

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Twin Cities Collegiate Deans:

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RE: Restructuring the Oversight and Support of Graduate Education to Enhance Excellence

Attached is our plan, as the senior vice presidents of the University and as all of the deans of colleges with graduate programs, for restructuring the oversight and support of graduate education to enhance excellence.

Attachment

**Restructuring the Oversight and Support of Graduate Education  
to Enhance Excellence**

In 2004, the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota unanimously endorsed the strategic goal to position the University as one of the top three public research universities in the world. Essential to meeting this goal is the continued nurturing and creation of world class graduate programs. The reputation of a research university is inextricably linked to the reputation of its graduate programs. Excellent graduate programs enable a university to recruit and retain talented faculty and outstanding graduate students and affect its ability to secure external support to advance the research that leads to scientific, artistic, and scholarly breakthroughs.

Against this backdrop, the University of Minnesota, along with universities worldwide, needs to prepare to meet new and significant fiscal challenges. To meet these challenges while at the same time *enhancing* the University's excellence and international reputation requires that we become even smarter about the way we conduct our business. Simply put, we must approach the oversight and support of graduate education in a way that is more effective and efficient – in a way that better enables graduate programs to thrive and to excel, in a way that conserves resources that can be captured and redistributed to provide additional direct support of graduate education, and in a way that promotes excellence in graduate education.

The plan outlined below seeks to meet the twin goals of: (1) enhancing graduate education by providing a structure for oversight and support that better enables programs to thrive and excel; and (2) conserving administrative fiscal resources in order to provide new and additional funds for investment in our graduate students and the excellence of our graduate programs. First, we briefly outline the objectives for graduate education and its oversight. Second, we provide some background regarding the current structure of the Graduate School and the way responsibility for graduate education currently is shared among the central administration of the University, the Graduate School, individual graduate programs, and the departmental and collegiate offices within which those programs reside. Third, we present the plan and set out a new administrative structure. Fourth, we outline the substantive benefits of the new structure along with the potential fiscal benefits. Finally, we propose an implementation timeline and creation of an implementation team to tend to the details of the restructuring.

**Objectives**

Graduate education has been and must remain one of the University's top priorities. From FY04-FY09, total annual resources (excluding carry-forward) for the Graduate School increased by \$10 million from \$17.8 million to \$27.9 million, including a 53% increase in the University's O&M support from \$12.8 million to \$19.6 million. During the same period, support specifically directed to graduate students through the Graduate School nearly tripled, increasing from \$6.2 million to \$17.7 million.

Continued investment in graduate education is critical, even in the face of current financial challenges. More specifically, the objectives of the University with respect to graduate education include the following:

- Continue to strengthen the quality of graduate education and the reputation of the University's graduate programs.
- Continue to increase support for graduate students, to help recruit the most outstanding students worldwide, and to assist them with timely degree completion.
- Become more effective and efficient in the administration of graduate education, eliminating duplication of effort and responsibility by providing coordinated services when economies of scale dictate that is the most effective solution, and decentralizing authority and resources where local control would be most effective.
- Maintain in the Provost's office an appropriate measure of oversight of and advocacy on behalf of the University's Ph.D. programs in collaboration with collegiate deans; delegate to collegiate deans responsibility for master's degree programs, professional degree programs, and applied doctoral programs.

#### **Current structure**

The Graduate School maintains the following administrative operation, staffed by over 50 FTE employees (see Appendix A) at an annual administrative cost of approximately \$4.5 million in salary and fringe: Admissions Office; Community of Scholars Program; Diversity Office; Faculty Grants Office; Fellowship Office; Interdisciplinary Initiatives Office; Policy and Review Councils; Post-Doctoral Affairs Office; and Student Services Office. (A brief description of each office is contained in Appendix B.) In addition to these offices, the Graduate School recently has created its own development office and has hired a communications professional to assist with communications efforts. The Graduate School also maintains a small office on the Duluth campus.

