

## Annual Report of the Graduate School 2014-2015

### **Examples of the Graduate School's Advancement of the University's Strategic Plan**

#### *1. Enhance the success of our students through educational innovation*

Thesis and Dissertation Support Services: TDSS offered writing workshops (30) and Dissertation Institutes (2) that were attended by approximately 650 students. The director also offered 16 custom workshops in graduate courses or colloquia at the request of faculty. The office launched two new online support programs, the Dissertation Completion Community—providing scholarly writing instruction, peer interaction, and accountability for writing—and the Summer Thesis and Dissertation Writing Accountability group—encouraging students to continue to make progress on their projects during the summer.

Preparing Future Leaders: PFL offered 101 events with a total attendance of 2,131, including 1,530 graduate students, 588 postdoctoral scholars, and 13 other participants. Nineteen graduate students completed the Preparing the Professoriate program, and 60 students earned the Certificate of Accomplishment in Teaching. Nine participants completed the Mentoring and Teaching Practicum, and 11 completed the STEM and Writing Annual Partnership Program (SWAP). The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs sponsored 17 events attended by 194 individual postdoctoral scholars and a total of 311 attendees. Sixty-eight attended more than one OPA event.

Recruitment: The Graduate School managed recruitment awards for University Graduate Fellowships (113 appointed), for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary fellowships and traineeships, and for award programs—395 students in 26 fellowship/grant programs. We also established a partnership with the Gates Millennium Scholars Program and the Meyerhoff Scholars Programs, which funded visitation programs for students from many other universities.

Dissertation Completion Grant: This grant is awarded to doctoral students doing promising research but having difficulties finishing their dissertations. Of the 15 grantees this year, 8 have been graduated and 3 more have received unconditional passes on their defenses. Of the remaining 3, 2 have scheduled defenses 1 is expected to defend soon.

External Reviews of Graduate Programs: The Graduate School managed the undergraduate and graduate external reviews of Food Science; Biological and Agricultural Engineering; Public Administration; Physics; Plant Biology; English; and Marine, Earth, and Atmospheric Sciences.

Graduate Student Research Symposium: The Graduate School planned and managed the 10<sup>th</sup> annual symposium, which featured 208 posters from 64 graduate programs, the most ever for the event.

#### *4. Enhance organizational excellence by creating a culture of constant improvement*

##### Improvements in Graduate School Processes:

- The NextGen Graduate Appointment System is an online process that streamlines the graduate assistantship selection and appointment process, replacing a slow and costly paper-based procedure that required review of at least five people for every appointment. NextGen will make the process more efficient and more convenient for all departments, colleges, institutes and centers on campus.
- Updates to the Graduate Faculty online admissions application review substantially improved the system, receiving much positive feedback from departments.
- The transition of the Graduate School's application process from ApplyYourself to a new NextGen system will allow for more automation and real-time updates and increase speed from initial application to posting of decision for student.

- A new version of the Course Inventory Management system has automated the course approval process.

Program Development: The Graduate School assisted faculty and departments with the planning of new graduate and certificate programs and revision of existing programs prior to submission for approval. It also coordinated responses with the Provost's office to UNC GA on proposed new degree programs for NC State and coordinated responses to the UNC GA Graduate Council on proposed new degree programs at other UNC system universities.

Administrative Board of the Graduate School: The Board handled 23 actions for graduate degree programs and implemented 100 course actions.

#### *5. Enhance local and global engagement through focused strategic partnerships*

Agreements with other universities: The Graduate School worked with the Office of International Services on developing academic partnerships, implementing new memoranda of agreement with Jiangan University, Zhejiang Sci-Tech University, Tsing Hua University, and Nanjing University of Science and Technology. The dual degree between the University of Surrey and Master of International Studies was renewed.

#### **Major initiatives and/or changes to programs or activities**

Improving Mentoring of Graduate Students: To advance this initiative in the university's FY 2015-FY 2017 Implementation Plan, the Graduate School:

- Created a digital tool to collect data on individual faculty mentors as a baseline to track effectiveness in mentoring over time and also to identify especially effective mentors and units for determining best practices and to identify ineffective mentors and units to target for improvement

- Began to raise awareness about effective mentoring by sponsoring various workshops on the topic
- Established a speaker series to bring in high-profile mentoring experts twice a year in order to heighten the focus of graduate faculty on mentoring
- Planned and funded an annual mentoring award and event to celebrate excellence in mentoring
- Took initial steps in instituting a requirement for periodic review of graduate faculty for maintaining graduate faculty status
- Developed materials that can be distributed to faculty and students concerning best practices and expectations for advisors and advisees

