

Florida Gulf Coast University Graduate Studies Update

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From time-to-time throughout the year these short summaries will be composed and distributed among members of the Dean's Council and among graduate program coordinators and directors. They will also be posted, along with attachments, within the Graduate Studies folder on the Marlin Share drive. Eventually they will be linked to the Graduate Studies web page. Attachments are numbered and these correspond to file names on the Marlin Share drive. *Items that require immediate attention or some effort from members of Dean's Council or from program coordinators / directors will be noted in italics.*

1. Graduate Studies Strategic Planning & Graduate Student Support

Last year was the University's first attempt at developing formal strategic plans for graduate education. Those plans had some very real positive effects: They focused Colleges' attention toward enrollment targets and the resources needed to support those numbers; the plans were used to leverage more dollars for graduate student support (in-state tuition waivers increased from \$116,000 to \$261,000 university-wide, out-of-state waivers were awarded for the first time totaling \$75,000, and GAships were funded for \$60,000 while they were never funded in previous years); and they provided insights into how to improve and initiate recruitment and marketing efforts (\$60K was invested in marketing last year and a larger amount will be invested this year).

The plan template has been improved over last year to avoid ambiguities and to fill some information gaps. Fields have been altered and better instructions accompany each item.

For this year: College- and program-level plans need to be completed this academic year. *Deans should work with their graduate program coordinators or directors to complete these by November 1, 2006.* The new templates are in place on the Share Drive (go to: <\\Fgcu-marlin\share\GradEnrollmentStrategicPlan>). Though this is a time-consuming process, I genuinely believe that the increase in graduate student support was a direct consequence of the planning process. One would have not happened without the other. Please contact me for advice or clarification. Last year Colleges knew of their waiver support before making admission's decisions. My hope is that commitments will be made for GAship support in advance as well.

2. Recruitment Initiatives

Three "recruitment initiatives" were implemented last academic year that put additional monies into the Colleges from Academic Affairs and ORSP. One provided

funding for faculty travel to conferences for professional development and recruitment (\$5000 per College); a second provided \$1000 per College for student interview travel; and the third provided up to 5 - \$10,000 research assistantships university-wide (\$5000 1:1 match between ORSP and the College) to recruit high quality graduate students. Colleges or faculty were required to submit short proposals for consideration. All three recruitment programs will be available again this academic year, with one small change. The faculty travel initiative has been expanded to allow colleges to use these funds for travel to a larger variety of conferences or recruitment events and for the design and implementation of their own recruitment events.

For this year: The RFPs for these three initiatives are attached herein and are available on the Share Drive (**attachment #s 1-3**; go to: \\Fgcu-marlin\share\Graduate Studies). Deadlines for the programs are as follows: *faculty travel – October 1; student interview travel – open deadline, but at least 1 month prior to when funding is needed; and RAship – December 15. With these new proposals, each College should submit a summary of last year’s efforts and an assessment of their success (e.g., a “results of prior support” summary).* Last year, a number of Colleges let these deadlines pass without participating, and only a handful of faculty members applied for the RAship funding. These are valuable opportunities that shouldn’t be missed.

3. New Program: Minority Recruitment Through Institutional Partnering

This academic year Graduate Studies, in cooperation with selected FGCU graduate programs, will begin an under-represented minority recruitment effort. The Office of Graduate Studies has a modest amount of money set aside for this initiative. Over the next couple of months the Graduate Studies’ staff will be working with the 5 Colleges to identify programs interested in developing relationships with other Florida universities that are minority-rich and have undergraduate strengths in those particular disciplines. For example, universities in South Florida or Tampa Bay regions may have strengths in Occupational Therapy or K-12 Education. Graduate Studies, with FGCU representatives from those selected programs, would arrange meetings both here and there for the development of partnerships.

In the next couple of weeks: *Please bring this initiative up among your College leadership teams to discuss your College’s interest in participating in this program. For which graduate program or programs would you like to improve student diversity? And with which institutions would you like to develop a partnership? If more one than program is of interest, please prioritize them.* We only have a limited amount of funds and have no way of knowing how many programs might want to participate campus-wide. Kevin Hunter will contact you in a couple of weeks to arrange a follow-up discussion.

4. Graduate Assistants as Satellite Center Advisors

At the first Dean’s Council meeting this academic year, the need to provide better advising at FGCU’s 3 Satellite Centers (Naples, Cape Coral, and Charlotte) was raised, and the use of Graduate Assistants in this capacity was suggested. The attached handout

summarizes a discussion that occurred through email and a recommended solution ([attachment #4](#)).

In the next week: Assuming this recommendation is approved by Dean's Council, Graduate Studies will craft a position description that will be distributed to program coordinators and directors. *Coordinators / directors should distribute the position announcement among your existing graduate students.* A process for selecting candidates will be developed over the next couple of weeks.

