



**Strategic Intervention for Doctoral Completion**

A collaborative initiative to understand and improve completion

**PROGRAMS ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT**

*prepared for*

***Taking Action to Optimize Doctoral  
Completion at the Program Level***

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## INTRODUCTION

The reports presented in this booklet summarize the goals and accomplishments of the participating programs at The University of Georgia, North Carolina State University, and the University of Florida. These interim reports have been prepared by the programs and are published here to facilitate the exchange of ideas.

As you will no doubt recall, our entire project is built around a prescriptive theory that suggests that there are four conditions, shown in Table 1, necessary for optimal doctoral completion. These reports make frequent reference to the four conditions.

<b>Table 1. Four Conditions for Optimal Doctoral Completion</b>	
<i>Condition</i>	<i>Description</i>
Condition #1: The right people apply for doctoral study	Applicants must be realistic about the demands and expectations of doctoral study
Condition #2: The right applicants are admitted as doctoral students	Admissions committees must properly screen applicants and, upon enrollment, orient them to the program
Condition #3: Students and faculty form productive working relationships	Faculty members and students must interact in a mutually respectful and task oriented manner
Condition #4: Students experience social support from fellow students	Students must recognize themselves as members of a community of learners facing common challenges and opportunities



**The University of Georgia Chemistry Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**What goals has your department set?**

***A. In terms of graduate recruitment, we set the following goals in 2005:***

1. Increase pro-active recruitment activities at scientific conference and recruiting fairs (2-3 over next academic year)
2. Increase visibility of the department to undergraduates through expansion of the summer undergraduate research program (increase student participation by ~30% over the next year).
3. Involve more faculty members in individual campus visits to give research/recruiting talks, especially to undergraduate-oriented institutions (increase by 2-3 trips per year).
4. Raising minimum standards for the TOEFL exam and requiring the TSE exam for international applicants (implement this policy for next recruiting year).

***B. In terms of trying to get the right applicants to choose UGA, we set the following goals in 2005:***

1. Schedule special student recruiting weekends (1 or 2 each year) at which many prospective students come together for a planned, organized full weekend. This is a model used by several competitors (i.e. UNC), but is very labor-intensive and requires extensive cooperation from all the research faculty (faculty to decide on whether they want this option during next academic year)
2. Restrict prospective students to come on only certain days (6 or 8) so that most faculty members can be there when they visit (implement this option immediately – fully implement next academic year).

***C. In terms of trying to strengthen the social support network among current graduate students, we set the following goals in 2005:***

1. Strengthen CGSO social activities through support of current and future chairpersons  
(Graduate coordinator will hold regular meetings with CGSO chairpersons – begin immediately).
2. Establish Departmental financial support for some CGSO activities (department will match UGA student organization fees that CGSO receives – begin next academic year)

## **What activities have you undertaken to date?**

### ***A. For graduate recruitment:***

1. We now attend a minimum of three graduate recruiting fairs each year to recruit potential students. We have had positive feedback and some recruiting successes from these efforts.
2. We are implementing a new and upgraded undergraduate research program for the summer of 2007. We plan to further integrate our activities with the Graduate School program to attract minority science students.
3. Faculty are still encouraged to present recruiting seminars, but we have not implemented a formal recruitment outreach seminar program that would send UGA faculty to present seminars at undergraduate institutions. Primary constraints in this process are cost and faculty time.
4. We have implemented higher minimum TOEFL standards for foreign applicants. We decided to emphasize quality rather than quantity in recruitment of foreign graduate students. Most faculty members believe that this is the correct approach since writing and speaking in English is critical for science communications.

### ***B. For getting the right applicants to choose UGA:***

1. We have not gone to a formal graduate recruitment weekend for visiting students. This is still under discussion.
2. We did implement a model in which we highly encourage prospective students to visit the Department on 3 or 4 Fridays during the months of February and March. This tended to concentrate the visiting students into larger groups and provided for more interaction between visiting students, current students, and faculty. We feel this model satisfies our needs for right now.

### ***C. In terms of strengthening social networks:***

1. The Graduate Coordinator instituted a series of regular meetings with the graduate students to raise issues pertinent to the administration of the graduate program (i.e. TA assignments, health insurance, etc.)
2. The Chemistry Department financially supports the Graduate Student Organization in terms of its on-going social activities.

## **What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007**

1. Involve more faculty members in recruitment seminars at local colleges. Begin a more formal process of scheduling such faculty trips.
2. Organize a separate small committee of faculty to plan more proactive recruiting activities. Such a committee has been constituted and is scheduled to begin work in the next few weeks.
3. Further refine the way in which the Department conducts its visits for prospective students. Learn from current 1<sup>st</sup> year students about what they liked and did not like about their visits to UGA.

## **The University of Georgia Computer Science Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **1. What goals has your department set?**

- Begin targeted recruiting of better prospective graduate students.
- Revise the PhD program of study so that MS degreed students can potentially obtain a PhD sooner than those students hold only BS degrees.
- Undertake a major re-design of departmental web pages to better reflect faculty and current students' qualifications as well as updating the pages to reflect changes in our PhD program.
- Make more TA positions available to prospective students.
- Assess the number of students graduating by end of Spring, 2007, so that we can better predict the number of TA positions available for recruitment.
- Provide reasonable quality space to PhD students.
- Hold one social event for faculty and students.

### **2. What activities have you undertaken to date? (from June 2005)**

- Engaged in targeted recruiting of prospective students by interacting with colleagues, friends, and peers at other universities, both in the US and abroad. Many UGA Computer Science faculty members started establishing communication channels with peers at other institutions for identifying prospective graduate students. We have already started benefiting from such communication channels. During Spring, 2006, we recruited one PhD student (who would not have applied to UGA) and three Masters students (who may later become PhD students). Currently (January 2007), at least three applications have been received due to personal contacts.
- We have revised our PhD degree requirements so that students already holding a MS degree in Computer Science could potentially obtain a PhD sooner than those who hold only BS degrees could. The Department has already approved the revisions. We are currently going through the transition period, which we anticipate to take about two/three more semesters.
- Departmental web pages have been re-designed (see: [www.cs.uga.edu](http://www.cs.uga.edu)) and updated. The changes have been significant.
- During Spring, 2006, we used two TA positions as a recruitment vehicle. We have started informing our students that we would not offer TA positions to MS students who are in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of studies and PhD students who are in their 5<sup>th</sup> year of studies. We have started enforcing this policy to our MS students. We are quite confident that enforcement of this policy will create more TA positions that we could use for our PhD recruitment activities.
- We are in need of quality and reasonable space for our students. Our Department has an extensive Space Plan. The Space Plan has been submitted to UGA administration for consideration. As of now (January 2007), we have received no additional space.

- The Departmental faculty has a bi-weekly social, which is intended for both, faculty members and students. Unfortunately, only a very small group of students (2 to 4) and members of faculty (2 to 3) participate in this bi-weekly social gathering. However, the Department successfully organized two major events, which were very successful (received almost full participation by students and members of faculty): a social gathering after our Departmental Graduate Students Orientation (August, 2006) and a Departmental Christmas Party (December, 2006). Graduate students who stayed in Athens and did not have relatives in Athens were invited to a Thanksgiving dinner at the Graduate Coordinator's home (three attended).

**3. What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

- Introduce additional changes to our graduate programs (for both, MS and PhD). Changes are being proposed to help streamline the students' roadmap to graduation. Proposed changes include:
  - a) Having deadlines for students to successfully complete departmental Core Competency Certification and Comprehensive Examination (Oral and Written parts);
  - b) Providing revised guidelines to members of the faculty who supervise graduate students (e.g. their active participation in formulating the Program of Study; the impact of +/- grading system; providing incentives to their students to take courses above the minimum requirements). We believe that the proposed changes, together with the most recent revisions to our graduate programs, will attract additional MS students to our PhD program.
- Provide significantly more travel money for students to participate in national and international research conferences. This will help students to enhance their research publication record and communicate/network with experts in the field who are not affiliated with UGA.
- Provide the required information/data to National Research Council (NRC) for departmental ranking. We believe that this is a very important step for our Department (since this is the first time that we qualify for participation in the NRC ranking). The process is quite time-consuming. We expect to continue being involved with this initiative throughout 2007. We consider the NRC ranking process to be a part of our recruitment activities, because the result of NRC ranking would affect our future recruitment activities (in terms of the number and quality of future applicants).

**The University of Georgia Economics Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**1. What goals has your department set?**

- a. Attract higher quality students who are better prepared for the quantitative aspects of the Ph.D. program.
- b. Decrease time to degree.
- c. Provide more extensive opportunities for research.
- d. Better equip our Ph.D. students to teach.
- e. Improve job market placements.
- f. Obtain formal approval for our Bachelor's-Master's program.

**2. What activities have you undertaken to date?**

- a. We made curriculum changes that became effective for the Ph.D. class that entered in 2006. With this scheduling change the core curriculum will be completed in the first year of the program, and both microeconomics and macroeconomics theory exams will be administered during the summer after the first year. Field courses will be completed during the second year, and field exams will be administered during the second summer. Previously, Ph.D. students did not complete their field exams until the summer after their third year. Consequently, students will move into the research phase of the dissertation about one year earlier than they previously did.

**Summary:** These curriculum changes will attract higher quality students, help them proceed through the program more quickly, give them greater research opportunities, and better prepare them for the job market.

- b. Related to this we implemented a research methods course to teach students how to do research and help them make a quick transition from the instruction to the research phase of their dissertation research. This course will be offered at the beginning of the third year (immediately after they finish the course and exam requirements described above), and requires a paper to be written and presented to the faculty.

**Summary:** This curriculum change will attract higher quality students, help them proceed through the program more quickly, give them greater research opportunities, and better prepare them for the job market.

- c. We obtained a substantial increase in funding for assistantships that allows us to increase the assistantships of first-year students by about 250% and the funding in the second through fourth years by about 15%.

**Summary:** This funding increase will attract higher quality students who will proceed through the program more quickly and do better on the job market.

- d. We made substantial changes in training our Ph.D. students how to teach. We appointed a faculty member to serve as the Graduate Teaching Assistant Coordinator (GTAC) who will teach GRSC 7770, a course that all graduate students who become instructors of record must take before they teach. The GTAC will also oversee the instructional activities of the Ph.D. student teachers and monitor their progress. We also implemented a grade distribution guideline for Ph.D. students who teach and passed a departmental policy on training Ph.D. students to teach. For more details see

<http://www.terry.uga.edu/economics/graduate/graduatestudentteaching.php>

**Summary:** This higher quality preparation for students who teach will attract higher quality students who will have better teaching records, which will help them do better on the job market.

- e. We formally approved the department's Bachelor's-Master's program, which had been operating informally for three years. The program has attracted 2-3 students per year. Participating students are some of the brightest and most motivated undergraduates at UGA (all have been students in the Honors College and 2/3 have been Foundation Fellows). The students who have completed this program have been very successful in graduate school and job market placements. For more details about the program see

<http://www.terry.uga.edu/economics/undergrad/ba-ma.php>

**Summary:** These joint degree students do not directly help us attract better students to our Ph.D. program. However, they do take classes with our Ph.D. students, improve the quality of the classes, and have positive spillovers on our Ph.D. students.

### **3. What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

- a. Start doing the administrative work on a non-thesis option for a Master's degree.
- b. With the curriculum changes described above we substantially improved the first two and a half years of our Ph.D. program. In the future we may consider whether to implement other guidelines or deadlines to help students proceed more expeditiously through the last few years of their program.
- c. Begin to market the Bachelor's-Master's program to students in their freshman and sophomore years.

## **The University of Georgia English Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **I. Our goals**

1. To increase the numbers in, and the strength of, our applicant pool;
2. To improve our matriculation rates to ensure that the best students whom we admit accept our admission offers;
3. To foster the growth of formal and informal working relationships between faculty and graduate students; and
4. To establish a physical environment within the building that encourages the growth of a sense of community among graduate students.

### **II. Our recent activities**

1. We have updated our website, removing dysfunctional features and adding detailed and attractive descriptions of our department's areas of study, teaching strengths, and research opportunities. These changes have already helped us in our efforts to recruit strong students, as many of our applicants, and even some of their faculty recommenders, quote statements from our website in explaining why the candidate is suitable for our program. In addition, we have put student forms on the website as well as advising guidelines, clarifying our policies to students and faculty. We have already heard from a number of students that they appreciate this change, and we expect that it will reduce the number of mistakes that can slow progress toward graduation.
2. We have made an effort to include faculty and graduate students in our recruitment efforts. One means of doing this is to invite faculty to serve as "consultant readers" on particular applications in their field of expertise. If they think the candidate is a strong one, we will also invite them to contact the applicant. This spring we will involve current students more fully in our recruitment efforts. We have done some of this in the fall, as prospective applicants visit. One of our strongest applicants this year is someone who is very interested in the program, after a day-long visit in the fall when she met with three faculty and several graduate students.
3. We reclassified the position of "senior secretary" to "academic advisor," enabling us to hire someone with communication and computer skills. This staffing change has allowed us to keep the website current and to have a more efficient and inviting office. Our new academic advisor was instrumental in arranging the visits of prospective applicants, and we expect she will continue to be helpful as we intensify our recruitment efforts in the spring.
4. We are in the data-collecting stage of a new advising database, which will enable us to keep track of—and share with the members of advisory committees—student accomplishments such as publications, awards, and presentations. This project depends on department-wide efforts underway to build a new department website for our new server.

5. We are compiling a small library of readings on professional development, and we invite our students to read these materials as they move through the degree program. The library will be especially helpful for students in prompting conversations about professional development among students and faculty.
6. With our first annual Hugh Kenner Travel Symposium in December 2006, we began a research colloquium that will allow the department's faculty and graduate students to meet three or four times each academic year to share research in a collegial way. The English Graduate Organization sponsors regular events, and with department funds for refreshments, with more publicity, and with an effort to integrate faculty and student research projects, we hope that these events will become popular and will help to foster more "formal and informal working relationships" between faculty and students, as listed in our goals. Efforts are underway to bring one of our recent graduates to campus so that she can read from her new book and discuss the process of converting a dissertation to a scholarly book. We will continue to seek similar opportunities, and we will promote and report on these events on our website.

