

Graduate School Staff Response to
Plans for Restructuring Graduate Education

Collated comments from staff of the Graduate School
in response to the Committee on Graduate Education's
"Draft Recommendations on the
Oversight and Support of Graduate Education
at the University of Minnesota"

May 22, 2009
FINAL

Contents

Method	1
General Recommendations	
• Location, Structure, and Leadership of Graduate Education	2
Comments on 15 Recommendations by Related Functional Area	
1. Fellowships.....	6
2. Admissions.....	8
3. Student Services	13
4. Diversity and Community of Scholars.....	17
5. Faculty Grants and McKnight Program.....	21
6. Interdisciplinary Initiatives.....	22
7. Postdoctoral Affairs.....	27
8. Staffing Across Functional Areas	28
9. Faculty Development	32
10. Systems and Data Management	33
11. Governance and Policy and Review Councils	35
12. Commencement	40
13. Professional Degrees	41
14. Graduate Education at Coordinate Campuses: Duluth and Rochester.....	42
15. Cost-Pool Analysis.....	45
Comments on Further Recommendations	
16. Reviews of Existing Academic Programs.....	46
17. Communication	49
18. Development.....	50
19. Finance and Personnel.....	52
20. University Press.....	53

Method

Staff of the Graduate School's various functional areas have studied the draft report of the Committee on Graduate Education, "Recommendations on the Oversight and Support of Graduate Education at the University of Minnesota," released for public comment on April 24, 2009. They have gathered their comments and corrections to submit together in this report. Not all comments represent unanimous views of the Graduate School staff.

Each section begins by citing—

1. a recommendation from the report of the Committee on Graduate Education

http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/reports/documents/grad_report042409_000.pdf

2. corresponding response to the report from the Graduate School Executive Committee, submitted May 13, 2009

http://www.grad.umn.edu/faculty-staff/governance/GSEC_response.pdf

3. relevant material from the Provost's plan, "Restructuring the Oversight and Support of Graduate Education to Enhance Excellence," announced Feb. 9, 2009

<http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/documents/GradSchlReorgreport.pdf>

<http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/documents/GradSchlReorgQA.pdf>

<http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/documents/GradSchlReorgmemo.pdf>

The Graduate School staff's response follows, with specific commentary citing language from the previous documents.

Location, Structure, and Leadership of Graduate Education

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 2, par. 2

...The committee decided not to recommend a combined Graduate School and Office of the Vice President for Research.

p. 2, par. 3

The committee is divided on the question of whether the central entity responsible for oversight of graduate education at the University of Minnesota should be an Office of Graduate Education or a Graduate College.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 1, Resolutions 1–3

1. The Graduate School is a free-standing academic unit and should continue as such. Its synergies and efficiencies stem from housing multiple functions within a central Graduate School; these synergies stimulate creativity and innovation.

2. As a free-standing academic unit, the Graduate School has a shared governance apparatus that includes a guiding constitution and an established set of policies. The current governance system is the appropriate venue for debating changes in graduate education and has the necessary capacity for reforms that will enhance efficiency, innovation and excellence. The Graduate School should keep its current constitution, body of policies, and shared governance structure. Structural changes to the Graduate School should occur consistent with provisions of the current constitution.

3. In order to continue to promote excellence in graduate education and research a free-standing Graduate School needs an independent Dean and Vice Provost at its head, empowered with leadership responsibilities. . . .

PROVOST'S PLAN

p. 3, New Structure

The Graduate School will be reconfigured from a free-standing administrative unit to which all graduate programs directly report, to an Office of Graduate Education that parallels the Office of Undergraduate Education. As such, the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School will reside within the Provost's Office, and will be responsible for oversight, coordination, and leadership on issues related to graduate education. Ultimate responsibility and accountability

for the quality of individual graduate programs will rest with collegiate deans and their facilities.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

We strongly endorse a continuing Graduate School as a free-standing academic unit. All colleges have administrative functions, but that doesn't make them administrative units or make administrative homes locations for academic functions. A full governance structure is essential to free-standing colleges in order to ensure faculty and student engagement and deliberations about educational policies and practices. Graduate education is no exception.

SPECIFIC COMMENTARY

1. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 2

The committee is divided on the question of whether the central entity responsible for oversight of graduate education at the University of Minnesota should be an Office of Graduate Education or a Graduate College.

vs.

pp. 13, 14

The committee believes that it is essential to set and evaluate academic policies for graduate education through a student/faculty governance system. . . . Thus, the committee proposes that the Policy and Review Councils be maintained as a centralized review and oversight process.

Graduate School staff response:

The committee states that its members are divided on the question of whether the entity responsible for the oversight of graduate education should be an administrative unit or an academic college, yet it clearly recommends that the P&R Council process and responsibilities—hallmarks of academic colleges—be maintained. Many of the functions the committee recommends be preserved are normally within the purview of academic units, e.g., responsibility for the review and approval of proposals for new and changed academic programs, review and approval authority for graduate-level courses. If the committee believes it is essential to set and evaluate academic policies for graduate education through a streamlined student/faculty governance system (p. 13) with responsibility for academic matters (pp. 13-14), it seems to be making the case for a central Graduate School/College that is in fact an academic unit with a system of shared governance. Under the alternative Office for Graduate Education model, how would it be decided which faculty and graduate students would be eligible to participate in the P&R Council process? Who would track this information and create the data systems that would facilitate their participation?

2. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 3, General Recommendations, Central Oversight

The Graduate College/Office should administer the following services and programs: graduate fellowships; admissions; student services, including conflict resolution, and student records; communications/Web presence; governance: policy and review councils, Council of Graduate Students (COGS); temporary graduate faculty appointments; career services; postdoctoral services; new Director of Graduate Studies orientation; interdisciplinary graduate programs and initiatives; commencement for programs overseen by the Graduate College/Office.

Graduate School staff response:

We strongly support the continued location of many central offices and functions within an ongoing Graduate School. While the committee report identified many alternate locations for Graduate School offices and functions, little or no evidence was provided of problems sufficient to warrant relocation, and few concrete benefits of relocation were identified. Nominal alignment rather than improvements, innovations, or demonstrated excellence was the primary rationale for redistributing Graduate School functions. Underlying efficiencies that require deeper knowledge of Graduate School functions could not surface in the timeframe of the committee's study.

3. Committee on Graduate Education report

The Provost's plan described the current "Administration" in **Appendix A** as "Dean, Associate Dean (3), Executive Office & Admin Specialist (1 + ½ + 1/3), Director of Communications, Student Office Support (student)," and indicated in **Appendix C** that Administration would be provided in the Provost's Office, with substantial downsizing. The Committee on Graduate Education did not directly address the topic of administration or leadership.

Graduate School staff response:

Nowhere in the draft report of the Committee on Graduate Education is leadership mentioned directly as a critical asset in advancing the quality of graduate education or ensuring efficiency.

The current leadership of the Graduate School is more complex than identified in the Provost's plan. It includes the dean, four part-time associate deans who are also active faculty members (including one at Duluth), eight directors of ten functional groups (for admissions, diversity, fellowships/faculty grants, finance and personnel, governance/Office of Interdisciplinary Initiatives, postdoctoral affairs, student services, and systems and data management), and a recently added communications director. Administrative support staff have responsibility for more than one unit across the Graduate School, generally, and provide backup assistance for one another.

The leadership group meets regularly and confers daily to brief colleagues on pressing issues, coordinate and share responsibilities, and engage in collaborative problem solving. Two attributes of this group as a whole are its cross-administrative expertise and its enterprise expertise.

Nearly every recommendation in the report about innovations that could lead to future action by reorganized functions describes an existing initiative that will founder without bold central leadership, sufficient resources for multiyear implementation, cross-administrative expertise, and solid team work present in the existing Graduate School. There is also no guarantee that these collaborative leadership practices are part of the administrative units where these functions are slated to be relocated. Some of the most significant examples of ongoing innovation, overlooked or unexamined by the committee, include paper-to-digital conversion initiatives; strategic planning to build capacity in the programs, departments, and colleges for academic excellence; and reforms designed to reduce time to the Ph.D. degree and increase completion rates. Many of these initiatives depend on the kind of central leadership that is strongly connected to national foundations and projects intended to improve graduate education and cannot be advanced purely through local knowledge.

Enterprise expertise is also an important attribute for leadership in graduate education at the University of Minnesota. Major innovations in the Graduate School benefit not just graduate education but all the University's systems and processes because of the unit's pioneering work in identifying and developing kinds of innovation that can be applied elsewhere. An example is the adoption of software to manage the Graduate School's many competitions, languishing in paper processes until last year. Such advancements have the potential for dissemination across the larger University, which manages countless competitions yearly without the advantages of appropriate technology that would speed processes. Strong, effective organizations like the Graduate School, with solid functional relationships and senior expertise, are vital sources of innovation for the larger University. There is no substitute for deep expertise.

A governance system with responsibility for graduate education requires a leader with expertise in graduate education and for whom it is a central focus, who will represent the University of Minnesota in national venues such as the AAU, Council of Graduate Schools, foundations devoted to higher education reform, and legislative venues, who has the capacity to engage others in a shared vision and goals across the University of Minnesota. The present vice provost and dean of the Graduate School was selected competitively in a national search that presumed substantial leadership experience in graduate education. Such a high bar likely attracts candidates who are familiar with multiple graduate education systems and possess comparative knowledge that includes seasoned judgment about the strengths and weaknesses of alternative systems (for admissions, distribution of block grants, and metrics, as just three examples). The likely shift to an internal search for a vice provost and dean of graduate education who heads an office of graduate education directly under the provost, with substantially reduced responsibilities, suggests a move from leadership to management.