5. Graduate Education Awareness Campaign

Last academic year, phase I of a graduate education awareness campaign was launched with \$60,000 of support from Academic Affairs and in-kind match from Community Relations & Marketing and Instructional Technology & Broadcast Services. Phase I emphasized the existence of graduate education opportunities at FGCU, developed a tag line, and invested in a variety of advertising venues. The marketing pieces ran between March and June of 2006.

For this year: Phase II of the Awareness Campaign is being planned for this academic year and will involve a continuation of efforts from last year, as well as develop advertising for specific programs identified by the Colleges ([attachment #5](#)). We already have a \$60K commitment from Administrative Services & Finance (to perpetuate phase I efforts), and a comparable sum is being considered by Academic Affairs. Assuming we're able raise the monies, *Colleges should begin a conversation about what programs they would like promoted and the kinds of advertising efforts that have greatest effectiveness.* Graduate Studies will contact the Deans over the next couple weeks with further details.

6. Graduate Admissions, Enrollment Targeting, and Communications

The Office of Graduate Studies invested much time and effort last year to improve our application process and our communications among our office, the applicant, and the College program. Our application process is streamlined; our office now communicates a number of times with a candidate from the time of first inquiry, through application receipt and application completion; a number of these steps are automated; an inquiry mailing packet now exists and contains more effective pieces; our transferal process of applications and admission's decision to and from the Colleges has improved; and our web presence has been expanded and become more user friendly. I believe that these changes, coupled with our Awareness Campaign and the recruitment efforts implemented by the Colleges, collectively resulted in graduate admissions exceeding its enrollment target for this fall.

For this year: There are many improvements to be made, and we hope to implement most of these this academic year. We hope to fully automate the application and communication process which will include the implementation of an online application; our web presence will continue to expand and improve; and we will work diligently to improve our communication with the Colleges. Last year's efforts did identify at least one problem outside Graduate Studies' control: many graduate programs have very late application deadlines for fall admission, some as late as July 1 or 15.

Some of these late admission's programs have very large enrollments. Consequently, the summer becomes an anxious time for our office and failure or success at achieving enrollment projections is a last minute realization. Additionally, Graduate Studies would be better postured to justify and appropriate support monies when knowing earlier in the academic year what enrollments are likely to be. *We therefore request that Colleges consider moving up their application deadlines or consider rolling admissions with an earlier last-possible deadline. Programs, however, should consider the effects of an earlier deadline – the earlier date should not decrease the number of applicants.*

7. Policy Concerning Course Prefixes Across Colleges

When new courses are approved through FGCU's curricular review process and passed on to the State, a course number and prefix is chosen based upon the best possible match between the course description and existing disciplinary fields. Consequently, courses may receive prefixes that represent disciplines traditionally offered by other Colleges. The traditional association of a discipline with a different College may cause problems of accountability or create misperceptions by those reviewing the course title in a resume, transcript, or course catalog.

In the next few weeks: In order to address this problem, which exists at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, *Graduate Studies and OCI are asking that Dean's Council consider the problem and review a working draft of a new policy (attachment #6).* Once Dean's Council reviews the situation, the matter will be passed on to the Undergraduate and Graduate Affairs Teams.

8. Policies Concerning the Charging of In-state Tuition for Out-of-state Graduate Student Assistants and for Out-of-state Graduate Students Enrolled in Web-based Distance Learning Courses

Last academic year, Graduate Studies developed draft policies for FGCU's Executive Group and BOT consideration that would allow out-of-state graduate student assistants (RAs, TAs, and GAs) and out-of-state graduate students enrolled in web-based distance learning courses to pay in-state tuition rates. The Executive Group decided to table the matter until this year.

For this year: Graduate Studies would like to resurrect these policy drafts for consideration by the Executive Group and BOT. Pending legislation in the State will make it nearly impossible for out-of-state students to establish residency. If this passes, it will become increasingly more difficult (or considerably more expensive) to attract students from out-of-state, thereby hindering our chances of achieving national prominence.

9. Filling Policy Gaps for Graduate Education

Numerous policy needs exist for FGCU's graduate educational efforts. Many were crafted in association with undergraduate education in the University's early years before a real appreciation of problems specific to graduate education existed. More

significantly, policies to cover numerous graduate education matters are missing and require development. Finally, as FGCU expands its offerings into the doctoral level, new policy needs have arisen.

For this year: The Office of the Registrar, Graduate Studies, and the University Graduate Affairs Team (GAT) will collaborate to assemble draft policy for the breadth of FGCU's graduate educational needs. These will be developed incrementally and passed through Dean's Council, the GAT, and the Senate for consideration and approval.

List of Attachments:

Attachment #1: Recruitment Initiative I – Faculty Travel & Recruitment Event Planning.

Attachment #2: Recruitment Initiative II – Student Interview Travel.

Attachment #3: Recruitment Initiative III – Graduate Student Research Assistantships.

Attachment #4: Summary report for Graduate Assistants as Satellite Center Advisors.

Attachment #5: White paper describing Awareness Campaign, Phase II.

Attachment #6: Policy concerning course prefixes across the Colleges.