

THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

2009 ANNUAL BUDGET REPORT
March 13, 2009



1. Overall State of the Unit

The Graduate College promotes excellence, integrity, and equity in all graduate programs at the University of Illinois. Recognized among our peers as a national leader and advocate on behalf of graduate education, the Graduate College at Illinois participates in many initiatives and studies that shape the national agenda on graduate education. This involvement positions us at the forefront of future directions at the national-level, which impact our graduate community and our institution in the 21st century.

With oversight responsibilities for more than 10,000 graduate students in nearly 300 graduate programs at Illinois, the Graduate College ensures the high quality of our programs and fosters an intellectual community that is conducive to exemplary scholarship, research and creativity. To do this, we strategically guide graduate students at all stages of their studies, beginning with recruitment and admission through professional development, and key academic milestones, including degree completion. We also work closely with graduate faculty and staff to establish campus-wide academic initiatives, policies, and procedures that benefit our graduate education at Illinois. Among these benefits are enhancing student access to and support within our graduate programs, strengthening the focus on student outcomes, and creating innovative and insightful opportunities for research in graduate education.

Under the direction of Debasish Dutta, Associate Provost and Dean since January 2009, the Graduate College will build upon its strong foundation to achieve higher levels of excellence in graduate education and broader engagement across campus. Three key areas currently underway will continue to receive special emphasis in the upcoming year. First, new initiatives are being developed to engage faculty and graduate students across campus in activities that embody the integration of research and education. Second, in our commitment to leading the campus effort to broaden participation of under-represented minority (URM) groups in graduate education, the Graduate College is developing an initiative to engage faculty to rethink current practices and formulate new strategies. Third, we are in the process of hiring a Development Officer and will soon initiate the search for a Director of External Fellowships. We expect these individuals to work synergistically to reach out to private donors, foundations, industry and federal agencies. The Development Officer will work closely with the Graduate Dean to secure gifts and endowments for new fellowships and other initiatives that support Graduate College activities. Working directly with students across campus, the Director of External Fellowships will focus on radically increasing the quantity and competitiveness of fellowship applications by graduate students.

2. Status of Strategic Goals

The Graduate College values an academic and intellectual climate that respects diversity, promotes rigorous scholarship and creative inquiry, supports professional development, and prepares our exceptional students to be top-notch scholars, innovators, entrepreneurs, creators, educators and leaders. Our values and commitment to graduate education are evident in our five strategic goals, as follows:

1. **Lead and Evaluate Graduate Program Efforts to Attract, Enroll, Mentor, Graduate, and Place a Talented and Diverse Graduate Student Body**
2. **Sustain and Advance Graduate Programs to Meet Current and Future, State, National and Global Needs**
3. **Increase and Diversify Funding to Support Graduate Education**
4. **Draw Upon our Rich Tradition of Excellence to Shape the Agenda on Graduate Education at Illinois and Beyond**
5. **Enhance the Graduate Experience at Illinois through Timely and Relevant Opportunities that Include Strategic Collaboration with our Campus and Community**

Rationale for each goal and progress on key initiatives aimed at accomplishing each goal are outlined below.

Goal 1: Lead and Evaluate Graduate Program Efforts to Attract, Enroll, Mentor, Graduate and Place a Talented and Diverse Graduate Student Body

The Graduate College provides crucial integration of leadership and assistance to graduate programs on campus in their effort to attract, enroll, and graduate first-rate graduate students. In this role, we support program-level efforts through effective outreach activities, enrollment management and support, and fellowship programs, as well as special initiatives designed to increase diversity in our graduate student body. Within Goal 1, the following areas are deemed particularly important to ensure a talented and diverse graduate student body: 1) increasing the number of URM students enrolled in our graduate programs; 2) providing adequate financial support to attract competitive students, while assisting current students seeking external funding, and; 3) streamlining admissions processes.

Efforts to expand the diversity of our graduate student body. The Graduate College continues to manage an integrated diversity initiative that connect directly to undergraduate students (both at Illinois and other colleges /universities across the United States) by encouraging their matriculation as Illinois graduate students and completion of an advanced degree. Current initiatives include the Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP), the Campus Visit Program (CVP), and the Summer Predoctoral Institute (SPI). These programs bring undergraduate juniors (SROP), seniors (CVP), and newly admitted graduate students within our programs (SPI) to Illinois for the purposes of promoting graduate

education at Illinois and supporting the transition from an undergraduate to a successfully acclimated and productive graduate student.