### **III. Future activities.**

A final plan we have not yet begun, but hope to begin this spring, is an effort to provide all students with the kind of professional development mentoring that some of our most engaged faculty regularly offer their students. Efforts in the past to institute a required course for first-year graduate students were unsuccessful, but we are considering a different model, since many students repeat the request for such a course. We might try as a model Dr. Barbara McCaskill's recent graduate course, Introduction to Multicultural Studies, where she introduced students to many elements of professionalization, such as writing research proposals.

### **IV. Goals we cannot meet without funding.**

Finally, we are very far from reaching two of our important goals, which our department has long recognized as pressing needs:

1. the renovation of the basement in Park Hall, where graduate student offices are clustered together with no common areas and high density within the offices. The space is inadequate for teaching needs and frustrates any attempt to build community. However, university funds are necessary for us to do anything about this dire physical environment; and
2. The reduction of the graduate student teaching load from 2/2 (with 22 students in each section) to 1/2. Our heavy graduate student teaching load makes it very difficult for us to recruit the best students; many of them would like to come to UGA but accept offers at comparable or even inferior programs that can offer them a lighter teaching load. Once again, we cannot change this defect in our recruitment package without financial support from the university.

## The University of Georgia Genetics Department Program Accomplishment Report

### 1. What goals has your department set?

Genetics goals remain unchanged from those stated in the self-assessment report. They are categorized based on the four conditions and supported by a list of activities to achieve the goals.

*Condition #1. To what extent are the right people applying to your program?*

**Self assessment:** We seek to attract students with demonstrated interest and aptitude for study of experimental genetics. Our ideal applicant has had excellent undergraduate academic preparation in the sciences and significant research laboratory experience. As judged by student accomplishments and postgraduate placement, we are attracting the right applicants. Our key current challenge is to expand the applicant pool so that we can increase the number of students in the program without diminishing student quality.

**Proposed activities for improvement:** Our plan for program improvement centers on implementing a new web site to highlight the quality of our training program and to inform applicants of our program expectations. We are also implementing a web-based application system to streamline the application process. Our goal is to fully implement each of these changes by Fall term of 2006.

*Condition #2. To what extent is your program admitting the right applicants?*

**Self assessment:** Our program appears to be admitting the right applicants because of a low attrition rate. Those students that do leave the program do so, with few exceptions, early in the program due to regular monitoring of student progress by the graduate affairs committee.

**Proposed activities for improvement:** Our ability to admit the right applicants is based, in part, on the two-day campus visit including faculty interviews and interactions with current graduate students. Potentially acceptable graduate students are invited to the campus after pre-screening. The screening is based on undergraduate GPA with emphasis on core science courses, standardized test scores, the applicant's personal statement, and letters of recommendation. Our plan is to continue this screening process in the future. Although effective, this process is not foolproof, so we will also maintain our policy of annual student evaluations and early completion of qualifying exams to identify students who are not capable of completing the degree program.

**Condition #3.** *To what extent do faculty and students form productive relationships in your program?*

**Self assessment:** In our program, a key measure of productive relationships between faculty and students is the number of research publications and by this criterion, our program does an excellent job. There are also many opportunities for faculty and students to interact scientifically and socially in events such as the weekly departmental seminars, an annual retreat, and open houses for visiting faculty candidates and prospective students.

**Proposed activities for improvement:** In addition to the program elements listed above, we plan to continue the rotation system, in which first-year students work for half a semester in three different laboratories before choosing a Ph.D. mentor. This is a key mechanism for ensuring that students and faculty mentors are well-matched.

**Condition #4.** *To what extent do students in your program experience social support from fellow students?*

**Self assessment:** One of the hallmarks of our graduate program is an extremely engaged and interactive student group. In addition to day-to-day interactions in academic and laboratory work, the students have organized an active graduate student association. We attempt to encourage student engagement and support by including the students fully in the activities of the department.

**Proposed activities for improvement:** The department will continue to provide resources for at least two student-invited seminar speakers each year. In addition, we will continue departmental policy of including graduate student representatives with voting rights at all faculty meetings. Finally, we will continue to provide resources for graduate student organized departmental retreats.

## **2. What activities have you undertaken to date?**

Since June of 2005, we have focused our new efforts on Condition #1. To what extent are the right people applying to your program?

Our self-assessment suggested that, as judged by student accomplishments and postgraduate placement, we are attracting the right applicants. However, our key challenge was to expand the applicant pool so that we can increase the number of students in the program without diminishing student quality.

We addressed this issue by redesigning our departmental web site to better highlight the quality of our training program and to inform applicants of our program expectations. The new web site went on-line in Summer of 2006 and can be viewed at [www.genetics.uga.edu](http://www.genetics.uga.edu). We also updated a paper flyer describing the Genetics training program and faculty research interests and mailed this out in the Fall of 2006 to faculty

colleagues at other colleges and universities. Because we also wish to boost minority enrollment in our program, we also sent the mailing to directors of minority undergraduate research programs including MARC, PREP and RISE. We also implemented a web-based application system to streamline the application process. For the first time this year, all domestic applications were available to graduate affairs committee members as electronic files, speeding review of applications.

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

We plan to continue the goals and activities currently in progress and to further streamline the application and review process. Although the web-based application system and on-line review by graduate affairs committee members worked fairly well, some documents, such as reference letters, had to be hand-scanned into the system. It is our goal to address this technical issue, either at the departmental level, or preferably through a university-wide web based solution for electronic receipt of reference letters.



## **The University of Georgia History Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **1. What goals has your department set?**

Our goals are the same as those previously submitted. Our principal efforts have been and continue to be directed toward better matching student/applicant interests with the strengths and resources available from our faculty. In particular, we would like to eliminate the occasional problems we have experienced when we have admitted students with otherwise very strong records, but whose goals and interests are not well-served by our faculty and other resources. We also have been, and will continue, exploring means to ensure that students identify and establish close working relationships with appropriate faculty mentors as early as possible after beginning their studies.

### **2. What activities have you undertaken to date?**

We have continued to expand our recruiting efforts in traditional fora—the University bulletins, department profiles in American Historical Association and other professional organization publications, and the like. In addition, we have expanded our recruitment efforts through our undergraduates, and by networking with colleagues at other institutions. We want to encourage students whose interests and needs are appropriate to our faculty and our programs to consider UGA among their choices for graduate school.

We have also revised our Proposed Study Form, which includes detailed questions about major and minor fields in which the applicants plan to work and faculty with whom they are interested in working. The form is available on our dept. website at <http://www.uga.edu/history/form/proposed%20study.pdf>. The section of that webpage containing the link to the form also offers an additional link to our faculty page, to encourage students to look more carefully at what we can and cannot offer.

We have also revised the program descriptions and other material on our webpage, including the addition of a FAQ section. We have also revised the materials we mail out to prospective applicants and made corrections and modifications of our graduate student handbook.

### **3. What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

We will continue to experiment with ways to ensure that students identify and establish close working relationships with appropriate faculty mentors as early as possible after beginning their studies. In addition to the steps outlined above, which encourage students to think seriously about mentors and advisors even before they arrive on campus—indeed, even before they complete the application process. We will, moreover, be pushing students to put together their advisory committees early on—before the end of their second semester for MA students and by the end of their third semester for PhD students—and monitoring this process with emailed reminders and regular reviews of student files



## **The University of Georgia Mathematics Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **Department goals:**

The following goals were identified in the program self-assessment.

1. Ensure a strong applicant pool for the Ph.D. program by good recruiting and publicity, but especially by obtaining adequate funding for the program - that would include competitive stipends for the academic year and the possibility of summer support (ideally the support would be available for both domestic and international students and would include at least occasional part-time research support).
2. Advise new students effectively and form their preliminary doctoral committees.
3. Make the departmental and university requirements clear to students and advisers.
4. Form a consistent graduate program offering with the right mix of courses.
5. Have a clear plan for the international TA's to develop their English proficiency.

### **Activities we have undertaken to date:**

Some of the major activities undertaken to achieve the goals from June 2005 through December 2006 are:

1. The department submitted another VIGRE proposal to NSF that reviewed well, received a site visit in Spring 2006, and was recommended for funding, but ended up as first runner-up (4th) and was not funded. An NSF grant for Summer REU's was approved and will fund 1 summer graduate assistant and serve generally as publicity for the departmental activities and incidentally as a recruiting vehicle for the graduate program. The department is preparing for another submission in June 2007 of a major VIGRE grant proposal which would include non-teaching traineeship support each academic year for several domestic graduate students and would help supply travel support and summer support for domestic students.
2. Descriptions and pictures of some of the departmental research group activities have been kept up-to-date on the web site.
3. Last spring we switched the Graduate Visitation Day program (from Saturday, as was traditional) to a Friday so that the visiting students could see the activity in the department and on campus. We also arranged visits for several of the top prospective students and offered to help cover expenses.
4. In Fall 2006 we informed the College (Arts and Sciences) administration of the departmental needs to increase the numbers of TA units provided to the department in order to ensure an adequate supply of experienced TA's available for the instructional mission of the College (through direct instruction, assisting, study halls, grading, and other duties).
5. We have continued the initial advising system, which seems to function well, and we have worked to overcome delays in the formation of the preliminary doctoral advisory committees. The model is that the student and advisor agree on a 5-member advisory committee (with the advisor as chair) and get the members

- approval, and then the student processes the paperwork with the graduate coordinator's signature.
6. A small but important change was implemented in the structure of the written qualifying exams. The graduate committee has also made some policy clarifications, especially concerning the way that the departmental research skills requirements may be fulfilled. The updated policies need to be written in final form, approved by the departmental graduate faculty, and posted.
  7. We have tried to help students plan their programs from the beginning (the preparatory courses for the qualifying exams, the problem sessions and the summer preparation groups, when to take the exams, when the oral qualifying exam will be taken, and finally research and thesis writing). The graduate committee and the advisory committees track students' progress towards the degree objective, for the continued support decisions that are made during each spring semester.
  8. The planning of the graduate course offerings has proceeded as usual with input from the faculty in the various subject areas and with student needs in view (but without systematic polling of students).
  9. It was decided that the requirements for student participation in the VIGRE research groups would remain the same for the academic year 2006-07 as in previous years. It was finally established within the department that faculty members leading a research group (with enough enrolled students) would receive partial teaching credit.
  10. The department started a system of bringing in a professional in the area of English language training to assess in the fall semester the international students' readiness for the TAST and to help in their preparation. However, the University has again changed its policy for international TA's to establish their English proficiency. The policy was changed to the TAST in Fall 2005 (score of 26 required) with the University arranging and subsidizing the taking of the test the first two times; and now after Fall 2006, the University no longer pays for the test and regularly schedules the test. The University still offers the two English language training courses ELAN 7768 and 7769, which some of our students take.

### **Changes we can reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

1. Enhance the program resources by applying for graduate school assistantships by entering qualified students in the competitions for graduate school funding opportunities. Prepare an updated graduate program review for inclusion in the June VIGRE grant application. Recruit aggressively through the annual Graduate Visitation Day.
2. We will continue to maintain good communication between the students and the program administration. We need to have the students elect a new graduate student ombudsman to convey graduate student concerns to the graduate committee. Late in the spring, we will conduct the 3rd annual program evaluation by the students. Revisit all remaining program policies that are not clear to students and faculty, and get a clear description in the Graduate Guidebook. Implement a system for providing teaching mentors for all TA's and carrying out

faculty observations of graduate students' teaching (the advisor will be in charge of getting a teaching mentor or a member of the student's advisory committee to do the observation).

3. Continue to explore how international graduate students can gain sufficient English proficiency to be effective TA's and find a way to document their effectiveness even if they are unable to get a 26 score on the TAST.



## **The University of Georgia Microbiology Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **Program goals:**

1. To obtain applicants who have strong undergraduate training in Microbiology and who have research experience, we targeted five schools/programs and work with faculty/students in those schools/programs to attract applicants (in addition to many other ongoing recruitment activities).
2. To insure that all faculty members in the department participate in the evaluation of applicant folders and in interviewing our top recruits so that students accepted into the program will fit well with our department.
3. To improve communication between students and faculty, several meetings will be scheduled annually to identify and address strengths and weaknesses of our program (beyond ongoing, normal annual committee meetings). Additional information will be added to our program web site (WebCT MIBO8150) after discussion with the graduate students concerning what would be helpful.
4. Establish a new student support group that will meet once per month.

### **Activities we have undertaken to date:**

**For goal 1.** Discussions have been initiated with Dr. Madeline Rasche (Graduate Coordinator) and Dr. Eric Triplett (Department Chair) at the University of Florida. Dr. Madeline Rasche visited Athens in July 2006. This meeting will be used to plan new initiatives. Dr. Hoover (undergraduate coordinator and P.I of REU program) went to the Univ. of Florida in October. His recruiting efforts have resulted in the application of qualified minority students to our program seeking admission for 2007. Dr. Ellen Neidle (Graduate Coordinator) recently visited Savannah State University and worked with Dr. Julius Afalobi to meet students and to encourage students to apply to our UGA programs.

**For goal 2.** We solicited information from faculty members throughout the fall by email communications and by getting written/verbal comments on all applicants' folders. Individual interviews will be set up between possible faculty mentors and applicants during our recruitment weekend, which is already scheduled for Feb. 15-18, 2007. Members of the graduate affairs committee will make follow-up communications and phone calls with top applicants throughout this period. The departmental web site has been updated.

**For goal 3.** The faculty discussed the graduate program during its retreat in May 2006. At that time, it was decided to create more opportunities for graduate students to report their research to the department. This proposal requires moving our seminar preparation course to the summer semester of the first year, which has already been completed. The

second part was to organize an annual student seminar program. This part is underway. Additional information has been added to our program web site (WebCT MIBO8150) after discussion with the graduate students concerning what would be helpful.

