

## **Proposal to Reconstitute the Office of Graduate Studies as The Graduate School at UC Davis**

January 10, 2011

### **Executive Summary**

This proposal describes a plan to transform the culture of graduate education oversight at UC Davis to reflect a new focus on academic activities that promote excellence in graduate study and postdoctoral training. The transformation will be publicly signified by a change in name from the Office of Graduate Studies to The Graduate School. The Graduate School will focus on academic matters, not transactional business, in support of graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, faculty and graduate programs. The core themes of the new Graduate School will include Enhancing Program Success through Student Success, Engaging Faculty in Reflection on and Creativity in Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Training, Disseminating Innovative Practices in Graduate Education, Enhancing Diversity and Fostering a Sense of Community, and Promoting Excellence through Increased Student Support. A key to success in this transformation is to support more students and more programs while fostering greater success of both, thereby preserving the comparative strength of a rich combination of disciplinary and interdisciplinary graduate programs and enhancing the academic excellence of UC Davis.

The Graduate School will promote student success through new and expanded activities that take graduate education and postdoctoral training beyond the normal teaching, learning and research that are inherent components of the preparation of new scholars and advanced practitioners in their fields. Examples of the academic activities to be supported by The Graduate School include the professional development series, courses on scholarly integrity and the responsible conduct of research, laboratory management training, mentoring workshops for students and faculty, leadership development programs (e.g. Professors for the Future) and an entrepreneurship program. The faculty, through the Graduate Council, will be key partners in these activities. The Graduate School will also directly engage faculty through activities that promote innovation and creativity in graduate education, sharing successful strategies between programs and introducing best practices from other institutions. Building on the success of the Mentoring at Critical Transitions program, The Graduate School will foster special attention on diversity, student retention, degree completion and the preparation of graduate students for a variety of career options. The transformation to The Graduate School will also enhance development and stewardship opportunities and enable the campus to strengthen ties to graduate alumni/ae.

## Background and Motivation

Graduate education is the hallmark of a research university, providing a key linkage between teaching and research. The long-standing interdisciplinary approach to graduate education at UC Davis, which bridges across strong departmental programs and multiple administrative lines, is a campus distinction that provides a competitive advantage and is a rich source of campus excellence. This combination of departmental and interdisciplinary graduate programs calls for a strong central voice in support of students, postdoctoral scholars, faculty, staff and the Academic Senate. At present, the Office of Graduate Studies is the central administrative unit responsible for providing effective and equitable oversight of all matters related to graduate education, for advancing the quality of graduate programs and for providing an interface to administrative offices, graduate deans at other universities, and state and federal governments. Of particular note are its efforts to support the interests of both faculty and graduate students, while serving as a resource to students beyond their programs. Graduate Studies is also the administrative arm of the Graduate Council, serving as an agent of the faculty's own quality control over graduate education and postdoctoral scholar training.

The Office of Graduate Studies was established at UC Davis in 1989 when the Office of Graduate Studies and Research was separated and new executives were hired for each. Prior to that time, the graduate office had been known as the "Graduate Division" within the combined office. Currently, Graduate Studies provides a wide range of services to prospective and enrolled graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, faculty and staff. Additionally, the office manages two undergraduate research programs that focus on increasing the numbers of underrepresented and first-generation students who earn doctoral degrees. Thus, Graduate Studies currently serves a clientele of more than 9,000 annual applicants, 4,600 enrolled graduate students, approximately 900 postdoctoral scholars, 50 undergraduate students and all of the faculty and staff engaged in delivering nearly 90 graduate programs on the campus.

Graduate Studies has provided this array of services in support of a graduate population that was relatively stable during the 1990s and began to increase dramatically in 2002. Between 2002 and 2006, graduate academic applications increased by 75% and enrollments increased by approximately 45%<sup>1</sup>, but since that time both have increased more modestly. The last period of dramatic enrollment growth corresponds to a period in which the campus made significant new investments in graduate student support, including the allocation of University Student Aid Program funds to graduate programs through Graduate Studies rather than directly to students via the Financial Aid Office. The modest levels of enrollment growth over the past three years correspond to the more modest increases in graduate student support in response to challenging financial circumstances facing the University. In addition to the increases in

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<sup>1</sup> The discussion in this document includes all students for whom the Office of Graduate Studies provides services: general campus graduate academic, health sciences graduate academic, credential, self-supporting academic and selected professional master's programs.

enrollments, the number of academic graduate programs for which Graduate Studies is responsible has increased 15% over the past 10 years to a total of 87.

As enrollments have grown in recent years, staffing in Graduate Studies has increased only modestly. Recent cycles of budget shortfalls have resulted in the elimination of staff positions (since July 1, 2008, a total of 5.5 positions have not been filled in order to meet budget reduction targets). These reductions have offset corresponding gains made in earlier years such that the Graduate Studies now serves many more students compared to 2002 without a corresponding increase in staffing. Thus, the transaction workload per staff member is about 50% greater than it was just 5 years ago, a trend that is not sustainable. Of course, changes in staffing have also been accompanied by evolutionary changes in function, such as an increased attention to recruiting, additional information technology professionals to support the need to use information more creatively, additional assistance to faculty in support of training grant applications and greatly reduced administrative support for the dean and associate deans.

The faculty have clearly articulated an interest in further increasing graduate enrollments, and the campus Vision of Excellence unquestioningly reflects that this is an important growth objective for the campus. This expected growth provides an imperative to *change* the way we manage the business of graduate education. At the same time, it is clear that the current budget shortfall is not a temporary phenomenon. The University must adapt to a new mode of operation – one that focuses on academic and administrative excellence in ways that free administrative resources to support academic objectives. The convergence of growth with diminished resources creates the imperative for a *transformation* in the way we manage graduate education.

One could imagine that Graduate Studies might continue to be creative in serving the needs of the campus without a proportional increase in resources through additional incremental changes in processes and policies. There are many examples of the ways that Graduate Studies can change how it does business in an incremental manner. For example, it has previously delegated student academic appointments to dean's offices, shifted to a program-managed admission application review and delegated postdoctoral appointment approval to some dean's offices on a pilot basis. More can be done in the future, including eliminating the need for Petitions for Exception to Policy (PEPs), streamlining internal financial support processing and using data and analyses to improve the effectiveness of Graduate Council's program review. The challenge is to develop the right balance of centralized and decentralized responsibilities that leads to the most efficient processing of necessary transactions and maintains equity in the application of policy while providing the greatest opportunities for academic excellence.

But, academic excellence can't be achieved through administration, no matter how efficient. Thus, a transformative, rather than evolutionary, change is needed. In that spirit, this proposal calls for a comprehensive change in the culture of graduate education oversight at UC Davis reflecting a new vision for a unit that serves graduate education and postdoctoral scholar training. That unit will promote excellence by focusing on the academic, rather than administrative, aspects of graduate education. The corresponding change in culture will be

signified by renaming the reorganized and reduced “Office of Graduate Studies” to “The Graduate School”.

Ultimately, The Graduate School must be able to support more students and more programs while fostering greater success of both. We must challenge past practices while preserving and enhancing the comparative strength of graduate education at UC Davis embodied in our many interdisciplinary graduate groups and departmental programs. Additionally, the transformation to The Graduate School will help establish a new model for supporting and highlighting graduate education within the UC system, thereby helping UC Davis to enhance its leadership reputation.

## **Planning Process**

The current proposal is grounded in the academic needs assessment requested by then-Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Horwitz in Fall, 2008. Preparation of that document revealed the need to think creatively about the future of the Office of Graduate Studies and more broadly about the administration of graduate education at UC Davis. Subsequently, a concept paper describing the transformation of the Office of Graduate Studies from an administrative unit to one with a more academic function (and renamed to The Graduate School) was shared with Chancellor Katehi when she arrived on campus in Summer, 2009. This concept was also discussed with the Graduate Council in Summer, 2009 and the Council endorsed the concept at that time. Most recently, the Report of the Task Force on the Future of UC Davis recommended the formation of a graduate school that would have a more academic focus, especially with regard to supporting academic planning for graduate groups.

