APPROVAL TO RENAME THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES THE OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

RESOLVED that, upon the recommendation of the Academic and Research Advancement Committee, the Board of Visitors approves renaming the Office of Graduate Studies in the Office of Academic Affairs the Old Dominion University Graduate School.

Rationale: The current strategic plan identified the creation of a graduate school as an objective that can help to strengthen the university’s academic and research programs. A faculty workgroup reviewed how graduate education is administered at peer institutions, discussed past studies on graduate administration, solicited feedback from colleagues, and recommended that a graduate school be created in order to support graduate programs across the seven colleges offering graduate programs. The Provost’s Council and Faculty Senate supported this recommendation. The creation of a graduate school will demonstrate that graduate education is an integral part of the university mission, provide for strategies to more efficiently devote resources to graduate education, enhance student support initiatives for graduate students, strengthen the University’s identity as a research institution, and assist in the coordination of interdisciplinary graduate programs. Widespread support for the creation of a graduate school exists among the faculty, the academic deans, and the administrative units that interact with the office of graduate studies.
Proposal to Establish the Old Dominion University Graduate School:
Supporting Excellence in Graduate Education

Overview

Based on the graduate exploratory committee’s recommendation, we seek approval to create the Old Dominion University Graduate School. The creation of the school will involve transitioning the Office of Graduate Studies into the Old Dominion University Graduate School. The creation of the graduate school is justified on six overlapping grounds involving the following themes: (1) centrality of graduate education, (2) budgetary issues, (3) student support initiatives, (4) branding as a research university, (5) coordinating interdisciplinary activities, and (6) widespread support for promoting graduate education.

Rationale

With regard to the centrality of graduate education at ODU, recent growth at the undergraduate level has reshaped the position of graduate education relative to the broader university student population. Creating a graduate school will send a message that graduate education is central to the university. A centralized unit is needed to advocate towards university leadership for more resources that will help to bring graduate education more into the center of the university community.

In terms of budgetary issues, a strong graduate school can produce positive revenue enhancements for graduate education. This suggestion is grounded in seven points:

1. Having a single administrator advocating solely for new state funds and tuition revenue to support graduate education will increase the likelihood that those new funds will be allocated to graduate education.
2. Graduate deans are in a prime position to identify and support efforts to receive new external funds supporting graduate education.
3. A strong graduate school will provide a structure for strengthening the graduate student organization, which would give graduate students stronger access to student activity fees controlled by the Student Government Association.
4. The presence of a graduate school better ensures the application of policies consistently and efficiently, which reduces the direct and indirect costs stemming from inefficient and differential treatment of graduate students across colleges.
5. A strong graduate school can optimize resources by coordinating marketing and recruitment efforts using activities such as a recruitment academy or graduate school magazine.
6. Marketing and recruiting efforts will produce a larger number of graduate students, which will produce more tuition revenue for the university.
7. A graduate school can develop stronger relationships with university units that can be called upon to support graduate activities (e.g., the development office, alumni relations, financial aid, and Office of Research).

Student support initiatives for graduate students will also be enhanced through the creation of a graduate school. Currently, graduate student support strategies are not universally available to students. The provision of health care insurance, for example, requires representatives from multiple
departments to come together to make that program work. Placing more of the administrative process for that support activity in the graduate school will enhance the support given to students. In a similar way, other support services such as dissertation workshops, boot camps, professional development workshops, travel grants, writing support, and so on are not currently universally available to all graduate students. A central structure will be able to identify and provide the types of academic support initiatives graduate students need.

Regarding Old Dominion University’s *branding as a research university*, strong research universities require strong graduate programs. With unprecedented growth in the undergraduate population occurring between 2005 and 2009, the role of graduate education was overshadowed. One of the pitfalls from this is that the university may appear to some to be an undergraduate institution with limited attention given to graduate education or research. The development of a graduate school stresses the importance of research to the university community.

In addition, a need exists both at the university and in higher education to provide better *coordination of interdisciplinary certificate and degree programs*. The university strategic plan expresses significant interest in building on interdisciplinary efforts at Old Dominion University. As it currently stands, very little coordination exists in terms of graduate interdisciplinary degree programs. Unlike the undergraduate level – which provides an interdisciplinary degree program including courses offered by each of the colleges through the College of Arts and Letters – there is no formal mechanism for supporting interdisciplinary graduate programs. With the development of a graduate school, formal efforts to support these initiatives between graduate programs can be expanded. Similar to the undergraduate level, the degrees would be housed within the academic college. Preliminary discussions are underway to develop an interdisciplinary graduate program in the College of Education similar to the undergraduate interdisciplinary studies program in Arts and Letters. Such programs would be coordinated and supported by the graduate school. The degrees would be offered by the colleges housing the interdisciplinary program.

All indications are that there is *widespread support for promoting graduate education* at Old Dominion University. During the strategic planning process, two different independent committees including faculty and staff listed the creation of a graduate school as something that should be part of the strategic plan. The resulting strategic plan did, in fact, list the creation of a graduate school as an action item that would improve our academic and research infrastructure. This conclusion is supported by recommendations made by consultants from the Council on Graduate Schools who recommended the following six years ago:

- ODU has shifted its model of graduate administration in recent decades from “centralization” to a degree of “decentralization” that is counterproductive. Strong collegiate and departmental units at ODU have been very successful in forging local strategies and operating solid programs. The lack of a strong central unit for graduate education, however, precludes a coherent campus vision and strategy for graduate studies; prevents the development of consistent academic and administrative standards and appropriate oversight and enforcement of them; militates against the most effective and efficient deployment of resources to programs and students; and makes comparative assessment of productivity difficult…Because ODU is in transition, however, it is well positioned to shape a new strategy for graduate education and for its administration on campus. The campus has great opportunities for research and graduate education.
In the first year of the implementation of the current strategic plan, an exploratory group was asked to determine whether a centralized structure should be developed and, if so, what form that structure should take. The group included faculty from each college as well as representation from the University Libraries, graduate admissions, Office of Research, and Student Engagement and Enrollment Services. The experiences and roles of the members of the task force included faculty members, department chairs, graduate program directors, an associate dean, faculty professionals, and representation from the executive committee of the faculty senate. After meeting several times between January and September of last year, the task force recommended the following: (1) a centralized structure for graduate education is needed, (2) the mission of the structure should be to support graduate students, faculty, and programs, (3) the structure should not have authority over faculty or graduate programs, (4) the structure should be labeled a “school” rather than a “college,” and (5) the initial step in creating the graduate school should be to rename the “Office of Graduate Studies” as the “Old Dominion University Graduate School.”

The task force report was made available to the university community in May 2015. Two university fora were held in Fall 2015. No opposition to the report was expressed. The concerns that were raised centered on whether renaming the Office of Graduate Studies would do any good. The consensus was that any changes would need to be supported by a strong financial commitment from the university. In order for the proposed graduate school to be successful, it was agreed that the amount of resources (financial and human) given to graduate education must expand.

**Projected Outcomes**

The outcomes from creating a graduate school are expected to include the following:

1. A larger portion of the university budget and new funds will be devoted to graduate education, including graduate assistantships, health insurance subsidies, and tuition waivers.
2. The graduate student organization will receive more funds from activity fees they pay.
3. Fewer complaints about inconsistent application of policies will be made by graduate students.
4. The decline in graduate enrollment will be stabilized and increases in targeted programs will become more likely.
5. Faculty and students will be more likely to view graduate education as important to the university.
6. A larger number of interdisciplinary programs will be created in the colleges.
7. A larger number of certificate and non-degree students will enroll in a degree program.
8. Decisions made at the university-level will be more likely to consider the interests of graduate education.
9. University-wide offices will provide human resources devoted to graduate education (e.g., the development office, marketing office, and Office of Research will assign staff to support fundraising, advertising, and grant writing respectively).
10. A strategic plan devoted specifically to graduate education will be developed, implemented, and assessed every five years.
Guiding Principles

The graduate school will adhere to the following principles:

- **Service** – the school exists to serve students, faculty, and graduate programs (not control them).
- **Budgeting** – zero sum budgeting processes that disadvantage other units in order to support the graduate school should be avoided so that the entire university benefits from a graduate school.
- **Advocacy** – advocating for graduate education should be the focus of all efforts.
- **Communication** – faculty feedback has been and should remain a critical part of the future of graduate education.
- **Balance** – graduate education must be balanced appropriately with undergraduate education.
- **Program diversity** – ODU administers many different types of graduate programs. From research and professional programs to STEM and Humanities programs, our university boasts a wide variety of graduate programs. The differences between these programs must be recognized, embraced, and considered in preparing for the future of graduate education at Old Dominion University.
- **Excellence**—the mantra of the graduate school will be “Supporting Excellence in Graduate Education.”

