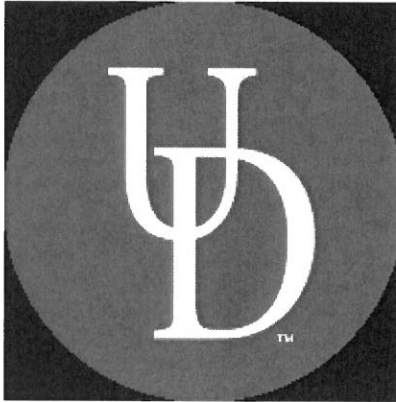


# **The University of Delaware Graduate and Professional Education**



## **Council of Graduate Schools Strategic Consultation Report**

**Report Based Upon a Site Visit  
Conducted on May 17, 18, and 19, 2017  
Report Submitted July 18, 2017**

### **On-Site Consultation Team**

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## **Introduction**

The Office of Graduate and Professional Education at the University of Delaware contacted the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) for the CGS Strategic Consultation Service. Dr. Barbara Knuth, Senior Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School at Cornell University, Dr. Lisa Tedesco, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies and Dean of the Laney Graduate School at Emory University and Dr. Steve Matson, Dean of The Graduate School at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill were appointed by CGS as the consulting team. Dr. Knuth was unable to join the review team at the University of Delaware for personal reasons. Dr. Tedesco and Dr. Matson were asked to review and make recommendations on the following areas: (1) analysis of organization and administrative structure of graduate and professional education; (2) assessment and analysis of student funding and graduate assistantships; and (3) the institutional and graduate mission. The consultation team's recommendations in all three areas are detailed below.

The team spent three days at the University of Delaware and met with students, faculty, directors of graduate studies, staff in the Office of Graduate and Professional Education, and senior administrative leaders including the President of the University, the Provost, the Registrar, Deans of multiple schools, the University development team, institutional research and the research council. In addition, the consultation team had a tour of the STAR Campus which was truly impressive both for its outstanding physical space and for its 21<sup>st</sup> century vision for the future of translational research, community outreach and clinical care, and the value placed on graduate and professional education.

## **Institutional Background**

The University of Delaware is a public four-year institution with approximately 23,000 students holding a Carnegie Classification of Doctoral Universities: Highest Research Activity. The University is classified as a comprehensive doctoral (no medical/veterinary) institution offering doctoral programs in humanities, social sciences and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, and graduate or professional degrees in one or more professional fields. The enrollment profile is identified as high undergraduate.

## **Area 1**

### **Analysis of Organization and Administrative Structure of Graduate and Professional Education**

The team strongly and enthusiastically recommends that the University of Delaware (UD) establish a Graduate College as part of its academic and administrative structure. The consultation team notes that there is historical precedence for a Graduate College at the University of Delaware and there is generally strong, although not universal, support for this new academic unit and the innovation it will bring. Where support wavers it appears to be due to a lack of understanding regarding the value, role, and responsibility of a Graduate College. Importantly, senior administration supports the establishment of a Graduate College and has a good understanding of its importance and value for advancing the University of Delaware in the ranks of research universities. The consultation team recommends using the term ‘college’ because of its historical use on the University of Delaware campus and the authority invested in the dean of a college.

The leader of the Graduate College should be a dean with a vice provost title. The latter reflects the fact that this individual, unlike the deans of other colleges, looks across the institution to lead graduate and professional education at the University of Delaware. The dean must have a seat at the table with all other deans and should be provided with the authority to leverage resources across the University to promote excellence in all programs, engagement of programs with each other and the community, and the assessment of outcomes. The dean must have the strong, clear and unequivocal support of the provost and the president and be considered first among equals in relation to the other deans.

Establishment of a Graduate College must be done thoughtfully and carefully with attention given to providing the personnel and financial resources necessary to make the Graduate College a ‘value added’ unit for the University in partnership with the deans of the other colleges. Establishing a mutually collaborative and supportive partnership with each one of the deans of the colleges is critical to the success of the graduate and professional education project in general. Some reorganization of resource distribution and personnel distribution will be required, as noted below. The goal is to reduce redundancy of function regarding graduate/professional education, allow a

more strategic use of resources for graduate/professional education, and ensure the comprehensive, thorough and unbiased review of graduate/professional programs and their outcomes.

