

Annual Report of the Graduate School 2015-2016

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 16 workshops serving 224 students who came to at least 1 event and had an overall participation rate of 307. TDSS also offers 9 online, on-demand workshops that were viewed over 2,300 times. In addition to workshops, we also held two Dissertation Institutes (“boot camps”) with 22 participants each.

Professional Development: The Professional Development Initiative offered 52 events in the Professional Development Series, Fundamentals in Teaching, Preparing the Professoriate, and Responsible Conduct of Research. The events collectively reached 371 attendees who came to at least 1 event, and had an overall participation rate of 815.

Science Communication: The Graduate School organized and sponsored the first annual 3-Minute Thesis® competition in which students honed their skills in describing their research to an intelligent audience in a short time with only one static slide. In addition, we helped to sponsor and presented the Triangle ComSciCon workshop, a daylong event aimed at helping students and postdocs communicate their research effectively.

Office of Postdoctoral Affairs: OPA offered 22 workshops serving 194 postdocs who came to at least 1 event, and had an overall participation rate of 311. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs is very proud that every member of the NCSU PostDoc Association leadership team received a job offer, 4 tenure track assistant professorships and 1 industry scientist placement.

Recruitment: The Graduate School managed interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary fellowship, traineeship, and award programs (~\$6 million; 394 fellows, 6 RA's; 25 programs in 2015-16).

We also partnered with graduate programs to fund department-level recruiting initiatives through

competitive recruiting proposals. For 2016-17, 38 proposals were submitted, 21 of which included campus visits, with a yield of 70%. Other recruiting funding went to travel to conferences, travel to present papers at HBCUs, development of recruiting materials, etc.

Dissertation Completion Grant: This grant is awarded to doctoral students doing promising research but having difficulties finishing their dissertations. Of the 8 students in the fall cohort, 5 have graduated, 2 have passed defenses unconditionally, and 1 has a defense scheduled.

External Reviews of Academic Programs: The Graduate School managed the undergraduate and graduate external reviews of Materials Sciences and Engineering, Integrated Manufacturing Systems Engineering, Nutrition, Operations Research and Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management. Post-review meetings were held for Food Science, Biological and Agricultural Engineering, Public Administration, Physics, Materials Sciences and Engineering, Integrated Manufacturing Systems Engineering, and Nutrition. The external review process is among the most effective means the Graduate School has to improve graduate programs.

Graduate Student Research Symposium: The Graduate School planned and managed the 11th annual symposium, which featured 192 posters from 67 graduate programs in all 10 colleges. Over the 11 symposiums, 1,826 posters have been presented.

Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning: NC State University joined this network of 46 universities whose goal is to help institutional partners improve teaching skills and increase diversity among future STEM faculty.

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

Improvements in Graduate School Processes:

- The Graduate School held a 1.5-day off-campus retreat to promote organizational excellence; this retreat, the first in a series of formal and informal events, focused on improving

communication within and among Graduate School units and enhancing effectiveness and efficiency.

- The process of awarding provost fellowships was altered this year to allow departments to make offers earlier, thus attracting more competitive students.
- The Graduate School started a monthly brown bag lunch for DGPs and Graduate Services Coordinators to foster better communication and the sharing of constructive ideas.
- We are automating and streamlining the withdrawal process so that only those students with mental health or medical issues are routed to the counseling center/student health.
- We have revised the entire Graduate Handbook so that it is clearer and more internally consistent and aligns with current practices.
- The new Graduate School website was launched in accordance with university branding and conventions.
- We continue to develop the Course Inventory Management program to improve the course action workflow and to revise the university routing forms for all program actions
- In June 2016, The Graduate School rolled out its NextGen Graduate Appointment System, a completely paperless hiring process that allows graduate faculty or designated staff to electronically initiate transactions on behalf of their students.

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

Administrative Board of the Graduate School: The Board reviewed 32 actions for graduate degree programs and implemented 481 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 to develop academic partnerships, implementing new memoranda of agreement with Istanbul Technical University, Nanjing Normal University, and the Université Jean Moret.

Major initiative

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

- Supported a new program, Dissertation Mentoring Fellows, with the Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity. Its goal for the eight faculty fellows for 2015-16 is to increase the diversity of doctoral students who choose and successfully undertake an academic career.
- Invited Lucy Johnston (University of Canterbury, New Zealand), internationally known expert on mentoring graduate students, to visit campus November 16-20, 2015. She gave three workshops to various audiences, students, faculty, and directors of graduate education.
- Presented four Faculty Mentoring Awards to highlight the importance of mentoring graduate students and to inspire others to strive to attain the qualities of mentors. Those honored were Lee-Ann Jaykus, Melissa Gail Jones, James Bartlett, and Alan Tonelli.
- Wrote a proposal to institute a requirement for periodic review of graduate faculty for maintaining graduate faculty status.

Diversity: Initiatives and Progress

- Partnered with faculty to write proposals for funding to recruit and retain students from underrepresented groups: \$5.5 million proposal submitted to National Institutes of Health for continued funding for the Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity.