**For goal 4.** The graduate student associate was asked to start a support group.

**Changes we can accomplish by June 2007:**

1. We expect that annual student seminar program will be organized by this time. The program is scheduled to begin in Fall, 2007.
2. Dr. Neidle (Graduate Coordinator) has been invited to visit Univ. of Florida Spring 2007 and will continue our recruiting efforts there.
3. Discussions will continue to start a graduate student support group.

## **The University of Georgia Physics Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **What goals has your department set?**

1. Improve facilities and space resources by major renovation of the Physics Building.
2. Refill full-time faculty lines lost due to recent retirements in high visibility research areas as outlined in the Department's strategic plan.
3. Strengthen pre-admission screening program.
4. Implement a senior graduate student guidance program.
5. Establish additional graduate student/faculty activities including a departmental retreat.
6. Establish a new graduate student research prize.

### **What activities have you undertaken to date?**

1. Reexamined and strengthened our pre-admission screening program.
2. Explored new international recruiting opportunities.
3. Continued (and expanded through junior / interdisciplinary faculty participation) our extremely successful PHYS 8990 laboratory rotation course.
4. Initiated a pizza dinner with the department head at least once a semester to provide a forum for graduate student issues.
5. Worked more closely with graduate student representatives to ascertain demand for new advanced topics courses.

### **What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

1. Initiate major renovation of the Physics Building.
2. Increase on-campus interviewing of national and regional recruits as funding allows.
3. Explore funding mechanisms for annual retreat, graduate student guidance program and research prize.
4. Provide enrichment seminars that address graduate student issues and concerns.
5. Continue social activities such as weekly coffee hour, graduate student award ceremony and annual picnic.
6. Set up a web-page to record and track the current employment situation of our ex-graduate students.



## **The University of Georgia Plant Biology Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **1. What goals has your department set?**

**Condition #1:** The right people apply for doctoral study.

- Most potential applicants use the department website to obtain information about the program and about faculty and their research. To communicate the most effective information faculty websites should be regularly updated with 'attractive' information.
- The Departmental website should be improved with updated departmental (and specifically graduate student) news, recent grants, significant papers, awards, etc.
- More advertising of the department would help make more potential applicants aware of our programs. Faculty should think of recruitment when at national meetings and when giving seminars at other institutions. Perhaps directing presentations at target schools would be strategic.
- We are somewhat limited as to the specific laboratories where potential applicants might find an active research home. Several of our older faculty are retiring or not taking new students. We need to replace with new faculty with active research programs. This goal will take many years as it depends on upper administration position and their decisions.
- We should indicate on the departmental website those faculty who are taking new students and those who are not taking new students.

**Condition #2:** The right applicants are admitted as doctoral students

- Most faculty think we are doing a good job at recruiting for graduate students and that our admission criteria are appropriate. We use GPA and GRE test scores along with a measure of the undergrad institution quality along with reference letters and potential 'fit' with existing faculty research programs. For domestic student applicants we have a recruiting weekend in February when all applicants of interest are brought to UGA to meet and talk with faculty and students.
- Our recruiting weekend well for domestic applicants, but we are unable to personally interview international applicants. For these we must rely on scores, personal statements, and letters of recommendation.
- As there is no easy solution to personal interviews for international students we have no concrete recommendations beyond what is presently employed (a recruiting trip by two section faculty members to China several years ago was not successful in attracting more or better students than the present procedures).

**Condition #3:** Students and faculty form productive working relationships

- As working relationships between faculty and students are often very individualized, it is difficult to generalize about this condition, but certain guidelines may prove to be helpful. The most critical general phenomenon related to condition #3 is that students need to be encouraged to move through their program in an efficient manner. This includes the scheduling of written and oral exams to allow students to advance to candidacy by the beginning of their third year. Students who are moving through their program at a slow rate need to be better monitored by their research committees or by the Graduate Studies Committee.
- The department has annual evaluations prepared by the major professor in consultation with each student. Typically, there is little follow through with these annual reports. This vehicle is in place as a potential monitoring device for student progress.
- Lab rotations are encouraged for new students, a major professor is then chosen from among the faculty, but this is not well explained on our website.
- The Plant Biology Graduate Coordinator is available for discussion with students if problems arise with a major advisor.

**Condition #4:** Students experience social support from fellow students

- In the past, there has been some separation between international and domestic students and between students in different disciplines, but that is changing.
- Socially, international students are mixing more now with domestic students and participating in departmental functions more than a few years ago.
- It is possible that the department could offer more opportunities for socialization

**What activities have you undertaken to date?**

- Most potential applicants use the department website to obtain information about the program and about faculty and their research. To communicate the most effective information faculty websites should be regularly updated with 'attractive' information.
- *Over 90% of the faculty has updated their webpages by mid-September. Also, the rewritten Overview section now is more promotional about the department and the university/Athens community.*
- The Departmental website should be improved with updated departmental (and specifically graduate student) news, recent grants, significant papers, awards, etc.
- *The Recent Publications have been updated to reflect all departmental publications listed at Web of Science in September. The graduate student awards webpage has been updated. Graduate students and faculty have been sent timely announcements of award opportunities with follow-up reminders of deadlines.*

- More advertising of the department would help make more potential applicants aware of our programs. Faculty should think of recruitment when at national meetings and when giving seminars at other institutions. Perhaps directing presentations at target schools would be strategic. *Personal email messages were sent to biology faculty at ~100 colleges and small universities to encourage “exceptional” students to apply to our program and summarized our areas of accomplishment. Responses from many faculty contacted were very positive about this advertising approach.*
- As working relationships between faculty and students are often very individualized, it is difficult to generalize about this condition, but certain guidelines may prove to be helpful. The most critical general phenomenon related to condition #3 is that students need to be encouraged to move through their program in an efficient manner. This includes the scheduling of written and oral exams to allow students to advance to candidacy by the beginning of their third year. Students who are moving through their program at a slow rate need to be better monitored by their research committees or by the Graduate Studies Committee.
- *We have initiated a program of notifying students when the student is about to fall behind schedule. Their advisors received copies and that has generally had a positive effect on compliance.*



## **The University of Georgia Psychology Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **1. What goals has your department set?**

Our goals were codified in the following 17-point plan:

- I.** Filter out students who are interested in a terminal degree. The department will highlight the Ph.D-only nature of the program by changing the wording in the department's website.
- II.** Keep faculty websites and the home page interesting and current to better represent the research interests of the program's faculty.
- III.** Increase graduate student stipends. To achieve this, the Department Head and Graduate Coordinator will work with the Graduate School and higher administration, and College Foundation.
- IV.** Increase the attractiveness of program benefits. The Department Head will encourage and facilitate faculty attempts to obtain external funding that includes research assistantships for graduate students by directing faculty to grant-writing programs requiring that grant applications include funds for graduate students research assistantships, and informing them of grant opportunities.
- V.** Compete with other universities for top applicants. The Department Head will identify funding for visits to the university for top applicants.
- VI.** Get early starts on faculty-student research mentoring. To this end, the department will increase the number of students supported by RAs funded with faculty external research grants or research startup grants.
- VII.** The Long Range Planning Committee will draft a list of recommendations and suggestions for encouraging student-faculty research early on for the department's six programs. Examples are to consider requiring a first year research paper/presentation of all students to encourage research collaborations with faculty early on, and incorporating grant proposal writing and writing review papers into coursework.
- VIII.** Encourage excellent current students to apply for external pre-doctoral fellowships, and thus ensure that they have time for an in-depth research experience with a faculty member. The Long Range Planning Committee will provide helpful information about these fellowships on the department's website.
- IX.** The Long Range Planning Committee will address ways to change the graduate curriculum and other requirements to create more time for students' research with faculty members.
- X.** Manage the large and increasing demand for undergraduate instruction as the number of faculty has decreased. The faculty will strategically increase the size of certain courses or sections in order to decrease the reliance on graduate student instructors, who then would have more time for research with faculty.
- XI.** Develop ways for faculty to mentor students in the development of computer proficiency at the level expected in the profession of psychology. This will be done through the department's technology committee.

- XII.** The Department Head will include, as part of the department's fundraising activities, attempts to obtain funding for graduate students to attend research conferences.
- XIII.** The graduate coordinator will gather feedback and suggestions from graduate students about graduate faculty research mentoring and about peer social support.
- XIV.** Department Head will encourage the Program Chairs to identify and develop opportunities for cross-program collaboration and socializing for graduate students.
- XV.** The Graduate Studies Committee will consider a Department award for graduate student mentoring.
- XVI.** Long Range Planning Committee will identify department models at other universities or in some of the programs in our department that promote peer mentoring and social support, especially regarding senior graduate students mentoring junior students.

## **2. What activities have you undertaken to date?**

This section is organized numerically in parallel with the previous section.

- I-II.** These changes have been made.
- III.** We are still attempting to increase the average rate of stipends. The head has been discussing possibilities with the upper administration. Our current strategy is to increase the number of hours that form the basis for the amount students are compensated. Currently, the stipend is based on 13 hours, which may be unrealistically low.
- IV.** All faculty members are now required to include RA funds within their grants when possible.
- V.** The department head now supplies funds to compensate for travel expenses associated with interviewing top applicants. Other departmental benefits, such as our exceptional access to resources, are now touted on our website.
- VI-VII.** All graduate students are encouraged (e.g., at the Graduate Student Orientation) to meet early on with their major professor to facilitate getting immediately involved in research. We have a number of new RA positions available through our new neuroscience/imaging initiative. A number of programs within our department (e.g., Neuroscience and Behavior and Cognitive-Experimental) require a first-year presentation where new students present the results of the research they conducted during the year. Other programs hold regular "brown-bag" meetings where first-year students informally present the results of their research.
- VIII.** Our faculty (e.g., Doree Fragazy) offer seminars on how to write successful pre-doctoral grant proposals. The Long Range Planning Committee is developing a section on our website that describes sources of external funding. Our graduate students were quite successful at obtaining external funding this last year.
- IX-X.** The Long-Range Planning committee recently drafted a charge for the

Undergraduate Studies committee. This charge was aimed at restructuring the undergraduate curriculum in ways that both optimize faculty time and free our graduate students from excessive teaching commitments. A number of professors are now teaching very large sections of courses that graduate students taught in smaller sections.

- XI.** The department head has charged the department's technology Committee with developing a 5-year-plan to develop innovative technologies for teaching and research, and to enhance compute proficiency in our graduate student body.
- XII.** Our students are encouraged to apply for travel funds through the graduate school which funds one professional trip per fiscal year. The department head is constantly seeking external funding for other professional development activities.
- XIII.** Several events have been organized that were designed to facilitate cross-program socializing and encourage peer support. For example, social gatherings for all of the graduate students have been held and supported by the department. The graduate students were required to attend a series of recent job talks. This requirement was designed to give the students exposure to the structure of job talks and foster a research culture. One of our faculty members also presented a lecture on how to give a job talk. After the talks, the graduate students met with the graduate coordinator to comment on the talks and to discuss other issues in their graduate education.

### **3. What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

The Graduate Studies committee met and discussed issues of consistency across programs and designed a "visitation" day. This day will be set aside for potential students who are interested in applying for our graduate programs and will allow them to meet with professors, tour labs, etc. The committee still needs to design a mentorship award. The Long-Range planning committee is still working on ways to increase the research culture within our department. We have identified as one of our main priorities our efforts to increase stipends, which we regard as unacceptably low for our students, e.g., it hampers our ability to recruit top students. Another priority is to reduce the workload of our graduate students in order to increase the time they have available to do research. These latter goals may not be accomplished by June, but we plan to make considerable progress (e.g., restructuring the undergraduate curriculum has already begun).



**The University of Georgia Sociology Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**1. What goals has your department set?**

1. Expand the “Frequently Asked Questions” section on our graduate program page to cover more issues, such as “how do I know if I am a good fit for sociology at UGA,” and “how is being a graduate student different from being an undergraduate.” In this way, we may be able to discourage inappropriate students from applying and increase the chances that the most serious candidates do apply.
2. Increase our outreach efforts to our colleagues at other universities who may be in a position to recommend students to our program
3. Showcase our current and future graduate students on our webpage.
4. Increase the quality of students who are invited to the visitation weekend.
5. Help first year students build early relationships with faculty.
6. Help first year students adjust to their new role as teaching

**3. What activities have you undertaken to date?**

1. The redesign of the FAQ was completed in October 2006. In addition, we also added a separate web link for “Prospective Graduate Students.” This page includes not only the new FAQs but also more detailed information on the program, course of study, funding opportunities, etc.
2. The Graduate Coordinator attended the American Sociological Association’s Director of Graduate Studies Conference in August 06 in order to network with those at other universities who are in a position to recommend students to UGA for graduate study.
3. In December 2006, we introduced web pages for all current graduate students. The format of these pages is identical to the faculty pages, which include a photograph, a link to a pdf of the C.V., list of grants and awards description of current projects, and list of selected publications. Due to the significant amount of time involved in constructing these pages and other new web initiatives, we do not intend to roll-out the “Focus on Alums” section until Fall 07.
4. In the Spring 06 recruitment season (for matriculation in Fall 06), each prospective student was placed in contact with one or more faculty members in his/her area of interest before the visitation weekend. Faculty members made initial contact over either e-mail or phone and then had an individual meeting with the student during the visitation weekend.
5. In order to help students build early, strong relationship with their major professors, the graduate coordinator will begin assigning temporary advisors to all incoming students effective Fall 06. The temporary advisor is in the student’s area

of concentration and helps guide student's selection of courses and research activities, as well as assists in selection of the major professor.

6. In Fall, 2007 graduate Coordinator assigned a senior graduate student to be the Lead TA in each of the Fall Introductory Sociology classes (most first year students teach discussion sections for Intro). The Lead TA oversaw the activities of the other TAs and served as a role model and resource.

### **3. What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

1. The Graduate Coordinator will send a letter to each faculty member who writes a letter of recommendation for a student who matriculates at UGA. The letter will thank the faculty member for sending us his/her student and highlight activities in our graduate program.
2. We will begin gathering the Alumni biographies necessary for the "Spotlight on Alums" section of the departmental website. We do not expect roll-out of the section, though, until Fall 07.