The proposed organizational chart for the graduate school is shown below.
Transition Plan for ODU Graduate School Administration

1. The vice provost will revise the position description for the associate vice provost of graduate studies. The new title will be Dean of the Graduate School. The dean will be a member of provost’s council, advocate for graduate education to the disciplinary deans, and support the disciplinary deans in efforts to promote graduate education.

2. The dean will conduct an internal search for an associate dean. The search committee will include members from the Graduate Administrator’s Council and Committee C from the faculty senate. It is recommended that the associate dean be converted to a twelve-month salary and placed on a 1-1 teaching load. The nature of this position will allow the associate dean to remain active as a scholar in their discipline while carrying out administrative duties.

3. The vice provost will move the Interdisciplinary Initiatives Administrator position from Vice Provost’s office to Graduate School.

4. The Vice Provost and Dean will request that research analyst be assigned to the graduate school. Preferably, the specialist position will come from the research analyst line assigned to the Office of Graduate Studies prior to the most recent organization.

5. The structure will have the Preparing Future Faculty coordinator report directly to the Dean for the PFF duties.

6. The Provost’s Fellow program will be expanded to appoint a faculty member as the Provost’s Fellow for the Graduate School over the next two years. The Fellow will assist in developing administrative materials for the graduate school and creating a five-year plan for the school.

7. A “dotted line” reporting relationship will be requested to HR between the Graduate School and Office of Graduate Admissions to strengthen the ties between those units.

8. A request will be made to the development office, marketing, financial aid, and Office of Research that staff from their offices be assigned to support the graduate school (e.g., a development officer, marketing specialist, financial aid specialist, and grant writer would ideally have part of their duties focused on the graduate school).

9. Graduate Administrator’s Council (GAC) will remain in its current form and the council will be asked to vote whether to add a representative from the Office of Research and the University Libraries. The chair of Committee C will be invited to participate on GAC.

10. Committee C of the senate will be encouraged to invite the dean of the graduate school to their meetings.

11. The dean and associate dean will be evaluated annually. The dean’s evaluation will be conducted by the dean’s supervisor, who will survey the graduate administrator’s council and other individuals who work closely with the dean. For instance, if the dean works closely with members of Committee C, those faculty senators would be asked to provide confidential feedback to be used in the dean’s annual evaluation.

12. The dean and chair of Committee C will oversee the development of a strategic plan for graduate education. Representatives on the planning committee will include faculty, representation from Committee C, representation from the university offices that work with graduate students, and the graduate student organization president. This plan must be approved by the faculty senate, provost’s council, and president. It is recommended that a new plan be developed every five years involving the same approval process.

Space

1. The Office of Graduate Studies space will be used to house the Graduate School.

2. It is recommended that the Interdisciplinary Initiatives Office be housed in the new College of Education building, pending approval.
Personnel

Primary Responsibilities of the Dean of the ODU Graduate School

- Secure new base funding for graduate education
- Advocate for centrality and importance of graduate education to university community
- Identify external funding possibilities for graduate assistantships
- Develop student support mechanisms for all types of graduate students
- Oversee development and implementation of graduate education five-year strategic plan
- Work with disciplinary deans, associate deans, and GAC to stabilize graduate enrollments
- Coordinate and support interdisciplinary graduate programs

Primary Responsibilities of the Associate Dean

- Oversee centralized student support initiatives
- Address student complaints
- Provide CourseLeaf administration and training
- Oversight of the graduate health insurance program
- Process theses and dissertations
- Serve as academic advisor for undecided students

Faculty Fellow

- Assist with development of graduate school strategic plan
- Assist with development of graduate school handbook and revision of policies
- Conduct baseline assessment of perceptions about graduate education

Research Analyst

- Monitor continuance and suspension data
- Support requests from programs for data related to accreditation
- Provide data needed to support self-studies and annual reviews
- Monitor health insurance data

Interdisciplinary Coordinator

- Coordinate interdisciplinary graduate activities between colleges
- Maintain marketing initiatives for interdisciplinary activities
- Support development of new and revised interdisciplinary initiatives

Administrative Assistant

- Support activities of dean and associate dean
- Maintain records related to graduate school
**Budget**

1. In the upcoming budget cycle, the vice provost will request resources to support marketing graduate education, addressing administrative support needs, enhancing graduate assistant packages, and recruiting graduate students.
2. New signs, letterhead, and business cards will be purchased to reflect the new name.
3. As part of the transition, no funds will be taken from the Colleges or Departments to support the creation of the graduate school.
4. The proposed estimated budget model for the transition year and next five years is below.
5. To become competitive and enhance all graduate programming, the stipend packages should be increased. It is recommended that they increase $1,000,000 over the next five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Category</th>
<th>Current Graduate Budget</th>
<th>Proposed Year 1 Budget</th>
<th>Proposed Year 2 Budget</th>
<th>Proposed Year 3 Budget</th>
<th>Proposed Year 4 Budget</th>
<th>Proposed Year 5 Budget</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dean/Associate VP Salary</strong></td>
<td>$114,240</td>
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<td>$116,000</td>
<td>$118,200</td>
<td>$120,400</td>
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<td><strong>Associate Dean</strong>*</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<td><strong>Interdisciplinary Initiatives Admin.</strong></td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>$76,400</td>
<td>$78,000</td>
<td>$79,600</td>
<td>$81,200</td>
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<td><strong>Administrative Assistant</strong></td>
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<td>$47,000</td>
<td>$47,950</td>
<td>$48,850</td>
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<td><strong>Research Analyst</strong></td>
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<td>na</td>
<td>$51,757</td>
<td>$53,000</td>
<td>$54,100</td>
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<td><strong>Graduate Admin Assistant</strong></td>
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<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
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<td><strong>Non-Personnel Services</strong></td>
<td>$27,000</td>
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<td>$45,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
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<td><strong>Travel for Graduate Students</strong></td>
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<td>$80,000</td>
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<td><strong>Health Insurance Subsidies</strong></td>
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<td>$550,000</td>
<td>$600,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GRA/GTAs</strong>*</td>
<td>$6,960,000</td>
<td>$7,160,000</td>
<td>$7,360,000</td>
<td>$7,560,000</td>
<td>$7,760,000</td>
<td>$7,960,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Marketing</strong></td>
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<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$130,000</td>
<td>$140,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recruiting Academy</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
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<td>$140,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty Fellow</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td><strong>PFF</strong></td>
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<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
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<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimate represents costs for conversion to a 12 month salary and costs to cover courses associate dean is released from.
**Position will be reallocated from Vice Provost to Graduate School
***Of this amount, $3,000,000 is base budgeted across the colleges. The remainder is administered through the Associate VP for Academic Affairs. It is recommended that the allocations increase, but the same process for allocating funds be used (e.g., distribution should not be determined by the graduate school).
Timeline/Milestones