The Graduate College must be appropriately staffed to fulfill its mission (see below). This may involve moving staff from other units that are, at present, doing mostly graduate work and making them part of the Graduate College. A careful inventory and analysis of staff positions across the University involved with graduate/professional education is expected to uncover duplications of effort and inefficiencies that can be addressed by making these staff part of the Graduate College. This will save resources and provide at least a fraction of the staffing required. The consultation team talked with several staff that would welcome this change and are ready to be part of a Graduate College with a University-wide mission. Among all levels of staff there was ample good will for new collaborations and innovations in graduate/professional education. It will be important to have at least one full time associate dean (viz., senior associate dean, academic affairs) who is able to oversee the day-to-day activities in the Graduate College. We do not recommend building up the staff in the new college mainly or largely through faculty course buyouts or part time administration appointments. The number of associate deans required should be expected to increase as the graduate/professional student population is increased and as service functions from the Graduate College to the faculty, staff and students are defined. A full time associate dean(s) will be essential to ensure excellent services to students, faculty, other deans and prospective students, and to address the several facets of the mission of the Graduate College.

The Graduate College should be expected to establish close working relationships with other college units including, but not limited to, Institutional Research, Student Life, and Development and Alumni Relations. All of these offices have excellent staff and are ready and willing to work with a Graduate College to promote and enhance the visibility and excellence of graduate/professional education at the University of Delaware. We were highly impressed with their enthusiasm, interest, and understanding of graduate/professional education, overall. Our meeting with Development and Alumni Relations staff was particularly productive as we found this group to be very open to the idea of fundraising for graduate/professional education.

Several opportunities appeared for new administrative structures to advance best practices within the Graduate College.

1. One of the most important functions provided by a Graduate College is the periodic review of all graduate programs to ensure quality and to provide benchmarking opportunities. At present, Program Review at the University of Delaware is somewhat disconnected, widely distributed, and lacks integrated follow-up for planning and outcomes. These gaps can be easily remedied in the Graduate College by structuring program review through the Graduate College, in collaboration with, and as a central function (through this reporting unit) of the Office of the Provost. There are many excellent working models of this structure. Institutional research should be involved to ensure appropriate data are available – including data that align with outcomes used for best practices as defined by national organizations (viz., CGS, AAU, APLU). Based on our observations, the Institutional Research Office is excellent and, with appropriate staff, up to the challenge of participating fully in coordinated, integrated program review.
2. The consultation team recommends that Professional and Continuing Education be located within the new Graduate College. This will signal the legitimacy and importance of this unit within the university. In addition, this unit can advance the mission of the Graduate College. There are many opportunities at the University of Delaware for online master's degrees that will leverage current strengths and serve to generate revenue to help support the doctoral programs. Continuing Education at the University of Delaware is a regional treasure, moving beyond the region, in fact. There is ample opportunity, with the vision and leadership already present, for the University of Delaware to have quick results from increased programming for recognition in national and international sectors for continuing education.
3. The formation of a Graduate College will allow the University of Delaware to fully leverage and take positive advantage of the student leaders on campus. At present, student leaders are lost with no central unit to look to for guidance. Consequently, the positive impact from their leadership to build capacity and advance the educational mission is not fully realized. That student leaders persist in their desire to advance the University of Delaware is a testimonial to their commitment and engagement. They must be involved in the establishment of the Graduate College to capitalize on the visibility of graduate education on campus. In addition, this will be instrumental in the creation of future leaders. The consultation team had the opportunity to meet with several students during the campus

site visit. The students are passionate advocates for graduate education and they desperately want to be involved in the process. University of Delaware student leadership is an asset that should be recognized and intentionally engaged. If a dedicated space for graduate student activities can be found it will strengthen the graduate community and the relationship between students and the Graduate College.

4. The Graduate College will organize and distribute services for students and support for faculty for 21<sup>st</sup> century best practices in graduate/professional education. Professional development and career planning, use of contemporary technologies for teaching, systematic and documented training for scholarly integrity and ethical conduct of research, English language support for students who do not have English as a first language, and writing support for academic and public audiences are all services that can be provided by a centralized Graduate College. The Graduate College should assess the presence and distribution of these co-curricular and professional development programs and address collaborations and partnerships to remove duplication where appropriate. By benchmarking nationally against other established and recognized graduate colleges/schools, the University of Delaware Graduate College will be able to design, deliver and monitor a best practices approach in these areas, and in support of faculty leadership for 21<sup>st</sup> century curricula in graduate/professional programs. Outcomes of best practices for professional development/career planning should be a part of the program annual planning/review process and guide resource allocation to programs.
5. Within the Graduate College, a team should be established to advance diversity, inclusion and community, and to help programs shape diversity plans for recruitment, admissions practices, mentoring, timely graduation and student success. Outcomes of these diversity plans should be a part of the annual planning/review process and guide resource allocation to programs. Again, benchmarking nationally, taking a good look at what is already being done in the graduate programs, whether departmental or interdisciplinary, addressing redundancies and finding resources to address the gaps will be essential.