**North Carolina State University  
Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**What goals has your department set?**

1. The right people apply for doctoral study.
2. The right applicants are admitted as doctoral students
3. Students and faculty form productive working relationships
4. Students experience social support from fellow students

**What activities have you undertaken to date?**

1. Obtain a listing of top seniors interested in graduate school from other schools and reciprocate the same. Send information to these candidates
1. Evaluate inquiries received from students directly, thru [www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com), and Peterson Guide with information (school, current year, GPA, GREs, research interest).
1. Set up booths at AICHE Graduate School Fair in Fall and Spring where faculty and graduate students talk with prospective students
1. Attend presentations and poster sessions of these students at AICHE Meetings.
2. Graduate Recruiting Committee (made up of 6 faculty members in different research areas in CBE) look over all applications received and admit the most qualified students into our program
2. Faculty contact the best students and talk one on one with them and invite them to a Graduate Recruiting Weekend.
3. Departmental seminars of graduate students, held several times a semester, where faculty and graduate students have fellowship after presentations
3. Research group meetings between students and advisor
3. Schoenborn student award and poster session day held annually.
4. Departmental picnic every Fall with faculty, staff, and graduate students welcoming incoming students
4. GSA (graduate student association) of department arranges monthly events such as celebration after work on at the end of the month for pay day.
4. Departmental Social every Spring with graduate student/faculty skits and awards
4. Graduate Recruiting Weekend Social with prospective and current graduate students.

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

Not applicable



**North Carolina State University Chemistry Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**What goals has your department set?**

**Condition #1.**

- a. Complete a major overhaul of departmental website to make it more informative, intuitive, and easy to navigate.
- b. Revise domestic faculty recruiting visitation program to provide better focus; identify a selected set of priority undergraduate institutions
- c. Make annual faculty visits to China and Puerto Rico
- d. Host active summer undergraduate research program (current programs: NSF REU, NSF AGEP)

**Condition #2**

- a. Hold annual visitation weekend in early spring for prospective graduate students where ample opportunities are provided for individual interactions with faculty and current graduate students.
- b. Restrict international admission offers to applicants in one of the following categories: 1) personally interviewed; 2) telephone interviewed by admissions committee; 3) guaranteed full research support by a faculty member.
- c. Consider research area availability when making admission decisions.
- d. Contact applicant's references if any questions exist regarding suitability and qualifications for our graduate program.

**Condition #3**

- a. Faculty give research overview talks to new students during first two months of fall semester.
- b. New students complete minimum of three individual interviews with faculty.
- c. Require that PhD candidacy exam be taken during the first semester of third year.
- d. Implement PhD candidacy exam evaluation sheets for faculty.
- e. Obtain student feedback by implementing post-candidacy and post-degree questionnaires for doctoral students. Evaluate how to better engage research advisory committees in student progress.

**Condition #4**

- a. Initiate regular meetings between Chair and a select group of graduate students
- b. Obtain student feedback by implementing post-candidacy and post-degree questionnaires for doctoral students.

**What activities have you undertaken to date?****Condition #1**

- a. A committee was established to revamp the departmental website. Work is underway but incomplete.
- b. Faculty members traveled to China in Fall 2005 and Fall 2006 to interview potential graduate students.
- c. A total of 18 undergraduate research students were hosted during summer 2006 through NSF REU (11 students) and NSF AGEP (7 students).

**Condition #2**

- a. A graduate visitation weekend was held March 3-5, 2006, and 29 prospective graduate students attended.
- b. International admission offers were restricted to applicants who had either been personally interviewed by at least two faculty members or telephone interviewed on a conference call by three members of the admissions committee.
- c. Considered research area availability when making admission decisions.
- d. Telephoned references of several applicants to resolve concerns before reaching admission decisions.

**Condition #3**

- a. Faculty gave research overview talks to new students during first two months of fall semester. (*standard practice*)
- b. New students completed a minimum of three individual interviews with faculty. (*standard practice*)
- c. PhD candidacy exams were taken by all students who were in the fifth semester of their program. (*standard practice*)

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?****Condition #1**

- a. Move closer to a major reworking of departmental website. Summer or early fall is a more likely completion date.

- b. Revise domestic faculty recruiting visitation program to provide better focus; identify a selected set of priority undergraduate institutions.

**Condition #2**

- a. A visitation weekend for prospective graduate students will be held on March 9-11, 2007.
- b. Restrict international admission offers to applicants in one of the following categories: 1) personally interviewed; 2) telephone interviewed by admissions committee; 3) guaranteed full research support by a faculty member. (*now standard practice*)
- c. Consider research area availability when making admission decisions. (*now standard practice*)
- d. Contact applicant's references if any questions exist regarding suitability and qualifications for our graduate program. (*now standard practice*)

**Condition #3**

- a. Obtain student feedback by implementing post-candidacy questionnaire for doctoral students.
- b. Evaluate how to better engage research advisory committees in student progress.

**Condition #4**

- a. Initiate regular meetings between Chair and a select group of graduate students
- b. Obtain student feedback by implementing post-candidacy questionnaire for doctoral students.



**North Carolina State University  
Civil, Construction & Environmental Engineering Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**What goals has your department set?**

**Condition #1**

- Attract applications from more high-caliber US individuals interested in pursuing a PhD (including diversity candidates) through short-term investment.
  
- Attract applications from more high-caliber US individuals interested in pursuing a PhD through long-term investment.

**Condition #2**

- Increase probability of acceptance by applicants selected in application review process by enhancing quality of visits by potential US PhD students.
  
- Increase probability of acceptance by applicants selected in application review process by assuring competitive offers to potential PhD students.
  
- Increase selectivity of international PhD students through increased faculty communication with candidate.

**Condition #3**

- Improved start for PhD students.
  
- Increase exposure of graduate student's research effort and progress during their studies to elevate their sense of accomplishment and recognition.
  
- Improved mentoring and monitoring of student progress and feedback.

**Condition #4**

Increased social support from fellow students

**What activities have you undertaken to date?**

- 1-2 Sought funding to identify potential candidates by using GRE Search Service. Funding received.
- 1-3 Sought funding for new brochure on educational aspects of program to complement existing brochure on research activities. Funding received.
- 1-4 Communicate information about the programs to candidates identified. 500<sup>+</sup> packets mailed.

- 2-1 Enhance quality of office space provided to graduate students by making strategic furnishings purchases: 90 new desk chairs purchased; one office area for 7 students renovated.

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

- 1-3 Develop new brochure on educational aspects of program to complement existing brochure on research activities.
- 1-6 Increase potential for current PhD students to become faculty in other programs through improved mentoring and exposure in national conferences and thus enhance branding of program in other US universities.
- 2-2 Enhance quality of office space by expecting specialty groups to better organize and maintain space appearance.
- 2-6. Monitor competitiveness of offer packages to PhD students.
- 2-7. Increase direct contact by faculty with international applicants and references by email.
- 3-1. Early assignment of appropriate temporary advisor for self-supported students.
- 3-6. Definition of expectations for student to participate in mentored teaching, conference presentations, publication, ethics seminars, and other career goals identified.
- 3-11. Increase graduate student interaction with Advisory Board.
- 4-3. Encourage graduate students to re-activate participation in Graduate Student Association.

Note: *In both questions two and three, the first numbers preceding “activities undertaken” and the “proposed changes” refer to either Conditions 1, 2, 3, or 4. The second number refers to the activity the program proposed for that condition in their self-assessment. The self-assessment is available at <http://www.gradsch.uga.edu:5080/cgs/register.htm> (go to Program Data page and select Program Self-assessments).*

## **North Carolina State University Computer Science Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **What goals has your department set?**

Our program goals are to:

- Have the best national and international students apply to our program.
- Admit the students who will do well in Computer Science at NCSU and get these students to matriculate here.
- Improve our acceptance rate for supported students.
- Help establish positive, productive, and congenial relationships between PhD students and faculty.
- All incoming PhD students should be paired up with a professor and have a plan for research.
- Provide support within each research lab so that students work well together, are cooperative and friendly, and socialize outside the office as well.
- Increase social interaction among all of the graduate students
- Provide a social climate to encourage women to apply to our program, make those already in the program comfortable, and provide them with an environment in which to succeed.

### **What activities have you undertaken to date?**

- Our students are our best recruiters. We have asked our students, primarily out-of-state and international PhD students, to present to their friends and younger colleagues at their undergraduate universities, the strengths and benefits of Computer Science Department, NCSU, and the professional opportunities available to our PhD students across the country as well as in the RTP area.
- Since we are now in one building we have
  - a. Monthly breakfasts with all of the graduate students, faculty, and staff, paid for out of departmental funds.
  - b. Graduate Student Association holds regular meetings and pizza parties.
  - c. An opening social the first Friday of classes for all students and immediately after a required meeting for new students.
- Increased emphasis on assigning TA positions to promote productive student-faculty relationships. Many advisee/advisor relationships develop out of the deliberate assigning/matching of TAs and professors with similar research interests.
- Continue to support our Women in Computer Science (WICS) organization and increasingly use them as part of our recruiting effort.
- Provide all PhD students with offices in MRC or EBII or desks in their research labs. This had been done for supported students before but we have extended that to all PhD students.
- Used regional Newsweek advertising for both UG and Graduate programs
- Expanded our Admissions Committee to include faculty from all of our major student areas and to process our application more rapidly.

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

- Support all PhD students who have passed their written qualifiers at least at the GSSP level.
- Implement a required CV for all PhD students and use these as the basis for a yearly review by the faculty.
- Require each PhD committee to meet with the students and report on progress and difficulties.
- Give special attention to female applicants and assign a female graduate student and female faculty person to mentor each accepted PhD female student.
- For international students, make sure those interested faculties phone candidates before offers are made and/or after offers are made to encourage acceptance. This has been done on an ad-hoc basis but it will be systematic.
- Require separate ratings for each student from each examining faculty member for each PhD exam that tracks how the students (as a group) are doing in terms of expected developments as a PhD student. We intend to use this to determine possible needed improvements in the program and weakness of students by research areas.
- DGP will hold general students session for PhD students separately to address any and all questions every semester.
- Get our support offers received by the students by the third week in February in increase our acceptance rate.

**North Carolina State University Economics Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**What goals has your department set?**

Our stated goals are:

1. To maintain a high quality applicant pool.
2. To re-evaluate the department deferred enrollment and terminal master's degree enrollment practices.
3. To implement research workshops to assist students in choosing a dissertation chair and/or topic
4. To plan and encourage more social events.

**What activities have you undertaken to date?**

1. We have worked diligently to improve our web presence thereby increasing the ease with which students can learn about our program and sort themselves appropriately. The College's communications director has worked closely with our program to ensure that our website is an accurate reflection of the program. We have also continued our practice of inviting strong potential students to visit the program to meet current students and faculty and, when possible, to sit in on graduate classes.
2. We have reduced the number of deferred enrollments we allow. We hope this will have the intended effect of discouraging those students who may seek to use NCSU's economics graduate program as a 'fallback' option.
3. We continue to strongly encourage (but not require) our students to participate in workshops held on our campus and at surrounding universities. We have also begun to circulate the research interests of faculty and students allowing each group to review the interests of the other. This practice has been very helpful to both students who are trying to settle on a chair and faculty who may have research or funding opportunities and need a better understanding of the talents and interests of our student body. We are in the process of organizing a brown bag workshop series that will allow our students to present their work to and bounce ideas off their peers.
4. We have also implemented the policy of requiring our students to complete their preliminary oral exam by April of their third year (if they've entered with a masters) or April of their fourth year (if they've entered with a bachelors degree). This preliminary oral exam may also be considered the dissertation proposal if the student's chair grants approval. If not, the dissertation proposal is required by January of the fourth or fifth year, respectively, for students entering with a master or bachelors degree. This practice forces students to choose their topic and work toward developing an appropriate research question in a timely fashion. We

have increased the number of social events underwritten by the program. We hosted a welcome reception at the beginning of the year allowing incoming students to meet current students and faculty. This function was well received by all attending. We also host receptions around recruitment efforts for our job candidates.

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

1. We will continue to develop our web presence. We are also working with the communications director to increase our visibility with potential students. Such a campaign may include targeted recruiting emails to particular undergraduate and masters programs. We will also continue our practice of inviting strong students to campus.
2. We will continue our practice of carefully evaluating each deferral request. We will continue to review the contribution and feasibility of our terminal master's program.
3. We will proceed with implementing the brown bag workshop series for graduate students. We will also consider the feasibility of including a requirement of workshop participation for our doctoral students.
4. We will continue to increase our number of social functions funded by the department. We are also working to establish a stronger web-presence for our economics graduate student association. This will allow students to easily plan their own social events.

**North Carolina State University Genetics Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**What goals have your department set?**

1. Improve visibility of the graduate program through the development of the departmental website and hard copy advertising material.
2. Implement a yearly meeting between the Director of Graduate Programs and individual graduate students.
3. Implement faculty/student task forces for review of graduate student recruitment activities, curriculum requirements, and support levels.
4. Hire new research faculty to increase the number of research advisors.
5. Implement a system to ensure and document yearly meetings between graduate students and their advisory committees.
6. Develop activities that encourage students to discuss their research in informal settings and activities that promote additional professional development.
7. Continue current admissions, interview and orientation activities. Continue the laboratory rotation system, inclusion of students on standing and special departmental committees, support of student-sponsored speakers, and opportunities for students to interact with seminar speakers and faculty candidates and participation in outreach activities.

**What activities have you undertaken to date?**

A yearly meeting between the Director of Graduate Programs (DGP) and each graduate student was implemented in Spring 2006. In these meetings, which were typically one to two hours in length, graduate program progress, professional development, student concerns, and ideas on program improvement were discussed. Although the meetings were very time-consuming, they provided important information on the program, gave students an opportunity to express their opinions in a private and confidential setting, and imparted to the student that their well-being and success are important to the program. The students were very positive about the meetings and these will become an annual event.