Year 1

- Secure additional new base funding from new funds for graduate education
- Develop Graduate Education Strategic Plan in Collaboration with Committee C
- Hire Associate Dean
- Assess faculty perceptions about graduate education.
- Gain approval from SCHEV to rename Office of Graduate Studies as the Graduate School.
- Appoint Faculty Fellow to assist with administrative functions
- Revise functions of Graduate Administrator’s Council to support graduate activities
- Develop MOU between graduate admissions and graduate school
- Purchase new signs, letterhead, etc.
- Develop graduate school handbook
- Study degree to which graduate teaching assistantships could be expanded through use of adjunct funds.
- Host two open conversations (fora) with faculty to discuss progress of graduate school
- Develop directory of graduate student support services at ODU
- Develop process for evaluating the dean and associate dean
- Request that a grant writer be assigned from the Office of Research to the graduate school
- Request that a development officer be assigned from Development to the graduate school

Year Two

- Secure additional base funding for graduate education
- Recruit research analyst to perform analyses related to student progress, program growth, health insurance utilization, and so on
- Identify service gaps in terms of graduate students’ needs
- Solicit new external funds from federal agencies and foundations to support graduate education
- Begin implementation of graduate education strategic plan
- Develop formal partnership with Office of Research and University Libraries
- Move interdisciplinary initiatives administrator to graduate school.
- Develop recruitment academy to recruit new students
- Host open conversations with faculty to discuss progress

Year Three

- Secure additional base funding for graduate education
- Secure expanded space for graduate school and graduate students
- Provide student support services to fill identified gaps
- Appoint new faculty fellow to begin to assess graduate education strategic plan
- Support fundraising efforts for graduate education
- Host open conversations with faculty to discuss progress
The Future of Graduate Education at Old Dominion University

A Report Submitted by the Graduate School Exploratory Committee to

Carol Simpson, Provost

and

Chandra de Silva, Vice Provost

May 2015

Amended in October 2015 after receiving feedback from faculty at two separate faculty forums hosted in September 2015.
Executive Summary

Old Dominion University’s 2014-2019 Strategic Plan presents a number of initiatives that have the potential to make a significant impact on graduate education at Old Dominion University. Chief among these initiatives is the proposal to establish a graduate school at the University, which prompted Dr. Carol Simpson to create an exploratory committee to address the following questions:

1. Should ODU develop a graduate school?
2. What model might be most effective for current and future needs at ODU?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of creating a more centralized graduate school?
4. If a centralized graduate unit is created, how should it be structured and what critical activities should it perform?
5. What resources are necessary for the model proposed?
6. How could such a unit improve the future of graduate education at ODU?

With these questions as a framework, the exploratory committee met several times during Spring 2015. We reviewed graduate structures at other universities, shared our own experiences with graduate schools, discussed arguments for and against a graduate school at ODU, surveyed committee members about activities they believed should be in a graduate school, and examined the purpose of a more centralized graduate unit at ODU.

The committee also expanded the conversation to others at the institution. For example, graduate program directors were invited to an open meeting to provide input about this endeavor; in addition, members of the committee solicited feedback from department chairs and other individuals—both on and off campus. Finally, the Graduate Administrator’s Council has been routinely updated about the status of this committee’s efforts.

Based on the results of the study, the committee reached the following conclusions:

- The current support structure for graduate education at ODU needs revision;
- A centralized structure should devote significant effort to supporting graduate students;
- The diverse nature of our graduate programs (in terms of professional and research-based programs) means that any centralized structure must be flexible and be able to address a wide range of needs for programs and students;
- The purpose of a centralized graduate unit should be to support graduate programs, not to control them;
- The structure would best be called a “graduate school” rather than a “graduate college;” and
- The initial changes can be funded through reallocation of existing lines at ODU but will require investments in both personnel and resources for long term success.
We present three possible structures, beginning with the current model, each of which has slightly different purposes and requires different resources. At this juncture, it will be important to start with a structure that supports the foundation of graduate education while allowing refinement in the future. We also recognize that the specific structure—including reorganization—and resources will require further discussion. As those decisions are made, the University community should have the opportunity to weigh in on the appropriate structural changes that would most fully optimize the future of graduate education at ODU.

The report was presented at a provost’s retreat and two faculty forums. Three themes arose from those presentations. First, it was agreed that the Office of Research and University Libraries should be better integrated into graduate education at Old Dominion University. Second, participants in the various fora indicated that a commitment of resources will be required in the future in order to build and sustain graduate education. Third, the participants agreed that while a positive perception of graduate education is important, perception is simply a starting point that must be bolstered by strategic decision making, a recognition of the diverse nature of our graduate programs, and understanding that there are many different ways to measure success in graduate education. Enrollment is but one of those indicators. Others include societal demand, quality of the program, research productivity, and centrality to the university’s mission. Each of these themes is integrated into this amended report.

Introduction

Old Dominion University’s 2014-2019 Strategic Plan demonstrates a commitment to graduate education. The plan includes a number of goals, objectives, and action items that, if completed, will significantly influence the future of graduate education at ODU. The development of a graduate school is a specific objective in the strategic plan, and in response to this action item, Provost Simpson convened an exploratory committee (see Appendix A) to consider whether the creation of a graduate school is appropriate at this time. The exploratory committee met several times during the Spring 2015 semester, reviewed materials related to graduate education, and discussed various options. This report summarizes the activities of the committee. In particular, the report addresses the following areas, which are described in more detail below:

1. History of Graduate Studies at Old Dominion University
2. Status Quo vs. Necessary Changes
3. Graduate Structures in Peer Institutions and Across Virginia
4. Arguments For and Against a Centralized Graduate Administrative Unit
5. Mission, Mantra, and Purpose of a Centralized Graduate Unit
6. Graduate School vs. Graduate College
7. Elements/Actions to Remain in the Academic Colleges
8. Elements/Actions to Move to the Graduate School
9. Possible Structures for a Centralized Unit
10. Moving Forward
History of Graduate Studies at Old Dominion University

Old Dominion University received university status in 1969. Shortly thereafter, the first graduate programs were approved at ODU, leading to dramatic increases in the number of graduate students over the next two decades. The majority of these students enrolled in professional master’s programs—education, business, and health sciences.

In the early 2000s, the University launched an effort to expand its research and scholarly footprint. Part of this effort included the development of new doctoral programs in a variety of areas. As a result of these changes, the number of doctoral students increased from 590 in 2002 to 1,349 in 2014, an increase of nearly 130%.

While there was a significant increase in the number of doctoral students, the increase in the number of master’s students and non-degree graduate students did not keep pace. Figures 1-3 (see Appendix B) show changes in graduate enrollment over the past two decades. Figure 1 presents the number of undergraduate and graduate students at ODU since 1995. As shown in the figure, the number of students enrolled at ODU has increased dramatically—from 17,000 in 1995 to more than 25,000 in 2015. All of this growth, however, occurred at the undergraduate level.

Figure 2 shows the proportion of graduate students making up the University population. In 1995, more than one-third of our students were in graduate courses and program. Currently, less than one-fifth of our students are graduate students. There are two reasons why the ratio of graduate to undergraduate students changed to such an extent. First, the number of undergraduate students grew significantly—from roughly 11,500 in the mid-1990s, to more than 20,000 today. Second, at the same time, the number of graduate students decreased. Figure 3 shows the number of graduate students over time. The number of graduate students peaked in 2003 with just under 6,600. This past fall, 4,817 graduate students were enrolled at ODU.

Some may attribute these declines to overall declines in graduate populations across the country. Our declines, however, are more dramatic than those found nationally. Also, much of the decline appears to be spread across programs, with many programs experiencing only minimal losses. However, the cumulative effect of these minimal losses at the program level means that the overall population of graduate students at ODU today is lower than it was in 1992. Figure 4 shows graduate enrollments across colleges since 2006. For Fall 2014, each college had fewer graduate students than it enrolled at some point in the past eight years. Importantly, the bulk of the loss occurred among non-degree students (which includes students who are not “owned” by specific programs). To reiterate, while few programs experienced significant enrollment drops, the total effect of many programs losing a few students added up over time to a large decline in the University’s graduate student population.