- Hosted a special “Scholars Visitation Day” February 28-March 1 targeting students associated with the Meyerhoff Scholars Program, Gates Millennium Scholars Program, and McNair Scholars Program.
- Held a Dean’s Coffee for American Indian graduate students to assist them in networking and community building.
- Provided funding to support college-level initiatives to recruit underrepresented doctoral applicants, including women, by paying for their campus visits.
- Held “Visit NC State” program targeting potential graduate students from underrepresented groups, attracting 42 students representing 30 institutions from 17 states.
- Participated in approximately 25 recruiting fairs, primarily for increasing diversity in STEM.
- Strengthened or established partnerships with the University of Puerto Rico (Cayey, Mayaguez, and Rio Piedras campuses) and the University of Turabo to enhance efforts to recruit Hispanic students.

Fundraising: Private Fundraising Successes

During fiscal year 2015-2016, \$18,108 was contributed to the Graduate School from 68 households, 29 of which are located in North Carolina. During this time, we implemented renewed acknowledgement and stewardship plans and reestablished connections with all major donors to existing endowed funds administered by the Graduate School, including the founding Advisory Board chair and the most recent chair.

Plans are under development to reconfigure the former Advisory Board as a new Campaign Committee for the Graduate School, in alignment with the upcoming University-wide campaign. In addition, emeritus Dean Robert Sowell was recruited to serve as initial chair of Graduate School Campaign Committee and a prospective nominating chair has been identified.

Administration: Changes and Achievements

Changes: New hires during this academic year are Laura Demarse, Director of Postdoctoral Affairs; Nicole Ditillo, Postdoctoral Affairs Assistant; Annie Erwin, Graduate Student Support Plan and Appointments Coordinator; Claire Robb, Electronic Thesis Reviewer and Graduation Coordinator; and Mike Walker, Assistant Dean for Finance and Operations.

Selected Achievements:

- Dean Maureen Grasso gave presentations at the Council of Graduate Schools Workshop on Holistic Review of Graduate Admissions, Washington, D.C.; the Annual Meeting of the Council of Graduate Schools, Seattle, WA; the National Summit on Developing a STEM Workforce Strategy; the University of New Mexico 9th Annual Mentoring Conference, Albuquerque, NM; the University of Maryland Forum: Preparing Doctoral Students for Multiple Career Paths, College Park, Maryland; and the University of Mississippi Faculty Development Workshop, Oxford MI. She also served as President of the NC Council of Graduate Schools.
- Senior Associate Dean Peter Harries was elected to the Executive Board of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools and chaired the Grants in Aid of Research Committee of Sigma Xi. He published 3 papers. In addition, he co-chaired a session, presented research, and was a co-author of an abstract for the Geological Society of America Annual Meeting, Baltimore.
- Assistant Dean David Shafer gave presentations at Career Week, Saint Augustine's College, and at the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools Meeting, Charlotte, NC. He also served as a panelist for the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program and as facilitator of a discussion session at the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools.

- Associate Dean Mike Carter gave a pre-convention workshop at the Annual Meeting of the Council of Graduate School in Seattle, WA and presented a paper at the 8th Annual Mentoring Conference in Albuquerque, NM. He published 2 articles and had one accepted.
- Assistant Dean Mike Walker co-chaired the project to upgrade the university's Financial Wolf Reporting System and he was the sole campus representative on UNC GA's Internal Controls Assessment Committee.
- Assistant Dean for Student Administrative and Academic Affairs Lian Lynch is active in the Association for Graduate Enrollment Management, having presented a paper at the annual conference, served on the Research Committee, and treasurer of the Southeast chapter.

Concerns for the Future and Recommendations

- Graduate fellowships. Our most important concern is that increasing the number of graduate fellowships may lose its position as a high priority in the comprehensive campaign. For example, the Campaign Volunteer Leadership Handbook contained no mention of graduate fellowships, despite the support of university leaders, who recognize that graduate fellowships are critical in making NC State competitive for top applicants.

Recommendation: The leadership team for the campaign should stress the importance of multiyear, full-ride graduate fellowships across the university, giving fellowships a prominent place in all campaign materials and focusing on them when cultivating donors.

- Response to Fair Labor Standards Act. The new required minimum wage for research postdocs has the potential for financial problems for researchers and departments. Currently 233 postdocs are paid below the \$47,476 threshold, which means that they must fill out time sheets and are subject to 1.5 overtime, likely generating confusion and higher costs for PIs and potential for lawsuits for underpayment.

Recommendation: Perhaps the best response to FSLA is to hire all new research postdocs at at least the minimum salary and phase out postdocs who are below. This will probably reduce the overall number of postdocs and require financial support by the university until research grants can compensate for the added costs.

- Assistantship stipends. When it was first implemented, the minimum \$8,000 stipend for an assistantship offered graduate students a modest living wage, but now it's embarrassing.

Recommendation: The university should follow the recommendation of the GSSP task force to raise the minimum stipend.

- Effects of HB2. The fallout from HB2 continues to affect the university and the Graduate School. We lost a key hire and had to repeat a search for that position. We have heard of students who have turned down offers for admission, and there may be similar consequences with hiring faculty. We cannot know the full impact because potential students and faculty may simply choose not to apply.