

Annual Report of the Graduate School 2017-2018

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 30 workshops serving 251 participants.

In addition to workshops, we held two Thesis and Dissertation Institutes (“boot camps”) with 24 participants in December and 25 in May. Online and in-person writing retreats served 80 participants. The Graduate School organized and sponsored the third annual 3-Minute Thesis® competition with 41 preliminary round candidates. Preliminary round competitors were required to attend science communication workshops designed and facilitated by Graduate School staff.

The finals were attended by over 200 people.

Private Sector Professional Development: The Graduate School launched Accelerate to Industry (A2i™) as a trademarked program targeting students and postdocs who are interested in working in industry. Thus far the program has served 92 graduate students, postdocs, and alumni. A2i events include the signature Immersion Week, site visits, training in job search strategies, and industry case studies. It has connected participants with more than 100 industry professionals representing over 30 companies and raised over \$20,000 in sponsorship funds from industry partners. A2i fundraising efforts have brought in over \$28,000 total to date. The program is currently expanding to partner institutions including the Universities of Florida, Arkansas, Georgia, Emory, and Clemson.

Teaching and Communication Programs: The new Teaching and Communication Certificate was formally launched in Fall 2017 with over 100 participants enrolling in the first semester it was offered. Seven customized versions of the certificate have been established with campus

partners to meet the specific needs of their students. Eight two-part workshops and two development series were offered each semester, along with partnership events (workshops, panels, customized outreach). The full-day New TA Workshop served over 400 participants. A half-day communications workshop cohosted with TDSS and the Office of Faculty Development served an additional 31 faculty, postdoc, and student participants. Two academic job readiness programs, Preparing the Professoriate and Academic Packways, served almost 60 participants.

Office of Postdoctoral Affairs: OPA and a postdoc-led planning committee hosted the 7th annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium with 122 attendees and 63 poster presenters from six institutions/organizations. In partnership with NCSU Libraries, OPA launched a new initiative, Postdoc Pop Talks, to help postdocs pitch their research to a broad audience. Seven postdocs presented their work in a visually immersive way. Twenty-three postdocs were awarded with competitive funding to promote their participation in travel or professional development opportunities.

Recruitment: The Graduate School managed interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary fellowships, traineeships, and award programs (~\$6.2 million). A total of 218 top applicants were recruited using fellowships funded by the Office of the Provost and administered by the Graduate School. We also partnered with graduate programs to fund 40 department-level recruiting initiatives through competitive recruiting proposals. Six Innovation Recruiting Grants were awarded to programs to promote a comprehensive overhaul of recruiting processes to increase the quality of students applying and enrolling at NC State.

External Reviews of Academic Programs: We managed undergraduate and graduate external reviews of Forestry and Environmental Resources, Animal Science, Genetics, Computer Science, Entomology, Horticultural Science, and Economics. There were post-review meetings for Youth,

Family, and Community Sciences; History/Public History; Mathematics; Biomathematics; Forestry and Environmental Resources; Animal Science; Genetics; and Computer Science.

Graduate Student Research Symposium: The Graduate School planned and managed the 13th annual symposium, which featured 207 posters from 70 graduate programs in all 10 colleges.

Brown-Bag Lunches for Fellows: The Graduate School developed a brown-bag lunch series for NSF Graduate Research Fellows, Provost's Fellows, and the Southern Regional Education Board Doctoral Scholars (SREB), designed to build community among fellows and scholars from diverse disciplines.

Outstanding Graduate Faculty Mentor Awards: The awards for this year were in two areas, Social Science, Business, and Education and Biological and Life Sciences. To date, eight graduate faculty have been selected for awards.

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

Improvements in Graduate School Processes:

- In response to one of the recommendations from University Communications, the Graduate School took actions to improve communication with Graduate Services Coordinators by creating a website just for them and instituting regular meeting times for GSCs to share problems and learn from each other.
- The Graduate School drafted a policy for eliminating the inefficient two-tier system of associate and full Graduate Faculty. All tenured and tenure-track faculty now have a unified Graduate Faculty status, which more accurately reflects the training of graduate students inherit in the expectations of their positions. Newly hired faculty are granted this status upon the departmental approval of membership in the faculty.

- Under new leadership, the Graduate School initiated a process for addressing the salary inequities that had grown over previous years and had created concerns for some employees. This included increasing the salaries of multiple employees who were below the Market Minimum.
- We created a postdoc grievance policy so that postdocs would have a clear procedure for complaints.
- The Graduate School investigated and formally proposed the university's purchase of TurnItIn, a learning and teaching tool designed to assist students to better understand plagiarism. It is expected to generate efficiencies for faculty, using a streamlined process for identifying plagiarism so that they can address the issue with students. We are currently in the process of formalizing the procurement of the system for one year (FY 2019).
- The Graduate School has significantly upgraded its reporting system for graduate student statistics. The new SAS Visual Analytics provides a wealth of data DGPs can use to track applications, enrollment, and their students' progress toward graduation.

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 and SACSCOC 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 16 actions for graduate degree programs and approved 150 course actions.

Communicating with Audiences Inside and Outside the University: The Graduate School sent a monthly e-newsletter to about 9,000 graduate students to keep them informed, with an open rate of 65-70 percent and a click rate of 8-12 percent. Also, in an effort to enhance

communications with other campus audiences—faculty, administrators, directors of graduate programs, and graduate services coordinators—the Graduate School worked with University Communications to develop a strategic university communications plan this year. The process included focus groups and surveys of graduate students, faculty, DGPs, and GSCs focusing on their communications needs. The result is a plan that will allow the Graduate School staff to communicate more strategically with our campus constituents to help them better understand our value and how we support graduate student success.