At the same time, there have been changes in the faculty body that suggest a greater capability for research and graduate education. For example, between 2001 and 2013, ODU added 154 terminally-degreed full-time faculty positions to its faculty roster. Changes in research expenditures also point to a stronger faculty infrastructure available to support graduate
education. As shown in Figure 5, external research expenditures increased approximately 50% between 2004 and 2014 (from ~$32 million to ~$48 million). Most notably, federal expenditures nearly doubled in this timeframe.

In 2009, the University asked representatives from the Council on Graduate Schools to review the overall structure of graduate programs at ODU. A copy of their report is included in Appendix C. The current exploratory committee reviewed the report and specifically focused on how their recommendations had implications for our current discussions regarding a centralized graduate structure. In particular, the committee believed that certain recommendations applied today just as they applied six years ago. In particular, quoting from the report, the following recommendations seem to be just as relevant today:

- “Create a campus level unit for graduate education and provide it with the responsibility, authority, and resources to offer strong leadership, academic oversight, student support, and student services.
- Assign this unit the status of graduate school or graduate college, and its leader the status of dean. Explore the many models available nationally for such a unit and decanal position. The current model at ODU of a graduate office headed by an Associate Provost for Graduate Studies is not working and is inadequate to realizing the aspirations for graduate education at ODU.
- Create a robust Graduate Council, with significant faculty representation and working subcommittees, that is chaired by and advisory to the graduate dean. Consider adding representatives from the graduate student body and the library to this Council.
- Shift this conversation on administration of graduate education from one of “centralization vs. decentralization,” with its attendant focus on authority and control of resources,” to a conversation focused on the challenges and opportunities at hand and the best administrative practices available for addressing them.”  

This final recommendation specifically resonated with the committee. It was agreed that our focus should be on how to optimize graduate education at ODU.

**Status Quo and Necessary Changes**

The committee reviewed materials related to graduate programming and discussed how graduate education is currently administered at ODU. Specific attention was given to the activities performed by the Office of Graduate Studies, the college units, and the graduate programs themselves. Asked whether the current administrative structure was meeting the needs of students, faculty, program directors, programs, and others, the committee unanimously agreed that the Office of Graduate Studies structure needed to be strengthened.

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**Graduate Structures in our Peer Institutions and Across Virginia**

To provide comparisons, we reviewed how graduate programming is structured at our peer institutions and in other universities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As a result of this review, the committee arrived at two conclusions: (1) Every university has its own strategy for organizing graduate programming, and (2) The vast majority of our peer institutions and universities in Virginia organize their graduate structure within the framework of a graduate school.

Appendix D shows the types of graduate structures found in our peer institutions and a sample of Virginia universities. Among our 24 peer institutions, nineteen have graduate schools. The five that do not (Brigham Young University, Drexel University, Northeastern University, Ohio University, and University of Houston) centrally administer graduate education through a graduate office. In Virginia, VCU, JMU, Virginia Tech, and Radford had graduate schools while UVA, William and Mary, and GMU did not. UVA does, however, have graduate schools within their college structures. Also, William and Mary has an Office of Graduate Studies and Research and a graduate center within their school of arts and sciences, as well as four separate graduate colleges: business, education, law, and marine science.

Appendix E presents the structures of the Virginia universities, with their organizations ranging from rather simple to more complex structures. In addition, there appear to be a range of activities within each organization and varied kinds of information on websites at each institution. Each of the graduate entities included links aimed at reaching out to prospective students.

**Arguments For and Against Centralized Graduate Administrative Unit**

As noted above, our recently approved strategic plan calls for the development of a graduate school at ODU. As part of the introduction to the plan, the following paragraph highlighted the justification for developing a graduate school:

> Old Dominion University is one of very few Universities in the Commonwealth of Virginia that does not have a graduate school. National and international recognition of Old Dominion University’s graduate programs would be greatly enhanced by the existence of a graduate school to promote and recruit for programs, ensure program quality, provide students with equitable levels of financial and other support, allow for interdisciplinary research across different colleges at the graduate level, and provide more effective development, administration, and operation of the University’s graduate enterprise. Old Dominion University’s standard aid packages for graduate students are lower than those offered by other doctoral institutions in the Commonwealth, which needs to be addressed in order for ODU to continue to attract high quality students.
Building on these justifications for a graduate school, the committee identified several reasons why ODU should develop a centralized graduate unit. Reasons we considered were (1) identity—a graduate school might serve to identify ODU as a University that is committed to graduate education; (2) marketing—a centralized unit could help to market general features of graduate education; and (3) focus—a graduate school could serve as a hub for promoting and supporting not only traditional graduate programs but interdisciplinary offerings at the graduate level as well.

The committee also considered cost. On the surface, some may believe that a centralized graduate unit is cost prohibitive. However, research shows that such units are actually more efficient than purely decentralized structures. Describing this difference, one study concluded:

It should not be surprising that the cost of decentralized administration of graduate programs exceed the cost of a centralized office. A centralized office allows for economies of scale. It is because of this that the vast majority of universities in the U.S. do have centralized administration, and those that have decentralized administration have graduate programs in each discipline large enough to realize the benefits of the economies of scale. Some universities that moved from centralized to decentralized administrative structures reverted later to the centralized model.²

In addition to these advantages, two other benefits that stood out to the committee were resources and student advocacy. With regard to resources, the Dean’s advocacy of graduate programs will likely result in enhanced opportunities for funding on a variety of levels. In the current administrative structure, although administrators may be committed to graduate programs, funding for graduate programming is not the sole priority of any specific administrator. Identifying a Dean who is accountable for graduate education and providing his or her unit the resources necessary to optimize graduate enrollments will strengthen graduate programs across the University. (As will be discussed below, the title of Dean in this context should not be confused with “deans” of academic colleges.)

Student advocacy will also be enhanced through the development of a graduate school. The University has made major investments in developing student success initiatives for undergraduate students. Similarly, a centralized unit advocating for graduate students can ensure that students are receiving the types of support they need to promote their success. The committee also agreed that a centralized unit could promote a consistent application of University policies at the program level. This should reduce the costs of grievances arising out of inconsistent application of policies throughout the University.

The committee discussed arguments against developing a graduate school. One argument we considered was whether a centralized unit was actually necessary. For some, another centralized

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unit may be an added layer of bureaucracy. In addition, concern was expressed that a centralized unit might be a drain on college resources. Further, it may be that the colleges are able to address specific needs of their students, while a centralized unit would not be able to address those same needs. Another potential disadvantage involves the diverse nature of our graduate programs (including a wide range of professional programs and research-oriented programs) that must be effectively balanced in one administrative structure.

The committee agreed that the identified advantages outweighed the potential disadvantages and concluded that a centralized unit with specific mandates would enhance efficiency, optimize graduate programming, and best serve the needs of graduate students, graduate program directors, and the University.

Mission, Mantra, and Purpose

The committee addressed the mission of a centralized graduate unit. Committee members were asked to share words or themes that they thought epitomized the type of graduate school that should be developed at ODU. This discussion resulted in the identification of the following themes:

- Student-centered
- Advocacy
- Optimization
- Support for graduate faculty
- Resources
- Consistent application of policies
- Promoting graduate education
- Quality
- Linking graduate education with research
- Linking graduate education with strategic plan
- Enhancing visibility
- Community engagement
- Regional interests
- Interdisciplinary efforts

Based on these themes, a suggested mission statement is:

The mission of the Old Dominion University Graduate School is to serve graduate students and graduate programs in an interdisciplinary framework that coordinates and optimizes available resources and enhances the visibility and value of graduate education across the region and world. The purpose of the graduate school will be to advocate for graduate students and graduate programs in a centralized manner so that policies and practices are consistently developed and applied across the academic colleges.
One of the committee members, an expert in marketing and management, suggested that we also develop a mantra—or catchphrase—with the purpose of “help[ing] employees truly understand why the organization exists.”³ With this in mind, a few possible mantras for the proposed graduate school are:

- **Making Graduate Education Count**
- **Quality Graduate Education that Counts**
- **Making Graduate Education Excel**
- **Fostering Excellence in Graduate Education**
- **Promoting Excellence in Graduate Education**
- **Promoting Graduate Excellence**.