Chancellor Katehi and Provost Lavernia formally asked Dean Gibeling to further develop the proposal for The Graduate School in mid-2010. Since that time, senior staff in Graduate Studies have held retreats and meetings to discuss and refine the concepts. They reviewed the structure and activities of graduate schools at a number of prominent universities that are known to have innovative graduate schools and/or highly regarded graduate programs. This list included the University of Wisconsin, Stanford University, the University of Virginia, the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Virginia Tech.

Comparisons with these other universities revealed that there is great variety in the organizational structure and the functions of graduate schools at universities comparable in stature and size to UC Davis. Thus, there is no single model for success and excellence. However, it also became clear that the activities that support graduate students and graduate education at UC Davis are very similar to those that exist at other institutions. With few exceptions, the student programs found at other universities are either already offered at UC Davis or have been considered. In fact, we already offer more programs than some institutions. In many ways, then, UC Davis already has many of the essential components upon which to build The Graduate School.

What also became apparent in this review is that the programs offered at UC Davis are not linked and integrated as they are at several other institutions. For example, the Planning, Resilience, Engagement and Professionalism (PREP) program at Michigan State, the Profession, Life, Academics, Networks (PLAN) program at the University of Michigan and the Transformative Graduate Education Initiative at Virginia Tech all provide an array of professional development and student success classes and workshops. The content of these programs is not inherently different from the array of student activities available at UC Davis, except that we lack a way to identify and brand these activities as contributions of a graduate school to graduate education. Thus, the Office of Graduate Studies does not receive recognition for the many activities that it sponsors and the office retains its reputation as largely an administrative unit. There is an urgent need to better coordinate existing academic activities as a central contribution of The Graduate School. In this way, The Graduate School will be seen as a holistic resource for students, faculty and staff to promote and support excellence in graduate education at UC Davis. In addition, marketing and development opportunities are increased once these programs are showcased as being part of The Graduate School.

## **The Graduate School Plan**

Traditionally, the Office of Graduate Studies has operated in the mode that students and programs must seek approval prior to taking many actions both within and outside established policy and guidelines. This top-down approach is like that traditionally employed at many graduate schools across the country. The new mode of operation must be one in which programs are given broad authority to take action within their areas of responsibility, with the central office providing oversight, developing policies, disseminating information, and tracking program and student success. That is, The Graduate School must have minimal transaction work in its portfolio in favor of providing academic leadership and programs in support of graduate education. Of course, this change cannot mean that workload is simply shifted from the current Office of Graduate Studies to the graduate program level. Rather, we propose that all transaction activities be housed in a new unit that blends current campus efforts to cluster graduate program administration with the broad concept of sharing administrative resources across the campus. This administrative unit is tentatively titled the Graduate Education Administration Team and will be responsible for the broad functions related to admissions, processing student financial support awards and academic appointments, monitoring academic progress and certifying degree completion.

By collecting the necessary transaction activities within the Graduate Education Administration Team, The Graduate School will be freed to focus on promoting excellence through academic leadership and programs for students and faculty. The Dean of the Graduate School will work with graduate programs to develop and achieve academic and strategic goals in the areas of recruiting, admissions, retention, completion and curricular innovation. The Dean will also work more closely with the deans of the divisions, colleges and schools in the areas of graduate

program academic planning, new program development and faculty FTE allocations, especially in support of the interdisciplinary graduate groups that are dependent on related departments to hire the faculty needed by the group. The Dean will also focus on developing international collaborations such as joint and dual degree programs and on new degrees offered at UC Davis such as expanded hybrid bachelor's/master's programs and Professional Science Master's.

The Graduate School will reflect a new focus on academic activities that enhance the excellence of graduate education and postdoctoral training at UC Davis accompanied by a shift away from largely administrative functions that characterize the Office of Graduate Studies. Broadly, the new themes will include:

- Enhancing Program Success through Student Success
- Engaging Faculty in Reflection on and Creativity in Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Training
- Disseminating Innovative Practices in Graduate Education
- Enhancing Diversity and Fostering a Sense of Community
- Promoting Excellence through Increased Student Support

All of these themes are essential to achieving the level of excellence in graduate education to which the campus aspires.

The related change in name is intended to signal and reinforce the significant shift away from administrative activities to better reflect the enhanced role of The Graduate School in academic aspects of graduate education and postdoctoral training, and to align with the term most commonly used among peer institutions. Within the University of California, the administrative offices responsible for graduate education have traditionally been referred to as the "Graduate Division". However, one other UC campus has adopted the name "Graduate Studies" while another has the title "Division of Graduate Studies". In contrast, the graduate education unit at most universities in the United States is known as the "Graduate School". For example, of the 57 AAU institutions that have campuswide graduate education units, 32 use the name "Graduate School", another 4 use the term "Graduate College" and 13 use the name "Graduate Studies". The name "Graduate Division" is a uniquely UC term (except for the University of Hawaii). By a significant margin, the executive who heads the graduate education office at major research universities carries the title "Dean", suggesting a primarily academic function. This is consistent with the fact that when students describe their plans after completing their undergraduate education, they generally say they are "going to graduate school" if they wish to pursue an advanced academic degree. Thus, the name change is intended to highlight the new mission and focus as well as to align with the term that is most commonly understood across the United States.

The Graduate School at UC Davis will provide the overarching framework to meet the needs and challenges of graduate education for the coming decades. It requires a transformation in focus toward outcomes and success, fostering bottom-up adherence to policy based on a desire

for programs to be successful, a strategic re-deployment of resources and staff, and attention to the educational needs of students and postdoctoral scholars. Progress will also require a concomitant transformation by the Graduate Council to rely more on outcomes and the success of students and programs in its oversight capacity. At the same time, the Graduate Education Administrative Team must foster the development of information technology systems to support the needs of The Graduate School, graduate programs, the Graduate Council and the broader campus. We must take every opportunity to review policies of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Council to ensure they contribute to success and can be effectively implemented. Of paramount importance is the need for a strong central graduate school and an efficient administrative organization that, together, support the success of both department-based programs and interdisciplinary graduate groups.

The overarching goals of the transformation to The Graduate School are to raise the quality of graduate education at UC Davis to the next level of excellence, advance our efforts to increase the diversity of the graduate population, enhance the quality of graduate student life, improve our success in retaining students and seeing that they complete their degrees, and bring greater visibility to graduate education at UC Davis. More specifically, this focus on excellence requires that we recruit the most capable students, ensure that most complete their degrees and do so in a timely manner, prepare our graduate students for a variety of career options, and broadly support the scholarship and teaching of the university and its faculty. Accomplishing these goals will require that we reduce the administrative and transactional burden for all partners and that we emphasize academic issues, enhance the personal, intellectual and professional development of students, and engage faculty thoughtfully in the business of graduate education. The new and expanded academic initiatives for graduate students, postdoctoral scholars and faculty will take graduate education and postdoctoral training beyond the normal teaching, learning and research that are inherent parts of the preparation of new scholars and will complement and enhance existing faculty efforts.

As noted earlier, the initiatives of The Graduate School can be grouped under the following broad themes:

#### Enhancing Program Success through Student Success

The excellence and overall success of graduate programs derives in large measure from the success of individual students. Towards this aim, The Graduate School will offer initiatives to promote the success of individual students. The focus of this initiative will be on the success of all students, not just the best. Thus, it is important to increase completion rates from current levels in the range of 40-60% for doctoral students to a target of 85% and to decrease time-to-degree in many programs. In addition, The Graduate School must help prepare graduate students for a broad range of career options including non-academic placements in keeping with student interests and likely employment opportunities. As part of the student success initiatives, The Graduate School will serve as visible and principal source of advocacy and support to enhance the quality of graduate student life. In this endeavor, it will support faculty through consultation and advice about student concerns, policies, and resources.

