

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN 2006 TRANSITION TO A NEW LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The preparation of this strategic plan is occurring coincident with a change in leadership of the Graduate School. This plan, although prepared almost exclusively by Dean Lewis Siegel, was reviewed and enthusiastically endorsed by the elected Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty and Dean-Elect Jo Rae Wright. Following this short executive summary is an extensive review of the state of the Graduate School and a more comprehensive presentation of the strategic planning goals presented here. Central to this strategic plan is the recognition that the quality of faculty and graduate students at a research university are inexorably intertwined and that strengthening the Graduate School will enhance the quality and activities of the entire University.

Overarching goal: Establish research-oriented graduate education as a leading priority in the University's agenda and enhance its stature and recognition both within and outside the University.

- 1) Strengthen the ability of the Graduate School to recruit and retain high quality graduate students by modifying the Graduate School formula to assign all tuition and fee revenue paid by students to the Graduate School, so that this revenue can be devoted as much as possible to support of students and their graduate programs.
- 2) Establish the Graduate School as a high priority for financial aid fund raising, with a particular emphasis on obtaining funds to endow such aid for graduate students in fields without significant access to external sources of student funding, such as research and training grants. (This could come through School or field-specific endeavors, such as finding endowment to directly support the Humanities, and/or through broader strategies such as working with the Development Office to create a naming opportunity to endow the Graduate School.)

Specific goal 1: Recruit and retain the most talented and ambitious graduate students.

- 1) Establish and maintain competitive financial support packages (stipends and health insurance and health fees) in all fields so that students admitted to graduate study at both Duke and peer universities can make their choices based on interest and programmatic fit rather than on financial considerations.
- 2) Double the number of James B. Duke fellowships to enable Duke to compete effectively for the top 20% of its pool of admitted Ph.D. students.
- 3) Increase the number of summer research awards in the Humanities and Social Sciences to enable entering students in those areas to have two years of guaranteed support, as is the standard at our peer universities.
- 4) Expand the availability of first year fellowships in all areas of the Graduate School.
- 5) Improve diversity by enhancing recruiting efforts, support programs, and the pipeline for underrepresented minority students.
- 6) Develop attractive and academically sound interdisciplinary training programs that build upon the diversity and strength of Duke University as articulated by the Strategic Plan.

Specific Goal 2: Prepare graduate students for successful futures in a rapidly changing, increasingly diverse and global environment by developing new academic programs, improving or expanding existing programs, and by continually reviewing the quality of all graduate programs at Duke.

- 1) Develop new and/or enhance existing graduate programs to complement the University strategic plan:
 - a) Explore new configurations and/or joint Ph.D. programs with UNC-CH) in German Studies and in Slavic & Eurasian Studies.
 - b) Create a new Ph.D.-granting program in Coastal Systems Sciences and Policy.
 - c) Examine new programs that will admit students for Ph.D. study in areas such as Neuroscience, Cellular Systems Biology, Biological Structure & Design, and Translational Biomedical Research.
 - d) Explore new Graduate Certificate Programs in Individual & Collective Ethical Behavior, Neuro-Economics, Latino(a) and Hispanic Studies, and Global Health and Human Welfare.
 - e) Increase the level of graduate student participation in the scholarly activities of the Franklin Humanities Institute, the Social Science Research Institute, and the existing certificate program in African and African-American Studies.
 - f) Consider granting the graduate certificate program in Women's Studies the ability to admit students.
 - g) Expand the M.D.- Ph.D. program.
 - h) Find ways to consolidate and to simplify the admissions process in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences.
 - i) Explore how thrusts in Cellular, Molecular and Environmental Imaging and in Materials, Devices and Integrated Systems will impact existing graduate programs.
- 2) Work with Schools to see that sufficient funds are available to meet needs for graduate student support in departments and programs that are particular strategic priorities for the University.
- 3) Improve the process of program review at Duke and participate in the forthcoming assessment of U.S. research doctorate programs by the National Research Council.

Specific goal 3: Develop and enhance programs that ensure student success.

- 1) Secure a dedicated physical space for a Graduate Student Center as part of a broader effort to lessen the sense of isolation felt by many graduate students and to develop a sense of community among the students.
- 2) Develop a family leave policy and expand child care support.
- 3) Expand Career Counseling and Professional Development efforts.
- 4) Develop more structured teaching programs and enhance the training in pedagogy for all graduate students.
- 5) Broaden the scope of training using cutting-edge instructional technology.
- 6) Develop Web-based resources for tracking student progress and for submission of electronic theses and dissertations.
- 7) Expand the scope of services to international graduate students and to increase the opportunities for more international training experiences for all of our graduate students.
- 8) Develop programs to improve faculty mentoring.
- 9) Continue and expand Duke's ground-breaking program in Responsible Conduct of Research.
- 10) Continue to provide leadership in the national effort to increase the rate of degree completion for Ph.D. students.

This strategic plan is submitted at a time when the Graduate School is at the largest size in its history, is highly diverse in terms of both international and U.S. minority students, and has become increasingly selective for students who apply to its programs. Reputational rankings of the great majority of its graduate programs have shown significant improvement in the past decade, and there has been particular strengthening of the area in which Duke has been traditionally most weak, the Physical Sciences and Engineering. The Graduate School of Duke University has played a prominent role in efforts to improve graduate education nationally in the past decade, and is now broadly recognized for its leadership in this area. There are always problems and challenges, to be sure, but the Graduate School, with limited resources, has managed to accomplish a great deal in the last ten years, and is now poised, at this time of transition in its leadership, to continue its trajectory, and that of the entire University, toward the level of excellence in graduate students and their research and educational activities that faculty at a top level research university have every reason to expect.