The mantra should be determined through discussions among faculty, administrators, and students.

After discussing the possible mantra at three different forums, the one that resonated the most with participants was Promoting Excellence in Graduate Education. Another suggestion offered by a participant was “Supporting Excellence in Graduate Education” (which reflects the proposed mission of the school).

**Graduate School or Graduate College**

While it may be simply a matter of semantics, members of the Graduate Administrators’ Council recommended the name, “graduate school” rather than “graduate college” for three reasons: (1) the name “graduate school” suggests that the centralized unit would support and work with other colleges rather than compete with the academic colleges, (2) the label “school” is a term that is part of current lexicon (e.g., students say they are going to “graduate school,” not “graduate college;” and (3) the phrase “graduate school” more accurately embraces both professional programs and research-based programs. The committee supports this recommendation.

**Activities to be performed by the Graduate School**

The committee discussed various activities that serve to promote and enhance graduate education. Some of these activities might be best performed by a centralized unit, while individual graduate programs and colleges should carry out other activities. At the outset, it was agreed that a centralized graduate unit should support the colleges, graduate programs, and students. The committee agreed that a centralized unit should not focus on “counting” students, but on supporting them.

According to the Council of Graduate Schools (2004), graduate schools are typically responsible for:

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The CGS identifies certain elements “critical for the success of graduate education at every university.” Table 1 identifies these elements and shows whether ODU currently possesses each element.

Table 1. Critical Elements for Graduate Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>ODU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governing Board and Administration that supports graduate education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic faculty units supervising graduate study and recommending degrees</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty committed to graduate programs and research</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Academic Officer for Graduate Education</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate Degree-Granting Graduate Unit</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPD in each academic unit</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Council</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate student representation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CGS further outlines the types of activities that the graduate schools are typically involved in across colleges and universities. Table 2 outlines these activities and provides examples of the specific activities included within the broader categories.
Table 2. Graduate School Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Area</th>
<th>Specific Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Content</td>
<td>• Reviewing new and revised programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assisting with development of new graduate programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promoting interdisciplinary programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reviewing existing graduate programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Setting academic policies governing graduate study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>• Admissions (structure varies, but graduate school at a minimum should ensure that policies and standards are followed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recruitment (“primarily the responsibility of each graduate department or program”; graduate school should help)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promoting Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identifying, securing, and distributing funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Training TAs and RAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitoring academic progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thesis and dissertation support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thesis and dissertation approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student support services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Retention programs (either initiate or help departments develop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Liaison with student organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Liaison with student affairs officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student grievance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Area</td>
<td>Specific Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>• Maintaining records of graduate faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Involved in hiring and promoting faculty (don’t think so)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Faculty development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overseeing postdocs and visiting scholars where appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td>• Data collection and dissemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Liaison with legal affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University-wide activities</td>
<td>• Promoting intellectual capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participating in central decisions making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enhancing scholarship and research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External relations</td>
<td>• Participating in national and regional association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Liaison with legislatures and boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing alumni relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fundraising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the information from CGS as a starting point, members of the exploratory committee were asked to indicate whether a centralized graduate unit should be responsible for 28 separate activities. Appendix F summarizes the results of this survey of the working group. Briefly, the
committee concluded that a centralized unit should carry out virtually all of the activities. The only activity that the committee did not want performed by a centralized graduate unit was the disbursement of graduate funding.

Building on this survey, members of the committee were asked to make a list of “activities that belong in a centralized unit” and “activities that belong in a decentralized unit.” While not unanimous, in general, the following activities were identified as belonging in a central unit:

- Securing funding for graduate education
- University-level activities such as coordination, training, and policies
- International student programming
- Advocacy for graduate students
- Marketing of “graduate education”
- Student support services
- Catalog oversight
- Development of policies and procedures
- Coordination of faculty graduate certifications
- Thesis and Dissertation Processing
- Data gathering and reporting
- GPD Orientation
- Coordination of program review process
- TA Training
- Handling student complaints
- Serving as a liaison with SEES, research, development, external bodies (e.g. CGS)
- Maintaining records of graduate faculty
- Data collection and dissemination
- Serving as a liaison with legal affairs
- Participating in national and regional association
- Developing alumni relations (support decentralized unit)
- Fundraising (support decentralized unit)
- Student financial resource development and administration
- Academic advising for undecided students
- Serving as a liaison with legislatures and boards
- Events Coordination for University-wide student programs such as New Student Orientation, GTAI Institute, Graduate Research Achievement Day
- Dissemination of information applicable to all graduate students through the Graduate Newsletter, the website, etc.
- Graduate Health Insurance Administration
- Providing training to faculty involved in the administration of graduate programs.
- Serving as a faculty resource on graduate policies and procedures
- CourseLeaf Administration and Training
- Overseeing Academic Continuance Process
- Overseeing Suspension/Reinstatement Process
- Overseeing Doctoral Mentoring Award and Outstanding GTA Award Coordination
• Handling Graduate Assistantships – hiring, performance reviews, workload, enrollment criteria, etc.
• Providing leadership in establishing strategic goals & objectives for graduate education, including the convening of the Graduate Administrators’ Council
• Approval of new courses, programs, and certificates
• Serving as Graduate Liaison with other University departments

Reviewing these activities, one key theme surfaces: the committee views the centralized unit as supporting and promoting graduate programming, as opposed to an entity that controls graduate programming.

Activities to be performed by the Academic Colleges

Committee members were also asked to report those activities that they believed should be performed by graduate programs. These activities included:

• Curriculum oversight
• Program marketing on the departmental level
• Faculty hiring
• Academic advising, certification for graduation
• Admissions – recruitment and selection
• Program/curriculum design and administration
• CourseLeaf/graduate catalog curricular/program updates
• Program assessment
• Establishing graduate certification standards
• Doctoral mentoring
• Performing program reviews/self-studies
• Thesis and dissertation formatting and approval
• TA and RA management

The clear delineation between those activities that “belong” in a centralized unit and those that “belong” in a department center around the curriculum, day-to-day activities of graduate programs, and strategies to maintain the integrity of the degree.

Possible Structures

As noted above, every university seems to have its preferred organizational structure for organizing graduate education. Appendix G includes four organizational charts from comparable universities. Using these structures and others reviewed by the committee, we considered different options for graduate education at Old Dominion University.

Appendix H offers a comparison of the current structure, as well as two alternative configurations. One of these alternatives is to establish a Graduate School by reallocating lines
within Academic Affairs and the University; this might include moving a coordinator of interdisciplinary programs, hiring an associate dean from the faculty, and shifting a staff member from Academic Affairs to the Graduate School. In addition, the title of the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Studies would be converted to Dean of the Graduate School. This title is consistent with those used in other graduate schools. In addition, the Dean would be similar to other “deans” at ODU who handle student and academic matters but do not oversee an academic college. For example, the Dean of the Honor’s College and Dean of Students each performs a wide range of activities that are clearly different from those performed by deans of academic colleges. In addition, a “dotted line” reporting relationship would be developed between the graduate school and graduate admissions.

The advantages of this structure are that (1) it is achievable under the current fiscal framework, (2) it would serve as a strong foundation for the initial phases of this new entity, and (3) the closer relationship between graduate studies and graduate admissions would provide for more focused and deliberate opportunities to increase enrollment. The disadvantage of this structure is that the new members of the team may require time to learn their roles within the new school.

A second alternative is to build a new Graduate College that includes multiple associate deans, reporting units, admissions personnel, marketing personnel, and others. The advantage of such a unit is that a comprehensive administrative structure would address the needs of nearly everyone involved in graduate studies at the University. The disadvantages are that such a model may be cost-prohibitive at this time and given forthcoming changes in the provost’s office, such a structure may limit the ability of future administrators to help shape the structure of the graduate school.

