

Annual Report 2006 - 2007

Part 1 Section A Unit Information

Unit:

Graduate Studies

Mission Statement:

Section B Unit Goals within Last Year's (2005-2006) Report

Strategic Plan Goal

With which 1 or 2 goals from the 8 current strategic plan goals does your 2006-2007 goal best align?

Goal 1 - High Quality Education

Unit Goal

Goal for 2006-2007

Strengthen Graduate Education and Enrollments

What actions have you taken to achieve this goal?

1. The Awareness Campaign will be continued into its second year (Phase II) and will emphasize College-level programmatic offerings while connecting conceptually to University-wide, Phase I effort that was implemented in 2005-2006.\
2. Implementation of the online application process. Our hand-driven application process is cumbersome and time consuming. This affects our ability to process applications in a timely manner, which in turn affects each program's abilities to admit students in a timely manner.
3. The web presence for Graduate Studies will be renovated to become more informative and easier to navigate.
4. Improve our graduate recruitment efforts through the following actions:
 - Continue the development and implementation of the Recruitment Initiatives.
 - Continue to improve our communication plan and inquiry response plan.
 - Develop more effective recruitment events and strategies.
5. Investigate matters of graduate student retention and timely completion toward graduation.
 - For this upcoming year, the goal will be to define the problem, its severity, and its causes. Subsequent years will be used to improve retention and timely completion.
6. Development of FGCU policies for graduate education. The following actions will be taken:
 - Determine what policies needs are outstanding.
 - Develop drafts of those policies.
 - Submit those policies for review through the GAT Graduate Policy and Appeals Subcommittee and the Faculty Senate.

What measures have you taken towards assessment of this goal?

1. The effectiveness of the Awareness Campaign will be assessed by:
 - The development of plan and proposal for Phase II, comparable to what was developed for Phase I.
 - Acquisition of funds through Academic Affairs with matching funds from the Colleges to support the marketing initiatives.
 - If funded, the Phase II marketing plan and the advertising efforts will be implemented.
 - Inquiries to the Graduate Studies Office and to the program PR representatives will be monitored and compiled.
 - A survey instrument will be developed for graduate students that are both admitted and entering a program to determine the effectiveness of the advertising measures.
2. Change-over to an online application process is somewhat outside Graduate Studies' control and depends upon the generosity and schedules of a number of other offices.
 - Assuming this is not a constraint, the achievement of this goal will be assessed by the successful implementation and use of the online application by prospective graduate students next academic year.
 - The effect this change on our Graduate Admissions Officer use of time will be measured.
3. The new web pages will be developed and implemented next academic year. Their effectiveness will be assessed by:
 - Asking a number of internal and external educators and administrators to critique the web resources.
4. Our recruitment efforts will be assessed as follows:
 - Faculty receiving money to support Recruitment Initiatives will be asked to provide summary reports.
 - Meetings will be arranged with Program Coordinators and PR Representatives to discuss the effectiveness of our inquiry response and communications plans.
 - Attendance at recruitment events will be monitored closely.
5. In order to define the seriousness of our retention and timely graduation problems, the following measures will be taken:
 - Data will be compiled concerning attrition rates and time-to-graduation terms for each of the Graduate Programs.
 - A series of interviews will be scheduled with Program Coordinators, Graduate Faculty Mentors, and Graduate Students to assess the problem.
6. Graduate policies will be drafted and subjected to the review process.

Describe the progress you have made toward attaining this goal including the anticipated completion date.

1. Effectiveness of the Awareness Campaign will be indicated by:
 - The successful funding and implementation of Phase II of the marketing plan.
 - The realization of significant number of resulting inquiries.
 - An indication that the marketing measures had positive effects upon applicants as indicated on the survey instrument.
2. If the switch to an online application, significantly reduces the time needed to process applications and the time to delivery to the programs, the measure will be viewed as a success.
3. The critiques obtained from the web reviewers will determine how effective the web pages are.
4. Success concerning our recruitment efforts will be gauged by:
 - Well used Recruitment Initiative monies.
 - Positive feedback from Program Coordinators and PR Representatives.
 - Improved attendance at recruitment events.
5. The data compiled concerning retention and the feedback from the interviews / meetings will illuminate the problem's seriousness.
6. Policies which survive through the review process are considered successful.

Describe how the results of assessments have been used to improve student learning or your department's activities.

1. The marketing associated with the Awareness Campaign is expensive. Results from the assessment will be used to gauge the relative effectiveness of the different marketing approaches, and adjustments to future marketing efforts will be made.
2. The online application process presumably can be improved. This will be explored if a time savings doesn't result.
3. This will be the first time a concerted effort will be undertaken to improve the web resources for Graduate Studies. The web pages will undoubtedly be a work in progress.
4. All recruitment efforts are adaptive and can be altered to reflect better practices.
5. Results concerning the definition of a retention problem will lead to the development of practices to improve retention that will be implemented in subsequent years.
6. Graduate policies may need to be recrafted and subjected to further review.