While the intent of the current structure is to oversee and promote the quality of graduate programs, to assist graduate students, and provide centralized services, the result is overlapping responsibilities and redundancies in a number of areas. For example:

- Responsibility for advancing the excellence of the University's graduate programs currently rests with the graduate faculty, directors of graduate studies, collegiate deans, and the Graduate School. The departments and colleges that house graduate programs provide the faculty, curriculum, facilities, research infrastructure, staff, and a large share of the total financial support that is dedicated to graduate students and graduate programs. The Graduate School provides additional resources, largely in the form of fellowships, block grants, support services, and coordination. Authority and responsibility for graduate education thus is divided between the colleges and the Graduate School. Collegiate deans make some decisions about allocation

of resources; the Graduate School makes independent decisions regarding allocation of additional resources.

- Responsibility for admission of outstanding graduate students is divided between the Graduate School and individual graduate programs, with applicants currently needing to file their applications both centrally with the Graduate School and locally with their program of interest.
- Responsibility for the support of diverse students rests with graduate programs, colleges, the Graduate School, and the Office of Equity and Diversity.
- Responsibility for international exchange programs overlaps between the Graduate School and the Office of International Programs.

Such divisions of authority and responsibility create ambiguities about accountability and undermine effective decision making and the setting and implementation of priorities. When the independent investment decisions of the colleges and of the Graduate School are not aligned, the effectiveness of both the central and the collegiate investments is undermined. Additionally, the overlapping of responsibilities between various Graduate School offices and other offices at the University creates opportunities for inefficiency, duplication of effort, and unnecessary administrative overhead, all of which draw resources away from direct investments in graduate education.

### **New Structure**

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

This new structure will lead to improved communication between the Provost's Office and collegiate units and to increased harmony between graduate education objectives and collegiate objectives. This model of collegiate responsibility and leadership with oversight and advocacy in the Provost's Office has been extremely effective over the past decade in greatly improving the quality of undergraduate education at the University of Minnesota. This model also is similar to the models that Stanford University, MIT, the University of Chicago, and the University of Pennsylvania employ for oversight of graduate education. For Minnesota, this is an opportunity to continue to be a leader among public research universities in employing innovative, efficiency-enhancing organizational change. Under this model:

- The Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education will provide oversight, coordination, and leadership on issues associated with the University of Minnesota's Ph.D. programs, approve

changes to Ph.D. programs, promote and facilitate the evolution of new interdisciplinary programs, and serve as an advocate for graduate education.

- Collegiate deans will be responsible and held accountable for the quality of graduate programs that reside within their colleges. Deans will be responsible for graduate program curriculum, degree requirements, allocation of resources, the size of programs, and appointment of directors of graduate studies. Deans also will be responsible for, but may delegate to directors of graduate studies in consultation with their graduate faculty and department chairs/heads, day-to-day administration of graduate programs, including authority to admit, reinstate, or drop students from a program, approve graduate committees and graduate advisors, clear students for degrees, etc.
- Professional degrees, master's programs, and applied doctoral programs outside the Academic Health Center will be the responsibility of collegiate units and campuses (as already is the case, for example, in law), but the Vice Provost of Graduate Education will review and recommend to the Provost action on proposals for new programs and changes to existing programs. For health professional programs, the current process in health sciences will continue.
- The Vice Provost of Graduate Education will collaborate with collegiate deans to help advance the excellence of graduate education at the University of Minnesota and to facilitate the effectiveness of graduate programs that span two or more colleges.
- The Vice Provost of Graduate Education will continue to oversee services that can more effectively and efficiently be provided in a coordinated manner (e.g., maintenance of a single on-line application, maintenance of official student records, etc.) The Vice Provost will collaborate with collegiate deans to determine which services are best provided in a coordinated fashion and which are best provided locally, in order to reduce duplication of effort, eliminate ambiguities regarding responsibility and accountability, and increase the effectiveness of services.
- Graduate education will be an explicit part of compact discussions between the Provost and the colleges that house graduate programs. Fellowships and block grants will be allocated by the Provost to the colleges as part of the compact process, and colleges will be held accountable through the compact process for effective use of those resources. Allocations will be subject to review and reallocation during each compact cycle based on collegiate performance on measures that track graduate program quality.