A third alternative would be a hybrid model: a structure that borrows ideas from each of the alternatives noted above and remains flexible enough to serve as a solid foundation for future administrations to build upon.

Based on current realities, the committee concurred that the first alternative is the most viable option for creating the foundation for a Graduate School. While an ideal situation might include stronger support services for graduate students (which could be explored by future administrators), in the immediate future it is recommended that the foundation of the Graduate School be the first step in “promoting excellence in graduate education” at Old Dominion University.

Moving Forward

Old Dominion University is at a critical point in its history. Decisions made today will have a lasting effect on the future of graduate education. The 2014-2019 Strategic Plan identifies the following items related to graduate education:

- Assess graduate program effectiveness on the basis of: student demand; student learning; relevance to future job expansion and national trends; relevance to the University’s mission; external program reviews; SCHEV productivity measures; national rankings;
internal assessment of outcomes; comparison with similar internal programs and those in peer institutions, standardized for the number of faculty positions; and alumni placement in professional positions related to their degree program, graduate school acceptance, or postdoctoral position appointments.

- Implement a focused marketing program to attract high-performing graduate students to programs of excellence.
- Identify and develop new undergraduate and graduate certificate programs, both for-credit and non-credit, in areas of national need such as homeland security, cybersecurity, critical infrastructure security, big data, bioinformatics, biostatistics, sea level rise mitigation and adaptation, and global health, among others.
- Raise the visibility of graduate education to attract the best graduate students, ensure high quality and enhanced productivity of Old Dominion University master’s and doctoral programs, and bring recognition to the research and scholarly work of the University’s graduate students.
- Develop and implement interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary graduate programs in areas of local, regional, national and international need.
- Ensure graduate student enrollments align with program capacity.
- Increase graduate stipends and tuition assistance packages to peer institution levels and offer affordable health insurance plans to attract the most sought-after graduate students.
- Identify and develop professional master’s programs in areas of high demand.

The exploratory committee believes that the Graduate School can play a leading role in helping to address these goals and perform the actions necessary to sustain graduate education well into the future. In the immediate future, the committee recommends the following steps:

- May 2015: Submit report to Provost Simpson and Vice Provost de Silva
- May 2015: Release report to University community
- July 2015: Present progress update to vice presidents and solicit feedback
- August 2015: Present update to Provost’s Council and solicit feedback
- August/September 2015: Present report at faculty forums and solicit feedback on appropriate models for graduate education
- October 2015: Develop proposed foundation for centralized graduate structure and business plan
- November 2015: Submit recommendations to Faculty Senate and Provost’s Council.
- December 2015: Submit proposal to the ODU Board of Visitors to rename the Office of Graduate Studies as the Old Dominion University Graduate School
- January 2016: Submit proposal to SCHEV to rename the Office of Graduate Studies as the Old Dominion University Graduate School
- March 2016: Officially rename the Office of Graduate Studies as Old Dominion University Graduate School
Concluding Comments

The upcoming changes in leadership in the Provost’s office were discussed by the committee. We concluded that the change in Provost should not dictate whether or not a graduate school would be created. At the same time, we recognized that the future Provost will play a central role in determining how to structure and fund the proposed graduate school. Consequently, we recommend that the foundation of a graduate school be created by renaming the Office of Graduate Studies as the Old Dominion University Graduate School. Doing so will create the foundation of a centralized graduate unit. The future of graduate education is dependent on bold decision making across the University. The Old Dominion University Graduate School will be in a key position to foster bold decision-making toward strategic and innovative opportunities in the years to come.
APPENDICES

Appendix A  Exploratory Committee Members
Appendix B  Graduate Enrollments
Appendix C  CGS Report
Appendix D  Types of Graduate Structures at Peer Institutions and Across Virginia
Appendix E  Features of Virginia Graduate Structures
Appendix F  Results of Survey of Exploratory Group
Appendix G  Administrative Structures at other Universities
Appendix H  Current and Proposed Administrative Structures
Appendix A

Committee Members*

Brian Payne, Office of Academic Affairs, Chair
Sebastian Bawab, Batten College of Engineering and Technology
Jane Dane, Student Engagement and Enrollment Services
Gail Dickinson, College of Education
Karen Eck, Office of Research
Rodger Harvey, College of Sciences
Bill Heffelfinger, Office of Graduate Admissions
Dana Heller, College of Arts and Letters
Donna Hughes-Oldenburg, ODU Libraries
Kiran Karande, Strome College of Business
Kimberly Adams Tufts, College of Health Sciences
Robert Wojtowicz, Office of Graduate Studies

The committee was staffed by Missy Barber.

*The committee would like to express its appreciation to Missy Barber for providing historical and procedural background information that assisted the committee in its deliberations.
Enrollment Trends
1995-2014

Total Number of Students

Undergraduate Head Count
Graduate Head Count
University Head Count

1995 - 2014
Appendix B

Figure 2

ODU Graduate Headcount Proportion 1995-2014

Graduate Headcount Proportion

Year

University Graduate Headcount...
Appendix B

Figure 3

Old Dominion University Graduate Student Enrollment 1992-2014

Number of Students

Grad Student...
Appendix B

Figure 4

Fall Graduate Student Head Count Across Colleges, 2006-2014

- Arts and Letters
- College of Business
- College of Education
- College of Engineering
- College of Sciences
- College of Health Sciences
- No College Designated
Appendix B

Figure 5

ODU External Research Expenditures (2004-2014)

Appendix C

February 27, 2009

To: Dr. Carol Simpson  
   Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
   Old Dominion University

From: Dr. Patricia Bishop  
   Vice Provost and Dean, College of Graduate Studies  
   University of Central Florida

   Dr. Charles Caramello  
   Associate Provost and Dean, The Graduate School  
   University of Maryland

   Dr. John Koropchak  
   Vice-Chancellor for Research and Graduate Dean  
   Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Subject: Report of CGS Consultation Team

INTRODUCTION

As part of a comprehensive enrollment management initiative, Old Dominion University (ODU) contracted with the Council of Graduate Schools for CGS Consultation Service. The CGS appointed a Consultation Team (CT) comprising the three signatories of this report.

Dr. Carol Simpson contacted the CT on January 6, 2009, requesting that it “provide specific recommendations that will enhance the quality, productivity and management of [ODU’s] graduate programs, utilizing ‘best practices’ and a SWOT . . . analysis.” Dr. Simpson asked the team to provide evaluation of and recommendations for four areas:

- Assessment methods and management of graduate program quality, capacity and viability;
- Graduate enrollment management—marketing, recruitment, admissions, student support (financial and social);
• Allocation and management of university resources to support graduate programs;

• Organizational structure and administrative resources of the Office of Graduate Studies and its reporting units.

The CT conducted a site visit to ODU on January 27-29, 2009, in the course of which it held twenty separate meetings with principal stakeholders in graduate education on campus, including representatives of the administration, faculty, staff, and students. The meetings were highly productive, and the CT wish to thank all those who met with us for their thorough preparation, candor, and openness. We particularly wish to thank Associate Dean Robert Wojtowicz for his extremely gracious and professional management of the visit.

The CT understand our charge as referring to the overall graduate program at ODU, rather than to individual programs. We also understand our role to be that of advisors, rather than that of program reviewers. We restrict our recommendations to those areas indicated by Dr. Simpson, but we wish first to provide a context for them.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

• ODU is facing challenges and opportunities in graduate education not uncommon in research universities, particularly universities in transition. Many institutions are assessing their policies and practices regarding program assessment, student recruitment and enrollment management, resource allocation, and administration of graduate education. The Council of Graduate Schools has produced a number of excellent policy statements and guides on these matters, detailing “best practices.” Those that we consider most directly relevant to ODU are listed under General Recommendation below.