Examples of the programs to be supported under the student success initiative include the existing professional development series (<http://iccweb.ucdavis.edu/graduates/pds/>) funded by Graduate Studies, courses on scholarly integrity and the responsible conduct of research (required of graduate students and postdocs funded by NSF and NIH grants), laboratory management training, mentoring workshops for students and faculty, leadership development programs (e.g. Professors for the Future, the formerly-funded Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate) and an entrepreneurship program. The current professional development series has been very popular with students and has been expanded each year. Example topics include “Grant Writing for the Humanities and Social Sciences”, “Preparing for Your Qualifying Exam” and the “Careers Beyond Academic” series. The new dissertation writing retreats have been especially well-received by doctoral students who need extra guidance and support to finish their dissertations.

In offering programs for students, The Graduate School will continue long-standing collaborations (including those with the Internship and Career Center, the University Writing Program and Counseling and Psychological Services), strengthen more recent partnerships (such as with the Center for Entrepreneurship, the Office of Research and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) and create new joint ventures where there are advantages. For example, The Graduate School will continue to partner with the University Writing Program to support the very popular writing workshops. The Responsible Conduct of Research brown bag series offered for the past several years in collaboration with the Office of Research will be continued, but The Graduate School will also coordinate and offer credit-bearing courses on scholarly integrity that are now distributed across the campus within various graduate programs.

An example of a new collaboration is found in the need to develop a program to train graduate students to effectively communicate their scholarship to broad audiences. Here we refer to communicating orally and in writing outside the academic discipline. This activity is related in part to preparing students for a broad range of career options by providing the training to describe their research to those outside the academy. For example, Stony Brook University has had considerable success in this area through workshops on improvisation created and led by the actor and adjunct professor Alan Alda. Developing better communication skills will also help graduate students become more effective advocates for the value of graduate education and to publicly promote the contributions of graduate education to the State and Nation. The annual Interdisciplinary Graduate Symposium provides an excellent opportunity for students to enhance their abilities to convey the importance and relevance of their research to a broad audience.

As noted earlier, UC Davis already offers a broad array of academic programs for graduate students, but there is an urgent need to better coordinate these existing academic activities as a central contribution of The Graduate School. In this way, The Graduate School will serve as a holistic resource for students, faculty and staff, helping to build graduate community and strengthen the impact of graduate education on the campus. More importantly, having a more



visible, comprehensive professional development program will promote and support excellence in graduate education and postdoctoral training at UC Davis. By further expanding the professional development programs to reach more students, they will see The Graduate School as their resource for success. This margin of excellence will lead to greater program success in recruiting outstanding students, ensuring that they are productive scholars and that they are successful in pursuing their graduate degrees.

### Engaging Faculty in Reflection on and Creativity in Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Training

One important feature that will distinguish The Graduate School at UC Davis from the graduate schools at peer universities is the focus on engaging and partnering with faculty. Traditionally, graduate schools focus their programs on graduate students – helping them develop the skills and strategies to cope with the rigors of graduate education and succeed in earning their degrees. However, this strategy can only have limited success if the faculty and the graduate school are not partners – with the graduate students - in the full graduate education enterprise. In a departure from the traditional approach, Graduate Studies identified the critical role of faculty mentors in the success of graduate students as a key element in its successful proposal to the Educational Testing Service and the Council of Graduate Schools. This proposal resulted in UC Davis receiving the first ever ETS/CGS *Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education: From Admission through Completion* for the proposal entitled “Mentoring at Critical Transitions: Faculty Readiness from Admission to Completion”. In the Mentoring at Critical transitions (MCT) program, Graduate Studies is working with faculty from selected programs to improve their mentoring skills in a variety of relevant areas. The goals are to create a culture in which the success of every student is valued and to prepare faculty to successfully guide multiple generations of graduate students.

The Graduate School will continue the work of the MCT project after the award grant has ended and will expand it to other graduate programs and training groups on campus. The continuing partnership with faculty will promote program success and excellence through the success of individual students. As part of the extended MCT programs, The Graduate School will host regular seminars and colloquia on topics in graduate education and postdoctoral training featuring invited speakers from other institutions, including graduate deans, faculty who conduct research on graduate education and experts in topics such as recruiting and retention. In looking at other institutions, this approach appears to be unique; among our comparison institutions, only Stanford and the University of Michigan graduate offices devote (limited) attention to faculty.

In order to promote continuing improvements in graduate education and to spark creative new approaches, The Graduate School will offer up to two program innovation grants each year. These grants from the Graduate Innovation Fund will be awarded through competitive applications in which programs outline a strategy for quality improvement and academic innovation. In addition, future allocations of graduate student support funds controlled by The Graduate School will be partially determined by quantitative measures of program excellence.

To avoid the possibility that programs with poor quality metrics will spiral downward, the bulk of the program improvement funding will be designated to graduate student support to enable programs to attract high quality applicants. However, a significant portion of the grants (25-50%) may be used to develop academic innovations that would otherwise be difficult to fund. This portion of the program improvement grants is similar to Stanford's Fund for Innovation in Graduate Education.

Finally, The Graduate School will reinstitute the Distinguished Graduate Mentoring Award and create a new Distinguished Postdoctoral Scholar Mentoring Award as recommended by the Postdoctoral Scholars Association. These two awards will recognize the important role of mentoring in preparing graduate students and postdoctoral scholars for successful careers within and outside the academy. They will also provide a mechanism to recognize faculty partnerships with The Graduate School.

### Disseminating Innovative Practices in Graduate Education

Many graduate programs operate in relative isolation from one another. Although this is less true at UC Davis, where faculty often belong to more than one graduate program, there is still a need to share ideas across programs. To further promote programmatic excellence, another key aspect of working closely with faculty is for The Graduate School to actively share innovative practices and successful ideas from national discussions and research on graduate education. Regular topical colloquia and workshops will help raise faculty awareness of key issues in graduate education, promote good mentoring and laboratory management practices by faculty, and facilitate the sharing of local best practices among UC Davis' graduate programs. These colloquia will also stimulate faculty to develop and adopt innovative new approaches to graduate education.

Ideas and themes will be derived from national organizations such as the Council of Graduate Schools and the Association of Graduate Schools (the group of graduate deans from the AAU schools), from the results of graduate education research (e.g. the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate and the Graduate Education Initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation) and from internal research in The Graduate School. Concepts from these sources will be complemented by sharing best practices from the most successful programs at UC Davis.

Potential topics for discussion and dissemination include:

- Using data to evaluate and improve graduate program quality;
- Promoting transparency in graduate education outcomes;
- Understanding the factors that impact attrition and completion rates;
- The importance of academic socialization in student retention and success;
- Strategies to promote international collaborations in graduate education;
- Developing effective approaches to teaching scholarly integrity;
- Responding to new opportunities in master's degree education.

## Enhancing Diversity and Fostering a Sense of Community

Consistent with the campus Vision of Excellence, recruiting, enrolling, retaining and graduating a diverse graduate student population is vital to the academic excellence of UC Davis and to our future success as a research university. Thus, it is critical that The Graduate School, like the Office of Graduate Studies at present, provide a strong central voice for increasing the diversity of our graduate students and our postdoctoral scholars. In order to attract an increasingly diverse and academically talented graduate student population, The Graduate School will reinvigorate our active graduate student recruiting program by continuing to engage faculty partners, strengthening and expanding collaborations and linkages with other universities (especially Hispanic Serving Institutions, Minority Serving Institutions and HBCU's), developing new recruiting strategies with individual programs and creating a targeted international recruiting effort. Using the network of contacts developed over many years, The Graduate School will also be in a good position to contribute to improving postdoctoral scholar and faculty diversity. Although recruiting a diverse student population is an important first step, The Graduate School will also play a key role in promoting the retention and success of this diverse population. A key strategy is to continue to support the efforts of student groups such as the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association, the Latino Graduate Student Association and the Graduate Ally Coalition. These groups individually and collectively contribute to creating a strong graduate community, especially among underrepresented students.