This reorganization will benefit directly graduate students, graduate programs and the colleges to which they will report, and the entire University:

- Graduate students will benefit from: increased financial support resulting from the capturing and reallocation of savings resulting from the reorganization; decreased transactions costs; and improved quality of graduate programs.

- Graduate programs and the colleges that house them will benefit from: increased responsibility and control; decreased transactions costs; and decreased cost pool charges.
- The University will benefit from the increased quality of its graduate programs and resulting enhanced reputation of the University as a whole, and budgetary savings.

### **Implementation Timeline and Plan**

A small implementation team, consisting of a representation of collegiate deans, experienced directors of graduate studies, graduate students, faculty, and the Provost's Office will be formed to develop an implementation plan. New reporting lines will be effective with FY10 and the entire reorganization of structure and duties will be fully implemented by the beginning of fall semester 2010. None of these changes will affect the application and recruitment of graduate students who matriculate in fall 2009. Appendix C contains an outline of current Graduate School offices along with general thoughts regarding reassignment of office responsibilities. The proposed reassignment of functions and responsibilities contained in Appendix C is illustrative only; the implementation team will be charged to make organizational recommendations to the Provost by April 10, 2009.

### **Conclusion**

The University of Minnesota rightfully should be proud of its graduate programs and the education it currently is providing to over 10,000 graduate students. The Graduate School and the University have worked diligently to improve the quality and prominence of its graduate programs and to increase resources available for the support of graduate students. We believe the restructuring of graduate education and its oversight described in this plan will align responsibility for graduate education in such a way as to promote the excellence of the University's graduate programs while at the same time freeing additional resources that can be directed to the increased support of graduate students.

## Appendix A

### Graduate School Offices and Personnel

<p><b>Administration</b> Dean Associate Dean Associate Dean Associate Dean Exec Office &amp; Admin Specialist Exec Office &amp; Admin Specialist (1/2) Exec Office &amp; Admin Specialist (1/3) Director of Communications Student Office Support (student)</p> <p><b>Admissions</b> Director Assistant Director Assistant to the Dean Admissions Officer Student Personnel Coordinator Senior Office Specialist Student Support Services Assistant Information Technology Specialist Office Support Assistant Student Services Specialist Exec Student Services Specialist</p> <p><b>Community of Scholars Program</b> Coordinator (1/2)</p> <p><b>Development Office</b> Development Officer Exec Office &amp; Admin Specialist (1/3)</p> <p><b>Diversity Office</b> Acting Director Assistant to the Dean Principal Office &amp; Admin Specialist Coordinator, Writing Enrichment Programs Graduate Student Support (student) Graduate Student Support (student)</p> <p><b>Faculty Grants Office</b> Director (1/2) Coordinator Exec Office &amp; Admin Specialist</p> <p><b>Fellowship Office</b> Director (1/2) Associate Director Exec Office &amp; Admin Specialist</p>	<p><b>Finance and Personnel</b> Associate to Vice Provost/Dean (½ GS; ½ OVPR) Senior Accountant Associate Administrator (½ GS; ½ OVPR) Executive Accounts Specialist (½ GS; ½ OVPR) Office Specialist (½ GS; ½ OVPR) Voucher Specialist (½ GS; ½ OVPR) Office Support Assistant (vacant) Executive Assistant (vacant) Student Worker</p> <p><b>Interdisciplinary Initiatives Office</b> Associate to the Dean (1/2) Assistant to the Dean Exec Office &amp; Admin Specialist (1/3)</p> <p><b>Policy and Review Councils</b> Associate to the Dean (1/2) Exec Office &amp; Admin Specialist (1/2) Administrative Fellow (student) Administrative Fellow (student)</p> <p><b>Postdoctoral Affairs Office</b> Coordinator (1/2)</p> <p><b>Student Services</b> Director Assistant to the Dean Coordinator, Grad Student Services Coordinator, Masters Degree Services Coordinator, Doctoral Degree Services Student Personnel Coordinator Student Office Assistant (student) Student Office Assistant (student) Student Office Assistant (student) Student Office Assistant (student)</p> <p><b>Systems and Data Management</b> Director Information Technology Manager Analyst/Programmer Office Support Assistant Information Technology Professional Information Technology Specialist Principal Office &amp; Admin Specialist</p> <p><b>UMD Graduate Studies Office</b> Associate Dean Principal Secretary</p>
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## Appendix B