In 2006-08, Illinois awarded proportionately more graduate degrees to women, international, and URM students compared to previous years. Similarly, Illinois holds the distinction of having produced more SROP doctorates than any other Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) institution. However, evidence of the post baccalaureate decisions of SROP alumni reveal that the Graduate College continues to be challenged to increase the number of SROP participants who return to Illinois for graduate study. As such, we aim to increase the number of SROP participants who enroll in graduate programs at Illinois by strategically enhancing the SROP experience for student participants and increasing faculty involvement prior to, during, and following their summer engagement with students. At the same time, we are working with graduate programs to improve the process for recruiting SROP students directly into programs at Illinois, so that we remain competitive with our peers. The CVP translated 67% of student visits in Spring 2008 to graduate program enrollments in Fall 2008.

Providing adequate financial support to attract competitive students. With recognition of the important relationship between adequate financial support and student enrollment and ultimate success, the Graduate College administers two major recruiting fellowships – the Illinois Distinguished Fellowship and the Graduate College Fellowship for Underrepresented Students. Fellowship support for the recruitment of new students or to assist current students is made possible through the Graduate College Block Grant program. Further, assistance is provided to students who are applying for external fellowships from federal and state sources, by facilitation of workshops specifically tailored to application for National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship, Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award, Ford Foundation Predoctoral and Dissertation Fellowship Awards, and the Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois fellowship. Finally, we participate in the Great Lakes Alliance for the Social Sciences (GLASS), funded by the NSF Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate in Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (AGEP SBE) program and administered by Northwestern University, which supports academic success among URM graduate students in four participating social science departments.

Streamlining admissions processes. To make Illinois more attractive and competitive for all prospective students, our Graduate and Professional Admissions (GPA) office has worked to streamline all processes and communications with prospective graduate students and graduate programs. GPA continues to educate our graduate programs on best practices, to provide them with admissions eligibility advice, and to encourage earlier admissions decisions in order to attract and enroll the very best students. As a result of these efforts, GPA has reduced the processing time for both domestic and international admissions (including issuance of visa eligibility documents) by 73 and 57 %, respectively. We will continue to work with graduate programs to maintain best practices in admissions decisions and policies, while increasing the number of admissions decisions made prior to March 1st and April 15th to increase competitiveness in our efforts to recruit the very best students to Illinois.

Goal 2: Sustain and Advance Innovative Graduate Programs to Meet Current and Future State, National and Global Needs.

The Graduate College at Illinois believes that innovation in graduate education is necessary to remain competitive and relevant in our global, knowledge economy. Pioneering approaches to graduate education provide enhanced opportunities for the development of breakthrough knowledge, desirable

alternatives for students with diverse career goals, and points of differentiation from our peer institutions. Although Illinois has a strong and robust tradition of graduate education, the majority of our graduate students have been trained within traditional department-based academic career-oriented programs, and we have offered relatively fewer interdisciplinary and applied programs than many of our peer institutions. Recognizing this issue, our efforts in recent years have focused on using our expertise to **lead units in the development of innovative graduate programs that are *interdisciplinary, off-campus/online, multi-institutional, and/or centrally administered.***

Since 2006, the number of interdisciplinary programs has increased five-fold (from 12 to 60). To facilitate the development of these innovative graduate programs, the Graduate College has functioned as both an 'incubator' and a 'central hub' for new interdisciplinary programs. The 'incubator' strategy was used with our interdisciplinary bioinformatics program by providing administrative support, apart from any one academic unit, thereby allowing the program time and space to mature before moving to a suitable permanent unit. **The Graduate College's role as a 'central hub' for an interdisciplinary program is demonstrated through the new Professional Science Master's (PSM) program.** The Illinois PSM is an innovative Master of Science degree that allows students to combine rigorous study in science with applied business knowledge and skills. Currently, three PSM programs will begin in Fall 2009 with projected enrollment of 15 to 20 students. The planned addition of one to two programs in Fall 2010 will bring total PSM enrollment to 30 to 40 students generating approximately \$300,000 in tuition revenue for that year. Through funding obtained from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Graduate College provided leadership to the national PSM initiative by establishing a recognized model for a self-supporting, centrally administered sustainable program which transfers tuition revenue back to the disciplinary units and allows for an ongoing collaborative relationship. We believe that the addition of the PSM to our degree portfolio will allow Illinois to provide opportunities for excellent graduate education to previously underserved students for whom research degrees are not an attractive option, while enhancing the economic competitiveness of our state.