Section C

Program or Service Specific Assessments

What program or service specific assessment occurred in the current academic year?

(Each item number from Section B is revisited here in section C.)

1. Phase II of the Awareness Campaign was successfully launched this academic year. A university-wide marketing campaign, to promote graduate education in general, was furthered this year, principally through the production and placement of two television commercials. Approximately \$60,000 were invested in commercial production and advertising. In addition, we continued with radio- and newspaper-based advertising. The second aspect was Phase II concerned a new endeavor for our office: a direct, one-to-one marketing campaign for each of our 20 graduate

programs. This effort employed a marketing and graphics company, Blue Results, and resulted in the development of a "personalized URL" (aka PURL) approach to advertising. Our investment for this marketing effort totaled \$25,000.

2. Our application and communication process for graduate admissions and recruitment is now fully automated and available online. The following communication pieces are now generated automatically: initial inquiry letter (sent as hard copy), initial inquiry personalized URL, on-line application, application checklist letters (3 in total sent at 5, 35, and 65 days after application is received), a letter of admission from the President (15 days after admission), and winter holiday greeting card to all prospective students submitting inquiries.
3. Graduate Studies now has a web presence that also links to the Colleges and graduate programs.
4. Recruitment efforts have been numerous this past academic year and include the following:
 - a. The 3 recruitment initiatives developed last academic year (faculty recruitment travel, student interview travel, and funding of research assistantships) were all budgeted and implemented this academic year. Overall, Colleges availed themselves of these opportunities.
 - b. Graduate Studies invested considerable time and money in recruitment travel to other universities, fairs, expos, and places of employment. A total of 20 events were attended this academic year.
 - c. Specific efforts were made toward the recruitment of under-represented minorities and included the following recruitment trips: Bethune Cookman University, Florida Memorial University, Florida Atlantic University, and Florida International University.
 - d. Graduate Studies hosted Graduate Education Expos on campus, one in the fall on November 2 and a second in the spring on April 12. We will continue to host two events per year. Attendance at both this year's events was up from previous years; we believe our one-to-one marketing efforts helped promote these events. In addition, for the Spring Expo, we made a concerted effort to recruit FGCU's undergraduates.
5. Graduate Studies began an investigation of student retention this academic year, though admittedly this objective did not progress as far as we had intended. Our efforts included the following:
 - a. The redesign and implementation of two New Graduate Student Orientations, one before the fall semester on August 15 and a second before the spring semester on January 4.
 - b. Graduate Studies, in cooperation with other offices on campus, is implementing two graduate faculty development initiatives that are designed to help faculty as mentors and scholars: (1) a time management workshop for faculty, scheduled for a trial run this May; and (2) a grantsmanship training workshop, scheduled for a first implementation this August.
6. Development of FGCU policy for graduate education has occurred on three fronts: through cooperative work with the Graduate Affairs Team; through FGCU's UBOT; and through the Florida Council of Graduate School Deans.
 - a. Graduate Studies has worked extensively this academic year with the Graduate Affairs Team in development of a graduate policy handbook. The handbook is almost complete in draft form and will go to the Faculty Senate for their review in the fall semester.
 - b. Two policies were developed by Graduate Studies and approved by the UBOT

in support of graduate student tuition waivers, thereby providing greater financial support for graduate education: (1) the charging of the in-state rate for tuition and fees for those out-of-state graduate students employed as assistants for FGCU; and (2) the charging of the in-state rate for tuition and fees for those out-of-state graduate students enrolled in distance learning graduate programs.

- c. The Florida Council of Graduate School Deans developed two policy drafts for BOG approval: (1) redefining the SUS admission's criterion with respect to the GRE minimum score; and (2) changing the criteria making it easier for out-of-state graduate students to become Florida residents. The former is under review with BOG; the latter never made it beyond the Council.
7. Although not identified as an action for this academic year, the Office made a concerted effort to provide professional development for the staff. The following workshops or conferences were attended by one or more of our staff members:
- a. Council of Graduate Schools. National Conference in Washington, DC in December, attended by Savarese.
 - b. Conference of Southern Graduate Schools. Held in Chattanooga, Tennessee in February, attended by Savarese.
 - c. National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals Summer Institute. Held in Las Vegas in July, attended by Hunter.
 - d. Graduate Recruitment Strategy Conference. Held in Boston in August, attended by Hill.
 - e. International Student Recruitment Conference. Held in San Francisco in July, attended by Gjini.
 - f. Recruiting Graduate Students in Canada, a web-based teleconference in August. Hunter participated.
 - g. SCT Banner Conference. Held in Las Vegas in March, attended by Hunter.
 - h. National Association of Graduate Admission Professionals. Held in Orlando, Florida in April, attended by Hunter and Gjini. Hunter and Gjini co-authored a presentation about our one-to-one marketing effort.
 - i. Florida Council of Graduate Deans. Held in September at Embry-Riddle University in Daytona Beach, attended by Savarese.