Two faculty/student task forces were formed in Fall 2007. One of these will review the graduate student curriculum requirements and support levels and the second will review graduate student recruitment activities. The task forces will begin their work in Spring 2007 and submit their recommendations for improvements in these areas by the end of 2007.

During 2007, the DGP in conjunction with students and faculty will develop a system to ensure and document that students have a yearly meeting with their advisory committee.

Revamping of our departmental website by a small committee of faculty was begun in Fall 2006. The committee submitted several ideas for format and content to the department. Based on feedback from the department, the committee has begun discussions with a web designer to implement the ideas. It is expected that the new website will be completed during 2007. It is expected that hard copy advertising material will be developed along with the website.

The Department is interviewing for two faculty positions in Spring 2007. It is anticipated that the new faculty will help make the graduate program more attractive by increasing and broadening the number of potential research advisors and areas of research. Our graduate students are active in these recruitments. They meet with each candidate as a group in private and participate in social events. In the past, our students have been some of our best recruiters and have provided feedback that was important in final decisions on offers to candidates.

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

We hope to begin developing additional activities that will involve both graduate students and postdoctoral associates in the department. One of these is an opportunity to meet on a regular basis in an informal setting to discuss research progress, techniques and ideas without faculty present. Other activities we would like to develop would provide opportunities to discuss career tracks, the balancing of personal and professional lives, and the particular challenges for women in science. The activities might include a spectrum of participants from within and outside the university.

## **North Carolina State University Mathematics Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **What goals has your department set?**

The goals stated in our self-assessment were:

1. Increase the percent of applicants who accept our offers
  - (1a) Increase value of TA
  - (1b) Get more research experiences into first two years.
2. Increase earlier entry into research.
3. Modify qualifiers
4. Earlier involvement with faculty

### **What activities have you undertaken to date?**

We have made four major changes since our goal development in 2005.

1. Stipend Levels: We surveyed our peer institutions on the East Coast. We then increased our base stipend for students classified as PhD students from \$13,000 to \$15,500 per academic year. This moved us from rock bottom to being competitive.
2. Qualifiers: Our previous qualifier system had the students pick 3 exams based on yearlong sequences and take all three examinations at the same time. Exams are given twice a year. This had the effect that students would often wait until the end of year 2 before they were ready to take the exams (this was especially true of students from smaller schools). It also had the effect that the summer before the August examinations students had no time to do anything but study for examinations. We have changed the system so that all three examinations do not have to be taken at the same time. The expectation is that entering students will take some of their examinations at the end of year one freeing up time in year 2.
3. Research Experience. We wrote a MTCP grant proposal to NSF to support early research experiences for entry-level (first two years) graduate students. We received support of \$940,000. The bulk of this money will go to support summer research experiences for graduate students. Some of these students will be from programs other than NCSU. However, a significant number will be given to NCSU graduate students in their first two years. Some of these stipends will be offered to students we are recruiting as a recruitment incentive thus enabling us to make even better offers to our most desirable applicants. In all cases, they will enable the student to spend the summer learning mathematics and doing mathematical research instead of teaching in summer school in order to make more money. These summer research experiences will also greatly increase student/faculty interaction at an earlier point in the students' graduate study. Finally, the activities of this program will increase the visibility of our already

excellent programs and assist in raising the quality of our already strong applicant pool even higher.

4. Recruitment: The Department Head and the Director of Graduate Programs were supported participants in a weeklong workshop at the Mathematics Institute in Palo Alto on recruitment and retention of historically underrepresented groups. There we shared strategies with other select graduate programs in mathematics on how to improve our already successful minority recruitment efforts.

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

1. Our primary emphasis will be finishing the planning of our MTCP program in preparation for the first group of participants in the Summer of 2007. We will also be pursuing some contacts made at the Palo Alto meeting in order to set up collaborations that will assist in minority recruitment.
2. We are still working on improving our graduate TA stipend package. Next on the agenda is the implementation of steps upon completion of such milestones as passing qualifiers or preliminary examinations.

## **North Carolina State University Microbiology Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **What goals has your department set?**

**Goal#1:** Our goal is to ensure the current composition, research interests, and activities of our faculty are effectively communicated at critical “points of contact” in the application process.

**Goal#2:** Our goal is to increase the size of our applicant pool by better communicating the scope and capabilities of our PhD program to key advisors, mentors and colleagues in local /regional academic institutions and bioscience employers.

**Goal #3.** Our main goal with what we feel is a currently successful evaluation and recruiting approach is to allow more time for visiting applicants to interact with existing graduate students (and potentially some program alumni) and to provide more opportunity to show visitors a few of the key resources available on the NCSU campus and the local environs.

**Goal #4.** Our goal is to make our student support package more competitive.

**Goal #5:** Our goal is to improve the communication of departmental expectations to both PIs and students and to develop methods to consistently apply the standards generated by these expectations.

**Goal #6:** Our goal is to develop and continually improve a comprehensive professional development course that is required by all PhD students.

**Goal #7:** Our goal is to increase the interaction between our Graduate student association (MBGSA) and our DGP to ensure that students concerns and suggestions can be communicated to the general faculty.

**Goal #8:** Our goal is to develop an mechanism that will allow and encourage students to interact in a non-critical and supportive scientifically-oriented arena.

### **What activities have you undertaken to date?**

**Goal #1:** Have recently completed update of department web site.

**Goal #2:** No activities

**Goal #3:** Have not had a recruiting season between original submission of these goals and now. More time will be made for meetings with existing graduate students this recruiting season.

**Goal #4:** No activities as yet

**Goal #5:** No actions to date

**Goal #6:** Item is on agenda for next Graduate Curriculum committee

**Goal #7:** DGP has initiated regular discussions with MBGSA leadership

**Goal #8:** No action to data

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

**Goal #1:** Further revision/refinement of web site

**Goal #2:** None

**Goal #3:** Next group of visiting recruits will be given more time to interact with existing students.

**Goal #4:** Expect a modest ( $\leq 5\%$ ) increase in stipend level

**Goal #5:** Expect to impose new guidelines requiring at least one committee meeting each year for all Ph.D. students.

**Goal #6:** Expect to provide 1 credit course on grant writing as part of ‘professional development’ package

**Goal #7:** No further action expected

**Goal #8:** No action to data.

**North Carolina State University Physics Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**1. What goals has your department set?**

1. Significantly improve the quality of incoming students to match the improvement in the quality of the faculty and research programs that occurred during the last 1-15 years. (Renewed goal to be implemented next few years.)
2. Promote a culture of “urgency”, merit, excellence, and high expectations. Make students responsible for their success.
3. Improve management/administrative procedures and achieve early completion of plan of work and preliminary oral exam.

**2. What activities have you undertaken to date?**

1. Created database and spreadsheets to better track the progress and status of each student.
2. Revamp Physics Department website (ongoing).
3. Compiled list of students who were floundering. Proactively managed their progress through advising, intervention, and communication with their thesis advisor.
4. Kept “pipeline” to China well functioning:
  - a. maintain existing contacts;
  - b. use present Chinese graduate students as recruiting agents.

**3. What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

1. Increase success rate with highly qualified US students. (Many of the best US applicants go elsewhere). DGP will call all excellent US applicants to persuade them to visit.
2. Eliminate admission of marginal students. Get input that is more extensive from key instructors and senior research leaders during selection process. Get help from present foreign students to screen foreign applicant’s aptitudes and attitudes.
3. Improve formality of advisor-student relationship.
4. Responsibly manage admitted students. Terminate failing students faster. Improve procedure to get preliminary oral exams scheduled earlier. Make sure plan of work is in place early.



## **North Carolina State University Plant Biology Program Accomplishment Report**

### **What goals has your department set?**

The goals for NC State University Department of Plant Biology have not changed; they are:

- a. Invite more widespread, informed interest in the Department and communicate the most effective information to potential applicants
- b. Proactively move to hire young faculty with active research programs to replace active senior faculty nearing retirement.
- c. Collaborate with other faculty and departments to offer interdisciplinary, cutting-edge programs that attract high quality students
- d. Introduce an interactive PDF form for soliciting faculty comments and recommendations regarding the fit between applicant's goals and interests and faculty research programs and willingness to serve as thesis advisor.
- e. Encourage involvement of the faculty and current graduate students in recruiting, using follow up email and telephone calls.
- f. For domestic applicants, have each applicant attend our recruiting weekend and meet one-on-one with several faculty members and interact with graduate students
- g. For international applicants, identify top candidates early in the admissions process and interview them by telephone before our recruiting weekend.
- h. Continue the current rotation system in which first year students funded through departmental assistantships or on training grants can work for several weeks in three different laboratories before choosing a Ph.D mentor.
- i. Better explain the rotation program on our website and in our Graduate Student Handbook and actively encourage rotations.
- j. Expand the current new student orientation to include elaboration of timelines, responsibilities, and the department's expectations on how students should be progressing through the program.
- k. Improve procedures to ensure that students move through their program in an efficient manner.
- l. Expand mentoring program for new faculty to include guidance on serving as thesis advisors to address difficulties in faculty-student working relationships that occur most frequently with new faculty.
- m. Expand professional development opportunities for student.
- n. Support the Graduate Student organization and its activities.
- o. Facilitate interaction between international and domestic students and between students in different disciplines.

### **What activities have you undertaken to date?**

- a. Staffed a booth and poster at the 2006 Botanical Society of America Annual meeting
- b. Hired a new assistant professor (phytochemistry) and a teaching assistant professor to replace retired faculty members

- c. Faculty are in discussions for interdepartmental training in ecology, evolutionary biology and RNA biology efforts; faculty participate in interdepartmental Biotechnology training
- d. Database is being developed and prototype PDF submission forms are in hand
- e. Most faculty correspond directly with prospective students
- f. 2007 retreat in planning stages
- g. 2007 applications have not yet been reviewed; ongoing
- h. Graduate handbook was revised in 2006 and will be revised again before August of 2007
- i. Discussions are ongoing to educate faculty to the importance of timelines.
- j. Departmental Graduate Student Symposium initiated in 2006 ongoing; BGSA president has been offered resources for enhancing professional activities; monetary prizes are supported for the Botany/Zoology and the Plant Biology Graduate Student Symposia.

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

Further implementation of ongoing efforts; movement to electronic submission of reports; better tracking of student progress; proactive support of student development and cross-disciplinary interactions; enhanced web presence; more organized contact and follow-up with accepted applicants.

## North Carolina State University Psychology Department Program Accomplishment Report

### What goals has your department set?

Program goals are:

1. Clarify department specializations;
2. Completely "renovate" our departmental web presence;
3. Establish system for better tracking of doctoral students' performance and progress;
4. Increase the number of highly-qualified students who accept an offer of admission;
5. Improve the diversity of student population;
6. Increase the number of students supported by Research Assistantships, so that the numbers of RAs and TAs reach approximate parity;
7. Increase the stipends for RAs and TAs, so that supported students do not need to take additional off-campus work that detracts from their research interaction with faculty;
8. Make teaching assistantship more "attractive" to students;
9. Model the importance of creating and maintaining social and professional ties;
10. Establish common area for graduate students to socialize.

### What activities have you undertaken to date?

**Re: Condition #1,** we have renovated our departmental web presence so that information on grad programs is more easily located and we have added materials to the FAQ pages to clarify the department's specializations.

**Re: Condition #1,** we have created new curriculum codes in the university database for our department's five specialty areas, so that we can better track students in each specialty. We are adding to the students' annual review process an explicit consideration of time thru milestones in the degree program, which we will implement for the first time at the end of the spring 2007 semester. We remain hopeful that we can increase stipends for students, and we continue to encourage specialty areas to keep diversity in mind during recruitment efforts.

**Re: Condition #3,** we have encouraged faculty to increase their requests for research support in grant proposals and we are seeing a steady increase in these requests as a result. We are also encouraging faculty/student mentoring through the Preparing the Professoriate program.

**Re: Condition #4,** we are distributing information about graduate student speakers' events to faculty and encouraging their attendance at these events. We have developed interim plans to increase workspace available to graduate students, until we can fully realize dedicated common room space in the context of new building plans.

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

We will examine general persistence rates for graduate students in psychology, for the 15-year period 1985-1999 to explore trends over time and across gender and race. We will continue our efforts to secure additional external and internal funding to support RAs and TAs. We hope to develop a system of stipend increases for students as they gain experience and expertise.

**North Carolina State University  
Sociology and Anthropology Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**What goals has your department set?**

1. Clarify information on program website and in informational letters and emails to indicate more specifically the nature of the program; discourage applications from students who do not intend to go beyond the master's degree. Describe the doctoral areas of specialization offered by the program so that we recruit students in our strengths.
2. More involvement of the different areas of specialization in recruitment. Review of applicants to be considered in terms of compatibility with departmental areas of specialization.
3. Recognition of student-faculty collaborations. Develop faculty-student relationships during recruitment process that continue after admission.
4. Restructuring of course offerings in sequence so that each cohort moves through required core courses together.

**What activities have you undertaken to date?**

1. Website, boilerplate emails, and other materials revised to focus on departmental strengths rather than "generic" sociology program. Student concentration preferences explicitly considered during application review process.
2. Coverage of major areas of departmental specialization in composition of recruitment committee. Reference of specific applications to area committees for input to recruitment committee.
3. Development of display boards to recognize student-faculty collaboration in publications.
4. Course offerings have been restructured

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

1. Refine application review procedures in light of experiences of current round of applicants.
2. Formal implementation of involvement of departmental areas of specialization in composition of recruitment and admissions committee



## University of Florida Botany Department Program Accomplishment Report

Below, the original goals are reiterated and followed by summary of tasks accomplished in italics.

### **Condition #1: The right people apply for doctoral study.**

We will improve our program's web site in the following ways:

1. Change the data on the first page of our website so that our graduate program appears in Google searches of the UF web site and in internet searches for ecology, systematics, and plant molecular biology.

*The website has been improved. Plant molecular biology's visibility is still weak in global Google search. We will continue to improve.*

2. To help prospective students evaluate their readiness for graduate school we will add a page about financial and time demands of graduate school with links to information about cost of living.