The Graduate College offers many **joint graduate degree programs** (in which the student receives some course efficiency during the completion of two related degrees), **graduate minors and graduate concentrations** that allow students to broaden their knowledge by including expertise from more than one related academic area in their programs. By educating units about these options and assisting in the proposal process, program proposals approved by the Graduate College Executive Committee have increased by 50% in the last year, with 34 proposals processed in 2008. To ensure that our online and off-campus offerings of campus degree programs are of the highest quality, the Graduate College Committee on Extended Education and External Degrees continues to evaluate new and ongoing offerings while remaining abreast of the latest advances in distance education technologies and pedagogies.

Distance learning and the Internet have made this an era of instantaneous global communication and with that flow of knowledge the opportunities for international collaboration within the academic community are prominent. A survey conducted by the Council of Graduate Schools in 2007 (n=1631) indicate 29% of American graduate schools have established degree partnerships with one or more international institutions and an additional 24% plan to establish such degree collaborations in the future. The Graduate College at Illinois is on the leading edge of these discussions and **played a key role in developing the 'Proposed Guidelines for Multi-Institutional Graduate Degrees in Collaboration with a Foreign Institution'** that are currently under consideration by the Board of Trustees. Upon approval of these guidelines, we anticipate that a number of units working collaboratively with foreign institutions will propose formal multi-institutional graduate degree programs.

Goal 3: Increase and Diversify Funding to Support Graduate Education

The University of Illinois, as with other public research universities, continues to experience diminishing “purchasing power” of state funding relative to the cost of attracting high achieving students to its graduate programs. Moreover, there is increasing competitiveness for a small number of awards from foundations and other agencies that have historically supported academically meritorious students. Two specific areas of need have emerged from these trends: a need to increase stipend levels for campus funded programs and decreasing cost of education (COE) funds for Graduate College fellowship and grant programs. Accordingly, the Graduate College seeks to strategically position itself to increase and diversify funding to support graduate education at Illinois.

In 2008, the Graduate College identified four major initiatives that it sought to develop. First, the Graduate College sought to increase development activities focused on graduate student support by initiating a search for a **Development Officer**. With this search underway, activities can soon shift to broaden the resources for fellowships. Further, we intend to work with campus and individual graduate programs on increasing external grants that support graduate students by initiating a search for a **Director of External Fellowships**. Both positions should be filled by Summer 09.

Second, the **Graduate College increased funding to students and departments**. The stipend amount of our two recruiting fellowships—the Illinois Distinguished Fellowship and Graduate College Fellowship for Underrepresented Students—were increased from \$17,000 to \$20,000 for Illinois Distinguished and from \$15,000 to \$17,000 for Graduate College Fellowship (over 12 months). The Graduate College has sought to increase funding provided to departments for direct student support in the form of the Block Grant as well as special sources of funding, including support for the Campus Visit Program and Conference Travel Grants. No increase was available for the Block Grant program for 2008, yet these funds are vital to departments to continue to leverage their own resources to support graduate education. Plans are currently under development to increase the stipend for the Dissertation Completion Fellowship for 2009-10 from \$17,000 to \$20,000. This will complement increases in recruiting fellowship stipends.

Third, the Graduate College **sought and received renewal for an AGEP grant for URM students in collaboration with the GLASS Alliance administered by Northwestern University and funded by the NSF**. NSF AGEP awards research and travel support for students in four social sciences departments at the University.

Finally, the Graduate College Fellowship Office continues to offer **workshops designed to encourage students to apply for external awards from federal agencies and private foundations**. Workshops were offered for a number of programs, including Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Program, NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program, as well as presentations to student groups about the process of applying for external funding (both in graduate classes, and in conjunction with the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities). The Graduate College will increase its efforts to support students’ applications for external awards, through communication with graduate programs and students, workshops and direct advising with students.

Goal 4: Draw Upon Our Rich Tradition of Excellence to Shape the Agenda on Graduate Education at Illinois and Beyond

As a large, research institution that ranks consistently **in the top 10 of institutions regarding annual number of doctoral degrees granted, we have access to a rich resource of data from which best practices in graduate education can be understood.** Not only is our pool of data robust in number, but also extends across various stages of scholarship, including master's level, traditional doctoral and professional graduate programs, and across a broad range of disciplines wherein practices and expectations differ greatly. As an active member within the graduate education community, we believe it is our responsibility to mine these data and contribute both evidence and direction to the important conversations occurring at the state and national level on economic competitiveness, educational policy and practices, and success of URM students. The Graduate College is currently engaged in several initiatives to achieve this goal. In 2008, work on the **PhD Completion Project** continued, as one of 29 institutions seeking to understand completion and attrition rates in doctoral programs, with particular emphasis on URM groups. In this project, we work closely with 14 doctoral programs on our campus to collect and analyze data, compare it to discipline-specific national trends, and design impactful interventions. Ultimately, we seek to understand and implement the best practices leading to graduate student success.