## **Area 2**

### **Assessment and Analysis of Student Funding/Graduate Assistants**

Once the Graduate College is established it should be a central locus for the funding of teaching assistants (TAs), graduate assistants (GAs), and research assistants (RAs). The consultation team envisions two ways to accomplish this goal. It may be possible to move all TA and RA funding lines (stipend, tuition, etc.) into the Graduate College which would then allocate funding lines to the various colleges in a deliberative process. Alternatively, the funding lines might remain in the various colleges with final approval of student appointments resting with the Graduate College. In either case, the Graduate College should be centrally involved in the process of funding students, and should assess cohort size and capacity for each program with clear attention to established and emerging best practices metrics recognized by national peer review processes used in the assessment of outcomes. To be clear, the programs, whether aligned with departments or interdisciplinary groups, should be accountable to the Graduate College for quality outcomes. These outcomes include student preparation for a range of careers, and diversity and inclusion of the graduate/professional student population. The budget model selected must ensure program accountability and the Graduate College dean's role and responsibility to hold programs accountable for outcomes.

Making this change will set the stage for several downstream actions.

1. Current internal funding packages for doctoral students will need to be increased to improve competition for the best students. Attention should be given to finding summer support for students on 9-month appointments. Until the establishment of the Graduate College, where communication and outreach will be regularized and intentional, the availability of summer funding must be well communicated and not left to informal networks that create inequities. At present, a less formal, and in some places weakly communicated approach appears to be the case. More centralized funding decisions will have a positive impact. Ultimately, the University of Delaware will need to consider moving to 12-month appointments for all graduate students to remain competitive for students seeking doctoral education.
2. There is far too much funding allocated to the support of master's students. We recommend a solid (not informal), integrated business plan for master's programming that will include revenue streams for doctoral support. The transition to this business plan will likely need

to include master's education as a revenue center with some scholarship support for master's students. If stipends are awarded to master's students they should be well justified. This change will require careful planning and monitoring for meeting business plan goals and high academic standards, set by the ability to generate revenue by attracting students to good programs with high quality advising, timely course offerings, a contemporary curriculum for working adults, and career/counseling/placement services. Attention to these factors will ensure master's programs that prepare students for a variety of workforce areas and/or continuing studies.

3. Ability to regularize funding amounts within the Graduate College. The funding of students should be transparent and aligned to criteria for qualifying and/or competing for the award of funding. Discounted tuition at the master's program level must be well- defined and not casual. Stipend awards at the doctoral level must be well-defined, and well-communicated. Again, as discussed above, anything less than well-defined and well-communicated processes based on best practices criteria, could lead to inequities and institutional vulnerabilities. At present, there appear to be too many systems and price points. In addition, a centralized Graduate College will ensure criteria for centralized processes, viz. the establishment of transparent criteria for merit awards, inclusive of disciplinary definitions, of course. Merit awards, in particular, play an important role in admission of the most competitive students. However, everyone must know what must be done to apply and compete for a merit award. A centralized Graduate College will make this possible.

### **Area 3**

#### **Institutional and Graduate Mission**

With the arrival of President Assanis, the University of Delaware has gained extraordinary momentum to continue its rise upward as a transformative research university. The President's Priorities\* for the University clearly represent well-established, nationally recognized

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\* President's Priorities:

- Enhancing the success of our students
- Building an environment of inclusive excellence
- Investing in our intellectual and physical capital
- Strengthening interdisciplinary and global programs
- Fostering a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship



commitments to graduate education. The establishment of a Graduate College will advance the goals outlined in the President's strategic themes.

Graduate education thrives where there is emphasis on student success and the essential role of mentoring and inclusion. Graduate students, by virtue of their preparation and motivation seek innovation, question intellectual boundaries and work beyond disciplinary borders. Graduate and professional students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have a keen appetite for incorporating global perspectives and desire learning in a variety of settings. Taken together, these "graduate assets" will provide great dividends to the mission and goals now established for the University of Delaware.

The opportunities for the University of Delaware mission abound. It is an excellent, although still undiscovered, research university with exceptionally well-defined **translational and applied** research and education. It was extraordinary to witness how teaching and research were so well integrated and engaged for applied and translational research. How the outcomes of the graduate program are measured and captured, how they are tracked, and how programs are held accountable for outcomes will advance the University of Delaware's AAU aspirations and higher education leadership. With some careful analyses and re-definition of student success, University of Delaware could well become a higher education leader to advance its goals, both in the AAU and nationally, for more contemporary metrics for student outcomes in graduate, professional, and continuing education. Two more or less over-arching conditions need to be addressed to advance the institutional graduate mission, necessary alignments and graduate faculty.

1. *Necessary Alignments.* Aligning professional staff and infrastructure for doctoral education will be essential to the transition to a Graduate College. Budget models to support graduate education need examination and implementation. Accountability for outcomes must be based on best practices and national metrics. Where possible and when appropriate, students should be supported on extramural funding, with practices and systems in place to track progress and outcomes. Funding for students in non-grant supported disciplines should be defined through agreements of shared costs with programs and departments. And, great importance needs to be placed on improved use of academic program review to achieve alignment with strategic goals for delivery on the University of Delaware mission. Getting clarity on where best practices are in place, where they need to

be developed and how they will help deliver outcomes for the mission are essential next steps.