*The links to appropriate web pages of the graduate school, minority program, and financial aids are created, rather than specific description about Botany graduate students, per se.*

3. To inform prospective and current students about program and our expectations, on our web site we will:

- Improve the program descriptions and feature the advantages of our interdisciplinary department → *done*.
- Add programs of study with links to course → *done*.
- Add a description of the application and admission process → *done, with a greater emphasis on the importance of contacting individual faculty members in advance.*
- Add timelines for appointing advisory committees, holding committee meetings, and taking preliminary exams; → *described in a botany graduate student handbook that is available as a pdf file online*
- Add a description of departmental seminar program → *improved but may not be visible enough to applicants.*

### **Condition #2: The right applicants are admitted as doctoral students**

No changes are needed in admission policies. Improvements are needed in recruitment of students. As stated in #1 we will improve the information given on our web site and do better advertising of our department there. This year we are establishing a set time at which we will interview prospective students on campus.

*The arrangement to have multiple applicants visit at the same time (= group visit) was received favorably by both applicants and faculty members. We are making even greater efforts to plan for group visits in advance this year, so that the information obtained during the visits will be useful for admission decisions.*

### **Condition #3: Students and faculty form productive working relationships.**

We reinstated a course for new students in which they met all of the faculty and staff of the department. The meetings were held in the labs and offices. Faculty members described their research to the students and introduced them to members of their labs. Staff members discussed departmental facilities and procedures. This course provided a means for the students to get to know the faculty and staff and to establish a productive working relationship.

*This course was given for the first time in Fall 2005, and repeated in 2006. Students viewed it favorably as a way to get to know other new students for better exchange of information and mutual assistance.*

We will build on the previous strategies by adding information to the graduate student handbook about what to expect in the advisor/advisee relationship. In 2006 Fall semester, we will make sure that:

1. Students and faculty know that problems can be discussed with the graduate coordinator
2. Discussion of problems will not affect the student's or faculty's status in the department;
3. Graduate coordinator is available to help resolve conflicts.

*We held an open forum in November 2006, inviting all graduate students. Approximately half of all graduate students participated. However, ecology program had more student representatives than cell-molecular biology or systematics. Students who participated asked many questions, especially about terms of assistantships. This kind of forum appears useful to build trustful relationships between the graduate coordinator and students. One important feedback from the students is to be clear about the exact expectations for teaching load associated with fellowship and teaching assistantship offers at the time of admission.*

### **Condition #4: Students experience social support from fellow students**

The course described in #3b serves to let each year's new students get to know each other. In addition, in the Fall of 2005, we began to strongly encourage all students and faculty to attend the weekly departmental seminars and the associated refreshment period. Students and faculty attendance is important because this is the only regularly scheduled event, which provides a time for social interaction, that all members of the department attend.

To encourage participation of everyone in other departmental social events, in the Spring of 2006 we will:

1. Form a committee of students and faculty to oversee the annual picnic and other social gatherings, such as receptions for seminar speakers, fall orientation, and holiday party. The job of the committee is not to be the caterers for all of these occasions, but to help organize the events, make sure that they are advertised, and encourage the participation of students and faculty.

*The seminar committee now consists of three faculty members representing the three*

*sub-areas within the department. This resulted in more balanced coverage of seminar topics and greater participation by graduate students.*

2. Begin having some monthly informal gatherings, each one hosted by one of the three programs.

*In fall 2006, we started to have socials every other month, hosted by one of three programs in rotation. Graduate students took large initiatives in planning.*

3. Have discussions among the faculty and with students to try to come to a satisfactory resolution to the situation with the graduate student stipends.

*The graduate student open forum described in the section #3 above was very useful. Before this open forum, a draft document titled "fairness policy" was circulated among students to demystify the stipend issues. The students clearly support the open-dialog policy on this issue.*



**University of Florida Chemical Engineering Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**What goals has your department set?**

**GOAL #1. Implement aggressive strategies to aid in graduate recruitment**

1. Aggressive advertisement. a) Exchange of posters and literature with schools of high quality.
2. Exchange program with “Partner Schools”, which involves; a) inviting faculty from target schools to visit department and learn about opportunities at UF CHE that they can take back to their students, and b) faculty from our department giving seminars at target schools to increase our department visibility.
3. Send applications packages (instead of letters) to top students from good schools (~ 500 students).
4. Response cards are followed up with phone calls as well as application package.
5. AIChE booth with information about our program at the major society meeting.
6. The application fee for domestic students has been waived.
7. Offer competitive student stipends.
8. We need to follow up with our partner schools and put more pressure on them to convince their undergraduate students to consider graduate school at UF. Faculty at the partner schools will have to actively participate and recommend Chemical Engineering at UF.
9. Furthermore, we need faculty present at the AIChE booth who can actively promote graduate school at UF.
10. It is also important to clearly let students know what is required in graduate school, i.e. that it will mean long hours in the laboratory and is not a continuation of their undergraduate studies, so that the graduate students know what to expect.

**GOAL #2. Implement strategies to ensure that we are admitting the right applicants once they have applied:**

1. High standards of acceptance. Standards will only be relaxed under special circumstances
2. When in doubt over an applicant, the referee (who wrote recommendation letters) will be contacted by phone.
3. Provide a good hosting program.
4. Keep records of the recommendation letters and how the recommendation letters correlate with each student’s performance in the program. For future reference, we will know whether the recommendation letters from certain individuals reflect the students’ likelihood for success in graduate school. This is particularly important for international students, where the university standards may be unknown.
5. Department announcements before seminar, including notices of graduate student successes.

**GOAL #3. Implement strategies for improving productive working relationships**

1. Implement a reward to faculty for high quality publications.
2. Another activity that can improve the productive working relationship between faculty and students is for students to give more presentations at national and international conferences.
3. A suggestion is to implement an award at the GRACE symposium for the best presentation that can be used towards travel to and a seminar at a conference.
4. Exit interviews with our PhD students can also help to identify weaknesses and strengths of the department.
5. Emphasize expectations during our department's new graduate student orientation.

***GOAL #4. Implement strategies to improve social experience for graduate students***

1. Implement a female mentoring program. The purpose of the mentoring program is to provide both personal and professional support for our female graduate students.
2. Higher faculty attendance at GRACE events.
3. Once a semester, or once a year, have mixed group dinners. This would improve relationships between groups and between students/advisors

**What activities have you undertaken to date?**

1. We have ongoing activities in all the areas of aggressive graduate recruiting we have proposed.
2. We have implemented all but #4 in GOAL #2
3. We have implemented all but #1 and #3 in GOAL #3
4. We have implemented all but #3 in GOAL #4

## The University of Florida Chemistry Department Program Accomplishment Report

### What goals has your department set?

In 2005 and early, 2006 we proposed a complete revision of our web site. We also initiated a campaign to contact those who wrote letters of recommendation for each of our completed Ph.D. students. A new advertisement was designed and sent to the undergraduate ACS affiliate magazine, *In Chemistry*, with the goal of increasing the number of domestic applications. We also set out to improve our already existing relationships with several French institutions, which have provided excellent applicants in recent years

### What activities have you undertaken to date?

The revision of the web site was completed in Spring, 2006. We reviewed the sites of our peer departments and tried to adopt the best practices, which we found among them. Our new site is much more informative, easy to navigate and professionally designed. We continue to write to those who have provided letters of recommendation to inform them of the successful completion of the Ph.D. by their former students. Our advertisement appeared in the September/October 2006 issue of *In Chemistry*, which was devoted to graduate education. We have met with or communicated with Claudia Brosnahan, international relations at ENSCPB, Bourdeaux, Michel Cournil, Director of Studies at Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Mines, Saint-Étienne and Catherine Ponthus, international relations director for Ecole Supérieure de Chimie Physique Electronique, Lyon in regard to increasing our exposure to their best undergraduates. We anticipate several French applications again this year.

### What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?

The web site will be reviewed for final minor revisions based on feedback from our visiting applicants during the spring. It is clear from the questions, which we have received during the present recruiting season that some aspects of the application process are not clearly presented on the site. It is too early to judge the success of our advertisement in *Chemistry*, but at the conclusion of the recruiting season, I hope to see an increase in the number of domestic applications.



## **University of Florida Civil and Coastal Engineering Program Accomplishment Report**

For the most part, the faculty feels that the students that are being admitted into the PhD program in the Civil and Coastal Engineering department are suited to obtain the degree. The applicant pool is strong and because the faculty, administrators, and support staff participates in so many regional, national, and international events, the opportunities to meet prospective students face to face are abundant. Students are encouraged to apply for admission within these interactions and via electronic inquiry. The criteria that are used to admit a student are:

- 1) Graduate School application
- 2) 3 letters of recommendation
- 3) Statement of purpose
- 4) GRE/TOEFL scores or the Fundamentals of Engineering exam
- 5) Transcripts or previous academic background. Once the student's file is complete, it is circulated to the appropriate group within CE/COA for consideration. Each individual within the group reviews the file and then a determination is made for admittance or denial and funding.

Once admitted, the student is asked to confirm whether he/she will attend the university. The student is provided with information regarding Graduate School and departmental policies and procedures upon his/her arrival to campus. The student will typically meet with an advisor during the week of their arrival. The student is also required to meet with the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Records and Advising Office personnel. Throughout the student's program, the faculty and Graduate staff provides opportunities for students to interact in a variety of venues encouraging both faculty/student interaction and student/student interaction up through graduation.

### **Program Improvement Plan**

**GOAL #1:** To attract and recruit higher caliber students to the institution.

Activities to accomplish the goal:

1. Strengthen and maintain personal relationships with contacts/colleagues at peer institutions and visit with them for recruiting purposes.
2. Strengthen the marketing plan for the department to include advertisement in student /professional journals and student newspapers; arranging recruiting events at peer institutions.
3. Strengthen and maintain personal relationships with alumni and contact them when possible to be included in recruiting efforts.
4. Possibly develop a web interview process/teleconference so that the faculty and prospective students can interact prior to the admissions consideration being finalized.
5. Update and maintain the department's website and personal faculty web pages.

**Implementation strategies as of 1/22/07:**

The Civil and Coastal Engineering department has completed a review of its marketing and has decided to address the website first. The Academic Support Coordinator is working with a selective group of PhD students. The students have agreed to work on collecting materials to update each area's information within the department itself. This includes 8 specific areas: Coastal, Construction, Geosensing, Hydrology/Water Resources, Geotechnical, Materials, Transportation/ Public Works, and Structures. The group has been meeting on a bi-weekly basis. Initially after completing this plan, the website was updated with current information for the graduate student population from admissions to graduation materials. Once the website is completed, the department will be advertising in student and professional journals and student newspapers in the Fall of 2007. The discussion is still ongoing regarding the use of teleconferencing and web interviewing of candidates. It will most likely end up being telephone conversations due to costs involved and the need for additional technology on the applicant's behalf.

A departmental database is currently being compiled of former graduates of the department dating back five years. It should be completed by the end of March 2007. Once completed, the Academic Support Coordinator, along with the new departmental Development Officer, will review possible opportunities for implementation as a shared resource.

Faculty contacting colleagues at peer institutions is a continual process. They participate in as many opportunities for exchange as is physically and fiscally possible.

**GOAL #2:** To retain and graduate 100% of the PhD students in the Civil and Coastal Engineering department by facilitating a process of "connectedness."

Activities to accomplish the goal:

1. To have the faculty interact more frequently with the students in a less structured setting. Options would include area luncheons, coordinating social gatherings on and off-campus, and conference/meeting attendance (travel.)
2. To facilitate a stronger bond between all PhD students by providing them with the opportunities to meet and socialize in a supportive environment.
3. Maintain funding levels.
4. Provide support to the "whole" person, not just the individual. Family and support systems within the student's life should be fostered with the assistance of the department via information dissemination and opportunities for participation in student events on and off campus.

**Implementation strategies as of 1/22/07:**

Since the development of this plan, a Graduate Student Advisory Group has been created which is comprised of two PhD students from each area within Civil and Coastal Engineering. These 16 students, along with the Academic Support Coordinator, plan events to be held each month to facilitate not only interaction between the students, but the staff, faculty and administration. To date, 7 events have been held all of which were

well attended by the students, faculty and staff. More importantly though, were the initial events where smaller groups spawned and students began to interact amongst themselves outside of these planned events. We now have informal basketball games going on weekly, backyard barbeques when the weather permits and much more. Students who would have never met because they work in different areas are now socializing outside of the department and coming together for the departmental events. A family-type atmosphere has occurred and the students seem to feel at ease with their home away from home. Families have also been invited to some of these events and additional information has been provided on the website to support those students with families. Conversations have also taken place regarding funding and the need to remain competitive while also maintain current funding levels. Some positive changes have been made due to the communications within these group exchanges.

**GOAL #3:** To acknowledge the accomplishments of each PhD student throughout their program.

Activities to accomplish the goal:

1. To establish a “rite of passage” ceremony after the student has been admitted into candidacy.
2. To announce publicly via the website, newsletter, and/or e-mail to other students of a student's presentation or award.
3. To assist the student in the production of a product upon their graduation so that acknowledgement precedes them in the field.
4. A departmental graduation acknowledgement will be planned each semester either by a presentation of a token or celebratory activity.

**Implementation strategies as of 1/22/07:**

Shortly after this plan was developed, a bi-annual celebration was established to acknowledge the graduating students within the Civil and Coastal Engineering department. Each graduating student (whether they attend the celebration or not) receives a gift from the department and has their group picture taken with the chair of the department. These pictures will eventually be posted on the department's website.

**GOAL #4:** To streamline the admissions process and provide more information so that the faculty can make a sound admissions decision.

Activities to accomplish the goal:

1. Encourage the admissions office and Provost's office to find or develop software to assist with this process.
2. Respond via e-mail to student applicants as soon as their application is submitted and correspond in a timely manner what the remaining documents are needed for consideration.
3. Provide a streamlined linkage system on the website that provides only those necessary links to apply – clean it up so that the applicant does not have to “find” what is needed.