• ODU expanded its graduate programs and enrollments significantly over a short period of time, focusing more on growth and rankings than on achieving excellence. This expansion lacked clear strategic direction and has outpaced available resources and infrastructure. ODU faces the challenge, under these circumstances, of establishing graduate programs of distinction and of providing the resources necessary to recruit, train, graduate, and place top graduate students, a challenge compounded by the fact that, because of recent expansion, ODU currently has a significant graduate student population in the pipeline.

• ODU has shifted its model of graduate administration in recent decades from “centralization” to a degree of “decentralization” that is counterproductive. Strong collegiate and departmental units at ODU have been very successful in forging local strategies and operating solid programs. The lack of a strong central unit for graduate
education, however, precludes a coherent campus vision and strategy for graduate studies; prevents the development of consistent academic and administrative standards and appropriate oversight and enforcement of them; militates against the most effective and efficient deployment of resources to programs and students; and makes comparative assessment of productivity difficult.

Three documents provided the CT by ODU reflect this problem: “Graduate Programs: Reporting Lines and Authority”; “Office of Graduate Studies” (document dated 12/17/08); and “GAC Task Force on Graduate Administration Final Report.” The first presents an organizational structure that lacks coherence; the second a policy document so generalized that it could apply to graduate administration in virtually any university; and the third an enumeration of GPD responsibilities that suggests both too high a burden and too strategic a role for Graduate Program Directors (GPD).

- Precisely because ODU is in transition, however, it is well positioned to shape a new strategy for graduate education and for its administration on campus. The campus has great opportunities for research and graduate education provided by its immediate location in Hampton Roads and broader setting in the coastal region. We believe that ODU should focus on developing: (a) a small number of strategically selected doctoral programs, niche programs that match the strengths of the university, the advantages of its location, and the realities of available resources, and that will have the possibility of achieving true excellence; and (b) a larger number of professional masters programs responsive to the workforce needs of the region, programs that, among other objectives, will provide a revenue stream for adequate support of doctoral programs and doctoral students.

**SWOT ANALYSIS**

**Strengths**

- Committed faculty
- Colleges and departments of demonstrable excellence
- Campus leadership for whom graduate education is a priority
- An increasingly productive research enterprise
- Location and demographics providing many opportunities
- A high graduate student percentage of total student body
- A wealth of data on the status and trends of graduate programs
Weaknesses

- Insufficient central oversight of graduate admissions, programs, and student support by administrators with expertise in graduate issues
- A general campus culture in which the connections between research and graduate education are not self-evident, as suggested by stagnant support for graduate students from grants and contracts
- Uneven level of attention paid to development of programs specific to location and demographic opportunities
- Large percentage of part-time graduate students
- Low percentage of graduate students supported by fellowships or assistantship for a research institution
- High percentage of available support directed to master’s students (as opposed to doctoral students)
- Relatively low PhD productivity considering total graduate enrollment
- Lack of rigorous, systematic, periodic program review process

Opportunities

- Strategic plan that places significant emphasis on research and graduate education
- Fluidity in campus leadership and in strategic planning may enable reorganization of graduate administration
- Campus strengths well-aligned with proposed federal stimulus plan
- Capacity for enhanced collaboration with military and regional partners
- Regional characteristics conducive to progressive graduate programming concepts, such as professional science masters degrees
- Potential for smart growth of student body

Threats

- Lack of clear mission, vision, strategy for graduate education
- Inadequate level of expert central oversight for graduate education by “best practices” measure
- An administrative culture that does not appear to promote collaboration across disciplines and colleges
- Recent expansion of graduate programs and enrollment appears to have outpaced infrastructure, resources, and critical mass necessary for programmatic distinction at the doctoral level
- Students express allegiance to programs but not to university
- Significant dependence on state support in a declining state and national economy
- ODU must compete for state resources with three distinguished research institutions (UVA, VT, W&M) and one other urban university (VCU)
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING SPECIFIC AREAS

1. Assessment methods and management of graduate program quality, capacity, and viability.
   - Create a formal and systematic reporting process from programs to colleges to graduate college or school (see number 4 below) (GS) so that the quality of students, faculty, and programs can be assessed at the campus level.
   - Utilizing this process, conduct a campus level review of current program policies and practices regarding admissions, curriculum, advising/mentoring, monitoring of student progress, formation of doctoral examining committees, granting of policy waivers, certifying graduation, and so on.
   - Utilizing this process, conduct a campus level review of program benchmarks and student success in meeting them via a comprehensive assessment of input, throughput, and output:
     - Assess quality indicators of recent incoming cohorts, including GPA, GRE, and discipline specific indicators.
     - Assess program benchmarks for student competency and success of current students in meeting them.
     - Assess program objectives for placement of graduates and success in meeting them. This assessment also should include objectives for completion, attrition, and time to degree rates.
   - Review the current program proposal process with an eye toward creating a campus level process moving from program, to college, to GS, to Senate, to Provost. Include a pre-proposal process that provides clear guidelines and includes vetting of pre-proposals in GS.
   - Guard against de facto creation of new programs via multiplication of tracks in existing or proposed programs.
   - Identify strong doctoral programs and enhance them; identify weak doctoral programs and either enhance them because of their disciplinary centrality or eliminate them to enable enhancement of strong programs and creation of new programs to be developed as strategic opportunities arise.
   - Strengthen and consolidate academic outreach via enhancement of professionally oriented master’s programs, paying particular attention to utilization of state-of-the-art delivery systems.

2. Graduate enrollment management—marketing, recruitment, admissions, student support (financial and social).
   - Provide collaborative and effective central oversight of graduate admissions, exceptions to university policies, graduation certification, and content of Graduate Catalog, regardless of where the effective decision-making and processing of these responsibilities occur.
• Increase the graduate application fee and use the increase to create and maintain enhanced technological infrastructure for admissions. This should enable a decrease in current turn-around time in processing.
• Review admission criteria for doctoral programs and consider (or reconsider) direct access into doctoral programs with the bachelor’s degree. This should enable a reformulating of master’s programs for professional/executive audiences, creating revenue streams that could be used to enhance support for doctoral students.
• Conduct a thorough assessment of the effectiveness of current graduate student support in attracting and retaining top students. Current support packages do not appear competitive, particularly with regard to the number of years of funding provided the student.
• Increase the number of years of Graduate Assistant support, and abolish the widespread practice of converting GAs into adjunct faculty with tuition waivers.
• Investigate all methods for providing fully or partially subsidized health insurance for graduate assistants, including and especially externally funded research.
• Conduct a campus wide discussion of use of student fees, insuring that graduate student fees are used for services that benefit graduate students, including support of a robust Graduate Student Organization.
• Review all student handbooks at program, college, and campus levels, ensuring that the implicit is always made explicit. This is important in a graduate community that includes significant numbers of distance learners and of first-in- family graduate students.
• Review and enhance program content descriptions in the Graduate Catalog, and move the Catalog on line as soon as is feasible.

3. Allocation and management of university resources to support graduate programs.

• Provide incentives to faculty, programs, and colleges to write graduate assistant support into all proposals for extramural funding. Increase the percentage of funding for graduate students from external support in relation to funding from State. ODU data indicate that externally funded research has increased but that student support has remained flat.
• Revisit the IDC allocation formula and consider reallocating some of the portion now returned to units for central redistribution to graduate students in the form of fellowships and assistantships.
• Devise a closer correlation of assistantship stipend allocations with tuition waiver/credit allocations. Review financial processes to enable allocation of resources to programs earlier in recruitment cycle.
• Provide a GS or other central unit with resources sufficient to conduct reviews as recommended under number 1 above. Review all programs on a formal, regular cycle, whether or not required by the State. Make these reviews part of resource allocation decisions.
• Resources should be allocated not on an historical model, but on the basis of excellence as demonstrated in program reviews based on input-throughput-output measures recommended under number 1 above. This allocation process should be
transparent to the university community.