1. Fellowships

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 4, Recommendation 1

Central Services

University-wide faculty committees are especially important in the award of graduate fellowships and block grants. A faculty committee should be charged with reviewing the current allocation processes for these awards, with a view to maintaining merit criteria while making the processes more efficient, transparent, and accountable, and recommending how they should be administered. This committee should be convened at the start of Fall Semester 2009 and asked to submit its recommendations in time for the new allocation processes to take effect during the 2009–10 academic year, for awards made for 2010–11.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 3, Recommendation 1

See Resolutions 5, 8, and 9

Resolution 8. The Graduate School Executive Committee strongly supports the principle of all-University, merit-based funding programs administered by a free-standing Graduate School, based on competitive, peer review processes across all disciplines of the University.

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: Fellowships would be reorganized from the Graduate School to the Provost's Office and local, i.e. other colleges.

Q&A: *What happens to graduate fellowships that are currently administered by the Graduate School?* Funding for graduate students will increase as a result of cost-savings from this reorganization plan. Fellowships and block grants will be allocated by the Provost to the colleges as part of the compact process.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

We support the Committee on Graduate Education's endorsement of University-wide faculty committees as important in the award of graduate fellowships and block grants.

SPECIFIC COMMENTARY

1. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 4, Central Services, No. 1

A faculty committee should be charged with reviewing the current allocation processes for these awards, with a view to maintaining merit criteria while making the processes more efficient, transparent, and accountable, and recommending how they should be administered. This committee should be convened at the start of Fall Semester 2009 and asked to submit its recommendations in time for the new allocation processes to take effect during the 2009–10 academic year, for awards made for 2010–11.

pp. 9-10, No. 1, Fellowships, Block Grants, and Other Student Financial Support: The committee recommends that a new committee be formed specifically to examine fellowships, block grants, and other forms of student support...[and] charged with producing a report containing recommendations by Nov. 1, 2009.

Graduate School staff response:

If implemented, the recommendation of the Committee on Graduate Education should be undertaken by the existing 16-member all-University faculty fellowship committee, working on a tight timeline so that any changes are reported out by early August, and led by co-chairs Professors Kathy Klink (geography) and Bob Lysak (physics). Right now, all planning for the GSF and DDF award competitions begins in mid- to late September, or as soon as fall enrollment stats are available, with notification to all DGSs by late October or early November. Any changes that such a committee might recommend could potentially trigger substantial revision in the electronic online nomination system, which would require that systems staff be available in a compressed time period in late summer or early fall for changes to be made in timely fashion. Moreover, the information and instructions for all fellowships for currently-enrolled students supported by endowment funds are revised and put online by early August, with information and instructions to programs and students by the first week of September, for a Dec. 1 application deadline. NOTE: With respect to efficiency, the planned online system to permit faculty to review fellowship nominations electronically was put on hold in February pending the outcome of the Crouch committee's recommendations. This system would be implemented with WorkFlowGen, the same as that used for the Grant-in-Aid program. (Phase 2 revisions for the GIA system, earlier scheduled for completion in spring 2009, have also been put on hold, awaiting final decision on the GIA program's administrative home.)

2. Admissions

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 4, Recommendation 2

Central Services

Work should begin as soon as possible on development of a Web-based graduate admissions system using program-specific “smart forms” that eliminate any duplication or unnecessary information in the admissions process and facilitates other process improvements. The key feature of the system would be a greater focus on the needs of individual graduate programs. Models for such a system are in place at both the Pennsylvania State University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and these should be examined carefully before designing a system for the University of Minnesota. Ideally, ApplyYourself would be amended to facilitate such information. However, if ApplyYourself cannot be efficiently and cost-effectively updated, other systems should be considered when the University’s contract with the ApplyYourself vendor expires in 2012.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 4, Recommendation 2

There is much evidence that ApplyYourself has been successful. Development of the improvements the Committee on Graduate Education is seeking should be an administrative decision, developed in consultation with graduate programs and based on their needs. Final decisions about investments in admissions systems needs to be based on a holistic assessment of the costs and benefits of comparative systems, rather than on concerns about a single issue.

PROVOST’S PLAN

Appendix C: Admissions would be decentralized to local sites (i.e. colleges) with some assistance from Provost’s Office.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

We enthusiastically support the committee's recommendation to maintain central support for graduate admissions—specifically for the integrated functions of transcript/credential evaluation, online admissions systems, and international student I-20 production. As stated in previous reviews of the Graduate School's operations, graduate admissions provide the greatest efficiency of scale when academic programs can share resources through a central operation. A single graduate admissions office delivers University of Minnesota excellence, quality control, and brand consistency. Work has already begun to implement the recommendations of the committee to further customize the online admissions system to better meet individual program's needs.

SPECIFIC COMMENTARY

1. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 10, Admissions/Transcripts/I-20s, par. 5

The authenticity of transcripts from international institutions is currently certified by experienced staff in the Graduate School. Some peer institutions (e.g., Ohio State) out-source this activity to consultants. Transcript certification is an example of an activity that must be handled at a central level; colleges are not in a good position to take on this work. It might be possible, however, for the University of Minnesota to out-source some of this activity, but this suggestion would require an evaluation at a level that is too specific for the present committee.

Graduate School staff response:

According to the director of the office of graduate and professional admissions at Ohio State, that office does *not* outsource the authentication and evaluation of international transcripts. Rather, this work is done entirely within the admissions office, which is an established best practice in the field.

2. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 10, Admissions/Transcripts/I-20s, par. 1

Everyone agrees that an on-line application system is important, but faculty and staff in some programs are frustrated by elements of duplication and redundancy that exist in the off-the-shelf version of the current system.

Graduate School staff response:

Like other University enterprise systems such as PeopleSoft, ImageNow, UMCAL, and Royall (used for undergraduate admissions), ApplyYourself does have standard, or off-the-shelf, features. Some of these features may be perceived as restrictive by some users. However, using technical enhancements as they became available and in response to U of M graduate program faculty and staff

recommendations and feedback, significant customization has already been built within the University's version of ApplyYourself over several years of continuous improvement, including:

- online letters of recommendation
- program-specific queries and periodic reports
- status update e-mails and online decision notification
- online "appraisal forms" used for program admissions decisions
- a financial smart form designed to streamline the international student I-20 visa process
- shared program accounts to facilitate a paperless review process

Perhaps most significant was the fall 2008 modification of the AY system to incorporate all Graduate School programs on the Duluth and Rochester campuses. This allowed for significant cost-avoidance and elimination of redundant processing.

3. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 10, Admissions/Transcripts/I-20s, par. 1

It is possible to purchase program-specific application modules from ApplyYourself (Stanford University, for example, has done this), but two applications would then still be required, one for the Graduate School and one for the program.

Graduate School staff response:

The Stanford system does not require two separate applications, but rather a single online application with program-specific supplements. With this model, the applicant uses only one online application, and both the graduate admissions office and the program use the same system.

4. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 10, Admissions/Transcripts/I-20s, par. 2

Work should begin as soon as possible on development of a Web-based graduate admissions system using program-specific "smart forms" that eliminate any duplication or unnecessary information in the admissions process and facilitates other process improvements. The key feature of the system would be a greater focus on the needs of individual graduate programs. Models for such a system are in place at both the Pennsylvania State University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and these should be examined carefully before designing a system for the University of Minnesota. Ideally, ApplyYourself would be amended to facilitate such information. However, if ApplyYourself cannot be efficiently and cost-effectively updated, other systems should be considered when the University's contract with the ApplyYourself vendor expires in 2012.

Graduate School staff response:

ApplyYourself can upgrade the online application to incorporate the smart-form technology and address issues of redundant data entry mentioned above.

5. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 21, Services to be Moved/Combined with Other Central Offices to Achieve Savings or Avoid Duplication

2. Diversity/DOVE

The committee recommends that the diversity functions under the auspices of the Graduate School Diversity Office should be moved to the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED). . . . Addition of many of the Graduate School Diversity Office programs and initiatives such as recruitment and retention can be well-coordinated within this office.

Graduate School staff response:

The campuswide three-year diversity initiative, “Reexamining Graduate and Professional Admissions Practices,” illustrates the critical importance of keeping the Graduate School Diversity Office within the central operations unit for graduate education.

Beginning in academic year 2007-08, the vice provost and dean of the Graduate School partnered with the vice president and vice provost for equity and diversity to combine the resources of their offices in support of this effort. Despite the involvement of the Office of Equity and Diversity, the project would not have moved forward without the Graduate School Diversity Office’s location within the unit responsible for graduate admissions and the GSDO’s years of experience and intimate knowledge of graduate academic programs and their needs.

The project has the following goals/expected outcomes: (1) recruit absolutely the most talented students with high aptitude in their chosen fields, (2) admit and retain a widely diverse student body, and (3) achieve an outstanding fit between admitted students and their chosen academic program. Key to this initiative is development of program-specific application components focused on individual program needs. Six to ten programs were sought for this pilot project, but 20 programs volunteered and participated.

- Year One: Activities were devoted to educating graduate programs about current practices, providing opportunities for critical reflection, and analyzing prevailing admissions practices. The research findings of Professors Nathan Kuncel and Michael Rodriguez about the use of standardized tests, specifically the GRE, and the discussion that followed were informative. The roll-out of the draft of the expanded application during the second workshop generated much helpful feedback that resulted in a more complete application. Barbara Shiels, Kimberly Hewitt Boyd, and Kristin Lockhart provided an instructive and useful discussion of the implications of the various Supreme Court case findings on how universities make decisions about who is admitted to programs. The discussions following each workshop provided an opportunity to share best practices among programs.