2. *Graduate Faculty.* Over the course of our visit, there was some discussion of definition of the ‘graduate faculty.’ While there could be a number of ways to define who the graduate faculty are, it will be important to engage faculty in this discussion. There are some very obvious, and well-established qualities that we expect will be considered. For example, at the master’s and professional degree levels, accreditation agencies and academic societies have guidelines and often regulations. In a number of cases, the definitions for ‘qualified’ educators tie to licensing and protection of the public and placement in specified workforce areas. At the doctoral level, the academic rigor and visibility of the faculty is of greatest importance. Placing graduate students with faculty who are productive and visible in their research and scholarship will be important for their eventual job placement, whether in the professoriate or beyond the professoriate. The quality of the graduate faculty is also essential to achieving the goal of the University of Delaware’s increased visibility and enhanced reputation, nationally and internationally.

## **Summary and Recommendations**

There is widespread agreement that the establishment of a Graduate College is key to advancing the University of Delaware’s contributions to research, scholarship, innovation and discovery. To meet the strategic themes outlined by President Assanis, robust support for graduate education will be necessary. The provost and the president must provide strong, clear and unequivocal support for the Graduate College to launch and thrive. Several recommendations addressing mission, structure, and funding are provided below.

### **Mission**

1. The mission of the Graduate College should be designed to advance graduate programs that support fundamental and applied scholarship, and basic research as well as translational and applied research.
2. There is a new opportunity to tie the value and importance of graduate education and professional and continuing education to University strategic themes as part of the Graduate College mission. This includes making clear the connection between

excellent graduate/professional education and the mission of educating undergraduate students.

3. With the establishment of a Graduate College there is an opportunity to ensure contemporary and high value **interdisciplinary contributions** of graduate programs to University strategic themes.
4. There must be alignment of resources to achieve the mission and goals of the Graduate College, and there must be ample support for improved use of academic program review to achieve alignment with strategic goals for delivery on mission.

### **Structure**

1. History and traditions recommend use of word 'college' rather than 'school' for this new unit. The Graduate College must be equivalent in role and authority at the decanal level to the other colleges who have powers and authority vested in their deans.
2. Consistent with national best practices, the leader of the Graduate College should be a dean with vice provost title, to reflect and support the role and responsibility this leader has to look across the University to leverage resources and programming for excellence, graduate faculty engagement, assessment of outcomes and provision of resources/funding. In her/his role as vice-provost, he/she will be able to assess opportunities for innovation in professional and continuing education as well.
3. Planning for the Graduate College must be thoughtful, careful and in partnership with the other deans. Sufficient new resources must be identified to make the Graduate College a value-added unit for the University and for partnerships. The Graduate College must be appropriately staffed. There appears to be abundant talent distributed across University units, and with careful planning duplications and inefficiencies can be addressed once central services are defined.
4. Centralized structures to support academic affairs and program review should be established in the Graduate College. Regular program review in her/his role as a vice provost will allow transparency and accountability for program quality and outcomes.
5. Professional and continuing education should be a full partner within the Graduate College. There is added potential for revenue streams to support funding of programming and students in the Graduate College. Including professional and

continuing education in the reorganization design could ensure that collaborations among staff and faculty would meet a range of programming needs (master's degrees, certificates, online education and hybrid programming).

6. The Graduate College should lead program level practices for diversity, inclusion, and community using national best practices for recruitment, retention, mentoring, timely graduation and student success. Systematic evaluation of outcomes should be a part of this overall work to advance diversity, inclusion and community.

### **Funding**

1. A budget model should be established to include a funding model that charges tuition at the master's level and provides revenue for stipend support at the doctoral level and, where appropriate, at the master's level. If stipends are awarded in the new plan to master's students, they should be well-rationalized. At every step, there should be careful planning and monitoring if business plan goals are to be met. Student costs, both tuition cost and opportunity cost, make it imperative to provide high quality advising and career counseling, accessible course offerings for working adults, and first job placement services.
2. Attention must be given to making summer support accessible to doctoral students. Merit awards for doctoral and master's students should be defined with clear criteria. Opportunities for support of any type must be clearly, transparently and regularly communicated and not left to informal networks that reproduce inequities and create institutional vulnerabilities.
3. Systematic and well-defined processes to determine program capacity for cohort size and enrollment and support for approved 'lines' and funding should come through the Graduate College.
4. Wherever possible, reasonable, allowable extramural tuition should be systematically collected as part of the general fund revenue stream to support doctoral education.