- Provide a GS or other central unit with resources sufficient to create programs, perhaps on a cost-sharing basis with colleges, for professional development of graduate faculty and students and for building a campus intellectual community.

4. Organizational structure and administrative resources of the Office of Graduate Studies and its reporting units.

- Create a campus level unit for graduate education and provide it with the responsibility, authority, and resources to provide strong leadership, academic oversight, student support, and student services. Commensurate accountability should accompany this responsibility.
- Assign this unit the status of Graduate School or Graduate College, and its leader the status of dean. Explore the many models available nationally for such a unit and decanal position. The current model at ODU of a Graduate Office headed by an Associate Provost for Graduate Studies is not working and is inadequate to achieve the aspirations for graduate education at ODU.
- Create a robust Graduate Council, with significant faculty representation and working subcommittees, that is chaired by and advisory to the graduate dean. Consider adding representatives from the graduate student body and the library to this Council.
- Shift the campus conversation on administration of graduate education from one of “centralization vs. decentralization,” with its attendant focus on authority and control of resources, to a conversation focused on the challenges and opportunities at hand and the best administrative practices available for addressing them.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

- The CT believe that issues pertaining to graduate education raised in this report may exceed the scope of the enrollment management initiative. We strongly encourage the President and/or Provost to appoint a distinguished Task Force to consider these issues and to formulate an implementation plan for addressing them.

- We further recommend that the Task Force consult the following policy statements issued by the Council of Graduate Schools: Assessment and Review of Graduate Programs; An Essential Guide to Graduate Admissions; Organization and Administration of Graduate Education; The Doctor of Philosophy Degree; PhD Completion and Attrition; Task Force Report on the Professional Doctorate; Master’s Education; Professional Master’s Education.
## Appendix D

### Graduate Structures at Peer and Virginia Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Graduate School</th>
<th>Graduate office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brigham Young University</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drexel University</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida International University</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida State University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia State University</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeastern University</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio University-Main Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma State University-Main Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois University Carbondale</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY at Albany</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Tech University</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Arkansas Main Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Central Florida</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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<td>University of Connecticut</td>
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</tr>
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<td>University of Delaware</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Houston</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Louisiana at Lafayette</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Memphis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Nevada-Las Vegas</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nevada-Reno</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Oklahoma Norman Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Rhode Island</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Southern Mississippi</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright State University-Main Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Virginia Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Graduate School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Commonwealth University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Madison University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William &amp; Mary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Tech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longwood University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radford University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix E
### Features of Graduate Structures in Virginia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Key Personnel and Functions</th>
<th>Website Highlights and Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VCU</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Dean, 2 Associate Deans, Director of graduate enrollment services, AE to the Dean, AE to the Associate Dean, Director of IT, Director of graduate student finding and financial operations</td>
<td>Student Life, Research (not much info), professional development, student resources, Faculty/staff resources. Seems like mainly support functions including funding opportunities, policies and procedures, graduation, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVA</td>
<td>Office of Graduate &amp; Postdoctoral Affairs</td>
<td>AVP, programs administrator, Associate director, and director of professional development, director of diversity programs, program and fiscal support.</td>
<td>Career development, diversity programs, and post doctoral affairs, separate links for graduate programs in each School (admissions, financial information, FAQ, and programs). Mostly professional development and diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Mason</td>
<td>Graduate Admissions</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Mostly admissions related information. Don't seem to have graduate school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William and Mary</td>
<td>Graduate Programs</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Mostly directs to college websites. Don't seem to have graduate school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Tech</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Vice President and Dean of Graduate Education, 4 Associate Deans, no information on staff</td>
<td>CGS&amp;P minutes, diversity initiatives, graduate certificates, graduate curriculum committee, graduate program review, interdisciplinary graduate education, meet the deans, news and announcements, transformative graduate education. Resources for prospective students, current students, faculty and staff, and alumni and friends. Mostly academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMU</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Interim Dean, Interim Associate Dean, Assistant to the Dean, Director, Student Support, Finance Coordinator, Graduate Admissions Technology and Document Manager, Receptionist, Director Admissions and Student Records, Assistant Director Admissions, Degree Auditor, plus 2 GAs</td>
<td>Prospective Students (graduate programs, application process, and international admissions), Current graduate students, Faculty and Staff, Graduate Student Life, Graduate Student Association. Looks like graduate admissions fall under Graduate School. Admissions and student support seem to be the two important functions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F

**Results of Survey of Exploratory Committee**

Please respond to the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regardless of whether it is expanded or not, the graduate unit should be responsible for…</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Coordinating the administration of graduate education at ODU</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Providing leadership in establishing strategic goals and objectives for graduate education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Convening the Graduate Administrators’ Council (GAC)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Approving new graduate-level courses, programs, and certificates</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Updating and publishing the University Graduate Catalog</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Overseeing the continuance process, including probation, suspension, and reinstatement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Organizing and providing training for graduate program directors (GPDs) and other graduate administrators and staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Advising the six academic colleges on the faculty graduate certification process</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Coordinating the Graduate Teaching Assistant Institute (GTAI), the process for training and certifying graduate teaching assistants</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Planning and facilitating University-wide events, including the New Graduate Student Orientation and the Graduate Research Achievement Day (GRAD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Resolving student issues &amp; grievances not resolved at other levels</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Acting as faculty representative for the Graduate Student Org.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Coordinating the Doctoral Mentoring and Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Selecting the Alumni and Meredith Scholarship winners</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Interacting with the Council of Graduate Schools, the Council of Southern Graduate Schools, and Virginia CGS</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Coordinating graduate health insurance</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Certifying graduate faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Monitoring graduate continuance data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Gathering/reporting institutional data related to graduate education</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Marketing graduate programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Coordinating the GA evaluation process and post-GTAEI training, including specialized training for international students</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Organizing graduate program reviews</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Monitoring curriculum guidelines and core requirements that are mandated by SACS and SCHEV</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Developing specialized programming for international students</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Overseeing the disbursement of graduate assistantships, fellowships, tuition waivers, and tuition grants</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Increasing professional development activities for graduate students</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Coordinating postdoctoral initiatives</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Managing the thesis/dissertation submission process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix G

Sample Structure 1 (Oklahoma State)
Appendix G

Sample Structure 2 (SIU)
Appendix G

Sample Structure 3 (Texas Tech)
Appendix H
Current and Proposed Structures

Figure 1: Current Organization of the Office of Graduate Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities Currently Performed in the Office of Graduate Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval of new courses, programs, and certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy for graduate students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration of policies and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination of faculty graduate certifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing GPD Orientation and TA Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling student grievances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in national and regional associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events coordination for University-wide programs such as New Student Orientation, GTAI Institute, and Graduate Research Achievement Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling graduate assistantships, including hiring, performance reviews, workload, enrollment criteria, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H
Proposed Structure 1

In addition to the activities in the current structure, the following would be included:

- Coordination of interdisciplinary graduate programs
- Advising for interdisciplinary graduate students
- Securing funding for graduate education
- Student support services
- Data gathering and reporting
- Coordinating program review process
- Coordinating self-studies for graduate programs
- Data collection and dissemination
- Academic advising for undecided students
- Developing strategic plan for graduate education
- Thesis and dissertation processing
- Coordination with graduate admissions
Appendix H

Proposed Structure 2
In addition to the activities in the current structure, the following would be included:

- Coordination of interdisciplinary graduate programs
- Advising for interdisciplinary graduate students
- Securing funding for graduate education
- Providing student support services
- Data gathering and reporting
- Coordinating program review process
- Coordinating self-studies for graduate programs
- Data collection and dissemination
- Academic advising for undecided students
- Developing strategic plan for graduate education
- Thesis and dissertation processing
- Coordination with graduate admissions
- International student programming
- Marketing of “graduate education”
- Serving as the liaison with legal affairs
- Serving as the liaison with legislatures and boards
- Developing alumni relations (support)
- Fundraising (support)
- Student financial resource development and administration