A revised graduate application was implemented in fall 2008. Participants have been encouraged to use their program applications to collect data that allow their programs to discern applicants' gifts, well-honed skills, or exceptional talent in relation to their prospective field of study. Questions are based on each program's insights about how these gifts, skills, and talents contribute to student excellence in specific fields.

- Year Two (delayed due to application roll-out in fall 2008 and restructuring announcement in February 2009): The planned focus is best practices and planning for change at the school, departmental, and program level. Since the new application to the Graduate School collects contextual information related to the diversity of applicants, program-level forms now can concentrate on indicators of applicant preparation and potential excellence. Participants will: (1) document existing admissions practices at the department/program level; (2) review data within their college about the relationship between offers of admission and the success of enrolled students in their programs, including underrepresented and marginalized students, and (3) work with faculty and students in the program to identify predictors of success that can be translated into admissions-related data and review criteria.

- Year 3: The outcome of these experiences is expected to be (1) a plan for admission that represents the results of this review, to be presented to students and faculty in the home departments/programs for consideration and implementation, (2) evaluation tools, included in the plan, that will be regularly used to assess progress toward articulated program goals, and (3) preparation of leaders from this admissions process review who will serve as mentors for a second round of the program.

3. Student Services

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 4, Recommendation 3
Central Services

Work should also begin as soon as possible on evaluation of student services processes and development of a University-wide electronic system for initiating and/or revising, approving, and archiving student program plans, examination clearances, and other student records. (The committee understands that the Graduate School had started work in this area but suspended it because of other staffing priorities.) The Graduate College/Office should only be involved in reviewing forms, electronic or otherwise, where there are clear additions to value; primary academic oversight should be the responsibility of the DGS and the faculty.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 4, Recommendation 3

A University-wide electronic system to manage all aspects of student program plans was suspended due to the needs of the EFS system, not at the Graduate School's discretion. The Graduate School has been working toward a system in which primary academic oversight is the responsibility of DGSs (directors of graduate studies) and faculty, as anticipated in the Committee's draft report.

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: Student services would be provided at the local (college) level, with some services in Provost's Office.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

The Graduate School strongly endorses the recommendation to evaluate student services, implement a University-wide electronic system for student processes and records, and assess student and program faculty and staff satisfaction. Assessment must be done using the expertise of the directors of graduate studies and DGS assistants for the 150 programs currently administered in collaboration with the Graduate School.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

1. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 4, Central Services, No. 3

Work should also begin as soon as possible on evaluation of student services processes and development of a University-wide electronic system for initiating and/or revising, approving, and archiving student program plans, examination clearances, and other student records. (The committee understands that the Graduate School had started work in this area but suspended it because of other staffing priorities.) . . .

p. 11, No. 3, Student Services, bullet 2

The institution must review the business processes surrounding student services from admissions through degree clearance and graduation...The Graduate College/Office must then begin immediately to develop an all-University electronic system to implement these processes and modernize student record processing and storage.

Graduate School staff response:

We enthusiastically support the Committee's recommendation to develop a University-wide electronic system. The Graduate School initiated the Graduate School Degree Management (GSDM) project in 2006 to establish such a system. In collaboration with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) and with intensive staff investment, significant progress was made over the course of 2006-07. Feedback from key stakeholders about the simplicity, transparency, and efficacy of the GSDM prototype was extremely positive. The decision to suspend work on GSDM was then made by OIT due to demands on their staffing resources of the enterprise financial system (EFS). The Graduate School and OIT attempted to resume the GSDM project in late fall 2008, but work has again been suspended pending the outcome of the proposed Graduate School reorganization.

The effectiveness of any University-wide electronic system is directly related to involvement at the development, implementation, and maintenance stages of individuals who have extensive, first-hand working knowledge of the intricacies of institutional policies and procedures. It is imperative that content experts

among the Graduate School staff continue to play an active role when the project is resumed.

2. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 4, Central Services, No. 3

The Graduate College/Office should only be involved in reviewing forms...where there are clear additions to value; primary academic oversight should be the responsibility of the DGS and the faculty.

p. 11, No. 3, Student Services, bullet 2

The Graduate College/Office should retain institutional oversight for degree programs meeting agreed-upon institutional rules and standard (e.g. number of credits in the program vs. outside the program).

Graduate School staff response:

The principles expressed by the Committee on Graduate Education—that primary academic oversight is the responsibility of the DGS and faculty, and that management of agreed-upon institutional rules and standards is a valuable service provided by the Graduate School—represent the very foundation of current practice.

3. Committee on Graduate Education report

Omission. Dual-degree students.

Graduate School staff response:

Recommendations did not address any issues surrounding the University's approximately 300 dual-degree graduate students. Difficulties for this growing group include the inability to register simultaneously in multiple colleges within a term (e.g. Law and the Graduate School), to determine the "primary" program for a term, etc. Resolving their issues would constitute a concrete improvement for graduate education.

4. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 4, Local Oversight, bullet 4

Award degrees

p. 6, Recommendation 13

Colleges should have the option—but not be required—to administer terminal (professional) master's and applied doctorate degree programs in-house.

p. 11, No. 3, Student Services, bullet 4

Students in all degrees administered by the Graduate College/Office should be cleared for graduation by the appropriate DGS and the Graduate College/Office

p. 24, No. 3, Award Degrees

Degrees at the University of Minnesota are conferred by the Board of Regents but academic units such as the colleges (and the current Graduate School) are responsible for managing and overseeing the process of awarding the degrees. If an Office of Graduate Education is established it is likely that this activity would devolve to the colleges, because that is where the undergraduate degrees are administered. An exception would be needed for interdisciplinary programs, which do not belong to a particular college and which would therefore have to be coordinated centrally. If a Graduate College is established, then this unit would administer all graduate degrees under its control.

Degrees housed in collegiate units should follow policies and procedures for degree approval and clearance similar to those of current professional programs (e.g., Law, MBA, etc.). In essence, the college is responsible for oversight of these degrees in all respects.

Graduate School staff response:

The Graduate School supports the Committee's recommendation that students in all degrees administered by the Graduate College/Office should be cleared for graduation by the appropriate DGS and the Graduate College/Office. This practice reflects the basic principles of faculty oversight of academic issues and centralized management of agreed-upon institutional standards.

5. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 23, Services to be Provided by Colleges/Programs

1. Student Orientation

The committee recommends the academic unit deliver the Welcome Day information, including but not limited to the following . . . academic integrity . . . responsible conduct of research . . .

Graduate School staff response:

Currently, a compelling introduction to these issues is presented in an interactive session during Welcome Day for all new students. Providing an introduction to these concepts to students from a wide range of disciplines has been well received and gives students an opportunity to consider these issues from many perspectives. Students leave the session knowing they should expect to learn more about these topics in their individual graduate programs. The central presentation provides valuable information to students, especially for those whose programs do little to prepare them in this area.

4. Diversity and Community of Scholars

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 4, Recommendation 4

Central Services

The diversity functions within the Graduate School Diversity Office (GSDO) should be moved to the central University Office of Equity and Diversity (OED). Within OED, significant resources and efforts must be directed toward increasing diversity in graduate education, including an office and personnel dedicated solely to this goal. This office will need to work closely with the Graduate College/Office, and an evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of the move should be conducted after the first full year of operation.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 4, Recommendation 4

The Graduate School Executive Committee supports maintaining an Office of Diversity within a central Graduate School in order to integrate a commitment to diversity into every aspect of its operations, from admissions and the support of timely progress toward degree to successful completion.

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: The Diversity Office would be relocated in the Office of Equity and Diversity with local (college) involvement.

Q&A: *How will this new structure help advance the diversity of graduate programs and provide support for graduate students from underrepresented groups?* The graduate faculty, directors of graduate study, deans, and Office of Equity and Diversity are all responsible for advancing the diversity of the University's graduate programs and ensuring the success of graduate students from underrepresented groups. The Diversity of Views & Experiences (DOVE) Fellowship will continue as will the University's commitment to ensuring student success.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

It is essential that the Graduate School Diversity Office remain embedded within a full array of graduate education functions. It must collaborate closely with dozens of graduate programs in the recruiting and retention processes. Units across the University depend on this office's activities, programs, and statistics to document the University of Minnesota's commitment to diversity in graduate programs—information required in applying for an increasing number of federal grants. The office works very closely with the postdoctoral office and other central graduate education units to provide a host of services to students and postdocs—and not only to students in diversity categories. Highly effective workshops on survival, writing, career development, etc., have been expanded for the wider population. Both the diversity and postdoctoral programs will be diminished if separated, since they share staffing and do so much joint programming. Their excellent service will be far better preserved and enhanced by keeping them within the Graduate College structure with collaborative ties to the OED rather than the reverse, as proposed. The committee's report provides evidence for this position, p. 16, No. 10. The described change would reduce the Diversity Office's effectiveness.

SPECIFIC COMMENTARY

1. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 16, No. 10 Career Services/Workshops

The committee recommends these three offices (Center for Teaching and Learning, Graduate School Diversity Office, Office for Postdoctoral Affairs) continue to work together to provide career-oriented classes and workshops for both graduate students and postdocs.

Graduate School staff response:

The three offices work well together because they share personnel (Andriamanalina) and have the same basic value system and goals. Location in a central unit where the total educational experience of graduate students is not the function will make it difficult to ascertain which values/goals the staff should pursue. Given the current staffing pattern (built for efficiency), it would appear that it would be necessary to hire two staff members to ensure that the quality and quantity of workshops continue to meet the needs of graduate students and postdocs. In the current structure, workshops and seminars are informed by interaction with the recruitment and retention activities of the Graduate School Diversity Office and the needs of the postdocs. After almost 10 years of existence, activities targeted to the Community of Scholars Program participants have finally found their way into the mainstream graduate education enterprise resource pool. If this change is made, students who have been trying to create a place for themselves as scholars and graduate students will again be marginalized.

2. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 21, Diversity/DOVE

The committee recommends that the diversity functions under the auspices of the Graduate School Diversity Office should be moved to the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED).

p. 21, No. 2, Diversity/DOVE

Recruitment and Retention of a diverse graduate body can be well coordinated within the Office of Equity and Diversity.

Graduate School staff response:

The Office of Equity and Diversity currently does not recruit students—undergraduate, graduate, or professional—so lacks the culture required to facilitate and nurture the recruitment of graduate students. Because recruitment activities are coordinated with graduate programs, location of activities to recruit a diverse graduate student population outside of the graduate education enterprise would create the perception, internally and among prospective students, that the diversity recruiting staff is a guest rather than an active participant in a priority of the Graduate College/Office.

- When the current Graduate School Diversity Office staff attends graduate and professional conferences, symposia, and graduate and professional school fairs and makes presentations about graduate education, it represents 150 graduate programs. Our location within the graduate education unit gives credibility with prospective students, their mentors, and department faculty. The electronic communication system shared with the Graduate Admissions Office through the ApplyYourself system allows us to get information from the field to programs soon after our return to campus and allows graduate programs to start building the relationship with the student from the perspective of the discipline.
- Retention activities start with initial contact with an admitted student through our Campus-Community Connection Program (CCCP). The CCCP exists as an extension of the graduate education enterprise and as evidence that the enterprise values the student.
- The Graduate School Diversity Office has an open-door policy for all students. Independent of their ethnicity or social status, students who are seeking information about the graduate studies application process, funding opportunities, consultation about graduate programs, assistance with interpersonal and personal issues, and a variety of other concerns related to admission or retention are served by the staff. This open-door policy is a good recruitment tool because we work with students who are already interested in the University of Minnesota.
- The Diversity of Views and Experiences (DOVE) fellowship program is a recruitment tool for graduate programs to attract students who represent a diverse community. A DOVE is awarded as a result of a competitive process involving a faculty review committee and under the auspices of the Graduate

School, therefore carrying the sanction of the graduate programs. To move this competition to an entity outside of the graduate education enterprise reduces it to a prize awarded by the University of Minnesota to a graduate student.

3. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 21, No. 2, Diversity / DOVE

An additional advantage to integrating the GSDO with the OED is the potential for synergies and enhanced programming. Another potential advantage is to provide a platform for encouraging undergraduates of color to pursue graduate school.

Graduate School staff response:

The Graduate School Diversity Office already has a strong relationship with the Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence, the Martin Luther King Jr. program, and other offices that provide academic support services to students of color.

- Through the National Name Exchange Program (NNE), we interact with more than 2,500 of our own U of M undergraduate students of color who are interested in being contacted by NNE participating institutions for possible research experiences and admission for graduate study.
- The President's Distinguished Faculty Mentor Program (PDFMP) and the Community of Scholars Program have established a mentor program whereby graduate students serve as mentors to undergraduates.
- We conduct information sessions to encourage students of color to consider participating in undergraduate research programs here at the U of M and at our sister institutions in the CIC as a means of preparing for graduate study.
- We conduct workshops on the graduate school application process and work with students on an individual basis to write competitive applications. Our legitimacy comes from being part of the graduate education enterprise.

5. Faculty Grants and McKnight Program

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 5, Recommendation 5

Central Services

The committee recommends that the faculty awards programs currently administered by the Graduate School—the Grant-in-Aid of Research, Artistry and Scholarship program, and the Distinguished McKnight University Professorship and the McKnight Land-Grant Professorship programs—be transferred to the Office of the Vice President for Research. Involvement of University-wide faculty selection committees in the selection processes for these awards is crucial, and must be maintained.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 4, Recommendation 5

The Faculty Grant-in-Aid, Distinguished McKnight and McKnight Land-Grant Professorship programs operate efficiently within the Graduate School Fellowship Office and awards are decided through a competitive process of faculty peer-review. These programs should continue to operate in this manner. Close coordination with the Provost's Office has existed since fall 2005.

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: Faculty Grants would move to the Office of the Vice President for Research; the McKnight Program would be relocated in the Provost's Office.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

It is important that faculty scholarly programs—i.e. McKnight Professorships and the Grant-in-Aid program—have an independent home in a free-standing entity. Thus, if the Graduate School remains as an independent free-standing entity (college), these faculty scholarly programs should remain with it. If, however, the Graduate School becomes an office within the Provost's office, then faculty grants and the McKnight program should be moved to the Office of the Vice President for Research, as the committee recommended, to maintain their independence.

6. Interdisciplinary Initiatives

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 5, Recommendation 6 Central Services

Interdisciplinary graduate programs must be protected. The Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate College/Office should be responsible for facilitating conversations among the deans of units involved in all cross-college programs, resulting in formal memoranda of agreement regarding financial support for each program. Regular revenue streams and special funds are needed to support these programs, especially those whose students and faculty are on different campuses. Allocation of funds should be merit-based and competitive and the criteria for funding should be transparent. The Graduate School's Office of Interdisciplinary Initiatives should be maintained and supported by the new Graduate College/Office.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 6, Recommendation 6

The Graduate School Executive Committee agrees with the recommendations to protect interdisciplinary graduate programs and to develop reliable mechanisms that ensure their support.

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: Provost Interdisciplinary Team

Q&A: *How will this plan protect interdisciplinary programs that cut across collegiate lines?* The Vice Provost of Graduate Education will work with the graduate faculty and deans of graduate programs to ensure the excellence of programs that span two or more colleges and to facilitate the interdisciplinary evolution of new programs.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

Fostering interdisciplinary activity in graduate education requires strong central services. Because of its intercollegiate nature, local collegiate responsibility is not an option. We endorse the key role of the Graduate School/College in protecting and supporting cross-college interdisciplinary graduate programs.

The current Graduate School itself is an interdisciplinary unit that collaborates across internal functional areas (e.g., admissions, data management, diversity, student services) and across a broad range of 150 graduate programs to promote promising and best practices in graduate education. Separating these functions or splitting disciplinary from interdisciplinary graduate education will undermine a core institutional goal and foster an environment of competition rather than collaboration, creating inefficiency and threatening excellence.

Because the Graduate School is responsible for disciplinary and interdisciplinary graduate education, it accommodates and supports a range of models of interdisciplinarity, including cross-collegiate programs, programs with faculty representation across a number of departments, and programs represented by a single department but with faculty from diverse disciplinary backgrounds (e.g., American studies). Effort is directed toward identifying and providing the specific support needed by different types of programs (e.g., memoranda of agreement for financial stability for cross-collegiate programs) rather than achieving consensus on a single definition of interdisciplinarity.

Housed in the Graduate School, the Office of Interdisciplinary Initiatives (OII) works with other Graduate School and U of M units on initiatives that benefit both disciplinary and interdisciplinary graduate education programs (e.g., the Writing Initiative, the Collaborative Leadership Development Series, etc.). Enhancing excellence in graduate education (e.g., developing best practices in student advising, training curricula for faculty, etc.) is best achieved by a centralized unit committed to maintaining the balance, integrity, and mutually reinforcing nature of interdisciplinary and disciplinary graduate education. The most promising practices are also likely to emerge when a close working alliance is maintained among all units dealing with graduate education (e.g., diversity, student services, admissions).

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

1. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 17

13. Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs and Initiatives

Interdisciplinary graduate programs are those whose faculty members are not housed primarily within one department or college.

Graduate School staff response:

The committee defines “interdisciplinary” as cross-collegiate. Cross-collegiate

and cross-campus programs face specific challenges that warrant special attention and support; however, we urge the committee to consider a broader definition of interdisciplinarity (e.g., programs with broad departmental representation among the faculty) as well as other types of support that enhance interdisciplinary education (e.g., networking opportunities, targeted professional development, etc.).

2. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 17, Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs and Initiatives, par. 3

. . . There should be one cross-college program policy and review council, with a mechanism to ensure and facilitate interaction with other programs and councils.

Graduate School staff response:

Faculty have rejected previous Graduate School proposals to establish a P&R Council specifically for interdisciplinary programs on the grounds that the governance needs of these programs are best met through the current structure. The current process and structure could be streamlined to minimize the steps involved in program oversight. We further recommend the creation of a formal mechanism to ensure and facilitate interaction among interdisciplinary programs on a regular basis in an advisory, rather than a governing, capacity.

3. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 4, Local Oversight. The following services should be provided by college or programs:

Development (in cooperation with the University of Minnesota Foundation)

p. 21, Services to be Moved / Combined With Other Central Offices to Achieve Savings or Avoid Duplication

1. Development

Graduate School staff response:

This model would work against the financial goals and needs of cross-collegiate interdisciplinary programs as outlined by the committee. Under a local model, how would development functions for cross-collegiate interdisciplinary programs be achieved and by whom?

4. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 5, Recommendation 6

. . . Regular revenue streams and special funds are needed to support these programs . . . Allocation of funds should be merit-based and competitive and the criteria for funding should be transparent.

Graduate School staff response:

What would be the source of these revenue streams and special funds? Would these be new central funds administered by the Graduate College/Office? However the funding is coordinated, we believe it is important that the process be systemwide and competitive.

5. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 4, Local Oversight. The following services should be provided by college or programs:

Program review

vs

p. 25, par. 3

For interdisciplinary programs, the review process may be best carried out by the Graduate College/Office.

Graduate School staff response:

All program review is currently conducted by a single associate dean. Who within the Graduate College/Office would conduct interdisciplinary program review if disciplinary reviews devolve to the school/college level?