In order to improve retention rates for all students, The Graduate School will also play a critical role in promoting and supporting a strong graduate student community and providing services that enhance graduate student life. A key element in this effort is the creation of a Graduate Community Center as a central location for graduate student meetings, for the Graduate Student Association (GSA) and Postdoctoral Scholars Association (PSA) offices, to provide a venue for Graduate School workshops, seminars and colloquia, and to generally serve as a central home for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. In recent years, such graduate student centers have been developed at a number of prominent research universities across the country, including Stanford, Cornell, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, UCLA, UC Irvine and Virginia Tech. One of the oldest centers is found in the Rackham School at the University of Michigan, which has its own building designed for the graduate school to house administrative offices and host graduate student activities.

Graduate student centers respond to the increasing interest of graduate students to have a broad educational experience that transcends their individual graduate programs and to the value of building a strong graduate community as a strategy for increasing retention and completion rates. While a graduate community center at UC Davis could take many forms, we envision it as a central location for The Graduate School offices, space for The Graduate School events and a meeting place for graduate students, much like the Michigan model. The graduate community center will be a key element in supporting graduate student success at UC Davis and will be the type of collaborative gathering place that prompts collaborative discourse and a sense of scholarly community that is identified in the UC Davis Vision of Excellence.

## Promoting Excellence through Increased Student Support

It is well known that the success of graduate students and graduate programs at UC Davis depends on increasing the amount of funding devoted to graduate student support. In addition to the academic and administrative transformations outlined above, The Graduate School must place new emphasis on graduate student support. While campus investments have grown over the past five years, future success must depend on acquiring additional resources from outside the University. Toward this goal, The Graduate School must expand support for and encourage students and postdoctoral scholars to seek extramural fellowships by offering workshops on proposal writing, promoting coaching by committed faculty and providing incentives through matching commitments. Such grant writing is not only a means to seek financial support, but also an important academic opportunity for professional development. Similarly, The Graduate School must better promote its Training Grant Support Services for faculty in collaboration with the Office of Research to encourage greater numbers of training grant applications across the campus. In addition, The Graduate School must continue to build an aggressive fund-raising activity for both student support and program excellence. The transformation of the Office of Graduate Studies to The Graduate School will significantly enhance our development activities by helping to define a clear vision and mission that will generate greater donor interest and support. Further, the transformation process itself can be used to create a sense of donor excitement about investing in a new vision at UC Davis, especially now that the campus is in the public phase of the Campaign for UC Davis. As a part of the overall development activity, the transformation will enable The Graduate School to build stronger connections to graduate alumni/ae of UC Davis. Because past donors represent an important source of future gifts, The Graduate School must also develop a sound donor stewardship program, something that the Office of Graduate Studies has been unable to do.

In addition to increasing graduate student support funding, The Graduate School will be more strategic in the way it allocates the available resources. As already proposed, the current block grant allocation method will be changed to emphasize quantitative measures of program quality as the basis for determining the amount allocated to each program. The new incentives-based allocation methodology will be structured to both reward and stimulate programmatic excellence based in large measure on the success of students in achieving their graduate education objectives. This approach will further strengthen the link between student success and program success.

Together, these initiatives will contribute significantly to the excellence of UC Davis through greater success of graduate education and postdoctoral training. Managing and implementing the changes will be challenging and strategic decisions will have differential impacts on programs and faculty. However, it is both appropriate and necessary that we transform how we oversee graduate education and postdoctoral scholar training if we are to realize our Vision of Excellence. The proposed transformation to The Graduate School will also enable UC Davis to demonstrate leadership and vision in developing a new model within the University of California.

## Graduate Education Administration Team

A core element of the transformation of graduate education and postdoctoral training oversight at UC Davis is the greatly enhanced focus of The Graduate School on academic issues. This requires that the provision of administrative services to graduate students, faculty and staff be re-conceptualized and enhanced.

In order to facilitate the transformation to The Graduate School, many current administrative processes must be streamlined, delegated to programs or eliminated. This goal is consistent with concepts presented in the report of the Task Force on the Future of UC Davis. Many of the current policies were inherited from the past – before there was a Graduate Division at UC Davis. The need to update processes is greatest in admissions and in student support processing. A key to success is to become more quantitative: enabling better use of data and analyses to make strategic decisions, to support program review and to enable staff to monitor program and student success. The Graduate School also needs to revise policies to reduce the number of required exceptions by clarifying and simplifying policies where necessary, delegating authorities where useful and shifting from a strategy of prior approval to one of monitoring program and student activities and successes. These multiple objectives can be accomplished by merging the Office of Graduate Studies staff that are now responsible for transaction work with the graduate program coordinators who work with each program and its faculty into a new unit known as the Graduate Education Administration Team that will:

- Provide excellent administrative services in admissions, enrollment and degree certification to students and postdocs to ensure their academic success;
- Provide improved services in financial support processing and academic employment;
- Be staffed by well-trained professionals who understand the critical issues in graduate education and student success;
- Manage staffing to ensure that all programs have high quality administrative support;
- Provide business, financial and information technology support to The Graduate School and graduate programs;
- Develop information technology tools to enable efficient routine transactions and to support The Graduate School and the Graduate Education Administration Team;
- Include the transfer of selected responsibilities from the Graduate Financial Aid Office and Student Accounting to create a more efficient single point of contact for graduate student financial matters.

The Graduate Education Administration Team will serve as the administrative organization responsible for transactional matters related to graduate education at UC Davis. It will provide cost effective, innovative and transparent administration for graduate education in the manner described in the campus Vision of Excellence. It will be formed by merging parts of the current Office of Graduate Studies with the staff who presently serve as graduate program

coordinators, thereby eliminating administrative overlap by creating a single seamless unit. It will be led by an Executive Director who will be functionally equivalent to an Executive Assistant Dean and who will report to the Dean of The Graduate School. However, the Graduate Education Administration Team will operate autonomously and will not be part of The Graduate School. The Executive Director will have considerable latitude in managing the daily operations of the Graduate Education Administration Team, will be responsible for all day-to-day decisions not requiring direct academic oversight and will make independent decisions on policy interpretation. This will enable the Dean of the Graduate School to have greatly reduced involvement in transactional matters in order to devote greater attention to academic issues and fund-raising development. A key attribute of the Graduate Education Administration Team will be the use of information technology tools to streamline (or even automate) administrative tasks and improve the availability of data to inform graduate program and Graduate School directions. The Graduate Education Administration Team is described in greater detail in a separate document.

## **Role of the Graduate Council**

Under the proposed Graduate School model, the Graduate Council will continue to play a critical role in developing academic policy, approving and reviewing programs and degree requirements and advising the Dean on resource allocations. It will have a clearly defined role as the executive committee of The Graduate School and will oversee all of its academic programs. Perhaps most importantly, the Graduate Council must take an active role in engaging the faculty in discussions and colloquia on topics of importance in graduate education as a key strategy to improve the quality of our programs and the success of our students. Finally, the proposed administrative transformation must be supported by a concomitant transformation by the Graduate Council to rely more on outcomes and the success of students and programs in its oversight capacity. Together, the Graduate Council, the Graduate Education Administration Team and The Graduate School must systematically review both academic and administrative policies related to graduate education to ensure that each contributes to the success of students and programs and that each can be effectively administered.

The work of the Graduate Council will be supplemented by a Dean's Advisory Council for development. This group will advise on fund-raising strategies, assist in identifying and cultivating new donors and support the stewardship activities of The Graduate School. The council will be comprised of approximately 12 individuals who are graduate alumni, faculty, external friends and supporters of The Graduate School.

## **Resource Implications**

The structure and staffing of The Graduate School are described in Appendix B. The proposed size of The Graduate School is approximately 50% of the staffing level of the Office of Graduate Studies in 2005-06 or about 39% smaller than in 2010. The latter reduction will be achieved by

eliminating some positions and by shifting transactional responsibilities to the Graduate Education Administration Team. The shift of transactional responsibilities will result in elimination of administrative overlap between the graduate programs and the central office by creating a single seamless unit to support the administration of graduate education. Further, total staffing of The Graduate School and the Graduate Education Administration team will be less than the Office of Graduate Studies combined with current graduate program coordinators. It is difficult to identify benchmarks for comparison with other institutions due to the wide variety of staffing levels that seem not to correlate with graduate enrollments or numbers of programs. However, the proposed Graduate School staffing will be among the lowest within the group of comparison institutions that were reviewed.

