and resources.

Public Service and Outreach Contributions

Recruitment

- 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 2006, the Graduate School held its annual on-campus Junior/Senior workshop on graduate education for UGA upperclassmen. More than 140 students attended the event.

In the summer of 2006, the Graduate School held its seventh 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.

- Recruitment presentations and visits

Graduate School recruiters attended more than 60 student recruitment events throughout the region to build relationships with prospective students and disseminate information regarding programs at UGA.

- Peach State Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation

Dean Maureen Grasso began serving as co-administrator of the Peach State Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (PSLAMP) grant, for which the University of Georgia leads the consortium of five other state colleges and universities whose goal is to boost the number of underrepresented minorities earning bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines.

Research and Student Learning

- Dissemination of scholarly work of students

In 2006, the Graduate School received and processed more than 850 electronic theses and dissertations, which are available to the public online through the library and which represent an important part of Graduate School outreach.

- Dissemination of Graduate School seminars and workshops

Seminars and workshops sponsored by the Graduate School on professional development were videotaped and made available through its Web site for viewing by students and other interested parties unable to attend the event. Information was also introduced online through the printable synopses series, the *5 Minute Mentor*.

- The Graduate School prepared four research briefs and a doctoral forum 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 began terms on the government affairs and membership committees for the Council of Graduate Schools.

Dean Grasso's term continued as a vice president for the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). She was nominated for a fellow award for achievement and research (winner to be announced in 2007).

Dean Grasso served as mentor and coach at the Bryn Mawr Summer Institute for Women in Higher Education Administration.

The Graduate School took additional steps to raise its visibility to the community, current and prospective students, faculty, staff and donors through communications tools such as new brochures, a Graduate School magazine and news releases to media outlets. In 2006, a new Web site was launched to better serve constituents and has earned favorable feedback from Web users across the country.

Short-Term Goals (FY08)

Goal 1: The Graduate School will continue its development efforts to create an endowment for graduate education.

Goal 2: The Graduate School will review, analyze and begin to implement the recommendations from the Graduate Education Task Force.

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

Goal 4: The Graduate School will continue to develop appropriate uses of technology in our business processes, document management, enrolled student services and admission processes.

Goal 5: The Graduate School will assist departments in implementing strategies to enhance doctoral completion.

Assessing Effectiveness

Enrollment

The Graduate School collected five-year enrollment data for all programs at UGA and anticipates collaborative action plans aimed at increasing new student numbers from departments with declining enrollments. In addition, the Graduate School continued to offer assistance to all new graduate programs to help with enrollment needs.

Technology

Technological improvements to the online application system have enhanced services provided by graduate admissions. Departments can electronically access information about applicants. This immediate sharing of information has reduced turnaround time of application materials. In 2006, nearly 100 percent of applications were received and processed online. Additionally, within 24 hours of receiving an application, the Graduate

School can now send the applicant an acknowledgement, beginning a dialog that lasts throughout the entire process.

Recruitment

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.

Retention and Graduation

- Graduate Recruitment Opportunities (GRO) assistantship

This program continued to require that first-year recipients provide monthly reports to peer mentors who are second-year recipients. The peer mentors met several hours a month to discuss their graduate school experiences and reported their progress as well as the progress of the first-year recipients to the Outreach and Diversity office.

- Graduate School Dean's Award Program

This program, in its third year, continued 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-five students were funded in 2006.

- 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 included 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, the Black Faculty and Staff Organization, and the Graduate and Professional Scholars student organization.

Focusing on the Future

In September, the provost and graduate dean appointed a campus-wide Graduate Education Task Force to examine graduate programs and create a plan for shaping the future of graduate education as it enters its second 100 years at UGA. The associate dean of the Graduate School will continue to serve as co-chair of the task force.

The associate dean will also continue to serve on the University Enrollment Targets Task Force, charged with identifying optimal future undergraduate and graduate enrollment for UGA and determining the resources necessary to achieve and support those enrollment goals.

The Graduate School will continue to focus on raising awareness for the need to create an endowment for graduate education at the University of Georgia.