5. Enhance local and global engagement through focused strategic partnerships

Agreements with Other Universities: The Graduate School worked to develop academic partnerships, implementing new memoranda of agreements including with Campbell University (dual Master of Social Work-Law) and 3+x programs in collaboration with the Office of Global Engagement with Huazhong University, Nanjing Normal University, South China Normal University, and Zhejiang University. The latter is focused on Technical Communication, whereas the other 3+x agreements were for Mathematics and Financial Math.

Major initiatives

Preparation for the Launch of GradPath: GradPath is a web and mobile app that allows graduate students to monitor their academic progress and co-curricular professional development activities. GradPath will be rolled out at New Student Orientation in fall 2018. Toward that end, the Graduate School (1) designed and prototyped the app, (2) made the app accessible on various platforms, (3) sought feedback from appropriate campus groups, including students in a Psychology of Human Factors class and students in focus groups, and (4) identified a volunteer department, Horticultural Science, to pilot it. Next steps include a marketing plan aimed at current students.

Launching of Slate: Slate is an application system designed to simplify the student application process and offers features to enhance communication between applicants and program directors. The Graduate School played a major role in designing, testing, and implementing Slate. The system is now taking applications for spring 2019. In order to create a more efficient and user-friendly environment, we loaded all the supplementary application materials from departments and programs in Slate.

Diversity: Initiatives and Progress

- The Graduate School participated in the Meyerhoff Scholars “campus connections fair” at UMBC on November 15, 2017. Meyerhoff Scholars are excellent prospective students who are also from underrepresented groups. For 2018-19, two Meyerhoff Scholars have accepted admission and both will be SREB Doctoral Scholars.
- On a recruiting trip to Puerto Rico, we made presentations to students and interviewed RISE Scholars for our campus visitation program. We also had the opportunity to speak to participants (~75) in the UPR-Rio Piedras RISE, MARC, and LSAMP programs.
- The Graduate School held its “Visit NC State Program,” the majority of attendees were underrepresented minorities. NC State hosted 29 students, representing 25 institutions.
- Thirty-five Diversity Recruiting Fellowships were approved to increase diversity in graduate education at the master’s and doctoral levels. The average award was \$2,000.
- The SREB Doctoral Scholars Program is designed to increase diversity in the professoriate. There are currently nine Scholars, with an additional six to be appointed in 2018-19.
- The Graduate School hosted a series of graduate student “Crosstalks” designed to promote diversity in graduate education and to build a stronger community by giving students the opportunity to network with other graduate students from diverse backgrounds.

Fundraising: Private Fundraising Successes

During fiscal year 2017-2018, \$194,705 were designated to the Graduate School, \$171,000 more than the previous year.

Administration: Changes and Achievements

Changes: Maureen Grasso, former Dean of the Graduate School, decided to return to the faculty and Peter Harries became the Interim Dean. New hires for this academic year are Leigh Peel, Business and Technical App Analyst, and Skyler Bunn, ETD Reviewer. Stephen Couch, Development Officer, is no longer with the Graduate School.

Selected Achievements:

- Interim Dean Peter Harries served on the Executive Board of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools and continued as chair of the Grants in Aid of Research Committee of Sigma Xi. He published a scientific paper, co-authored an abstract for the CSGS Annual Meeting as well as an abstract at the Geological Society of America Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA.
- Assistant Dean David Shafer has given many presentations, including at the Southern Conference Undergraduate Research Forum, the 30th Annual Feeder Scholars Conference, and the GEM Annual Board Meeting and Conference. He is president of the NC State University Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, served as an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program review panelist, and sits on the Southern Regional Education Board Doctoral Scholars Advisory Committee.
- Associate Dean Mike Carter published “Value Arguments in Science Research Articles: Making the Case for the Importance of Research” in *Written Communication* and attended the 2017 57th Annual Meeting of the Council of Graduate Schools in Phoenix, AZ.

- Assistant Dean Laura Demarse attended an NIH Train the Trainer Workshop in Washington, DC, a HERS Leadership Training Institute for Women at Wellesley College in Wellesley, MA, and the 2017 57th Annual Meeting of the Council of Graduate Schools in Phoenix, AZ.
- Assistant Dean Mike Walker continued to represent the university on the Self-Assessment of Internal Controls Committee (UNC GA), assisting in updating this year's self-assessment.
- Assistant Dean Lian Lynch is active in the Association for Graduate Enrollment Management, serving on its Research Committee.

Concerns for the Future

The greatest challenges for us are those that can have a significant impact on graduate education at NC State but that we have little or no control over. Here are two of the more important ones.

- International enrollment. The number of international applications to graduate schools has dropped in the United States, largely as a result of policies and attitudes that make potential international applicants feel unwelcome here. Other countries have taken advantage of this situation to increase international enrollment. Canada, for example, has a plan that offers international students who earn graduate degrees citizenship. International students are critical to many of our STEM programs. Our concern is that applications will decrease along with our overall graduate enrollment and we will not be able to meet our own enrollment targets and those of UNC General Administration.
- Mental health of graduate students. Several studies published recently have shown that graduate students suffer mental health problems at a rate significantly higher than the general population. The Graduate School has partnered with the Counseling Center to provide mental health workshops for Graduate Services Coordinators and Directors of Graduate Studies so that they become more familiar with such problems. We are also planning to address the

issue at the fall 2018 New Student Orientation. However well-intentioned such actions are, we are also concerned about all those students who fall through the cracks and are not receiving attention.