Overall, staffing of The Graduate School will focus on academic initiatives, analysis and policy and development. All three areas will receive increased attention compared to the present in order to promote excellence in graduate education at UC Davis. As noted throughout the proposal, a central focus of The Graduate School will be on academic programs that promote student success and engage the faculty in graduate education. The Graduate School will also continue and enhance activities to recruit outstanding students with an emphasis on increasing diversity. These positions, combined with those that support the UC LEADS and McNair Scholars academic preparation programs, are similar to the current status. The proposed staffing also reflects the need to better manage data regarding graduate education and to provide a robust institutional research capability to inform strategic decisions by The Graduate School, the Graduate Council and individual programs. An example of the desired institutional research capability is the recent Graduate Studies report on Ph.D. completion and attrition based on data submitted to the NRC assessment by UC Davis. Finally, The Graduate School must devote significant attention to development and stewardship. The proposed staffing reflects that these will become functions of this unit, along with other marketing activities. Because the development and stewardship activities of The Graduate School benefit all divisions, colleges and schools, these positions must be funded as part of the core budget of The Graduate School.

The budget for The Graduate School is presented in Appendix C. This budget reflects costs for staff and operations consistent with the new mission of The Graduate School. It also reflects a proposed transfer of the current development officer position from University Relations to The Graduate School, consistent with campus practice that unit development officers are aligned with their divisions, colleges and schools. Additional resources will be needed to support core activities. While some may come from the central campus (e.g. increasing the block grant to accommodate enrollment growth), other resources must be obtained through revenue generation and efforts to streamline workload. For example, The Graduate School should explore ways to increase revenue (other than planned application fee increases) such as through revenue-generating master's programs. Expanding vital academic program activities will require that The Graduate School seek additional extramural funding from federal agencies, foundations, private giving and the Council of Graduate Schools. At the same time, The Graduate School must identify additional opportunities to outsource tasks where appropriate (e.g. current plans to work with SARI to administer program review questionnaires).

In order to fulfill its new mission, The Graduate School will need appropriate space in an appropriate location. The current space occupied by the Office of Graduate Studies is not appropriate since Mrak Hall is neither a building that houses student activities nor is it viewed as student-friendly. In order to reinforce the new identity of The Graduate School, alternative space outside Mrak Hall should be identified, preferably in a relatively central location. However, if the Graduate Community Center is built (or acquired), space for The Graduate School should be provided in that location. For example, student and postdoc activity space, meeting rooms and the GSA and PSA offices could be located on the first floor with The Graduate School offices on the upper floors.

### **Timing and Next Steps**

Appendix D contains the proposed consultation plan for this proposal. During Winter Quarter, relevant constituent groups will be briefed on the proposal. Feedback from these briefings will be incorporated into a revised version that will be submitted for formal review on campus during Spring Quarter. Pending campus and systemwide approval, the transformation from the Office of Graduate Studies to The Graduate School will begin in the academic year 2011-12, with full implementation by Fall 2012. The transformation will be accomplished by appointing two implementation work groups, one for The Graduate School and one for the Graduate Education Administration Team. Each will be comprised of staff from the current Office of Graduate Studies plus stakeholder representatives, including graduate students, graduate program staff, graduate program chairs, graduate advisers and other administrators representing departments, schools and colleges. These implementation work groups will identify additional details that will shape the two new units, with special attention to the appropriate division of responsibilities and the need to streamline processes.

The implementation work groups will also be asked to consider whether other functions should be included in the charge to either unit. For example, it might be appropriate to consider re-aligning the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning with The Graduate School to recognize the important role of this unit in graduate student professional development. This structure is used at other university campuses such as UC San Diego and UC Berkeley (and was formerly the model at UC Davis).



## Appendix A Summary of Primary Graduate Studies Activities

### Activities to be retained by The Graduate School

- Outreach to prospective students,
- Recruitment of new applicants with an emphasis on diversity,
- Certification to the Academic Senate that students have completed their degree requirements,
- Allocation of block grant funds and work-study units to graduate programs,
- Advice and guidance to graduate students and postdoctoral scholars regarding applications for external fellowships,
- Advice and guidance to graduate students on managing the challenges of graduate school,
- Academic support to faculty and staff in serving graduate students and their programs,
- Professional development programs for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars,
- Appointment of graduate group Chairs,
- Appointment of Graduate Advisers for all programs,
- Orientation of Chairs and Graduate Advisers,
- Assistance to faculty in developing new program proposals and changing existing programs,
- Assistance to faculty in applying for training grants,
- Development of private and foundation support for graduate education (in collaboration with University Relations),
- Stewardship of graduate student support endowments,
- Print and electronic publications to support graduate education at UC Davis and the various programs managed by Graduate Studies,
- Administrative support of the Graduate Council and its program review process,
- Management and implementation of the UC LEADS and Department of Education-funded McNair Scholars programs to promote undergraduate student research (includes writing McNair grant proposal),
- Institutional research in response to requests for information and to inform internal policy decisions,
- Information databases to support the functions of The Graduate School and the Graduate Council, and to inform the campus community,
- Interface between UC Davis and national organizations such as the Council of Graduate Schools and the Association of Graduate Schools (part of the AAU),
- Financial support to the Postdoctoral Scholars Association,
- Organization and conduct of an annual Graduate Studies Commencement Ceremony.

### Activities to be retained by the Graduate Education Administration Team

- Admission application processing and approval,
- Academic services for enrolled students,
- Dissertations and theses submission,
- Fellowship application processing for new and continuing students,
- Management of internal fellowship award processes (includes interactions with Graduate Council Support Committee),
- Financial management of internal fellowship and block grant funds,
- Pre- and post-award management of external fellowship awards,
- Administrative support to faculty and staff in serving graduate students and their programs,
- Interpretation of graduate education policies for students, faculty and staff,
- Oversight of academic appointments for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars,
- Implementation of collective bargaining agreements for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars,
- Administrative support of the Postdoctoral Scholars Association,
- Business, human resources and financial support to The Graduate School and the Graduate Education Administration Team,
- Information technology solutions to assist students, graduate program staff and faculty with the administration of graduate education.

## Appendix B The Graduate School Staffing

Staffing in The Graduate School is based on the need to deliver academically-oriented programs for students and faculty, to ensure the ability of the campus to recruit an increasingly diverse and talented graduate student population, to manage programs that prepare undergraduates for graduate school, to provide analyses that inform policy and programs and to effectively seek external student financial support from private donors, foundations and granting agencies. The proposed staffing outlined below acknowledges that the majority of the transaction work related to graduate education will be managed by the Graduate Education Administration Team. Thus, the current staffing level in the Office of Graduate Studies (29.7 FTE on campus funds and 1 FTE development officer currently housed in University Relations) will be reduced to a total of 18.6 FTE, a reduction of 39%. This reduction comes on top of prior staffing reductions of 22% over the previous 5 years. At the same time, The Graduate School will be better positioned to support a strong development and external fellowship effort.

Dean of The Graduate School (1 FTE)

Associate Dean of The Graduate School (0.5 FTE)

Faculty Assistants (0 FTE with stipends)\*

Graduate Student Assistant to the Dean and Chancellor (0 FTE student position)

Executive Assistant to the Dean (1 FTE)

Receptionist and Assistant to the Directors (1 FTE)

Assistant Dean for Academic Programs (1 FTE)

Student Academic Programs Specialist (1 FTE)

Faculty Academic Programs Specialist (1 FTE)

Recruiting Specialist (0.5 FTE)\*\*

Graduate Diversity Coordinator (0.5 FTE)\*\*

Manager of McNair Scholars Academic Preparation Program (0.1 FTE)\*\*

McNair Scholars Academic Preparation Specialist (1 FTE)

Director of Analysis and Policy (1 FTE)

Graduate Policy Analyst (1 FTE)

Graduate Programs Assistant (1 FTE)

External Fellowship Grant Analyst (1 FTE)

Training Grant Analyst (1FTE)

Director of Development and Marketing (1 FTE)

Communication and Marketing Manager (1 FTE)

Stewardship and Events Coordinator (1 FTE)

Gift Processor and External Fellowship Assistant (1 FTE)

Web Application Programmer (1 FTE)

\* Faculty Assistants for: Graduate Group Chair Appointments, Scholarly Integrity, International Collaborations and Training Grant Development.