The Graduate College lead the coordination of an extensive data-collection process involved in the **National Research Council Assessment of Doctoral Programs** that utilized surveying universities, faculty members, and students, and providing detailed programmatic information. Hailed as one of the most influential assessments of graduate programs at U.S. colleges and universities, faculty and unit administrators, as well as prospective students contemplating programs application, will be able to access numerous quantitative variables related to doctoral programs, such as faculty members' scholarly activities, program characteristics and research resources. On a national level, Dr. Richard Wheeler contributed nationally to this process by serving on the NRC committee guiding this project, while Dean of the Graduate College. Recently, Deans Wheeler and Tappenden gave invited talks at national forums on our participation in this project, and data provided by the Illinois Graduate College was included in two 2008 publications on this topic by the Council of Graduate Schools.

Locally, the Graduate College's recent efforts have focused on preparing the campus and other key stakeholders for the survey release that will allow for understanding attributes of their program, benchmarking their programs against that of peer institutions, and engaging in a data-driven, targeted process of program improvement. Upon release of the data in Spring 2009, the Graduate College will host a series of workshops about the assessments for administrators, and faculty and staff members. These workshops will also officially launch the **Graduate College's newly developed Web-based program called "Program Profiles" that will allow users to examine the University's real-time data, which will be continually updated.**

We anticipate that these data tools will prove especially useful for Directors of Graduate Studies and unit Executive Officers by providing insightful information with which to review programs for continual improvement. Moreover, with an increasing focus on the growing number of graduate programs around the world, these data can be important for understanding our educational system within a broader international context, offering perspective to help guide us in maintaining our competitiveness and our reputation as a first rate institution for graduate study. Such data might also prove useful for venturing into strategic collaborations with institutions abroad. Because of this, the Graduate College

plans to offer future initiatives to promote research that examines multiple facets of graduate education.

Finally, in our efforts to shape the graduate education agenda at the national level, the Graduate College plans to establish a **National Advisory Board** composed of 12 members drawn from universities, industry and government. This board will meet twice a year on campus. These meetings would provide a forum for the Graduate College to highlight Illinois developments in graduate education and engage national leaders in topics that impact graduate education policy, practice and placement. Further, Advisory Boards often complement development activities which the Graduate College will soon embark upon.

Goal 5: Enhance the Graduate Experience at Illinois through Timely and Relevant Opportunities that Include Strategic Collaboration with our Campus and Community

The Graduate College is uniquely situated to reach across the Illinois campus to foster a strong graduate community that supports interdisciplinarity in research and professional growth for our students. By collaborating with our wider campus and community, we facilitate cost effective initiatives, programming, and communications that are appropriately tailored to the more than 10,000 graduate students on our campus - roughly one quarter of the student body. These highly beneficial collaborations include both initiatives and services that reach students directly (such as workshops, Web resources, and symposia), and those that reach students indirectly, yet no less effectively, through educating staff and faculty who work with graduate students on best practices and national trends in graduate education. In providing leadership, we help shape the graduate experience at Illinois in a way that is productive and meaningful to students during all phases of the studies, beneficial to programs, and valuable to our institution overall by sustaining our reputation as a national leader in graduate education and first rate graduate college.

In 2008, the Graduate College **offered over 50 well-attended workshops and programs on a wide range of practical and professional development topics pertinent to graduate students, staff and faculty.** Many of these took advantage of strategic collaborations with partners on- and off-campus. In some instances these collaborations allowed cost-sharing with nearby academic institutions to bring in high-profile speakers, such as Susan Basalla, co-author of *So What Are You Going to Do With That?*, a well-received career development book for graduate students. Other collaborations enabled the Graduate College to expand the breadth of resources we offer to students and faculty, and draw on expertise in units on our own campus, including the Biotechnology Center, the Career Center, the Counseling Center, Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), University of Illinois Alumni Association, the Center for Teaching Excellence, and U of I Academic Human Resources, as well as faculty experts from various academic programs. Our 2008 Annual Symposium on Graduate Education, entitled *Research Integrity: Whose Rights? Whose Responsibilities*, highlighted issues of authorship, peer reviewing, and the influence of commercial sponsors in academic research and benefited greatly from expertise in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Research, the University Library, the Office of Technology Management, as well as several academic departments.