Increasing Fellowships: To enhance recruiting of the very best doctoral applicants and to reduce time to degree and increase doctoral completion rates, the Graduate School has promoted graduate fellowships by:

- Hiring a full-time development officer for the Graduate School who would coordinate his efforts with University Development
- Hiring a director of marketing and communication to better enable the Graduate School to communicate the critical importance of graduate education and of support for graduate students
- Producing a white paper on graduate fellowships that explains their value, particularly in STEM programs, and presents a proposal for funding fellowships

SACS Reaccreditation: The Graduate School played a major role in response to SACS monitoring of outcomes assessment of academic programs: working with DGPs to improve assessment reports, helping to write a new policy, drafting the SOP and flow chart for

implementing the new policy, creating workshop materials for and providing training in writing and evaluating reports, working with various parties in bringing reports up to basic standards, and drafting the university summary report for the provost.

### **Diversity: Initiatives and Progress**

#### Current Grants:

- Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity, NIH (\$5.8 million), through 2017.
- Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) in Molecular Biotechnology, U.S. Department of Education (\$704,385), August 2014-August 2017

#### Grants Proposed and Pending:

- GAANN in Molecular Biotechnology, DOE (\$845,262)
- GAANN in Nuclear Science and Engineering, DOE (\$845,262)
- GAANN in Nanoscale Electronic and Energy Materials, DOE (\$845,262)
- GAANN in Scientific Computation, DOE (\$845,262)

### **Administration: Changes and Achievements**

Changes: During the past year, the Graduate School lost seven employees: Becky Rufty, senior associate dean; Dan Willits, assistant dean; Rick Liston, assistant dean; Meghan Wilson, human resources coordinator; Karen Alarie, coordinator for Administrative Board of the Graduate School; Erica Cutchins, electronic thesis and dissertation editor and graduate coordinator; and Barbi Honeycutt, director of graduate teaching programs. New hires include: Ashley Chilton, accounting; Natalie Hampton, director of communication and marketing; Melissa Nosbisch, coordinator for Administrative Board of the Graduate School; Sharlene O'Neil, executive assistant to the dean; Lauren Palermo, residency officer; Steve Couch, development officer; and Peter Harries, senior associate dean.

### Achievements:

- Dean Maureen Grasso gave presentations at the Second International Conference on Developments in Doctoral Education and Training in Oxford, UK; Council of Graduate Schools Technical Workshop in Portland, OR; the Georgia Council of Graduate Schools in Dahlenega, GA; and a Council of Graduate Schools Webinar. She also served on boards of directors of the Council of Graduate Schools and Graduate Record Examination.
- Assistant Dean David Shafer served as president of the NC State Chapter of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, chair of NC State Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship Selections Committee, reviewer to select students to receive Study Abroad Scholarships and for admissions into the NC State University Honors Program, and NSF Proposal Reviewer–Research Traineeship Program.
- Associate Dean Mike Carter gave a presentation at the Second International Conference on Developments in Doctoral Education and Training in Oxford, UK, published 2 articles and had one accepted for publication. He completed a \$3.5 million NSF project as co-PI.
- Assistant Dean George Hodge was a discussion session facilitator for a session at the Conference of the Council of Southern Graduate Schools, presented a paper at the American Flock Association meeting, and was a participant in the Student Success Summit at NC State.

### **Concerns for the Future**

- The recent directive from UNC General Administration to clean up vacant positions within a limited period is particularly challenging for the Graduate School because so many positions are now open. The Graduate School has lost at least seven employees over the last year, including some key positions such as senior associate dean, two assistant deans, and a human resources specialist. And other vacancies exist from previous years. The dean has been hiring

as quickly as she is able, but she has had to prioritize positions to be filled, including two new positions provided by the provost. It is important that the dean be given sufficient time to act strategically to fill all positions.

- With so many new employees in the Graduate School, another challenge is to train them all.
- The Graduate School is working to upgrade its website to comply with the new university branding. A special challenge is to make the website fully accessible to mobile devices.
- New construction of the privately owned non-wovens building adjacent to the textiles complex is going to require the elimination of a large parking lot to be replaced by a private parking garage. The loss of this parking lot affects the Graduate School because it will dramatically reduce the amount of parking in proximity to it, requiring employees to compete for a reduced number of spaces some distance away.