

Ferris State University

Graduate Education Task Force  
AY2010-2011 Recommendations  
Presented to Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs  
April 25, 2011

The Graduate Education Task Force was appointed by Dr. Fritz Erickson, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs in October, 2010 to lay out a five year pathway for graduate education. The charge was

To review current policies and procedures and make recommendations pertaining to the post-baccalaureate programs, graduate certificate programs, and graduate courses at Ferris State University. This broad reaching charge includes exploring and developing a set of recommendations for the future growth and development of graduate programs. My hope would be that this task force consider an inclusive process that looks at the policies and procedures we currently have in place regarding graduate education as well as considering new policies and procedures that serve as the foundation for growth while maintaining high academic standards and high integrity for all of our graduate programs.

Task Force Membership:

<b>Nancy Hogan, Chair</b>	COEHS	Criminal Justice Administration Chair, UGPC
<b>Scott Atwell</b>	FLITE	Library--UGPC
Doug Blakemore	BUS	Information Systems Management Greg
<b>Sharon Colley</b>	AHS	Nursing--UGPC
Christine Conley-Sowels	COEHS	Education & Curriculum Instruction
Julie Coon	AHS	Nursing, Interim Dean Allied Health
Mike Cooper	BUS	Community College Leadership
<b>Mike Ennis</b>	EDU	Community College Leadership--UGPC
<b>Olukemi Fadayomi</b>	AS	UGPC-Arts & Sciences
<b>Anita Fagerman</b>	BUS	Business Administration--UGPC
<b>Greg Gogolin</b>	BUS	Information Systems Management--UGPC
<b>Lon Green</b>	AS	UGPC—At Large
<b>Jeff Hardesty</b>	TEC	UGPC--Technology
Liza Ing	COEHS	Career and Technical Education
<b>Renee Koski</b>	PHR	Pharmacy--UGPC
<b>Nancy Lashaway-Bokina</b>	Senate	Education & Curriculum Instruction--UGPC
Mandy Seiferlein	PHR	Pharmacy
Greg Vanderkooi	COEHS	Criminal Justice Administration
<b>Randy Vance</b>	OPT	Optometry--UGPC
Shannon Yost	BUS	MISM/MBA

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The Graduate Education Task Force of 2010-2011 submits the following recommendations for consideration. Due to the broad charge, the task force concentrated on the key issues this year to move Ferris State University forward to prepare for future graduate program growth. Currently, graduate programs are de-centralized and must rely on existing undergraduate formats for processing and servicing students. Future growth in graduate education will require a centralized format, meeting the standard protocol at most universities.

The 2010-2011 Task Force not only represented all graduate and professional programs on campus, but was truly committed to providing the best pathway to move Ferris forward and begin the foundation for future growth. Countless hours were spent researching other universities and their processes, attending sub-committee meetings, attending Task Force meetings, and participating in in-depth discussions about graduate issues. In 2001, former VP Barbara Chapman appointed a task force on graduate education based on North Central Accreditation's report on the inconsistencies between existing graduate programs. The 2001 Task Force noted that "Ferris was in a phase of transitioning toward an academic culture that includes graduate programs". Ten years later, the need for an academic infrastructure devoted to graduate education remains stronger than ever.

The recommendations below are based on countless hours spent researching other universities and their processes, discussions at sub-committee meetings, discussions at Task Force meetings, the analysis of a graduate student survey, and active participation in debates about graduate issues. These recommendations will provide a sustainable future for graduate education at Ferris State University.

## **I. Administration of Graduate & Professional Programs**

- Establish a Graduate/Professional Office (Center) housed within the Academic Affairs Unit.
- The Graduate Office will provide administrative services to the graduate programs.
- The University Graduate and Professional Council would function within the graduate office helping to review graduate issues (e.g. curriculum changes), participate in the development and implementation of policies and procedures, encourage and initiate interdisciplinary programming and student activities as well as develop for infrastructural graduate/professional processes.
- All existing university functions related to the graduate/professional academic level should be located within the Graduate/Professional Office (e.g. Grants office, Institutional Review Board, graduate writing center).

Functions of the Graduate/Professional Office would oversee the creation of a student/faculty-friendly graduate level infrastructure as well as the development and administration of the following areas:

## **II. Admissions**

- Graduate admissions should be separated from undergraduate admissions.
- Decide on using existing software or having separate software (both Banner and Xtender are used at other universities).
- Designate a person from Graduate Office who handles all applications with timely response to students and distributing applicant information to individual program coordinators the same day information is received.
  - Migrate to electronic application only.
  - Purchase software for electronic letters of recommendation.

## **III. Development of Graduate Faculty policy**

- Establish a tiered system of membership that would reflect the educational, research, professional, and scholarship requirements. Credit load would be based on membership level held. (Suggested levels: Full, Associate, Affiliate—with most beneficial faculty load allocation corresponding to level of faculty involvement.)
- Establish consistent process by which faculty are appointed to graduate faculty teaching positions including the requirements for graduate level teaching.
- Establish a formal system to review graduate faculty membership, similar to post-tenure review.
- Establish clearly delineated responsibilities for Program coordinators and appropriate release time for these duties.
- Calculate annual graduate program costs to be used to make recommendations and assist in the development of new graduate programs.
- Create a realistic formula that reflects differences between online v. traditional learning formats.

## **IV. Centralization of Communication & Information**

- Effectively disseminate graduate/professional program information
- Develop Ferris-Graduate/Professional webpage

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- Define specific contact for university departments regarding graduate/professional programming & needs
- Create specific contact regarding graduate/professional policies and procedures
- Develop new graduate programs
- Create graduate/professional newsletter
- Center for all graduate/professional support services

## **V. Aid individual programs in Marketing & Recruitment**

- Market graduate/professional programs separate from undergraduate programs.
- Attend graduate fairs around the state.
- Use most recent technology available, not only to recruit, but to inform current graduate students (e.g. Ferris downloadable application, Facebook, Podcasts, Webinars).

## **VI. Centralization of Graduate/Professional Program Services**

- Establish a graduate student orientation
- Provide general advising of graduate programs
- Establish a graduate writing center
- Establish a graduate career services
- Create student-friendly procedural infrastructure
- Establish an University-sponsored graduate research fair
- Thesis & Dissertations
  - Develop protocol for thesis/dissertation committees
  - Develop compensation for committees & chair
  - Provide student assistance
  - Establish document formatting

## **VII. Centralization of Financial Services**

- Centralize Federal funding for graduate students-Stafford Loans
- Provide funding for Graduate Assistantships
- Establish FSU graduate-level scholarships
- Establish tuition waivers
- Develop more graduate/teaching assistants

## **VIII. Development & Implementation of Graduate/ Professional Student Services**

- Work with infrastructure to secure most compatible online course format
- Establish Graduate Writing Center
- Establish University Graduate/Professional Student Organization
- Establish Graduate/Professional Career services
- Establish Professional development for graduate students—workshops on areas of interest such as statistics, how to publish, grant writing, Institutional Review Board requirements, stress and time management, budgeting and finance.
- Procure more resources devoted to graduate/professional level (help with software, access to printing, more resource availability for off campus sites)

## **IX. Creation of Separate Graduate/Professional Student Identity**

- Separate commencement from undergraduates
- Separate university-organized and sponsored graduate activities
- Create separate area for graduate/professional students to gather
- Designate an area for graduate quiet study