6. Committee on Graduate Education report

pp. 18-19

15. Metrics

To measure the quality of graduate education, the committee recommends using the metrics originally suggested by the Graduate Student Support and Graduate Discipline Evolution task forces from the strategic positioning process (2006). The Graduate College/Office should be responsible for compiling data in these areas and sharing the information yearly with administration and the broad University community: . . . interdisciplinary opportunities for graduate students (cross-program exchanges), interest groups around interdisciplinary initiatives (communities of faculty and students), interdisciplinary teaching opportunities for graduate students, joint faculty hires for interdisciplinary education, funding for interdisciplinary research initiatives (faculty and students) . . .

Graduate School staff response:

The committee recommends a single set of University-wide criteria for interdisciplinary and disciplinary academic program review. How will local (disciplinary) and centralized (interdisciplinary) review policies and procedures be coordinated in order to ensure that the metrics are applied according to standards and processes that maintain quality and excellence in graduate education? Additional metrics related to interdisciplinary graduate education could be added (e.g., writing support for interdisciplinary graduate students; targeted professional development, etc.). What mechanism will exist for further discussion and review of metrics? Who would be responsible for coordinating this, and who would participate?

7. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 5, Recommendation 6

Central Services

Interdisciplinary graduate programs must be protected. The Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate College/Office should be responsible for facilitating conversations among the deans of units involved in all cross-college programs, resulting in formal memoranda of agreement regarding financial support for each program.

Graduate School staff response:

We agree that the vice provost and dean of the Graduate College/Office should facilitate the development of Memoranda of Agreement to secure sustained funding for cross-collegiate interdisciplinary graduate programs. Faculty, staff, and students have also identified additional structural, policy, and procedural issues impacting the quality of interdisciplinary graduate education, teaching, and training (e.g., the need for dissertation-writing support for interdisciplinary graduate students, barriers to collaborative/interdisciplinary teaching, enhancing mentoring for interdisciplinary faculty and students, etc.). Under the leadership of the current Graduate School dean, the OII staff has pursued excellence in interdisciplinary graduate education as a primary goal. How will this goal be integrated into the overall vision of a reconfigured Graduate College/Office?

8. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 17, par. 3

In addition, there are eight graduate groups formed to stimulate new collaborations and discussions that may lead to new interdisciplinary graduate education initiatives.

Graduate School staff response:

Unlike the interdisciplinary graduate education programs that receive Graduate School funds, Graduate Groups require participation of faculty and graduate students from multiple departments but not necessarily multiple colleges (though some groups are cross-collegiate and at least one is cross-campus). In addition, though Graduate Groups may result in new interdisciplinary graduate education programs, this is only one possible outcome and is not the only rationale for forming groups.

7. Postdoctoral Affairs

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 5, Recommendation 7

Central Services

A centralized Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPDA) must be maintained based on the current and projected needs of the university. Postdocs are likely to play an increasing role in the research environment of the University in the future and a single-site organization is likely to be the best organizational structure. Moreover, the OPDA currently shares several structural functions with the Graduate School such that whatever unit manages graduate education should also include the OPDA.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 5, Recommendation 7

The Graduate School Executive Committee agrees with the recommendation to maintain a central Office of Postdoctoral Affairs. This office should be located in the Graduate School to maximize its synergies and efficiencies with related offices.

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: Postdoctoral programs and services would move to the local (college) level.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

We endorse the Committee on Graduate Education's recommendation to keep the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs in the Graduate College/Office.

8. Staffing Across Functional Areas

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 5, Recommendation 8

Central Services

Based on information for graduate school operations of comparable size at three peer institutions (Illinois, Penn State, and Wisconsin), the committee believes that it should be possible to reduce the staff complement of our current Graduate School by approximately 20 percent. A further reduction should be possible if terminal master's and applied doctorate degree programs are taken over by colleges. In suggesting this substantial downsizing, however, the committee wishes to emphasize that due regard must be given to maintaining acceptable levels of service to faculty, staff, and students in the graduate programs.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 5, Recommendation 8

Reference to Resolution 5: The Graduate School Executive Committee recommends that the Graduate School strive for increasingly higher standards of service to be provided to graduate students, graduate faculty, and graduate programs. The Graduate School is committed to a rigorous examination of its processes, policies, and procedures with an eye toward innovation, improvement, and efficiency. Planned budget cuts must not compromise this commitment.

PROVOST'S PLAN

p. 3

...The overlapping of responsibilities between various Graduate School offices and other offices at the University creates opportunities for inefficiency, duplication of effort, and unnecessary administrative overhead, all of which draw resources away from direct investments in graduate education.

Provost's charge to the committee

Estimate the number of employees you anticipate will be required in the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean for Graduate Education and describe the roles they should play. Address any critical resource issues such as space and technology.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

The Graduate School recognizes the need to adjust staffing levels in accordance with office functions. It continually analyzes staffing levels and resources needed to maintain excellent service in a changing environment. The Admissions Office, for example, reduced a full-time position to 75 percent in 2008 and eliminated a full-time position this year. Both changes were made after a careful analysis of functions. Some Graduate School offices and functions are led by .5 FTE with support staff shared across multiple functions. The workload is heavy, and, though much is accomplished, this is sometimes due to the willingness of staff to work long hours.

The Committee on Graduate Education's recommendation lacks sufficient evidence and analysis, having compared only three other institutional samples—Illinois, Penn State, and Wisconsin—whose centrally-located functions diverge widely. In addition to total graduate application and student head-counts, accurate measures must minimally include number and type of specific services provided, and they should also include level of satisfaction among those who rely on those services.

SPECIFIC COMMENTARY

1. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 21, No. 16, Staffing Levels, pars. 4-5

The streamlining of the current staff complement for the Graduate School should be possible without impacting the quality of our graduation programs. A reduction of approximately 20 percent should be possible, and a further reduction could be considered if terminal master's and applied doctorate degree programs are taken over by colleges.... It is important that due regard be given to maintaining acceptable levels of service to faculty, staff, and students in our graduate programs.

Graduate School staff response:

More comparative evidence and analysis are needed to avoid compromising the University's ability to competitively admit and retain high quality students. Though suggesting that admissions staffing levels should be based on number of applications and that student services staffing levels should reflect the number of registered students, the committee recognized that the sample size (3) was small, that not all aspects were directly comparable, and that satisfaction levels were not considered. Staffing-level evaluation should also be based on type, depth, and range of services and satisfaction with them. Graduate School units currently have in place standards for excellent service to all groups.

2. Committee on Graduate Education report

pp. 19-21, No. 16, Staffing Levels, pars. 3-4

Staffing levels for admissions should reflect the numbers of applicants . . . Given that the numbers of students served and applications processed are roughly comparable for the three institutions, the question must be asked as to why Minnesota needs almost twice as many staff as Illinois, Penn State, and Wisconsin to perform these functions.

p. 20 Staffing

Admissions/Minnesota/14.6

Graduate School staff response:

Models for graduate admissions offices are vary significantly. The Ohio State University's central admissions office employs 42.59 FTEs compared to only two FTEs in Northwestern University's model. Therefore, the Graduate Education Committee's report, citing only the metric of applications per employee to determine admissions office staffing levels, is problematic. A more accurate comparison would examine the functions of each office along with the duties of each employee and would include a wider sample set than three universities.

For example, the report notes that the University of Illinois receives 18,300 graduate applications per year. But its admissions office processes only 6,000 of those applications because the programs forward only admitted-student files to the central graduate office for final review. The admissions staff is not responsible for change-of-degree or readmission applications, supporting an online admitted-student portal, student recruitment, or coordinate campuses. In contrast, the University of Minnesota office processes all 14,300 graduate program applications, processes change-of-degree and readmission applications, supports an online admitted-student portal, recruits, and manages admissions for Duluth and Rochester as well as the Twin Cities campus.

Other Big 10 peer institutions also vary significantly in their graduate admissions staffing and functions. As mentioned above, the Ohio State University admissions office employs 42.59 FTEs to process 22,000 applications annually for its graduate and professional programs. Purdue University's Graduate School has a stand-alone recruitment office, and its admissions office does not process I-20 visa documents for international students. In contrast, the U of M Graduate School admissions office is responsible for recruitment and I-20 production. Northwestern University has only two central admissions staff but employs 50 graduate admissions staff at the program level who are regularly trained by the central office. In addition, the graduate admissions offices at Ohio State, Purdue, and Northwestern do not process labor-intensive change-of-degree or readmission applications, while the U of M admissions office does perform this core function.

Before implementing central admissions office staffing cuts and shifting processing duties to graduate programs, a detailed comparative analysis should be made based on office functions and employee duties. Application counts are a

valuable part of this analysis, but should not be the only metric used to justify significant reductions or redistributions of core processes.

Finally, while a partial subsidy has been requested for FY2010, it is worth noting that the U of M graduate admissions office has been entirely self-funded through application fees and it exists, financially speaking, outside of the cost-pool structure.

3. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 20 Staffing

Student Services (degree clearance, etc.)/Minnesota/6.5

Graduate School staff response:

Current Student Services staff level is 5 FTE (not counting the director, who is counted in the “Directors” line) plus up to and not always 3 part-time student workers.

4. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 20 Staffing

Fellowship office/ Minnesota/5

Graduate School staff response:

Current Fellowship Office staff level is 2 FTE. The current Faculty Grants Office (not identified in the report) staff level is 1.75 FTE. If this line is renamed to include both, the total staff is 3.75 FTE (not counting the director, who is counted in the “Directors” line). The Fellowship Office staff members administer not only graduate student fellowships for incoming students but a range of fellowship programs both internal (e.g. endowed fellowships and DDFs) and external (e.g. Fulbrights and NSF fellowships) as well as the two McKnight Professorship programs and the annual Ford lecture. The Faculty Grants Office handles the Grant-in-Aid program and limited nominations for external grant programs.

