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Council of Graduate Schools Summer Workshop

Making the Case for Graduate Education with Your
President and Board

Dr. Paul W. Ferguson
President

July 13, 2015



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A Personal Perspective on Graduate Education (1993-2006)

13 Years Directly Leading Graduate Education:

- Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, *University of Louisiana, Monroe*
 - Senior Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate College, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*
 - Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*
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A Professional Commitment to Graduate Education (2006-Present)

10 Years Promoting Graduate Education:

- Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, *Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville*
 - *Associate Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School*
 - President, *University of Maine*
 - Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School
 - President, *Ball State University*
 - Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School
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A Guiding Vision for Graduate Education (*Council of Graduate Schools, 1990*)

“It is the role of graduate education to explore and advance the limits of knowledge and to define the state of the art in every field.

Its purpose is to serve society’s needs in specific technical and professional ways, but also to serve the need for intellectual expansion.

Graduate education is a major source of future intellectual leaders of society, and is thus an integral and necessary part of our educational system.”



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The Changing Landscape in Higher Education

- International Growth and Competition
 - Interest in and Efficiencies of U.S. Graduate Education (Recruitment and Retention)
 - Employment Opportunities Across the Disciplines
 - Demographic Shifts in Student Populations
 - State and Federal Funding Declines; Student Debt
 - Political/Regulatory Pressures for Relevance and Accountability (Legislatures, Boards, Consumers)
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Assessing Institutional Landscapes for Graduate Education: Perceptions vs. Reality

- Graduate Education is Secondary to Undergraduate Education
 - Graduate Education is Secondary to the Research Mission
 - The Departments “Own” the Graduate Assistants
 - Graduate Education is First for Budget Cuts
 - The Graduate School is Just a Bureaucracy
 - The Graduate Dean is Not a “Real” Dean
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Major Considerations for Ensuring Relevance of Graduate Education to Leadership

- Be Consistent With Institutional Vision/Mission (e.g. scope of degree of programs)
 - Be Clearly Identified Within the Organization
 - Promote a Vital Partnership in Enrollment Management
 - Develop Authority and Accountability for Graduate Students/Assistants-and Their Future
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Major Consideration for Ensuring Relevance of Graduate Education to Leadership (*cont.*)

- Significantly Contribute to Institutional Budget Stability and Growth
 - Demonstrate Evidence of Innovation in Management *and* Program Offerings (e.g. Admissions, Certificates, Executive Programs, High Impact Degrees, e-Dissertations/Use of Technology, Online Programs)
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Major Considerations for Ensuring Relevance of Graduate Education to Leadership (*cont.*)

- Develop Use-Inspired Strategies for Community Engagement and Impact
 - Contribute to Institutional Reputation in a Substantial Manner
 - Inspire and Motivate the (Graduate) Faculty
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Specific Initiatives As Graduate Dean: Graduate Student Welfare: Student-Centered

- **Formalized a University-wide Graduate Assistant Budget** with contemporary guidelines for GA assignments, performance evaluation, and departmental distribution criteria.
 - **Provided affordable Graduate Student Health Insurance.**
 - **Established Graduate Certificates** for graduate students to develop additional specialties enhancing marketability (e.g. College Teaching, Business Development).
 - **Promoted development of a Graduate Student Organization** to serve as a viable voice for graduate students to the University Administration ensuring due process and program development.
 - **Streamlined Thesis and Dissertation Approval** and initiated the options of e-Dissertations.
 - **Promoted contemporary uses of technology** to improve student processing from admissions to graduation.
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Specific Initiatives as Graduate Dean: Organizationally Aware; Community-Engaged

- **Organizational Efficiencies: Read the Culture and Understand Resources.** Coupled Graduate Education to the success of the Research Enterprise often by combining offices and leadership. Emphasized a centralized approach to graduate education relating successes in research funding to incentivized funding of graduate education.
 - **Program Development: Be Positively Opportunistic.** Focused graduate student enrollment growth with key local, regional, and national market niches consistent with the University mission (e.g. Education, STEM, Health Sciences, Dual Degrees with Professional Programs).
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Specific Initiatives as Graduate Dean: Example From 7 Years at UNLV

- **Increased total graduate degree programs** from 75 (with 18 doctoral programs) to 108 (with 32 doctoral programs and 2 professional degrees: JD, DMD).
 - **Increased graduate student funding** both in number and quality. The number of Graduate Assistantships increased from 515 to 1018 (98% increase).
 - **Increased total University extramural sponsored program funding** from \$59 M to \$95 M (61%); total research funding increased from \$31M to \$69 M (123%) during 2003-2006.
 - *The Center for Measuring University Performance 2008 Annual Report indicated that UNLV was the fifth fastest growing institution in receipt of total research dollars among the top 156 American Research Universities from 1997-2006.*
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Unique Role and Impact of the Graduate Dean: Some Helpful Perspectives

- It is all about Personalities
- Learn the Culture of the Place
- Leading at the Right Moments
- Needing a Sense of Humor

Rosemary Levy Zumwalt

Chronicle of Higher Education, 2011



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Unique Role and Impact of the Graduate Dean: Power Player vs. Passive Player

- Carries the Legacy of Standards and Excellence
 - A Clear Voice of Institutional Vision Unrestrained by “Disciplinary Prejudice”
 - Integrates the Academic and Research Missions
 - Can Serve as “Chief Collaborative Officer”
 - Best Applies the Use of Persuasive Power
 - A Consensus Choice of Trust and Wisdom
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Clear Role for Graduate Education in a Changing Landscape

“...the competitiveness of the United States and our capacity for innovation hinges fundamentally on a strong system of graduate education.”

The Path Forward: The Future of Graduate Education in the United States. 2010.