4. Request that the “recommender’s” e-mail address and phone number be listed on the letter of recommendation form so that faculty can contact the individual if further information is necessary.
5. Strengthen the wording in the Statement of Purpose request so that the student clearly states his/her motivation and goals for the pursuit of a PhD. This will assist the department in determining if the student desires to enter the educational arena or pursue the industry. In identifying this, a better “fit” can be determined between the faculty, student, and project.

**Implementation strategies as of 1/22/07:**

The applications are now responded to as soon as they appear on the system. E-mail is sent after a file is established as well to notify the applicant of any missing materials. Follow-up e-mails are sent according to what is lacking in the student’s file or where they stand in the review process.

The website was also streamlined to simplify the application process. The Graduate Student Advisory group reviews the site and provides input regarding accessibility and ease of obtaining information. It is in constant review under the current revision process.

**GOAL #5:** To provide comprehensive information regarding employment, job placement services, and internships to the students within the department.

Activities to accomplish the goal:

1. Develop a link on the departmental website that addresses employment opportunities by the appropriate discipline and degree level being sought.
2. Refine the CE Career Planning and Resume Workshop to include employers who are seeking applicants from all areas within the department.
3. To maintain a departmental alumni employment listing so that current students can network with previous graduates.

**Implementation strategies as of 1/22/07:**

The department has decided to refer students to the UF Career Development Center for current employment information as there are no personnel to currently maintain updating the website.

The CCE Career Planning and Resume Workshop annual event included more employers from a variety of disciplines within Civil and Coastal Engineering. Students were pleased with the representation from each area and the opportunity to network with possible future employers.

The alumni employment listing is currently being compiled and will be completed in March 2007. It will be updated each semester after graduation.

**GOAL #6:** To establish a CE graduate student activity board/focus group in order to gather valuable input regarding the program from admissions to graduation.

Activities to accomplish the goal:

1. Request that the faculty recommend students who they feel would be active participants.
2. Invite those students to an initial gathering to: explain the purpose of the group; begin planning activities; discuss program improvements; set a meeting calendar.
3. Meet with the students on a regular basis.

**Implementation strategies as of 1/22/07:**

DONE!

### **Program Improvement Plan Timeline**

GOAL # 1

1. Maintaining external relationships - this activity is on-going.
2. Marketing plan - this will be done within the next 6 months after a review of what is available.
3. Alumni contact – this will be implemented within 12 to 18 months. A list of alumni has to be generated and contacts have to be made.
4. Web interview process – since funds have to be allocated for this, discussions must take place to see if the actual process is feasible. If approved this can be implemented in the next 12 months.
5. Update website – immediate and on-going changes will be made

GOAL #2

1. Faculty interaction within an area of CE w/ students: this can be done within the next few months. Completion within 6 months and will be on-going.
2. Social interactions of students – events have been held recently to facilitate this and events are planned throughout the current term and future semesters.
3. Maintain funding level – on-going.
4. This should be completed within the next six to twelve months and will be on-going.

GOAL #3

1. Rite of passage ceremony – implementation within a year.
2. Website announcements – can be implemented immediately with permission from the student, however the website is under review and will most likely be finished in the next three months.
3. Production of a product - Faculty must take a proactive roll in facilitating this as an on-going process.
4. Graduation acknowledgment: A celebratory activity will be planned for this and every ensuing term – on-going.

#### GOAL #4

1. Software to expedite admissions process – out of department's control
2. E-mail response to applicant – implemented
3. Website linkage system – under review with implementation in three months
4. "Recommender's E-mail" – Make a request to the individual/office that designed the letter of recommendation form to include these items. Contact can be made and hopefully changes will be accepted within the next three months.
5. Statement of Purpose – immediate implementation

#### GOAL #5

1. Career link on website - Currently under review and possible development – 6 month implementation and on-going
2. CE Career Planning event - an annual event - implementation will begin in Nov.06
3. Employer link on website - Currently under review and possible development – 6 month implementation and on-going

#### GOAL #6

1. Faculty recommendations – within the next month (Feb 06) and on-going
2. Student invitation – within the next two months (Feb 06-Mar 06)
3. Student meetings- on-going

## **University of Florida Computer Science and Engineering Program Accomplishment Report**

### **What goals has your department set?**

1. CISE/UF would like to increase the number of minority and female applicants in our PhD program by diligently targeting outstanding minority and female undergraduate students throughout the US.
2. Make changes to expedite the admissions process.
3. Continue the above-mentioned efforts (Seminars, Town meetings, etc.) to maintain positive communication.
4. The Ambassador program is new. The department plans to expand the role of the ambassadors, as well increase the number of students who participate as ambassadors.

### **What activities have you undertaken to date?**

1. With the help from College of Engineering and SEAGEP (Minority scholarship program), we are able to dedicate 2-3 fellowship positions for minority PhD students. However, we were only able to recruit one Hispanic PhD student so far. Our effort will continue for Fall 2007 admission.
2. For Fall 2006 admission, we are able to make all offers before the middle of March. We are planning to accomplish this task even earlier for Fall 2007 admission.
3. We had held two town meetings for graduate students so far. The participation was great. A large number of issues were raised and discussed. Many new policies and improvement have been the results from these town meetings. For example, a new graduate student organization was formed. They have been very active to organize social events, host seminars, help new student orientation, etc.
4. The ambassadors program has been created. We anticipate they will be more active in participating in student organized events as well as helping recruiting new PhD students.

### **What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

The College of Engineering has a new dedicate person for minority PhD students recruiting. This person has been traveling all over the country to meet potential minority PhD applicants. We are receiving information cards for possible CISE applicants much more than what we had in the past. Hope this will help our minority recruiting.



**University of Florida Economics Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**What goals has your department set?**

Goal: Increase recruitment efforts

Activities:

1. Increase marketing efforts to smaller liberal arts colleges in the US. This would involve sending letters to economics and math departments at those schools informing them about our program.
2. We will review the files of students for the past 10 years, and make contact with those undergrad institutions. Select regional small liberal arts colleges for new outreach. This would be done sometime in the Fall 2006 term.
3. When faculty present talks at other universities, they will try to arrange meetings with potential applicants. This has already started. For example, one faculty member while in India met with potential applicants at several schools. Modify brochure/develop talking points for all faculty members. All faculty should have business cards to pass out to the students they meet. They should take the student's name and send a note when they return. Activity implemented Fall 2006 thru Spring 2007.
4. Analyze the Fall's recruitment process and applicants to identify trends and make a plan for the next cycle. Fall 2006
5. Send thank-you letters to the references of accepted students. Follow-up letter to these same professors at end of first year – this will help keep UF's program in front of departments that have sent us successful students. Spring 2007.

*Condition #2: The right applicants are admitted as doctoral students.*

Goal: Reevaluate admissions criterion

Activities:

1. A retrospective review in depth at past students records to see if there was information not utilized to predict success or failure. Some initial evaluation has already been done but nothing definite has been found to explain either failures or successes. Fall 2006
2. In the admissions process more weight will be given to successful completion of a quality paper in an undergraduate or masters program. Also, more weight will be put on getting information about the difficulty of an applicant's undergraduate program, possibly by soliciting further information about what texts were used in key courses. Spring 2007.
3. We will do focus groups of our existing students to determine what factors they feel make them successful. We may also tap into their personal connections with previous classmates to find out what other successful programs are doing. Fall 2006.

*Condition #3: Students and faculty form productive working relationships.*

Goal: Help faculty members and students form relationships early in the program

Activities:

1. Try to ensure that individuals who are admitted are aware of the faculty interests. Having knowledge of each other's interests should facilitate productive interactions.
2. In addition, we recently began requiring that all students do a research project during their first summer. This should help students connect earlier with faculty in their research activities. Ongoing from Summer 2005.

*Condition #4: Students experience social support from fellow students.*

Goal: Encourage student social interaction

Activities:

1. When necessary, encourage group collaboration on problem solving in place of grading. Fall 2006
2. Department will continue to organize social events during the year to encourage students to interact with each other and with faculty. Ongoing.

#### **What activities have you undertaken to date?**

Our main concern with admission was whether our every-other-year program would affect applicants. We have monitored the flow of applicants and this seems not to be a problem. We have begun the screening of applicants earlier than in the past and are selecting some applicants from Gainesville, or nearby areas, to meet with faculty, before admissions. This will allow us to get more information about their potentials as graduate students and to begin selling them on our program earlier. In previous years, we did not invite potential students to these meetings until after they were admitted.

#### **What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

If necessary, we will be making contact with faculty members at other institutions to try to increase the applicant pool.

## **University of Florida English Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **What goals has your department set?**

- We conducted a department self-study and site review last spring, which highlighted the need for institutional support in stipends and infrastructural support, especially regarding the allocation of more space. We planned to respond to specific recommendations of the external reviewers.
- We will continue to request specific space for the teaching assistants and to urge the College to increase the TA stipends closer to the level of our peer institutions.

### **What activities have you undertaken to date?**

- We have continued to request specific space for TAs. We have provided basic funds, as available, for the conferences organized by the various grad-student-organized reading groups. Many of our applicants first became aware of the program at UF through their participation in graduate-student-led conferences.
- The college is considering providing funds to support applicants' visits to campus, an initiative we are supporting.
- The university has provided a new health insurance package for TAs, which has improved their quality of life. We are publicizing this and expect an improvement in our pool of applicants.
- We are considering dividing our Alumni Fellowships between the students' first and last years, and will attempt to find funds to support Fellows as TAs during the intervening years.
- As was suggested by the external reviewers, we are in the process of redesigning and expanding the department's website.

### **What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

- Since the department is in the middle of a search for someone to fill the chair's position, we are holding off on further significant changes before summer 2007.



## **University of Florida History Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **What goals has your department set?**

We set five significant goals for our department as a part of the self-assessment process. These may be briefly stated here:

1. We have sought to improve the quality of the admissions process, in order to make the application process easier, and to connect students more directly with faculty in appropriate fields.
2. We have sought to improve the quality of the department's recruitment of graduate students by facilitating a greater visibility for faculty research and teaching programs and developing better networks of professional contacts.
3. We have sought to improve the quality of the department's recruitment of new graduate students by facilitating a greater visibility for work and accomplishments of current graduate students.
4. We have sought to enhance the advisor-student relationship through the exercise of closer oversight, to ensure that faculty members are following all appropriate procedures.
5. We have sought to encourage greater social support among our graduate students.

### **What activities have you undertaken to date?**

1. Our website, so we have directed our energies there. Each faculty member now has a comprehensive summary of their teaching and research interests on the main department site, in addition to their personal pages. More importantly, we have begun the process of creating pages for the specific areas of strength in the graduate program. One example—the department's page for students interested in graduate study in "Nineteenth Century and The Civil War Era". The page is here: [http://web.history.ufl.edu/new/grad\\_studies/amh/19th\\_c.htm](http://web.history.ufl.edu/new/grad_studies/amh/19th_c.htm)
2. We have begun to enhance our recruitment of new graduate students through the greater notice and attention given to the successes and accomplishment of current and former students. Former students job placements and book publications are now listed on our website. Current students have been, for the first time, given financial support to attend our national meeting (American Historical Association). Twenty-five PhD students attended this year's meeting, presenting papers, attending sessions, and networking with students and faculty from around the country.
3. Improving departmental oversight is an ongoing process. This past Fall, we have improved the reporting rate for faculty assessments of graduate student performance in seminars, a valuable tool in gauging student progress.

4. We have taken a number of steps to help improve the social support our students receive from one another. We have a new graduate student organization, the History Graduate Society, whose executive board has organized social events and professional development opportunities. The department has given financial support to HGS, and has organized social events to which graduate students have been invited. A new professional development series implemented by the department has been started as well, with sessions held (or planned) on job searches, grant writing, and other critical issues.

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

1. Within the short span of a semester, there are some concrete objectives for our department.
2. We would like to complete the improvements to the department's web page, adding more pages on areas of graduate program strength.
3. We would like to solicit feedback from all of our admitted applicants (those who accept our offers and those who do not) on the admissions process, in order to give us valuable information on where improvements might be made.
4. We will begin a process of converting two classrooms into dedicated graduate student space, in order to provide our students with a more productive work environment and collegial social space.
5. We will award, for the first time, two new graduate research travel scholarships, both of which will be generated from new sources of private funds

**University of Florida Mathematics Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**What goals has your department set?**

**Goal #1: Strategies for graduate recruitment**

- 1) We propose to develop and circulate more informative recruitment brochures and pay for site visits.
- 2) In addition, we desire to increase the number of fellowships that we can offer to top applicants.

**Goal #2: Strategies to admit the right applicants**

- 1) Place a little greater emphasis on applicants intending to pursue applied fields, in view of the oftentimes, greater opportunities for funding and placement in those fields.
- 2) Label all incoming students (except those coming with a master's degree) as master's students, to avoid potential errors of data interpretation

**Goal #3: Strategies for improved working relationship**

- 1) Assign a provisional advisor to each incoming student, to guide academically and mentor teaching.
- 2) Offer special colloquia for beginning students, orienting them early as to potential areas of research.

**Goal #3: Strategies to improve social support**

- 1) Encourage greater social cohesion among graduate students in research groups, following successful departmental examples.
- 2) Conduct exit interviews (in addition to the already-conducted annual interviews of continuing students) in order to obtain feedback on practices

**Other Intervention**

Form an advisory committee to identify at a relatively early stage doctoral students for whom research poses too great a challenge

**What activities you undertaken to date?**

**Goal #1:** As yet, there has been no substantial progress on (1) and (2) because of budgetary conditions.

**Goal #2:** (1) is being considered with regard to the current pool of applicants; (2) can only take effect in fall 2007.

**Goal #3:** (1) Provisional advisors are being assigned to the fall 2006 class this semester. (2) Special orientation colloquia have already been offered in fall 2006.