9. Faculty Development for Improving the Student Experience

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 5, Recommendation 9

Central Services

The quality and consistency of graduate and professional student advising, including supervision of research and teaching assistants, must be improved. The committee asks that the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate College/Office form a committee to study this issue further, work with Center for Teaching and Learning staff to help build curriculum, implement an advisor training program, create measures to evaluate the success of training, and continue to work with the Academy of Distinguished Teachers on this topic.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 6, Recommendation 9

The Graduate School Executive Committee agrees with the recommendation to improve the quality and consistency of graduate student advising. Working closely with the Council of Graduate Students, Directors of Graduate Studies, and the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Graduate School will develop strategies for implementation in 2009–10 that address these issues. Improved mentoring is the highest priority of COGS, and their surveys have identified significant graduate student concerns about the quality of mentoring.

PROVOST'S PLAN

The Provost's plan did not explicitly address this issue.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

We agree with the need for improved advising and mentoring of graduate students through establishment of advising standards, best practices, and opportunities for adviser and mentor training.

10. Systems and Data Management

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 5, Recommendation 10

Central Services

The quality of graduate education at the University must be measured and shared with the University community and administration. The new Graduate College/Office should be responsible for compiling these data in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR). Suggested metrics are listed in Section IV, and are compiled primarily from the two strategic positioning task force reports on graduate education (2006). Ultimately, it is the faculty members who are responsible and accountable for the quality of graduate education in their programs, and the compilation of these data is essential for demonstrating that quality is, in fact, being maintained.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 6, Recommendation 10

The move at the University of Minnesota toward data-driven decisions and academic management by metrics requires new staffing within a central Graduate School at the level of Data Analyst to carry out these functions. A wider set of metrics needs to be developed within a central Graduate School, and among graduate schools nationally, to effectively track performance.

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: Downsize to one staff person who would be relocated from the Graduate School to the Provost's Office.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

We strongly support the recommendation for improved metrics to track performance in graduate education. We also support the recommendation of the Committee on Graduate Education and urge maintaining staff support in this area.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

1. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 18, No. 15, Metrics

To measure the quality of graduate education...the Graduate College/Office should be responsible for compiling data in these areas and sharing the information yearly with administration and the broad University community.

- Total number of dollars for graduate fellowships
- Number of multi-year funding packages
- Percentage of graduate students on fellowships
- TA/RA salaries compared to top tier public research universities
- Track degree completion
- Track graduate placement
- Track student awards (from program level to central)
- Improve Ph.D. time to completion (University 8-year graduation rate). . . .
- Faculty-to-student ratios in programs
- Block grants longer than current 2-year time
- Student satisfaction of mentoring/advising
- Dollars for graduate/professional education in compact process
- Dollars available for student funding for conference presentations
- Cost graduate students pay for health care premiums
- Interdisciplinary opportunities for graduate student . . .
- Interest groups around interdisciplinary initiatives . . .
- Interdisciplinary teaching opportunities for graduate students
- Joint faculty hires for interdisciplinary education
- Funding for interdisciplinary education
- Review of the quality of graduate programs . . .

Graduate School staff response:

Many of the metrics described in this recommendation are reported as current practice. The ongoing conversion of current paper-based practices within the Graduate School to online electronic workflow processes further facilitates these reporting efforts. It is unclear how continued conversion to electronic workflow and an increase in data collection and reporting can increase while reducing Systems and Data Management staff. If a central staffing model is eliminated or reduced significantly and data is entered in a decentralized way, inconsistencies are likely to compromise the final metrics.

11. Governance / Policy & Review Councils

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 6, Recommendation 11

Central Services

Faculty governance over matters of graduate education via the Policy and Review (P&R) Councils should be maintained, with administrative assistance from the Graduate College/Office. However, the Council review process is considered cumbersome and is often an impediment to rapid and effective change. The functions and processes linked to the Councils should be streamlined by removing the most minor, routine items from the review process and using subcommittees and e-votes to speed evaluation of more substantial proposals.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 6, Recommendation 11

The Graduate School Executive Committee agrees with the recommendation to maintain faculty governance over matters of graduate education via the Policy & Review Councils and to streamline review processes.

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: Shared decision-making through governance would be carried out at the local (college) level, with oversight and assistance from the Provost's Office.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

We strongly support the recommendation to maintain faculty governance over matters of graduate education via the Policy & Review Councils and to streamline review processes. Continuation of the existing Graduate School will preserve the body of policy and practice developed and refined over time.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

1. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 6, Recommendation 11

Central Services

. . . The Council review process is considered cumbersome and is often an impediment to rapid and effective change. The functions and processes linked to the Councils should be streamlined by removing the most minor, routine items from the review process and using subcommittees and e-votes to speed evaluation of more substantial proposals.

p. 14, pars. 2 and 4

. . . The size and breath of the P&R Councils makes it difficult for them to meet frequently. As a result, it can take months—many months—to approve new courses or programs, even when the proposals involve only minor changes. . . . The committee proposes that the most routine matters (e.g. course title changes, program name changes which involve no accompanying revisions to degree requirements) be removed from the P&R Council review process altogether. . . .

Graduate School staff response:

Key reasons why the review of new and changed academic programs include the following.

- A major concern is the proliferation of programs, particularly those perceived as money makers, that will not meet the University's expectations for high standards.
- It is hard to write proposals for new and changed academic programs, and we are not confident that deans and associate deans give them enough attention because they often sign off on a proposal with such basic problems as the failure to make sure required credits add up in parts of the proposal.
- There is the possibility of much duplication. For example, the Graduate School just looked at a proposal for a master's in management studies with a track in arts management from the College of Continuing Education. There is no reason such a proposal can't also come from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, the Carlson School of Management, and the collaborative arts wing of the College of Liberal Arts. Who will oversee and insist on the lack of duplication?
- Our review of new and changed programs requires Graduate School staff in governance, student services, admissions, and the program review area to look at

difference aspects of a proposal where each has particular expertise. In the Academic Health Center, which has recently constituted its own review process, those involved include Barbara Brandt, an assistant vice president; Erin Sperling, Brandt's assistant, who has experience working in the MnSCU chancellor's office; and a secretary; and the AHC Council, which consists of high-level and willing faculty and associate deans. Are the deans prepared to duplicate this considerable range of expertise? Will the colleges be able to provide this kind of energy or find faculty willing to give the kind of effort required?

- The Graduate School's careful reading of preliminary drafts of proposals for new and changed academic programs results in proposals that are of much higher quality when the subcommittees receive them for review. This is simply a process that takes time, if the resulting program is to be sound and rigorous, and one that will afford an excellent graduate student experience. The need to consult with faculty, department heads, and college deans also increases the time from the preliminary draft stage to final program approval. This is particularly true in the case of interdisciplinary graduate programs.
- The committee asserts that program name changes should be approved administratively. In fact, over the years, program name changes have prompted the most debate and concern in Council discussions and have required the Graduate School on occasion to play a mediating role. Broad consultation among all stakeholders, and sufficient time to resolve any turf issues, has been critical to agreeing on a name that all parties can accept. The P&R Council process provides a mechanism for dialogue, consultation, and shared decision-making.
- Routine course or program changes are not subjected to the same full review as new courses and programs or complex changes. However, if new courses are requested in the context of a proposal for a minor change in program requirements, the larger request is submitted to the Council to more fully inform the Council's consideration of the course additions. If a change in course title suggests a major shift in the format or thrust of a course (e.g., an 8xxx-level seminar is proposed to change to an online format or an independent study course), the change is submitted to the Council. Minor changes in title, prerequisite, or description are approved administratively. All credit changes require Council review, given their resource implications.

2. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 15, paragraph 1

A centralized mechanism is required for granting temporary graduate faculty appointments to adjunct faculty or faculty at other institutions for special cases . . . The committee recommends that the Graduate College/Office be given the responsibility for approving these applications.

Graduate School staff response:

Under provisions of the current Graduate School constitution, community professionals may be appointed to the graduate faculty, if a graduate program

approves them at a particular membership level and if they secure a Human Resources (University) appointment. Additionally, the Graduate School has administratively authorized “external faculty appointments” for decades. These are one-time appointments that allow a practitioner or faculty member from another university to serve on a student’s exam committee.

The number of such appointments has grown markedly in recent years. The procedure for making external-faculty appointments is described in the Director of Graduate Studies Handbook on the Graduate School’s Web page for Directors of Graduate Studies.

In fall 2008, the P&R Councils and Graduate School Executive Committee approved an innovative and far more robust policy that will formalize participation by faculty from other universities on graduate program faculties here. The new policy will make visible liaisons with faculty from other universities and is expected to benefit graduate students in substantial ways. How would appointments for non-U of M individuals be monitored under an Office for Graduate Education? What membership levels would be used? How would students know who these individuals are? See also comments on graduate faculty, below.

3. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 4, Local Oversight, bullet 3

Ongoing graduate faculty appointments (automatic with tenure line)

p. 24, Services to be Provided by Colleges/Programs

2. Ongoing Graduate Faculty Appointments

The committee recommends that regular tenure-track and tenured faculty automatically be allowed to advise graduate students and serve on graduate student committees; no additional graduate faculty appointment should be required. Decisions to limit the ability of these faculty to advise and on serve on committees should be made at the department or division level.

