

# Florida Gulf Coast University

## Graduate Studies Update

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This update reviews some of Graduate Studies' news-worthy developments as we enter the 2007-2008 academic year.

### **1. Graduate Studies Strategic Planning.**

Strategic plans for your College and graduate programs need to be completed this fall by December 1. As previously, they are available as InfoPath documents and can be obtained on the Marlin Share drive at <\\Fgcu-marlin\share\GradEnrollmentStrategicPlan>. If you have trouble accessing the forms or launching the software, please contact Lenore Benefield. I'm also available if you find the forms confusing or if you need advice.

Despite the tediousness of the exercise, the process has worked. The plans have resulted in greater investment in graduate student support. Tuition waivers were well supported last year and ultimately funded at requested levels (for a total of \$326,733); we now have a total of \$70K committed permanently by Academic Affairs for teaching-related GAships; and ORSP continues to support a number of research-related GAships.

### **2. New process for applying for research-related GAs. Handout attached.**

Graduate Studies has been working with ORSP to develop a better process for the awarding of research-related GAships. In the past, requests for this funding were made through the Strategic Plans. Because plans are typically completed by program leaders and chairs and not by the faculty members that are most familiar with their research needs, we've developed a separate RFP process (see the attached document). These forms are to be filled out by graduate faculty members, but reviewed and prioritized by your College Dean. The completed College package should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office by December 1. Please note that ORSP is willing to support these requests, funding permitting, but only if there is some potential for future extramural support.

### **3. Third year of recruitment initiatives. 3 handouts attached.**

Graduate Studies and ORSP are sponsoring the three graduate student recruitment efforts for a third year. They are: (1) RAship Initiative, a competitive award to fund 5 research assistants campus-wide for 9- or 12-month period [December 1 deadline]; (2) Faculty Recruitment Travel Initiative, providing each College up to \$5,000 for travel and expenses related to student recruitment efforts [November 1 deadline]; and (3) Student Interview Travel Initiative, providing up at \$1,000 to each College for student interview travel to Southwest Florida and the FGCU campus [rolling deadline]. Details for each are described in the attached documents.

**4. Faculty Academy concept.** *Handout attached.*

Graduate Studies, in cooperation with a variety of other offices on campus, will be developing a Faculty Academy – an annual series of workshops and programs designed to provide professional development opportunities to improve faculty research and student mentorship. This academic year we hope to offer 3 new programs, perhaps more, concerning (1) time management for academic professionals, (2) graduate student mentorship, and (3) improving productivity and synergy as both a teacher and a scholar. Dates for these programs will be released over the next couple of weeks. The attached handout describes the Academy’s concept and operation.

**5. Graduate Faculty and Student Resources on the web.** *Handout of web page attached: [www.fgcu.edu/Graduate/graduateresources.html](http://www.fgcu.edu/Graduate/graduateresources.html).*

Graduate Studies continues to improve its web presence. The staff is working with IT to both provide better information and to beautify our pages (the former has been rolled out; the improved design is forthcoming). In particular, we have created a new page for “graduate faculty and student resources.” As part of our third year of operation, Graduate Studies intends to take on a greater role in improving faculty and graduate student services as mechanisms to improve educational quality and student retention. Linked here will be announcements of upcoming events and programs, pdfs of all informative documents (like the ones distributed with this newsletter), and calls for funding opportunities.

**6. In-state Residency Criteria for graduate students.**

Of all the items contained within this newsletter, this is the sole item that concerns bad news. The BOG, through its Articulation Coordinating Committee, has reinterpreted the State Statute concerning the state residency criteria and made it considerably more difficult for an out-of-state graduate student to declare Florida residency by the second year of enrollment. The normative measures of registering to vote, acquiring a domicile, and obtaining a Florida driver’s license or vehicle registration will not automatically qualify graduate students for residency, even if those students are employed by the University. Graduate Studies has been working with the Office of the Registrar to best minimize the impact of this new interpretation. We do have the ability, through an FGCU policy approved last spring by our BOT, to consider up to 10 out-of-state students employed as GAs, TAs, or RAs as in-state for tuition purposes. However, the expectation was that 10 new graduate students could be accommodated every year as pre-existing recipients became residents in their second year. This means we have fewer accommodations to go around. As you court out-of-state students for admission, please talk with both Michael Savarese and M.J. Caro. Collectively we can best plan our out-of-state recruitment efforts and avoid misrepresenting the University’s commitment to prospective students. Finally, and assuming this new and more rigorous interpretation of residency persists, I would like Academic Affairs to consider re-proposing our BOT policy and increase the number of allowable employees for in-state tuition.

## **7. Registering for Continual Enrollment.**

Many universities require that students who are ABD (i.e., have completed their course work but have to complete their scholarly project) or those that take a short hiatus from graduate work to register for either a 1- or 0-credit course. The purpose of this is multi-fold. First, it allows students to maintain their rights and privileges within the university (e.g., use of the library, recreation and health facilities, etc.); it serves as a subtle incentive to work towards completion of the degree; and finally it provides a mechanism to track those students who have not enrolled but still consider themselves as active graduate students. Graduate Studies would like to implement such a measure at FGCU. Presently, we have had a conversation with the Registrar and the matter is being considered by the Graduate Affairs Team. We hope to bring the issue to a future Dean's Council meeting.

## **8. New Graduate Faculty appointments.**

As we continue to grow as a university faculty and in the number of graduate programs, more of our faculty members require graduate faculty status to teach graduate-level courses, to mentor graduate students, and to part-take in university service related to graduate education. Even without a graduate program, faculty members can benefit from graduate faculty status – it allows them to compete for various sources of research-related funds (e.g., RAship initiative, GAship monies) and permits their involvement in the development of graduate programs within their discipline. Please send a call for new or renewed graduate faculty applications within your college over the next couple of months. *I will request an updated Graduate Faculty List from your College by the start of the spring, 2008 semester.* A copy of the University Graduate Faculty Criteria is linked to our “graduate faculty and student resources” web page. Your college may have more stringent criteria.

## **9. BOG effort to acquire funding to subsidize health insurance for employed graduate students.**

The BOG is proposing a new statute to the State that, if adopted, will provide up to \$18M system-wide to subsidize health insurance for employed graduate students. A few SUS institutions require that all or just employed graduate students carry health insurance. FGCU currently does not demand this, but it is something we hope to consider in the near future. Health insurance that is provided as a benefit to graduate students improves the ability to compete for the best students (as part of their financial award package). If successful, FGCU will have new monies to offer its employed graduate students; this could prompt us to consider adopting a policy of mandatory health coverage.

## **10. Staffing changes within the Office.**

Graduate Studies is pleased to announce a couple of staffing changes within the Office. Jennifer Johnston (formerly Jennifer Gjini) has been reassigned as the Office's Assistant Director, filling the vacancy created by Kevin Hunter's departure. The vacant Coordinator position created by Jennifer's promotion is presently being advertised. We

hope to have someone new on board by mid-November. Finally, the Office hired a new half-time OPS office assistant: Ms. Tracie Hurley.

**11. Post-Baccalaureate Non-Degree Application now available on line.**

The last component of our application process is now automated. An on-line application for our post-baccalaureate non-degree seeking students is now available.