How were the results of the assessment used to improve programs or services?

1. Phase II of the Awareness Campaign allowed Graduate Studies to better focus its limited marketing dollars. The university-wide portion, principally the television advertising, should provide wider recognition in the Southwest Florida community. The program-specific one-to-one marketing has increased the number of inquiries and, by association, the number of applications. We hope to continue developing our one-to-one services in the future.
2. The online application process and automated communication system we now implement are perhaps our greatest service improvements. The Office has received few complaints about mishandled applications; a greater percentage of our applications are ultimately completed; and Colleges and programs are interacting with us and the applicants in a much more efficient manner.
3. We now have an appreciable web presence. This, coupled with our automation, has improved our services, accessibility, and visibility.
4. A review of the demographics of our graduate student population this last year noted that the ethnic diversity of that population does not match that of our five

county service area. This has stimulated an effort to increase diversity among our graduate student population. We intend to augment our recruitment efforts here.

5. The retention of graduate students remains a concern for Graduate Studies and a problem we intend to focus on more closely next academic year.
6. Policy for graduate education needs to be formalized in time for the roll out of our professional doctorate degrees (anticipated in Fall, 2008). We are well on our way to meeting that deadline and work toward completion will continue next academic year.

Section D

Unit Contribution or President's Performance Measures

Please review the [President's Performance Measures for 2006-2007](#). Did your unit contribute to any specific performance goals for the President? (If so, please indicate whether the measure set was attained and to what degree.)

Part 2

Section A

Unit Goals for Coming Year (2007-2008)

Strategic Plan Goal

With which 1 or 2 goals from the 8 current strategic plan goals does your 2007-2008 goal best align?

Unit Goal

Goal for 2007-2008

Goal 1 - High Quality Education

Strengthen Graduate Education & Enrollment

What action(s) will you undertake to achieve the goal?

Marketing

1. Graduate Studies hopes to continue the university-wide advertising it undertook this academic year. Our advertisements (copy, video commercials, audio pieces) are all produced; we would hope to fund their placement with various media.
2. Our one-to-one marketing efforts will be continued and bolstered. We intend to develop subsequent pieces for the each program's personalized URLs.

Communications

1. Our web offerings need to become more informative and beautified.
2. We still need to improve the efficiency and quantity of communication between Graduate Studies and the Programs / Colleges.
3. We hope to develop and roll out an online version of our non-degree application. This is the last remaining piece of our application materials yet to be automated.
4. We intend to further our efforts with respect to the recruitment of under-represented minorities.

Retention

1. Little attention campus-wide has been paid to the retention and graduation rate of graduate students. We intend to accomplish the following:
 - a. Further document the problem among the Colleges and programs.
 - b. Through some survey process, assess the possible causes.
 - c. Develop new initiatives (and further existing ones) to promote student mentorship and faculty resources.
2. Expand the financial support we have available for graduate students (details provided below).

Recruitment of High Quality Graduate Students

1. At present the funding level to support graduate students is too low, and reasonable levels of graduate student support are needed to attract and retain the highest quality students. Consequently, 3 changes are proposed for next year: (1) the total dollar amount for in-state tuition waivers university wide should be increased by at least 30%; (2) graduate assistantships (for teaching and service needs) need to be funded as a recurring line item in Academic Affairs' or Graduate Studies' budget (recommend an initial level of \$150,000 annually); and (3) a better competitive process needs to be implemented for the proposing and funding of research-related graduate assistantships through ORSP.
2. Efforts to help Colleges recruit high quality graduate students, for self-identified programs or needs, should be identified and implemented.

Graduate Education Policy

1. A complete draft of the graduate education policy handbook must be finished and enter the Faculty Senate review process as early as possible next academic year.

Fostering the Development of New Programs

1. Graduate Studies will work with the College of Arts & Sciences in the development of 2 or 3 new masters-level programs.

By what means will you assess goal achievement?

All the defining actions concerning Marketing, Retention, Recruitment, Policy, New Program Development, and goals 1-3 in Communications are task based. Once the task is complete, the action has been achieved. Communication action 4, concerning the recruitment of under-represented minorities, will be assessed through the monitoring of our enrollment data.

How will you know if you have successfully attained each goal?

See above.

How will the results of the above assessments be used to improve student learning or services?

All the listed actions improve either the quality of graduate education, the quality and number of graduate students, or the services provided to graduate students, graduate faculty, and graduate program administrators at FGCU.

Section B **Resources**

What additional resources have you requested and received a commitment for during 2007-2008 from your area VP or the President that is based on your analysis of assessment data for 2006-2007?

Section C **Assessment Plans**

What assessments are you planning to conduct during 2007-2008?

Section D **Coming Year - Strategic Plan Contributions**

