

The University of Georgia Graduate School Annual Report 2007

Highlighted Achievements

The Graduate School electronic thesis and dissertation program reached a landmark in fall 2007 when the number of theses and dissertations submitted and reviewed electronically reached 5,000. This program continues to be one of the largest and most comprehensive systems of its type in the nation and serves as a model for other universities.

The Graduate Education Advancement Board created funding opportunities for graduate students by raising a total of \$169,006 through new gifts and pledges. The Mary Erlanger Graduate Fellowship was established in 2007 to fund a graduate student interested in researching the process of aging.

The Graduate School was awarded a \$50,000, three-year grant from the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) to continue work on doctoral completion. With this extension of a previous CGS grant, the Graduate School examined doctoral programs at UGA and launched an initiative for optimal doctoral completion with the goal to improve doctoral completion rates among all departments. The dean worked with individual faculty leaders in departments through conferences and small group meetings as part of this initiative. The Graduate School also created a comprehensive Web site as a resource for departments (www.gradsch.uga.edu/cgs).

An all-time record enrollment was reached in fall 2007 when 6,947 graduate students matriculated at UGA.

The Interdisciplinary Toxicology Program completed its second year under the auspices of the Graduate School. Comprised of graduate students, faculty, staff and post-doctoral fellows from 11 departments across the University of Georgia, the program announced the hiring of two new faculty members to instruct courses in molecular toxicology and genetic toxicology.

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

Strategic Plan Progress

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 Education and Experience

- Professional Development Seminars

Pod casts were created of the professional development seminars held on campus, enabling students and the general public to access the information from the seminars anywhere. Topics included academic culture, formatting and submitting electronically theses and dissertations, and business etiquette for interviewing. The Graduate School continues to offer access to the seminars through video-streaming format and in printable synopses, called the *5 Minute Mentor*, both available through the Graduate School Web site.

- Multimedia Offerings

The Graduate School has taken a lead in incorporating multimedia into its Web site. In addition to the streaming videos of Graduate School seminars, the *5 Minute Mentor* series and the pod casts, the Graduate School is currently in the process of creating numerous informational videos for the benefit of current and prospective graduate students.

- Technology

The Graduate School was awarded a Technology Fee grant for a proposal to create a new student work area. Following the March 2007 move downtown, the Graduate School established the student work stations featuring 15 new high-end computers, laser printers and a large-format (poster) color printer for graduate students to use in preparation for research conferences and presentations. Graduate assistants within the Graduate School also benefit from the successful proposal.

- Graduate School Teaching Portfolio Program

This program moved from a paper submission process to an entirely online submission and review process. Students may now submit their portfolios from anywhere in the world, and reviewers may evaluate them anywhere and at any time. Thirty students participated in the Teaching Portfolio Program in 2007, and the new, all-electronic system promises to continue to significantly boost this number.

- Graduate School Future Leaders Program

Twenty-three students representing a range of disciplines and backgrounds participated in this annual two-day, off-campus opportunity during fall semester to explore leadership styles and professional goals.

Steps to Build Graduate Enrollment and Increase Competitiveness of Graduate Programs at UGA through National and International Recruitment

- Enrollment Policy

In fall 2007, the new enrollment policy was completely phased in for all graduate students. The policy, first implemented in Fall 2006 semester for new 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. This policy had a positive impact on graduate enrollment in Fall 2007 semester, increasing “returning” student headcount by 81 students from the previous fall.

- Application Processing

The Graduate Admissions tracking system incorporated a number of improvements in 2007 to increase its ease of use and comprehensiveness. Most notable was the creation of an all-electronic letter of recommendation system, which permits recommenders to submit their letters online. The letters are then available to the departments and Graduate Admissions as part of the tracking system. The letters of recommendation are also incorporated into the assistantship competition process.

- Awards and Assistantship Competitions

In the past year, all graduate assistantship competitions administered by the Graduate School have become an entirely online nomination and review process. This includes the Graduate School assistantship, Presidential Graduate Fellowship, and Dissertation Completion competitions. The process has streamlined an operation that formerly took eight Graduate School employees a week to prepare the nominations but now can be administered by one person. The reviewers may evaluate the nominations from any location and at their convenience. Not only has this new process augmented the review process, it has greatly accelerated the award process within the Graduate School.

- Graduate Student Funding

The Graduate School funded more than 300 graduate assistantships in disciplines across campus.

The Graduate School supported approximately 245 doctoral students with travel awards to present papers at regional and national conferences in 2007.

- Communication with Domestic and International Applicants

E-mail campaigns were used to communicate with prospective students, including messages to 6,450 undergraduate students from universities and colleges within the University System of Georgia. Other e-mail messaging targeted faculty contacts through the United States. This communication objective was to increase awareness of graduate programs and to increase the number of applications.