Graduate School staff response:

These decisions are already made at the graduate-program level. Faculty in each program elect new members and report their actions to the Graduate School, which maintains the central program-roster database and searchable lists on the Web for easy reference by students, prospective students, DGS, faculty, etc. This month, the Graduate School launched an online system for submission and approval of graduate faculty nominations, greatly streamlining the process. The system was developed over several months, with focus groups and consultation with DGSs and their assistants, and was completed on schedule.

Tenure-line faculty HRMS appointments are made to departments, not graduate programs. Even when a graduate program has a clear department home, how will faculty from other departments be appointed? Will graduate faculty membership be barred if they have no tenure or tenure-track status? Will

colleges and departments want to limit ability to advise and serve on committees, and if yes, how will they accomplish this? What about faculty in interdisciplinary programs? How would decisions be made in these programs about which faculty could advise/serve on committees? What about faculty associated with professional master's degree programs that are no longer administered via a central graduate education office? They might be tenured or tenure-track faculty in a department; would they be eligible to serve on the committee of a student in a program administered via the central graduate education office? How would students know which faculty could serve as their adviser or as a committee member? Would there be membership levels for the graduate faculty that would signal a corresponding set of responsibilities? Where would students go to find this information? Where would it be published and who would publish it? Would a student have to search for this information by college or department?

4. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 17, No. 12

New DGS Orientation

For new DGSs, the committee recommends that an on-line tutorial be designed. . . . In addition, the committee would encourage the practice of out-going DGSs to provide some guidance to new DGSs with regarding department-specific policies . . .

Graduate School staff response:

The responsibilities of directors of graduate studies (DGSs) are sufficiently complex—extending far beyond a departmental view—that orientation to them is best handled in face-to-face sessions that provide an opportunity to ask questions and probe issues more deeply. In recent years, the Graduate School has organized summer orientations for new DGSs that are led by experienced DGSs and give newcomers an opportunity to interact with their more seasoned colleagues around a variety of issues. Sessions are designed to provide a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, highlighting many best practices. A Graduate School associate dean participates to respond to questions regarding critical issues in graduate education, issues concerning Graduate School policy and practice, etc.

12. Commencement

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 6, Recommendation 12

Central Services

The Graduate College/Office should be responsible for conducting an all-University commencement ceremony for the graduate programs it administers, but there should be only one such ceremony each year rather than the two ceremonies currently held by the Graduate School.

p. 18, No. 14, Commencement

The Graduate School currently conducts commencement ceremonies twice a year for master's and doctoral students. The committee recommends that in the future, a single ceremony be held in the spring for these graduates, organized by the Graduate College/Office.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 6, Recommendation 12

Working with the Council of Graduate Students (COGS), the Graduate School will assess the feasibility of moving to one graduation ceremony per year from the two currently offered. The size of available facilities and graduate student needs are critical issues to be examined.

PROVOST'S PLAN

The Provost's plan did not address this issue.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

We support the Graduate School Executive Committee's recommendation regarding commencement.

13. Professional Degrees

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 6, Recommendation 13 Decentralized Services

Colleges should have the option—but not be required—to administer terminal (professional) master’s and applied doctorate degree programs in-house. Other master’s degree programs (i.e., M.S. and M.A. degrees) are often preparatory to the Ph.D. and should be administered centrally by the Graduate College/Office.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 6, Recommendation 13

See Resolution 11: Colleges should elect to manage master’s and professional doctorate programs, following Graduate School review and eventually Provost and Regents approval.

PROVOST’S PLAN

p. 4, bullet 2

Professional degrees, master’s programs, and applied doctoral programs outside the Academic Health Center will be the responsibility of collegiate units and campuses (as already is the case, for example, in law), but the Vice Provost of Graduate Education will review and recommend to the Provost action on proposals for new programs and changes to existing programs. For health professional programs, the current process in health sciences will continue.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

We endorse the Graduate School Executive Committee’s resolution that colleges be given the freedom to manage their own professional master’s and professional doctorate programs. Proposals for all new programs should be reviewed by the Graduate School. After approval, professional master’s and professional doctorate programs may elect to be managed in their college. Programs that reside in more than one college, however, merit a central location.

The present mixed pattern reflects the Graduate School’s previous accommodations and flexibility on this issue. We endorse retaining M.A. and M.S. research degrees within the Graduate School, in part because those students often continue into doctoral studies in the same program.

14. Graduate Education at Coordinate Campuses: Duluth and Rochester

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 6, Recommendation 14

Decentralized Services

Graduate degree programs at the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) should continue to be administered by a central authority on the Twin Cities campus, whether this is an Office of Graduate Education or a Graduate College. Terminal master's degree programs at UMD may optionally be administered locally.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 6, Recommendation 14

See Resolution 4: Acknowledging that there has been significant debate and discussion of recommendations regarding the delegation of responsibilities to the coordinate campuses for master's and Ph.D. degrees without a clear understanding of the implications of restructuring, the Graduate School Executive Committee recommends that discussion of these issues continue over the next year through the Graduate School's established governance system.

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: Graduate programs, except for the Ph.D., would be administered on the coordinate campuses.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

The University of Minnesota currently supports a single system for administering graduate education that extends to all campuses offering graduate degrees—presently the Twin Cities, Duluth, and Rochester. These three campuses are differently situated and have varying capacities to support graduate students, graduate faculty, and graduate programs.

A single system positions the University to provide consistently high quality services and uniform standards of review and assessment. As currently provided, graduate education is unlimited by the physical location of students, faculty, or programs, an important asset for the development of online education, joint degrees, and University-wide offerings.

The same standards and processes for academic program and review are employed for all campuses offering graduate degrees. These practices provide quality control, efficiency, and brand integrity for the institution as a whole.

Both the Duluth campus, with its longstanding commitment to graduate education, and the emerging Rochester campus rely heavily on the Graduate School's centralized infrastructure and local staff to support graduate education on their campuses. Further conversation within the governance system is needed to identify potential consequences of decentralized arrangements. Specific plans to build local capacity for graduate education are needed before decentralizing core functions such as admissions, student services, block grants, or fellowships.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

1. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 10, Admissions/Transcripts/I-20s, par. 4

Graduate programs at the U of M Duluth should be handled in the same way as those on the Twin Cities campus. That is, UMD should have the option of administering professional programs locally, but their other degree programs should continue to be administered by the central entity responsible for oversight of graduate education.

Graduate School staff response:

Plans for decentralization of graduate education translates to local collegiate control. On coordinate campuses such as UMD, the opposite is likely to happen: leadership for all Duluth graduate programs would be centralized in the chancellor's office. The premise that excellence lies in decentralization is undermined by the different outcomes of local control on the Twin Cities and coordinate campuses.

At least four types of graduate degrees on the Duluth campuses need to be analyzed in terms of restructuring: (1) collegiate master's programs already

administered by the chancellor's office, (2) professional master's and professional doctoral programs, which the staff recommends be subject to centralized review of proposals for new programs but local control thereafter, (3) master's programs that currently reside in the Graduate School, which the staff recommends be subject to extensive discussion within the governance system before a decision is made, and (4) doctoral programs that are necessarily all-University programs because coordinate campuses are not authorized to offer doctoral education without a Twin Cities campus base.

Programs that currently span more than one campus are integrated biosciences, toxicology, and water resources science (Twin Cities and Duluth); business administration (Duluth and Rochester); and bioinformatics and computational biology (Twin Cities and Rochester).

15. Cost-Pool Analysis

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 6, Recommendation 15 Decentralized Services

Before any graduate program that is currently under the auspices of the Graduate School is moved to a college, an analysis should be performed of the implications this has for the college's cost pool charges. At a minimum, this analysis should include a review of the original fund transfers that central administration made to the college when the new budget model was adopted in 2005–06. At that time, revenue-neutral adjustments were made to each college's budget to pay the initial cost pool charges, based on the prevailing head count of students and Graduate Faculty.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 7, Recommendation 15

The Graduate School Executive Committee endorses the committee's recommendation about current cost-pool arrangements.

PROVOST'S PLAN

p. 4, last bulleted paragraph

Graduate programs and the colleges that house them will benefit from: increased responsibility and control; decreased transaction costs; and decreased cost pool charges.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

We strongly endorse the Committee on Graduate Education's recommendation about cost-pool arrangements and the need for careful analysis before changes are made.

16. Reviews of Existing Academic Programs

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

pp. 24-25, Program Reviews

Services to be Provided by Colleges/Programs

4. Program Reviews

Graduate Ph.D. and M.S. programs are reviewed periodically by the Graduate School in accordance with Board of Regents policy. Reviews for Ph.D. programs typically involve identification of an external review team (two or three faculty members), a self-study document, an on-site visit, a final oral and written report, and follow up meetings with requisite deans for post-review considerations.

Master's programs often have a modified streamlined version of such reviews involving a self-study document and internal review. Some reviews are carried out in conjunction with parent departmental reviews while others (e.g., interdisciplinary programs) are carried out with the sole purpose of evaluating the scholarly contributions of the graduate program.

Program reviews are work-intensive for both the program being evaluated and the Graduate School. An Associate Dean currently manages the reviews as a major responsibility. The results of the reviews are shared with the Provost, the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, the primary deans associated with the graduate program, and the faculty. It is not clear if there is a relationship between the funding a graduate program receives from the Graduate School (fellowships and block grant allocation) and the outcome of an external review. This raises questions among the faculty as to the purpose and motivation of such a review other than an administrative exercise.

In contrast, deans frequently use external reviews as a measure of scholarly reputation and accomplishment and can craft future financial policies and support for programs based on either strong or weak external reviews. Therefore, the case the carry out program reviews seems strong. The necessity to manage such an activity through a Graduate College/Office is less clear.