\*\* Balance of position funded extramurally.

## Appendix C Summary of The Graduate School Proposed Budget

<b>Salaries (based on midpoint of classification in most cases)</b>	\$1,300,000
<b>Operating Budget Expenses (from existing Graduate Studies)</b>	
Office and Unit Operating Budgets	90,000
Commencement	15,000
Graduate Council	12,000
Graduate Group Chairs	131,000
Graduate Student Assistant to the Dean and Chancellor	25,000
Student Programs	33,000
Recruiting	197,000
Publications	15,000
UC LEADS	<u>100,000</u>
	\$618,000
<b>Proposed Operating Budget Expenses (new)</b>	
Student Academic Programs Initiatives	10,000
Faculty Academic Programs Initiatives	10,000
Development and Special Events	10,000
Diversity Initiatives	<u>10,000</u>
	\$40,000
<b>PROPOSED BUDGET TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$1,958,000</b>

Note: The above total compares to a total annual budget of \$3,250,000 for the current Office of Graduate Studies of which \$1,900,000 is for salaries.

## Appendix D Proposal Consultation Strategy

As noted in the body of the proposal, the concept paper for The Graduate School has been shared with the Graduate Council, which endorsed the concept, the Chancellor and the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor. The general concept has also been discussed with the Council of Deans and Vice Chancellors. Review and approval of the full proposal requires additional and more detailed consultation. Although The Graduate School will not be a traditional academic unit, we believe that the overall review and approval should follow Policy and Procedure Manual Section 200-20 *Establishment or Revision of Academic Units* and Section III.B.1, *Establishment of New Schools and Colleges in the Universitywide Review Processes for Academic Programs, Academic Units and Research Units (the “Compendium”)*. However, additional campus consultation is needed prior to those formal review processes. The following table outlines the proposed consultation steps:

Group or Committee	Dates	Action
Chancellor and Provost	January 10-28	Review of concept
Budget and Institutional Analysis	January 10-February 28	Analysis of financial implications and options
Graduate Studies Staff	January 12	Informational presentation & feedback
Council of Deans	January 18	Informational presentation & feedback
Assistant and Associate Deans	January 24-28	Informational presentation & feedback
Graduate Council	February 4	Informational presentation & feedback
Committee on Planning and Budget	February 7	Informational presentation & feedback
ADMAN	Feb 1- Feb 15	Informational presentation & feedback
Senate Executive Council	Feb 1- Feb 15	Informational presentation & feedback
GSA Executive Council	Feb 1- Feb 15	Informational presentation & feedback
Academic Senate Representative Assembly	February 24	Informational presentation & feedback
Graduate Program Staff	February 24	Informational presentation & feedback
Graduate Program Chairs	Feb 25 and Feb 28	Informational presentation & feedback

Following campus consultation, the proposal will be revised to incorporate feedback prior to beginning the formal review process. The following steps constitute the formal review:

Group or Committee	Dates	Action
Academic Senate	March 15	Submission of proposal
Committee on Planning and Budget	March 15-April 15	Formal Review
Graduate Council	April 1	Formal Review
Committee on Research	March 15-April 15	Formal Review
Executive Council	April 15-May 15	Formal Review
Representative Assembly	June 3	Formal Review
Council of Deans & Vice Chancellors	June 14	Formal Review
Chancellor	June 15	Formal campus approval and submission to UCOP
Divisional Academic Senate Chair	June 15	Submission to systemwide Academic Senate

## **Proposal to Reorganize Administrative Services for Graduate Education**

January 10, 2011

### **Executive Summary**

The proposed Graduate Education Administration Team model will bring staff from the graduate programs and a part of the current Office of Graduate Studies together under a single administrative structure. This model will eliminate administrative redundancies, lead to significant administrative efficiencies and provide a more effective mechanism to support faculty and students in UC Davis graduate programs. It will create a single administrative structure that serves the needs of graduate programs independent of whether they are organized as department-based or graduate group programs. This model will lead to a uniform and rational classification of staff, focus their job responsibilities on graduate education and provide logical career advancement opportunities. Staff will also have opportunities to be fully trained in all aspects of their jobs initially and on an on-going basis. The Graduate Education Administration Team will be supported by robust information technology applications to minimize transaction work, eliminate redundancies and maximize efficiency in overall graduate education administration operations. Once implemented, this new model will serve as a national example of graduate education administration in a highly interdisciplinary academic environment and will promote excellence in graduate education at UC Davis.

### **Introduction**

This proposal serves as a companion to the “Proposal to Reconstitute the Office of Graduate Studies as The Graduate School at UC Davis”. It describes a plan to streamline processes and the organizational structure that support the administration of graduate education at UC Davis. It describes a new unit, the Graduate Education Administration Team, which merges existing graduate program coordinators and some staff from the current Office of Graduate Studies into a single unit responsible for all transactions related to graduate education. The Graduate Education Administration Team will serve as a companion organization to The Graduate School, enabling the latter to focus exclusively on academic matters in graduate education. Together, The Graduate School and the Graduate Education Administration Team will contribute to the increased excellence of graduate education at UC Davis.



## Background and Challenges

Administrative and academic support is critical to the success of both graduate students and programs. But, the concept of the “graduate secretary” who is a friend and confidant to the students and a blessing to the faculty is quickly changing. The job of providing support to graduate programs and their students has become increasingly complex and the workload has increased significantly with enrollment increases in many programs at UC Davis. This complexity is reflected in the list of primary tasks of current graduate program coordinators. Furthermore, the workload is distributed unevenly at UC Davis, with some programs receiving over 600 applications per year and/or enrolling over 200 students and others receiving only dozens of applications and/or enrolling a total of 10-20 students. In general, these differences are managed by assigning staff to support more than one small program or by assigning them a variety of additional functions unrelated to graduate education. Thus, at present there are approximately 60 full and part time staff supporting 87 graduate programs at UC Davis.

A recent survey of graduate program coordinators conducted by the Office of Graduate Studies in collaboration with the Graduate Studies Advisory Committee revealed that program staff support from 1 to 6 programs and/or have other duties such as undergraduate advising, purchasing and payroll, academic personnel, managing an ORU or other research program, overseeing departmental PPS and DaFIS accounts, and managing international visitor exchange programs. This same survey revealed that staff performing closely related job functions in support of graduate programs are classified at the varied levels of Administrative Assistant II, AA III, AA IV, Student Affairs Officer I, SAO II and SAO III. They support programs between 30 and 100 percent time (with one at less than 10%). Some are part-time employees or have other duties as noted.

Current training of program coordinators is limited and fairly informal – the Office of Graduate Studies provides some basic training in the use of systems such as the BANNER student information system, the GARD electronic application review system, the Payroll and Personnel System and the GradTrack\$ student support management system. Fellow program staff and program chairs also provide some training. Many graduate program staff positions are supervised by a MSO or CAO who often has limited experience in graduate education matters and may be only loosely connected to the day-to-day operations of the graduate program, especially in the case of graduate groups. Graduate program staff work fairly independently but are guided by the program chair or other faculty who chair program committees. In order to advance her or his career, a staff member typically must move to another program with a more highly classified position, thereby triggering a search process and a subsequent round of training. It is the responsibility of individual departments or graduate groups to find replacement staff if a person leaves, whether temporarily or permanently, leading to disruptions in program support. Often, faculty must fill in during the absence of a program coordinator.

