

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Graduate College Functions

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

July 13, 1999

Committee members: Professor Clif Brown, Chair, Professor Geneva Belford, Professor Phil Best, Professor Cleo D'Arcy, Dean Leigh Estabrook, Professor Susan Fahrback, Professor Tom Ward, Professor Benito Marinas, Dean William Schowalter, Professor Edward Shoben, Dean Howard Thomas, Professor Charles Tucker. Staff: Carol Livingstone.

The reputation of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as a public research institution is due in large part to our programs, abilities and accomplishments in graduate education. As stated in the *Report of the Task Force on Graduate Education* (1997), graduate education with its associated scholarship and research activities sets the tone of the university's intellectual environment, defining the university as a community of scholars engaged in the development and transmission of knowledge. The 1997 Report continues by defining three issues that our Committee interprets to be the central roles, or functions, of the Graduate College. The Committee believes that these roles are critical for our continuing success in graduate education. These roles include:

- Helping the campus adapt to a changing world while at the same time preserving our central values and strengths.
- Helping the campus focus discussion on and effect improvement of program quality.
- Helping the campus attract excellent graduate students and promoting the well being of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.

Within the context of these roles, the Committee recommends the ensuing allocation of functions to the Graduate College in the separation of the Office of Vice Chancellor for Research and the Graduate College. At the same time the Committee comments on aspects of these functions that it believes could benefit from further study and improvement.

- Graduate publications should remain with the Graduate College. The primary focus of this function is to disseminate, employing a variety of media, information on the University's graduate programs to students, advisors, and other interested parties. The Committee suggests that further investigation is needed to see if the compilation of the graduate portion of the *Programs of Study* catalog might be better housed in the Provost's office, which compiles the undergraduate portion of the catalog.
- The Fellowship Office, including the Fellowship Board, should remain with the Graduate College. The primary functions of this office are to allocate a variety of fellowships and grants to graduate students and graduate programs. The Committee has a number of concerns with the present administration of this function.
 - Block grants to departments. The Committee has concerns that the effort and cost required of departments, particularly those with smaller graduate programs, in applying for block grants may exceed the benefits from the grants awarded (the smallest grant is

\$4,000 per year). We suggest that this process be examined by the new Dean and streamlined significantly.

- Development of fellowship funds. The Committee is concerned that UIUC lags far behind its peers in campus-level fellowship funds (1996-7 data indicate that the campus ranks ninth out of the eleven CIC institutions). Campus-level fellowship funds are important in attracting the best students into our graduate programs, particularly for programs that do not have access to other sources of fellowship funds. The Committee, however, is unprepared to evaluate the potential of the Graduate College in attracting more campus-level fellowship funds. The Committee also notes that care must be taken to coordinate Graduate College fundraising efforts with college and departmental campaigns.
 - Fellowship processing. The Fellowship office currently collects paper "rating forms" from departments nominating students for campus-wide fellowships and enters the fellowship appointment data into the payroll system and any tuition and fee waivers into the student billing system. It also monitors compliance with the conditions of fellowships. We suggest that the Fellowships Office explore ways to streamline this process and reduce the paper flow while retaining the monitoring and compliance functions.
- The Minority Affairs Office should remain with the Graduate College. The primary functions of this office are the recruitment, retention and support of minority students in UIUC graduate programs. The committee has concerns about the limited level of resources currently allocated to minority fellowships compared to peer institutions. We suggest that the new Dean should consider searching for solutions to this problem as a high priority task.
 - Graduate student problem solving should remain with the Graduate College. The primary foci of this function are to resolve and mediate potential graduate student grievances, award emergency grants to graduate students and handle student petitions concerning various aspects of their graduate program requirements.
 - The Thesis Office should remain with the Graduate College. The primary functions of this office are to provide advice on writing theses and dissertations and to ensure that submitted theses and dissertations meet publication standards.
 - Commencement: Organizing the Ph.D. candidates for hooding at the campus-wide ceremony is a small but important role.
 - Graduate program administration should remain with the Graduate College. The primary foci of this function are to establish Graduate College policies and procedures, admissions policy (including limited status admissions), graduate course and program approvals, doctoral committee appointments, SPEAK appeals, graduate student mentoring awards, and advising departments on "best practices" for graduate programs. The Committee has a number of concerns with the present administration of aspects of this function.
 - A traditional function of the Graduate College, in combination with the Office of Vice Chancellor for Research, is an incubator for new academic units. Examples include the Department of Atmospheric Science and the Department of Computer Sciences, both of

which were in the Graduate College during their inception and early development stages before transferring to their present disciplinary colleges (LAS and Engineering, respectively). The Committee recognizes that this incubator function was particularly well served in the past by a combined VCR/Graduate College, and that neither unit can individually serve as an incubator. We therefore recommend that this function remain with both the VCR and the Graduate College, with the VCR having the primary responsibility for development of research facilities and the Graduate College, if no other appropriate college can act in this capacity, having administrative oversight for any new units formed. The section below on "experimental interdisciplinary programs" relates to aspects of the Graduate College participation in this function.