The Graduate School worked with UGA administrators and US government officials to lift restrictions by the Chinese government with regard to UGA Web pages, especially the Graduate School pages. Prospective students in China now have multiple avenues for obtaining information through improved Internet search tools. In addition, an e-mail campaign was sent to 800 prospective graduate students in China. The names were obtained through Graduate School participation in the International Graduate Scholarship Conference.

- Collaboration with Departments

The Graduate School hosted workshops for 40 departments to enhance recruitment practices at the program level.

Collaborative sessions were held with faculty in 16 academic programs to develop individual recruiting plans.

The Graduate School provided departments with \$15,000 from the Dean's Fund for Student Recruitment to bring prospective graduate students to UGA for campus visits.

The Graduate School worked with 50 doctoral programs across campus to complete the National Research Council Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs.

Steps to Increase Diversity

The Graduate School, through its Outreach and Diversity office, continued efforts to create an inclusive environment and increase enrollment among historically underrepresented groups, expanding the definition of these groups to include income background, representation of gender within the discipline, first generation college students and non-traditional aged students.

Technology has played an increasing role in recruitment efforts, as e-mail messages and online applications and registrations for programs are used to reach prospective and current students. Creative use of technology has resulted in budgetary savings and more effective contact for students accustomed to "instant" communications.

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. In 1999, 316 African-American graduate students enrolled, and in 2007, 677 enrolled. This number represented a 3 percent increase from 2006 (664).

In August 2007, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* (formerly *Black Issues in Higher Education*) ranked the University of Georgia 21st 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. Fort Valley State University was added as a fifth feeder institution.

The Graduate School completed its third 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 2007, the Graduate School was awarded a \$50,000 continuation of the grant to work with individual departments and programs at UGA. 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, regarding initiatives to increase doctoral completion rates.

Steps to Build Graduate Education Development and Funding Opportunities

The Graduate School continued to fulfill a key objective of its Five-Year Plan with measurable outcomes through its formal development program. The year 2007 represented the third full year of the program. Initiatives included the following:

- The Mary Erlanger Graduate Fellowship was established to fund a graduate student interested in the process of aging in any related discipline, including interdisciplinary and emerging fields of study related to the topic.
- A targeted mailer was sent to a limited number of graduate alumni and garnered in donations nearly three times the cost involved in the production of the letter.
- Many unrestricted gifts and pledges were received in 2007, raising the total donations to an all-time high. Corporate sponsorships and individual donations continued to increase.
- The Graduate Education Advancement Board held two meetings in 2007 and inaugural members were rotated off after their two-year appointments. New board members, representing alumni and friends of the Graduate School, were initiated to continue the board's important work in raising funds for graduate study.

Public Service and Outreach Contributions

Recruitment

- The Graduate School Conference Participation

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 2007, the Graduate School held its annual on-campus Junior/Senior workshop on graduate education for UGA upperclassmen. More than 140 students attended the event designed to encourage application to UGA graduate programs.

In the summer of 2007, the Graduate School held its eighth 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 40 graduate fairs across the country, hosted six "Preparing for Graduate School" workshops at various institutions and established a working relationship to conduct workshops through the Associated Colleges of the South.

- Peach State Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation

Dean Maureen Grasso served as co-principal investigator of the Peach State Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (PSLAMP) grant, for which the University of Georgia leads the consortium of four 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.

- International Outreach and Recruitment

The dean attended the UGA Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities (CURO) International Research Symposium in San Jose, Costa Rica, during which time she met with prospective graduate students from the Universidad de Costa Rica to promote graduate programs at UGA.

- 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.

The Graduate School co-sponsored with the Institute for Women's Studies a lecture by Dr. Mary Ann Mason, former graduate dean at Berkeley and renowned expert on women and mothers in the workplace, to discuss her research and book, *Mothers on the Fast Track: How the New Generation Can Balance Career and Family*. Considered a national expert on child custody issues and family law and policy, she also held a colloquium at the Graduate School for graduate students before her talk.

Research and Student Learning

- Dissemination of Scholarly Work of Students

In 2007, the Graduate School received and processed approximately 900 electronic theses and dissertations, which are available to the public online through the library and which represent an important part of Graduate School outreach. Researchers from anywhere in the world may access the graduate scholarship of UGA students through this electronic library. The total number of theses and dissertations surpassed 5,000 since the implementation of the electronic process.

- 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* and converted to pod casts available for download without charge to anyone.