Graduate Studies manages policies and processes for the entire campus whereas programs have specific needs for their students and faculty. Staff in Graduate Studies work closely with

graduate program coordinators to answer questions, resolve problems and provide customized attention to the needs of students in the programs. However, in order to ensure some uniformity in the way students are treated and to maintain the overall quality of graduate programs, Graduate Studies strives to be consistent in the way policies and procedures are applied across the campus. Nevertheless, in spite of efforts to communicate through electronic updates, regular conversations and collaborative activities, there remain gaps between the central office (Graduate Studies) and the multiple program offices with respect to information and shared understanding of how best to deal with issues as they arise. Finally, over the past 20 years there has been a gradual shift of responsibilities to the program coordinators. Thus, it is appropriate to ask whether the balance of workload between the central Office of Graduate Studies and the graduate program offices is right or whether there are some redundancies.

The current staffing structure for the support of graduate education does not fully optimize the use of personnel nor does it provide the highest level of support for our interdisciplinary programs. There is a need for better training of program staff to carry out the continuously changing and increasingly complex functions of their jobs. These staff need to have more focused responsibilities, which can be achieved by eliminating job responsibilities unrelated to graduate education. This step will reduce the required span of knowledge for these positions and allow staff to become expert in matters related to graduate education. Program staff need to have consistent job classifications and better career mobility. We need to reduce unnecessary challenges to graduate programs when individuals change positions. The distinction between central administrative functions and program-level administrative functions needs to be streamlined considerably in order to place decision points closer to the academic activities and to avoid overlap in responsibilities. The Task Force on the Future of UC Davis recommended that graduate program administrative support needs to be more efficient and more uniform across programs. Clearly, there are opportunities for greater efficiency at both the program level and the central level. Taken together, these observations suggest that a new structure that addresses these important challenges will enable the campus to provide better support to graduate students and program faculty, thereby enhancing efficiency and quality.

### **Proposed Graduate Education Administration Team**

Over the past 10 years, a number of graduate program administrative clusters have been formed across the campus. Clustering and formation of service centers have recently accelerated as strategies to manage budget reductions. In some cases, this means that multiple staff support several programs from a single cluster office. The best known example of this model is the Biological Sciences Graduate Group Complex. In other areas, a single staff person has been assigned to support multiple graduate programs by eliminating unrelated responsibilities from the position. While these approaches have brought some efficiencies, they have been implemented without a comprehensive consideration of the broader opportunities across programs.

We consider here a new model that builds on the concept of clustering and combines it with aspects of the shared service center concept being discussed at UC Davis. However, the new model extends those concepts by developing a strong central core with distributed satellite offices to provide local, program-specific administrative support. This new distributed administrative model, tentatively called the Graduate Education Administration Team, is unique within graduate education administration in the United States. In this fully distributed model, all transaction work related to graduate education will be managed in a single unit that is separate and distinct from The Graduate School. We envision approximately 6-8 graduate education support satellites across the campus, each providing academic, administrative and financial support for approximately 10 graduate programs. Both department-based and graduate group programs will be supported in this manner, without regard for program organization type. The groupings of programs will be based on physical location and/or academic similarities. Each satellite will include 3-4 Student Affairs Officers depending on the number and size of the programs supported. Generally, these individuals will be classified at the SAO I level with one supervisory position classified at the SAO II or III level. The student affairs officers will be responsible for all academic and student matters related to the graduate programs supported by that satellite. In addition, each satellite will include one Financial Analyst to manage the budgets of the graduate groups supported by that unit and student financial support matters including block grant funds and both internal and external fellowship awards. The separation of academic and financial responsibilities into different positions will reduce the overall complexities of the positions, enabling individuals to master the specific skills needed for their particular jobs.

The satellite offices will be linked to core staff of the Graduate Education Administration Team, most likely located in Mrak Hall. The core staff will include an Executive Director with overall responsibility for the unit and who will report to the Dean of The Graduate School. The Executive Director will have considerable autonomy in the operation of the Graduate Education Administration Team. Furthermore, the Graduate Education Administration Team will operate separately and distinctly from The Graduate School. The core staff will include a Director of Admissions and Academic Services who will guide the work of all SAOs in the satellites and provide regular training for them; a Director of Financial Services who will be responsible for all operational and student support budget matters, will oversee the work of the Financial Analysts and provide them regular training; and a Director of Information Technology who will be responsible for supervising the programming staff that develops and maintains the tools to streamline workload and provide the data needed for effective oversight and review of graduate education. In addition to these primary tasks, the core staff will provide an interface with central administrative offices such as Accounting and Financial Services, Office of the University Registrar, Payroll, Human Resources and Information and Educational Technology. The core staff in the finance and IT areas will also be shared to support the operations of The Graduate School.

In this new model, all of the core staff and individuals in the graduate education administrative satellites will be employees of the Graduate Education Administration Team. The supervising SAOs will report to, meet with, and interact directly with the Director of Admissions and

Academic Services. In a parallel manner, the Financial Analysts will be linked directly to a Director of Financial Services. The SAOs and Analysts will have full responsibility for carrying out all aspects of the tasks that fall within their areas. For example, the SAOs will manage admission applications directly, entering decisions into the GARD and generating admission letters to applicants; there will no longer be a second review by staff in a central office. The Graduate Education Administration Team will be responsible for hiring employees and adjusting staffing levels to meet program needs. Graduate program staff will now have career advancement opportunities from SAO I to the supervisory positions as SAO II or III, and eventually to the director position, all within the Graduate Education Administration Team. This structure will help to eliminate the campuswide musical chairs situation that arose in recent years as staff moved from one program to another in order to advance their salaries, leaving a vacancy that was filled by a staff member from another program and so on. The new model also provides the capacity to respond to temporary vacancies due to medical or personal issues and to provide coverage for employees who leave their positions.

The number of positions in the Admissions and Academic Services unit and the Student Financial Support unit in the Office of Graduate Studies will be reduced from the current budgeted levels. There will also be a reduction in the total number of graduate program staff because all will support graduate education on a full-time basis. An initial estimate is that a total of 10-15 FTE could be eliminated from the current number, preferably through retirement and attrition. While savings in terms of staffing are predicted, an equally significant impact will be to streamline administrative processes, enabling more efficient administrative support of graduate education. Finally, the Graduate Education Administration Team will eliminate any sense of “us” versus “them”; there will be only one unit.

In addition to the merger of existing administrative functions in the Office of Graduate Studies and the graduate programs, the Graduate Education Administration Team will provide unified access to financial support information for students by assuming some of the responsibilities for student service formerly located in the Financial Aid Office. Graduate students will thus have one less office to consult. Recent budget reductions have led to significantly decreased access of graduate students to the Financial Aid Office, which will be partially mitigated by this plan. A similar efficiency can be obtained by relocating the processing and posting of graduate fee and tuition remissions from Student Accounting to the Graduate Education Administration Team. This function was assumed by Student Accounting many years ago not because it was the appropriate office but because no other office would accept the responsibility. At present, a significant effort is expended to coordinate fee and tuition remissions with other student financial support and employment. These processes will be streamlined to be more efficient and to ensure that the correct fee and tuition revenue is being collected.

There are two key elements that are critical to the success of the Graduate Education Administration Team model: appropriate information technology tools and continuous training of staff. In an era of constrained resources, The Graduate Education Administration Team must invest greater energy in information technology and redeploy current resources. Graduate Studies has already had success in this area through the Embark application system and GARD

electronic application review system. Together, these systems place UC Davis at the forefront nationally in using information technology to create a completely electronic admission and fellowship process. The Graduate Education Administration Team must build on this success. It is now important to turn attention to the next phases of the planned Graduate System for Management of Admissions, Alumni and Records Tracking project (GradSMAART), including the student tracking and the alumni tracking modules. The former is critical to our ability to monitor academic progress and financial support of individual students. This system will enable The Graduate School and the Graduate Education Administration Team concepts to reach fruition by moving the offices from a mode of requiring prior approval to one of monitoring outcomes and success and by facilitating much of the routine administrative work at the program and central levels. The financial tracking element will enable more strategic deployment of student support funds and provide tools for programs to manage their funds better. The alumni tracking module is central to both our development activities and our reporting and assessment activities.