Our efforts to enhance the graduate students experience by working with staff is shown in events such as the Annual Workshop for Directors of Graduate Study and Contacts, which in 2008 was titled ***Practices Make Perfect*** and addressed best practices in recruiting, annual assessment and timely degree completion. Our Graduate and Professional Admissions (GPA) unit works closely with staff in

graduate programs to ensure they are adequately trained regarding admission processes for domestic and international students. GPA also continues to work with ISSS to maintain best practices in advising international applicants on their visa status and requirements, and to provide them with a smooth transition from applicant to student. These efforts cultivate relationships with prospective students around the world, make the application process smoother for students, and help Illinois attract the very best students.

In our commitment to diversity, the Graduate College continues to support the transition of URM students from undergraduate or master's programs to doctoral programs at Illinois. During the summer, 30 students participated in the **Summer Predoctoral Institute (SPI) program**. Participants were enrolled in an independent study course that introduced them to the research and writing expectations of their respective programs. A series of seminars, which were developed to assist participants in learning about the campus, community, and the rigors of graduate study at Illinois were conducted. The seminars included topics such as, The Culture of Graduate School, The Research Process, Research Methods, Financial Management, Leadership in the Academy, Making the Most of Your Graduate Education, The Curriculum Vitae, and The Institutional Review Board and Human Subjects Research. Today, approximately 80% of the participants are graduate students within our graduate programs at Illinois, whereas another 13% state plans to enroll in a graduate program at Illinois in Fall 2010.

A **Graduate College Distinguished Lecture Series** is being planned for inauguration in Fall 2009. This lecture series will add to the many on campus but will be unique in its orientation. Once per semester, this event will bring prominent scholars who will speak about issues in graduate education from disciplinary viewpoints. Speakers from industry often have unique perspectives on education they seek to share with faculty and students.

In the coming year, the Graduate College will pilot several additional events to provide resources on a full spectrum of timely and relevant topics, including mentoring, **Electronic Thesis Deposit** (piloting began in March and we expect this option to be available to all graduate students in Fall 2010), acclimation of graduate students to academic culture, and the annual assessment of graduate students. Other projects and initiatives currently in the early stages of development are improved communications with graduate students, especially prospective and new students, and a **redesign of our Web site to improve online resources, to develop effective Graduate College branding, to highlight achievements within our graduate community, and to promote our accomplishments to those beyond our campus**. We believe that these efforts will continue to enhance the success of our graduate students and the experience that they receive at Illinois.

3. Critical items not addressed in the Strategic Plan

Given our standing as a college that spans that breadth of the university, and with acknowledgement of the relatively limited pool of resources that we access, we do not currently engage in, nor do we propose, any activities outside the scope of our strategic plan.

4. Salary Requirements

None

5. Status of Unit Deficits

The Graduate College does not have a budget deficit.

6. Financial Planning Parameters

7. Interdisciplinary Activities

To best prepare our graduate students for the 21st century, it is imperative to prepare them to be bold thinkers, risk takers, and collaborative leaders in an increasingly interconnected yet diverse world. Through interdisciplinary initiatives, the Graduate College seeks to provide our students opportunities to identify and understand macro phenomenon from micro (local) patterns, to transfer knowledge from one domain to another, to bring to bear technology solutions for social progress and to understand technology development within the social context, and to explore the cultural, social, and historic frameworks that for the problems. We are developing ***Focal Point***, a program that will catalyze the formation of groups of faculty and graduate students around topics that undergird important issues and problems of our times. Through this initiative, we hope to engage faculty and inspire graduate students to advance knowledge in areas of critical national and human need and seed activities targeted for development as grant proposals with strong graduate education components (e.g., NIH training grants, Howard Hughes Medical Institute programs, Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) grants, National Endowment for the Humanities programs, Social Science Research Council programs and NSF programs like IGERT, GK-12, AGEP, etc.).

The Graduate College is committed to leading the campus effort on broadening participation of underrepresented minority (URM) groups in graduate education. Toward that end, we are developing an initiative ***Common Ground: Graduate College Colloquia focused on issues related to broadening participation in graduate education***. These colloquia will focus on the development of common ground: The issues that cut across diverse student groups that we are trying to recruit, mentor, retain, graduate and place in the 21st-century knowledge economy. *Common Ground* seeks to reframe the URM discussion. Instead of focusing on strategies that we think are URM specific, the colloquia will identify a set of core issues (common ground) that apply to URM and non-URMs. We will engage and mobilize faculty to address common ground issues more effectively by working together to avoid duplication of effort. The colloquium will feature speakers who have developed and participated in successful strategies and practices that address the overall theme.

8. Requests for permanent and non-recurring funding