The committee therefore recommends that reviews of programs that are structurally and financially aligned closely with a department be decentralized and managed at the school/college level. For interdisciplinary programs, the review process may be best carried out by the Graduate College/Office.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 3, Resolution 10

The Graduate School's central oversight of academic program approval and review is critical to University-wide quality control and should be maintained.

PROVOST'S PLAN

p. 4, bullet 1

Collegiate deans will be responsible and held accountable for the quality of graduate programs that reside within their colleges. Deans will be responsible for graduate program curriculum, degree requirements, allocation of resources, the size of programs, and appointment of directors of graduate studies. . . .

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

The Committee on Graduate Education's summary (pp. 24-25, cited above) does not provide a clear understanding of reviews or their essential relationship to quality control. The Graduate School carries out three kinds: (1) external reviews of established departments and programs, (2) internal reviews of recently established programs, and (3) more recently, reviews of centers.

External reviews

Among the best practices in graduate education are periodic reviews of established programs. These are best positioned as a central function to ensure a neutral and unbiased space for carrying out assessments, uninfluenced by collegiate priorities or central investment decisions. The University of Minnesota has long charged the Graduate School with responsibility for administering these external reviews on a 5- to 7-year cycle in consultation with the collegiate deans and central administrators.

If these reviews are taken over by colleges, we expect the following complications to arise.

- Across colleges, opportunities will increase for lack of consistency, regularity, and clear insistence on quality.
- The temptation, on the part of collegiate deans, to make their programs look good will be strong, especially if the Provost is involved in the review.
- Deans often have wanted a buffer between themselves and departments. If the Graduate School rather than a dean requires the review, then it is easier for the Graduate School to insist on the review than for a dean to do so, who faces the more direct wrath of a chair and faculty who don't want one for a variety of reasons.
- Reviews demand considerable work and attention to detail. If a dean's office does these only sporadically, they will not be as efficiently done as they are now, when a single staff member in the Graduate School manages all of the details, deals with the Radisson personnel, etc., and an associate dean manages communication among reviewers, deans, and faculty.

- Though many deans have wanted various reviews to occur, they rarely have the resources to give a review much time or creative energy. This has been left up to the Graduate School.

Internal reviews

To ensure that recently approved programs are operating effectively and that their practices are consistent with institutional expectations, the Graduate School historically has conducted reviews at or about the second year mark. These are less extensive than periodic external reviews and are carried out by staff.

- These will be almost impossible for colleges to implement effectively because they will simply be conducted by those too close to home and without the experience to see the big picture.

In short, all of these activities are best done with a systemic approach and staff with experience gained from broad oversight.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

1. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 24, Program Reviews

Reviews typically involve identification of an external review team (two or three faculty members)...and follow up meetings with requisite deans...

Graduate School staff response:

A review has never been carried out with only two external members, but with three or four external members. Follow-up meetings with requisite deans also include the Provost or his representative.

2. Committee on Graduate Education report

p. 25, Program Reviews

This raises questions among the faculty as to the purpose and motivation of such a review other than an administrative exercise.

Graduate School staff response:

Implicitly, “administrative exercise” refers to the Graduate School. In fact, though the Graduate School has maintained the “right” to initiate an external review, reviews have been initiated according to college’s desires and in the order they wish. Every year, the Graduate School solicits deans’ interests for holding external reviews, and in at least the past six years, it has never conducted a review outside of deans’ expressed interests.

17. Communication

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 13

Recommendation—One person in the Graduate College/Office should coordinate alumni relations and publicity. This person should serve as the liaison with both the University of Minnesota Foundation and University Relations while guiding content and presentation on the Web site.

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: This function would be discontinued.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

We endorse the committee recommendation to maintain a communications position. It describes current practice and plans underway.

18. Development

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 21

Services to be Moved/Combined with other Central Offices to Achieve Savings or Avoid Duplication

1. *Development*

The committee firmly believes that the Graduate College/Office should not have a separate development (i.e., fund-raising) operation. The colleges and schools (and academic departments) already work to build relationships with their alumni and to raise funds from companies and foundations, and duplication of these efforts by the Graduate School is at best counter-productive. It is important, however, that the University of Minnesota Foundation continue to solicit funding for general graduate education needs, beyond program-specific monies.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 3, Resolution 7

The Graduate School Executive Committee supports retention of the following functions within the Graduate School, based on successful past performance and the failure of either the Provost's plan or the Committee's draft report to identify compelling rationales for relocating them: . . . competitive awards, including existing endowments. . . .

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: Development would be carried out at the local (college) level.

Q&A: *How does this new structure advance Strategic Positioning?* The strategic goal to position the University of Minnesota as one of the top three public research universities depends crucially on world class graduate programs. The reputation of a research university is inextricably linked to the reputation of its graduate programs. Excellent graduate programs enable a university to recruit and retain talented faculty and outstanding graduate students and affect its ability to secure external support to advance the research that leads to scientific, artistic, and scholarly breakthroughs. The reorganization will enhance graduate education by providing a structure for oversight and support that will better enable programs to thrive and excel and by using existing fiscal resources to provide new and additional funds for investment in our graduate students and the excellence of our graduate programs.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

The Graduate School currently has more than 30 endowments and many living donors who require care and stewardship. The recommendations to eliminate a development officer overlook these stewardship responsibilities. Until the Graduate School hired a development officer in 2007, the responsibility fell to various staff members, who had no access to the considerable assistance the University Foundation provides to development officers and who could not devote the time and energy needed to deal optimally with active donors.

Apart from the stated goal of reallocating any cost savings from reorganization into student support, the recommendations fail to offer long-term solutions or strategies to remedy the general scarcity of funding support for graduate education and the reality that adequate support is not forthcoming from the state. This is a particular concern for interdisciplinary programs, which often lack a strong departmental or even college affiliation.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

1. Committee on Graduate Education report

pp. 22-23

Services to be Moved / Combined with other Central Offices to Achieve Savings or Avoid Duplication

5. 21st Century Fund

The 21st Century Graduate Fellowship Endowment was started in 2000 . . . [and] is used to provide matching support for fellowship funds raised by graduate programs across the University. The committee recommends that [it] be administered by the Office of the Vice President for Research . . .

Graduate School staff response:

To our knowledge, the UMF has never solicited funds for general graduate education needs. The 21st Century Fund was negotiated by a former dean of the Graduate School with a former President.

Now that the 21st Century Fund has exhausted its potential for matches, the primary question is how matches will be financed, not where the fund is located. Currently, central administration is adding matches by increasing the cost pool, which is not a viable strategy for maintaining this program in the long term.

19. Finance and Personnel

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

No specific recommendation was made about this function.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 1, Resolution 1

The Graduate School is a free-standing academic unit and should continue as such. Its synergies and efficiencies stem from housing multiple functions within a central Graduate School; these synergies stimulate creativity and innovation.

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: These functions would be discontinued, with some FTEs moving to the Office of the Vice President for Research and some to the Provost's Office.

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

The staff responds in the absence of comment from the Committee on Graduate Education. The Graduate School's current finance and personnel group of 5.75 FTE is budgetarily shared with the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR). Traditionally, this has been a staff of 4 FTE, but with the advent of the EFS financial cluster model, an additional 1.75 FTE were required to meet the system's requirements.

The staff provides financial and personnel services for all functions of the Graduate School, OVPR, Office for Technology Commercialization, University Press, Minnesota Population Center, Hormel Institute, and Minnesota Supercomputer Center. There is great synergy between the group and the Graduate School's Fellowship Office/Faculty Grants Office, including McKnight Programs. The McKnight programs alone are sufficiently work-intensive that salary for .5 FTE staff comes from McKnight Funds. As a financial cluster, the Finance & Personnel unit oversaw approximately 50,000 non-payroll financial transactions in 2008. Significant efficiencies are achieved by this combined resource.

To split the work of the Graduate School off from this seasoned team would not yield any cost savings but would shift the work to another unit without the capacity or experience to deal with the Graduate School's transactions.

20. University Press

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE EDUCATION RECOMMENDATION

p. 23, Services to be Moved/Combined with other Central Offices to Achieve Savings or Avoid Duplication

6. University Press

The University of Minnesota Press, currently located within the Graduate School, is the University's scholarly publishing arm and is under the administrative and financial control of the University and the editorial control of a faculty committee. The committee recommends that it remain so. The Board of Regents 1981 policy specifies that the President or delegate will appoint the director and committee. Currently, the delegate is the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School. For reason of prevailing practice, continuity, and alignment, we recommend that the reporting structure of the Press should shift to the Office of the Vice President for Research. During the consultation process, members of the committee met with the Director of the Press, the Chair of the Faculty Press Board, and the University Librarian, who all are in agreement on these general principles. The University Librarian further suggested that the Press would benefit from establishing a Strategic Advisory Board to consider avenues for aligning the Press with a mind towards the future. Considering the evolving nature of print media and the reality of new technological innovations, the committee recommends that the Press explore avenues of collaborations within the University, including possibly leveraging the Library's investment in electronic infrastructure.

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE

p. 2, Resolution 7

The Graduate School Executive Committee supports retention of the following functions within the Graduate School, based on successful past performance and the failure of either the Provost's plan or the Committee's draft report to identify compelling rationales for relocating them: . . . Similarly, no compelling rationale has been offered for relocating the University Press.

PROVOST'S PLAN

Appendix C: This unit would become part of the University Libraries and the Provost's Office

GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSE

No compelling rationale was given for moving the University Press out of the Graduate School. The Committee on Graduate Education also did not acknowledge the Graduate School's role in aligning the Press with the strategic priorities of the University. The interdisciplinary Quadrant Series, with funding from a Mellon Foundation grant, has realized this alignment. Protecting the Press from editorial interference while accomplishing such alignment requires a careful balance.