The coming decade will certainly bring increased workload associated with the planned graduate enrollment growth that is a priority for the campus as reflected in the Vision of Excellence. The campus also faces challenges with the unionization of postdocs and implementing the TA collective bargaining agreement with a shift of responsibility from Employee and Labor Relations to the Office of Graduate Studies. Faculty continue to be creative in their ideas for new graduate programs as reflected in the 5-year perspective and the academic plans of the schools, colleges and divisions, and these will add to workload. The ability to absorb this increasing workload requires a flexible administrative structure such as the Graduate Education Administration Team.

Equally important to the success of the Graduate Education Administration Team is the need for adequate and continuous training of staff. For some matters, the supervisory SAOs will serve as a conduit of information, descriptions of changes in policy and implementation of new procedures. This regular exchange will be complemented by more formal training offered by the Directors and Executive Director. This training is envisioned to be much more extensive than at present in order to ensure that all staff are fully aware of policies, procedures and strategies for managing graduate programs. In addition, this training will enable new staff to more effectively master their jobs and minimize the disruptions associated with staffing changes. Finally, the Graduate Education Administration Team model will facilitate enhanced training of SAOs to address pressing concerns regarding graduate student retention and completion by helping programs support the social and academic needs of students. In these ways, an important outcome of this model is to create highly trained graduate education professionals who will contribute to the success of our students and the excellence of our programs.

## **Timing and Next Steps**

The creation of the Graduate Education Administration Team represents an administrative reorganization. Thus, the final decision to implement this plan rests with the Chancellor. A consultation plan leading to a final decision is presented in Appendix D. During Winter Quarter, relevant constituent groups will be briefed on the draft proposal. Feedback from these briefings will be incorporated into a revised version that will be submitted for formal review on campus during Spring Quarter. Pending campus approval, the Graduate Education Administration Team would be created during the academic year 2011-12, with full implementation by Fall 2012. The overall transformation of the Office of Graduate Studies will be accomplished by appointing two implementation work groups, one for The Graduate School and one for the Graduate Education Administration Team. Each will be comprised of staff from the current Office of Graduate Studies plus stakeholder representatives, including graduate students, graduate program staff, graduate program chairs, graduate advisers and other administrators representing departments, schools and colleges. These implementation work groups will identify additional details that will shape the two new units, with special attention to the appropriate division of responsibilities and the need to streamline processes. In the case of the Graduate Education Administration team, key decisions will need to be made regarding the merger of existing budgets for Graduate Studies and graduate program administration and the identification of appropriate space across the campus for the 6-8 satellite offices.

## **Appendix A Duties and Responsibilities of the Graduate Education Administration Team**

### Core Responsibilities

- Admission application processing and approval,
- Academic services for enrolled students,
- Dissertations and theses submission,
- Fellowship application processing for new and continuing students,
- Management of internal fellowship award processes (includes interactions with Graduate Council Support Committee),
- Financial management of internal fellowship and block grant funds,
- Pre- and post-award management of external fellowship awards,
- Administrative support to faculty and staff in serving graduate students and their programs,
- Interpretation of graduate education policies for students, faculty and staff,
- Oversight of academic appointments for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars,
- Implementation of collective bargaining agreements for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars,
- Administrative support of the Postdoctoral Scholars Association,
- Business, human resources and financial support to The Graduate School and the Graduate Education Administration Team,
- Information technology solutions to assist students, graduate program staff and faculty with the administration of graduate education.

### Program Level Responsibilities of Support Satellites

- Day-to-day management of a graduate program or programs
- Advising and referral of students (e.g. coursework, PELP, parenting policies, GSHIP, financial issues)
- Event planning (e.g. fall welcome, symposia/colloquia, retreats)
- Admissions (e.g. managing applications in Embark and GARD, SIRs, etc.)
- Marketing and recruitment (e.g. websites, brochures, posters)
- Responding to inquiries from potential applicants
- Managing graduate program/group budgets not associated with student financial support
- Managing student funding (e.g. block grants, work study)
- Processing of fellowships applications and awards (internal and external)
- Student tracking/database management
- Distribution and collection of annual progress reports
- Organizing program review materials

- Course scheduling
- Submitting information for DESII
- Submitting data for the Graduate Student Inventory
- Management of grade submission
- Textbook ordering
- Preparing and submitting course approval forms
- Reviewing catalog galley proofs
- Coordinating seminar series
- Responding to IT issues
- Website maintenance
- Entering information in PPS
- Managing resources using DaFIS
- Submitting MyTravel documents for reimbursement



## **Appendix B Graduate Education Administration Team Proposed Staffing**

Staffing of the Graduate Education Administration Team is based on the need to deliver high quality administrative services to all graduate programs, graduate students and faculty. The proposed staffing outlined below acknowledges that the majority of the transaction work related to graduate education will be managed by the Graduate Education Administration Team. Thus, the current staffing level in the Office of Graduate Studies (29.7 FTE on campus funds and 1 FTE development officer currently housed in University Relations) will be reduced to a total of 19.6 FTE, a reduction of 39%. This reduction comes on top of prior staffing reductions of 22% over the previous 5 years. At the same time, The Graduate School will be better positioned to support a strong development and external fellowship effort.

Executive Director (1 FTE)

Director of Graduate Admissions and Academic Services (1 FTE)

Student Affairs Officer (1 FTE)

Graduate Program Liaison (1 FTE)

Director of Financial Services (1 FTE)

Budget Analyst (1 FTE)

Academic Personnel Specialist (1 FTE)

External Fellowships Analyst (1 FTE)

Financial Aid Specialist (1 FTE)

Director of Information Technology (1 FTE)

Programmers (2 FTE)

Systems Analyst (1 FTE)

Computer Resource Specialist (1 FTE)

6-8 Graduate Education Support Satellites (approximately 32 FTE)

Student Affairs Officers (3-4 FTE each, including 1 supervisor)

Financial Support Analyst (1 FTE each)

Total Staffing: approximately 45 FTE

## **Appendix C Graduate Education Administration Team Proposed Budget**

The base budget for the Graduate Education Administration Team will include approximately \$688,000 in operating funds, of which \$521,000 is for graduate group administrative support. Additional funding for staffing and operation of the satellite offices will be calculated as part of the further review and refinement of this proposal.

## Appendix D Proposal Consultation Strategy

Review and approval of the proposed changes in the administrative support for graduate education requires additional and detailed consultation. Approval of the Graduate Education Administration Team rests with the Chancellor; hence all consultation is limited to the campus. The following table outlines the proposed consultation steps for review of this proposal in combination with the proposal for The Graduate School:

Group or Committee	Dates	Action
Chancellor and Provost	January 10-28	Review of concept
Budget and Institutional Analysis	January 10-February 28	Analysis of financial implications and options
Graduate Studies Staff	January 12	Informational presentation & feedback
Council of Deans	January 18	Informational presentation & feedback
Assistant and Associate Deans	January 24-28	Informational presentation & feedback
Graduate Council	February 4	Informational presentation & feedback
Committee on Planning and Budget	February 7	Informational presentation & feedback
ADMAN	Feb 1- Feb 15	Informational presentation & feedback
Senate Executive Council	Feb 1- Feb 15	Informational presentation & feedback
GSA Executive Council	Feb 1- Feb 15	Informational presentation & feedback
Academic Senate Representative Assembly	February 24	Informational presentation & feedback
Graduate Program Staff	February 24	Informational presentation & feedback
Graduate Program Chairs	Feb 25 and Feb 28	Informational presentation & feedback

Following campus consultation, the proposal will be revised to incorporate feedback prior to beginning the formal review process. The following steps constitute the formal review and approval:

Group or Committee	Dates	Action
Council of Deans & Vice Chancellors	June 14	Formal Review
Chancellor	June 15	Formal campus approval