- Doctoral Completion Initiative

The Graduate School prepared four research briefs and hosted a conference in February entitled “Taking Action to Optimize Doctoral Completion at the Program Level.” The conference served as a central forum for the University of Georgia, the University of Florida and North Carolina State University to report research collected during their joint three-year project on doctoral completion funded by a grant from the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), in which UGA served as lead institution. The research conducted through this Strategic Intervention for Doctoral Completion grant was 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. The UGA project was featured by CGS on their Web site.

Additional Outreach Contributions

Dean Maureen Grasso was elected to a second term as a vice president for the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). She received the fellow award for achievement and research and was nominated for an exemplary service award.

Dean Grasso continued terms on the government affairs and membership committees for the Council of Graduate Schools.

The dean presented two sessions at the Council of Graduate School Summer Workshop for Graduate Deans and New Deans Institute held in San Juan, Puerto Rico in July 2007. One session was on fundraising, and the other was *Utilizing Data to Foster Program-Level Change*.

The dean also presented *Utilizing Data to Foster Program-Level Change* at the Council of Graduate School 2007 Annual Meeting held in Seattle, Washington in December.

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, news releases to media outlets, online informational and promotional videos and pod casts, and streaming videos of workshops and lectures sponsored by the Graduate School. In 2007, the Graduate School created new stationery to commemorate its move to a historical building in downtown Athens.

Assessing Effectiveness

Admissions and Enrollment

The Graduate School enrolled an all-time high number of graduate students in Fall 2007 semester, with 6,947 graduate students matriculating at UGA. Enhanced efforts to recruit and retain graduate students are attributed to these results.

Application for admission to the Graduate School more than doubled in fall 2007 from fall 2006 (411 in 2006 versus 929 in 2007) for prospective students from China.

Technology

Technological advances have been implemented in all aspects of services at the Graduate School, from recruitment programs to admissions to assistantship and awards competitions to enrolled students services. The result has been more efficient and effective service to students and faculty, as well as an increased turn-around time for most processes. The Graduate School continues to lead the country in its electronic thesis and dissertation submission program, enabling students to complete and submit their research online from anywhere in the world to complete requirements for graduation. The Graduate School surpassed in December 2007 the 5,000th mark in thesis and dissertation submission and serves as a model for other institutions wishing to implement such a system.

The Graduate School's Initiative for Optimal Completion, funded by the Council of Graduate Schools to investigate doctoral incompleteness and propose strategies for increasing retention and graduation, created a "drillable" database for UGA departments to research their own programs' rates and compare them to similar programs' rates or to those of the university as a whole. The Graduate School worked collaboratively with the Office of Institutional Research to build the database.

Recruitment

Following a comprehensive internal assessment, the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) doubled participation of students from around the country. SURP 2007 was the most diverse group, ethnically and academically, in the history of the 8-year program.

Future Scholars Visitation Program also nearly doubled its participation rate following an internal assessment of the services related to this recruitment effort.

Graduate Student Retention and Graduation

Graduate Enrollment and Degrees Awarded

The total graduate student enrollment (returning and new students) for Spring 2007 semester was 6,699. This represents an increase of 23 students (0.3 percent) over the total of 6,676 for Spring 2006 semester.

The total graduate student enrollment (returning and new students) for Fall 2007 semester was 6,947. This represents an increase of 29 students (0.4 percent) over the total of 6,918 for Fall 2006 semester.

In 2007, 2,117 students were awarded graduate degrees. This number represents an increase of 85 (4 percent) over the total of 2,032 graduate degrees awarded in 2006.

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 and Other Funding

The Dean's Award program, in its fourth 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. The Graduate School supported 12 students in the arts and humanities and 17 in the social sciences.

The Graduate School supported eight graduate students for study abroad programs.

As additional special project support, the Graduate School funded 35 departmental assistantships and \$34,000 toward various projects and programs on campus.

Short-Term Goals (FY08)

Goal 1: The Graduate School will increase development and fundraising efforts to support expanding opportunities for graduate education.

Goal 2: The Graduate School will expand and improve marketing, recruiting, outreach and diversity programs to build optimal graduate enrollment.

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

Goal 4: The Graduate School will begin planning for its centennial celebration in 2010, marking 100 years of formalized graduate education at the University of Georgia.

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

Focusing on the Future

The Graduate School will work to increase enrollment numbers of graduate students through targeted marketing and recruiting efforts with an emphasis on use of technology to reach prospective students.

The Graduate School will continue to raise awareness of its programs, services and contributions to the UGA community through increased public relations and outreach efforts.

The Graduate School will continue to focus on building an endowment for graduate education and graduate students in all disciplines.

The Graduate School has formed a planning committee for the centennial celebration in 2010 and will begin the process of commemoration of 100 years of formalized graduate education at the University of Georgia.