**Goal #4:** Means of promoting (1) are still under discussion; the form of the exit interview is being drafted.

**Other:** Advisory committee formed and active in spring 2006.

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

**Goal #1:** Fundamentally dependent on budgetary circumstances.

**Goal #2:** Full implementation anticipated for fall 2007.

**Goal #3:** Orientation colloquia in all fields will be offered by fall 2007.

**Goal #4:** Exit interviews will be conducted.

## **University of Florida Microbiology Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **Program Goals:**

1. We are recruiting more underrepresented minorities into our own program as well as encouraging underrepresented minority UF students to go to graduate school even if at other institutions.
2. We submitted an REU proposal to NSF as planned and it was funded. In this grant, we will build partnerships with the University of Georgia and North Carolina State University. In this grant, we are also cultivating relationships with minority-serving institutions.
3. The participation in the NIH bridges program with Cal State Fullerton is underway.

### **Activities accomplished to date:**

The REU proposal was funded and the recruitment of summer interns is underway. Those activities are described briefly above. All of these items were done:

1. Submitted an NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) site grant proposal to enhance visibility of our program and attract strong research-oriented students for summer research internships. We are aware that NSF-REU programs at the University of Georgia and Cal State Fullerton have been wonderfully effective as recruiting tools. Part of our proposal may include partnerships with other institutions indicated in the previous questions.
2. Cultivated relationships with minority-serving institutions
  - Participated in an NIH Bridges to the PhD grant proposal with the Hispanic-serving institution Cal State Fullerton.
  - Participated in and advertising of UF graduate opportunities at the Cal State Fullerton Annual Minority Biomedical Research Conference
  - Developing relationships with undergraduate science programs at Florida State University
  - Participated in SEAGEP activities and nomination of prospective students for SEAGEP fellowships
  - Developed a minority-serving component in our NSF-REU proposal.
  - Some of our graduate students will help with our recruitment efforts.
3. In addition, we have hired two Hispanic faculty members – the first ever in our department. This will help us recruit from the large Hispanic population in Florida.

### **Changes we can reasonably accomplish by June 1, 2007**

1. By June 1, 2007, we will have our first cohort of REU students in our department. Our recruitment efforts will continue.

2. We hope to have in place a program that provide our graduate students with skills essential for most jobs but rarely offered in graduate school such as advice in mentoring and personnel management.

## University of Florida Physics Department Program Accomplishment Report

### What goals has your department set?

- A. Systematic and planned hiring of new faculty members, at all levels, is the most important means to address the issue of the department's "reputation" as perceived by prospective graduate students.
- B. We have continued to address the salary levels of our TAs, and our present support levels are nominally equal to peer institutions in the Southeast. However, the stipend levels for our Alumni Fellowships have lost their competitive edge, and this support needs to be increased.
- C. In order to improve the number of students from underrepresented groups, we have been admitting students who have research experience but who might have posted a low GRE subject test score. During the first year in our graduate program, we attempt to remedy undergraduate coursework deficiencies before the students start the "core" courses of our graduate program. It is important to note that our attempt to improve diversity has the risk of increasing our time-to-degree or jeopardizing a favorable graduation rate.
- D. As one might imagine, joining a research group is not an issue for students who are motivated and confident about their choices. A small number of first year students, nominally 10% of the incoming class, have some shyness or uncertainty about their ability to approach members of the faculty. Consequently, we try to arrange for informal settings where the students might meet members of the faculty. A single, ideal, universal setting does not seem to exist, and success is achieved by affording several different, periodic opportunities.
- E. If energetic students are ready to organize the appropriate events, then the next most important aspect for the success of any of these programs is food. Consequently, a steady budget is needed to fuel the activities.
- F. If mentor-student problems develop, then the graduate student, faculty member, or both (but independently) consult the Graduate Coordinator. In many instances, straightforward comments are sufficient to improve the working atmosphere. In other cases, the issues are related to scientific issues, so the members of the PhD supervisory committee need to be involved.

**What activities have you undertaken to date?**

- A.** Hiring new faculty at all levels is a key element of providing a diverse atmosphere for graduate education, and we are presently conducting a search for a new faculty member that will join the Department in Fall 2007.
- B.** We have successfully lobbied the College to allow us to boost our graduate student stipends to \$20,000 per year. This stipend level places our graduate student support package near the top of similar programs in the Southeast. In addition, the University has dramatically improved the health insurance coverage for graduate students holding TA, RA, and Fellow support. On a negative note, in spite of our lobbying efforts, the Alumni Fellow stipends are still slated to be \$20,000, whereas we have asked to boost them to \$25,000.
- C.** The Department's Graduate Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee (GRAC) have been charged, by the Chair, to address the need to increase the diversity of our student body. Furthermore, a GAANN (Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need) proposal was submitted to the Department of Education. The University support was at a level of 33%, which is higher than the required 25% matching level.
- D.** The timing of the Department-wide "poster session", serving as a faculty-student mixer with food and beverage, was changed from late March to early December. Everyone perceived this rescheduling as a positive step.
- E.** The graduate students were successful in securing funding that allowed them to serve pizza at their self-organized Graduate Student Seminar Series.

**What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

- A.** We expect a successful completion of the faculty search.
- B and C.** The incoming graduate student class of 2007 will be identified.
- C.** We are hopeful that the GAANN proposal will be funded.
- D, E, and F.** In Spring 2007, we believe the graduate students will complete their reorganization to provide constructive comments on the graduate student environment.

**University of Florida Psychology Department  
Program Accomplishment Report**

**What goals has your department set?**

**Condition 1. Identifying the right people to apply for doctoral study**

We established a set of five (5) goals to pursue in relation to generating an excellent pool of applicants for our six doctoral programs in *behavior analysis, behavioral neuroscience, cognition and sensory processes, counseling, developmental, and social psychology*, and made the following progress in relation to each of them.

1. Restructuring the website to support effective recruitment.

We added and updated a PowerPoint based program on “Preparing and Applying to Graduate Study in Psychology” to attract interested applicants and assist them in the development of their applications and their identification of graduate programs best suited to their interests and experiences. All graduate application materials are now available and viewable online, as well.

2. Using the GRE Search tools to identify and solicit excellent graduate applicants  
Due to funding limitations, we were unable to pursue this objective.

3. Participation with the Office of Graduate Minority Programs (OGMP)

We enhanced our participation in the initiatives supported by the OGMP, including our participation in the Campus Visitation program, and our teaching a Research Methods course for them.

4. Ongoing Utilization of State of Florida Minority Database System.

We continued to use the minority database system to identify excellent prospective applicants to our graduate programs.

5. Conference Networking

We continued to identify strong potential applicants at regional and national conferences, and encourage their consideration of our doctoral programs.

**Condition 2. Enhancing the fit between the applicants and graduate programs they are admitted into**

We established six (6) objectives in relation to enhancing the goodness-of-fit between the students we admit and the doctoral programs they were admitted into, and made the following progress in relation to each of them.

1. Establishing on-site interviews in all six of our programs of doctoral study.

All areas now bring students to campus for on-site interviews. Modest levels of support are now provided to help defray applicants’ travel costs.

2. Increasing graduate stipends to NIH levels.

We have been unable to increase our stipends to match NIH levels, but we have increased our base stipend to \$12,500 and our fellowship awards from \$15,000 to \$16,000

3. Increasing the length of graduate funding.

We have initiated a system for supporting graduate students for an additional year, extending their funding from 4 years to five years. Students in good standing can now petition for a 5<sup>th</sup> year of funding, and we have been able to support these requests to the extent of available resources.

4. Increasing involvement of current graduate students in the recruitment process

Current graduate students now host applicants during the applicants' visits, and are provided with meal vouchers to take candidates to lunch, as well. This enhances their interaction with the applicants and provides an opportunity to further assess the goodness-of-fit between current students in the program and prospective students.

5. Encouraging earlier recruitment visits

Earlier recruitment visits are now encouraged, and offers are extended earlier, as well.

6. Increasing the funding to defray travel costs for student visits/interviews

We have been unable to increase these allocations, but remain committed to providing students with \$150 of travel support and reducing their costs by housing them with current students and providing them with lunch during their visit

### **Condition 3. Encouraging Productive Working Relationships between Faculty and Students**

We established two objectives in this regard, and made the following progress in relation to them.

1. We have maintained our commitment to our Graduate Travel Award program to support graduate student travel to accompany their mentors in relation to the presentation of their research.

2. We now recognize graduate student excellence through Outstanding Graduate Student Awards in all six areas in our department. Individual plaques and stipends accompany these awards, and awardees' names are added to a perpetual plaque that remains within the department, as well. Awards are made during the Annual Departmental Luncheon, and pictures are taken of advisors and their students at that time.

### **Condition 4. Encouraging Social Support from Fellow Students**

We established two objectives in this regard, and made the following progress:

1. We now sponsor an annual Undergraduate Research Form that provides a vehicle for the presentation of undergraduate research, much of which is supervised by our graduate

students. This provides graduate students with the opportunity to mentor their supervisees and to develop peer interaction and support in relation to their roles and mentors.

2. We have now established a Seminar on Psychological Science that will be designed for all incoming graduate students in the department. The Seminar will highlight research across a broad range of areas within the discipline and provide each cohort group of incoming students an opportunity for interaction and the development of group cohesion.



## **University of Florida Sociology Department Program Accomplishment Report**

### **Introductory Remarks:**

Since the initial program goals and self-assessment were submitted, the Department of Sociology undertook a search for a new chair. That search resulted in my appointment, effective Fall Semester 2006. Additionally, since that time, the department has obtained additional feedback from our current graduate students in two forms and on two occasions. In the Spring of 2006, a self-report survey was distributed to all enrolled students. In Fall of 2006, representatives from the University's Human Resources division conducted focus groups with 35 of our students. The report from the focus groups will be distributed by January 15 and, along with results obtained from the survey, will be the basis for an ongoing evaluation of our graduate program. Thus, in this report, some adjustment in goals will be noted.

### **1. What goals have the department set?**

- a. to increase the number of applicants in under-represented areas of program specialization;
- b. to increase co-authorship opportunities for graduate students with faculty and to increase research training opportunities by increasing the number of research assistantships; and
- c. to increase structured opportunities for supportive peer activities among graduate students.

Additionally, while no goal pertaining to admission of "the right" applicants was identified in the earlier assessment, I believe the feedback from current students suggests that a better fit between student and faculty interests must be developed. Therefore, I discuss proposed efforts to address this goal below.

### **2. What activities have the department undertaken to achieve these goals?**

- a. To increase the number of applicants in under-represented areas of program specialization and to improve the fit between student and faculty interests, we have undertaken the following steps and propose to continue to address these goals in a number of ways:
  - i. Draw from our current undergraduate population as future applicants – introduce undergraduates to faculty research and graduate education through undergraduate curriculum;
  - ii. Draw from existing interdisciplinary graduate training program at the University. (Graduate courses are extensively "advertised" to students in other programs.)
  - iii. Develop seminars that cross departmental areas of specialization (e.g., Gender and Aging; Gender and Health; Health Disparities).

- iv. Update departmental webpage to better highlight faculty research within and between areas of specialization and clearly reflect the extent to which our faculty members work across areas.
  - v. Move our graduate “recruitment” weekend (which now occurs *after* admission decisions are made) to Fall semester, so that it occurs before the deadline for applications occurs (proposed).
  - vi. Expand faculty involvement in the review of applications; formalize the current practice of referring applicants to select faculty in areas of interest expressed by applicants. Encourage all faculty to review files that fall within their areas of expertise. Assign “transitional” faculty mentors to all incoming graduate students, with the explicit expectation that students will select a more permanent mentor(s) once they have had an opportunity to get to know more faculty (proposed).
- b. To increase co-authorship opportunities for graduate students and faculty we have undertaken the following steps:
- i. Publicly acknowledge collaboration between faculty and students (and among students) through posting of abstracts and listing in departmental newsletters;
  - ii. Informally encourage creation of more faculty-student research groups;
  - iii. Institute a more regular seminar series featuring faculty research projects; graduate students are invited and encouraged to attend;
  - iv. Attended the second annual Conference of the Social Sciences (a local event designed and sponsored by our graduate students in which they present their ongoing research projects). Nearly 100 percent of all faculty members attended.
  - v. Sponsored informal lunch discussion groups in which faculty talked with students about submitting proposals for presentation at professional meetings have begun. (Some departmental funds may be allocated to formalize this in the future);
- c. To increase structured opportunities for supportive peer activities among graduate students, the Department has undertaken the following steps:
- i. Provided financial support and extensive social support for the graduate students’ Conference of the Social Sciences;
  - ii. Acknowledged and encouraged the recent formation of a Teaching Cooperative begun by graduate students to provide instrumental and socio-emotional support for new teachers (Some financial support for this activity will be forthcoming, as needed, and assistance in sponsoring a College-wide annual program on teaching designed by and for graduate students is in the planning stage).
  - iii. Provided financial support for current students to host visiting students at informal events during the recruitment weekend.

**3. What other changes can you reasonably hope to accomplish by June 1, 2007?**

I have identified a number of proposed changes in the above responses. In addition, the following changes will be implemented before June 1:

- a. I have invited the graduate students to select an advisory group of approximately six to eight members who would work closely with me and meet regularly with their peers. The group's primary function would be to facilitate communication between graduate students and faculty. Members of the Board would provide input regarding the planning of departmental initiatives pertaining to a number of important issues including: teaching by TA's (e.g., training, assignments, evaluations); redesign of the pro-seminar; mentoring and/or student-faculty relationships in general; recruitment of new students; and other issues pertaining to career development (e.g., job search). Their specific duties would include meeting with me (as a group) on a monthly basis; attending faculty meetings; and setting up and facilitating regular meetings with fellow graduate students.
- b. Faculty will begin a concerted discussion of the students' responses to the aforementioned survey and focus group discussions with the goal of developing a unified and broad-based strategy to enhance mentoring and faculty-student relationships in general.
- c. A new program for training in teaching will be instituted in May. A voluntary graduate seminar in teaching will be offered. Approximately six to eight students who have not yet taught will receive assistantships to work as discussion facilitators in large undergraduate courses. The tuition waiver will cover the costs of taking the seminar. More extensive mentoring and supervision in teaching will be instituted. A new program in supervised teaching (with UF graduate students as teachers of community college students) with the local community college is under discussion.