- Graduate program approvals.
 - Experimental interdisciplinary programs. The Committee believes that many of the more creative and productive future research programs will arise in the intersection of the campus' present academic disciplines. As interdisciplinary research programs arise, so too does the need for parallel experimental graduate programs. The Committee recognizes that the Graduate College focused recent efforts in developing simpler procedures for approving and monitoring pilot graduate programs. However, the Graduate College should focus more effort on the problems faced by two or more departments with existing graduate programs when developing an interdisciplinary graduate program housed, at least for the pilot period, within one or more of the existing programs.
 - Professional graduate programs. The Committee believes that significant differences exist in the objectives and pedagogical models of professional masters' programs and masters' programs that prepare students for entry into research-oriented doctoral programs. If so, different criteria likely are appropriate for monitoring and evaluating professional masters programs, criteria that may be better understood within disciplinary colleges than within the Graduate College. The Committee suggests that the Provost further study this issue to determine which post-baccalaureate programs the Graduate College should oversee and which, if any, a disciplinary college should oversee. This study also should examine the growing number of certificate and other non-degree programs to determine the extent to which the Graduate College should have oversight.
- Improvement of graduate program quality. One of the central values of our campus is the desire to expand our knowledge about ourselves and the world around us. Implicit in this value is continuous improvement in the processes used to gain knowledge. Graduate programs should not be content with their status quo, no matter how good they are, but should always seek to improve. A primary function of the Graduate College should be as a campus advocate for, and facilitator of, the quality and continuous improvement of our graduate programs.
- Review of graduate program quality. The Committee believes that an integral aspect of program improvement involves periodic review of the program by qualified individuals outside of the program using an established and known process. Because academic departments house numerous academic programs (research, undergraduate education, graduate education, and service), the campus should not limit the scope of these reviews to graduate programs but rather encompass all departmental programs. Further, the primary review focus should be avenues and opportunities for the improvement of

departmental programs. Likely the disciplinary colleges should be the initiating and managing entities for these reviews, but both the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and the Graduate College may be in positions to support and add value to the review process. The Committee supports the recommendations of the recent Program Quality Review Committee chaired by Dean Leigh Estabrook.

- Research Standards Officer. The present Research Standards Officer is Professor Michael Loui, the Associate Dean of the Graduate College. This officer is responsible for ensuring compliance with the *Policy and Procedures on Academic Integrity in Research and Publication*, particularly with respect to allegations of research misconduct. The Committee recommends that this officer report to the Vice Chancellor for Research.
- Computer support for Graduate College functions should remain with the Graduate College. The primary foci of this function include the GRADS database, network administration, RBM data entry, and data generation and analysis.
- Reporting to external agencies. The Graduate College completes many national surveys and responds to periodic inquiries from various granting agencies. This work should remain with the Graduate College.
- The Graduate Student Advisory Council should remain with the Graduate College. The primary functions of this council include maintaining an assistantship clearinghouse, mailings to new graduate students, and town meetings to increase communication between graduate students and the university.
- Graduate College administration should remain with the Graduate College. The primary foci of this function includes office support, planning and budgeting, personnel development, participation in associations of graduate schools and outreach to prospective students.

The Committee recommends the ensuing allocation of functions to the Vice Chancellor for Research in the separation of the Office of Vice Chancellor for Research and the Graduate College.

- The Research Board (including the Scholars Travel Program, the Graduate College Scholars' Program, and faculty research-related recruitment and retention).
- The Critical Research Initiatives Program.
- The Center for Advanced Studies.
- The Program on Ancient Technologies and Archaeological Materials.
- The Biotechnology Center
- The National Computational Science Alliance (NCSA).
- The Institutional Review Board.
- The Office of Laboratory Animal Resources.
- The Research and Technology Management Office.
- The Research Standards Officer.

During its deliberations, the Committee noted a number of issues that a new Dean of the Graduate College should address. We indicate most of these issues in the prior sections. The Committee believes that the primary function of the Graduate College is that of an advocate: an advocate for the quality of graduate programs and graduate education, an advocate for graduate students, and an advocate for graduate faculty.