### Functions of Primary Graduate School Offices and Programs

<p><b>Admissions</b></p> <p>The Office of Admissions collects and assists with processing all applications for admission and for readmission or change of status. Currently, applicants to graduate programs submit an application directly to the program to which the applicant is applying as well as directly to the Graduate School. The graduate program is responsible for evaluating the application and deciding on admission; the Graduate School assists with processing. The Graduate School also issues form I-20s for international students admitted to the Graduate School.</p> <p><b>Community of Scholars Program</b></p> <p>This program, which originated in what now is the Office of Equity and Diversity, is designed to assist underrepresented students through advising and mentoring services, academic seminars and professional development workshops, and by connecting students to the Twin Cities community through research and civic engagement opportunities.</p> <p><b>Diversity Office</b></p> <p>This office helps support the recruitment, funding, retention and graduation of a diverse student body.</p> <p><b>Faculty Grants Office</b></p> <p>This office administers internal faculty research grant programs, including Grants-in-Aid of Research, Artistry, and Scholarship Program, and the Distinguished Women’s Scholar Award. The office also coordinates the internal selection of faculty proposals for competitive programs for which the number of nominations submitted by the University is limited.</p> <p><b>Fellowship Office</b></p> <p>The Fellowship Office manages competitions for and distribution of Graduate School Fellowships, Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships, and a variety of additional fellowships earmarked by funders for specific fields of study. The office also administers external programs</p>	<p>such as the National Science Foundation Predoctoral Fellowships, Fulbright Scholarships, and the Luce Foundation Scholarships. Additionally, the office manages two graduate international exchange programs, two competitive professorship programs, and a lectureship.</p> <p><b>Interdisciplinary Initiatives Office</b></p> <p>The office works with the Provosts’ Interdisciplinary Team to help foster interdisciplinary inquiry by graduate students and graduate faculty.</p> <p><b>Policy and Review Councils</b></p> <p>The Policy and Review Councils advise the Graduate School Dean on academic matters related to the quality and review of graduate programs, including degree program proposals, faculty, courses, tuition, residency requirements, and advising. Each graduate program is assigned to one of six Policy and Review Councils, which are divided into the following subject areas: biological sciences; education and psychology; health sciences; languages, literature and arts; engineering, physical, and mathematical sciences; and social sciences.</p> <p><b>Post-Doctoral Affairs Office</b></p> <p>The purpose of this office is to help support post-doctoral fellows.</p> <p><b>Student Services Office</b></p> <p>This office advises students, staff, and faculty concerning policies and procedures, particularly those relating to academic issues. More specifically, the office is responsible for student academic matters, including: student degree progress issues; degree program and thesis proposal forms; examination committees; milestone exam authorization and scheduling; acceptance of theses and dissertations; degree clearance and award of degrees; separate Graduate School commencement ceremony; registration questions and requests; and maintenance of permanent student records.</p>
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## Appendix C

### Proposed Relocation of Graduate School Offices and Responsibilities

<u>Current Offices</u>	<u>Proposed Relocation of Responsibilities</u>
Administration	Provost Office, with substantial downsizing
Admissions	Local with some assistance from Provost Office
Communications	Discontinue
Community of Scholars	Office of Equity & Diversity with Local
Development	Local with assistance from UMF & MMF
Diversity	Office of Equity & Diversity with Local
Duluth	Local, except Ph.D
Faculty Grants	OVPR
Fellowships	Provost Office and Local
Finance and Personnel	Discontinue (some FTEs to OVPR and Provost)
Interdisciplinary Initiatives	Provost Interdisciplinary Team
McKnight Program	Provost Office
Policy and Review Councils	Local with Provost Office oversight and assistance
Post-Doctoral Affairs	Local
Student Services	Local with some services in Provost Office
Systems and Data Management	Downsize to one data person in Provost Office
University Press	Library and Provost Office