UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE.

Organizational Restructuring of Graduate and Professional Education and Planning for Graduate Enrollment Growth

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Context and charge: In his first meeting with the University Faculty Senate on September 12, 2016, President Dennis Assanis expressed his interest in establishing a graduate school or college in accord with the *Delaware Will Shine* strategic planning document and doubling graduate enrollment at UD over the next ten years, noting as well that "we need to take our graduate and professional education programs to the next level."

Following a series of presentations in Fall 2016 to senior university leadership—the President's Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees, the Provost's Executive Committee, and the University Faculty Senate Executive Committee—as well as other key constituents such as the President's Leadership Council, the Faculty Senate Graduate Studies Committee and the university's graduate program directors, a Hanover Research Group benchmarking study was commissioned and a University Working Group was constituted and charged by the President and Provost with planning for the establishment of a graduate school or college.

The strategic objectives to be achieved through organizational restructuring:
- Increase the visibility of graduate and professional education at UD with internal as well as external constituents
- Achieve greater accountability, quality control, and impact of graduate programs and engagement in national conversations about best practices and trends in graduate and professional education
- Incentivize excellence and innovation in masters as well as doctoral programming
- Enhance UD's effectiveness in attracting external funding (private philanthropy as well as federal, corporate and foundation grants) for graduate education and research training, in particular for inclusive excellence initiatives and interdisciplinary doctoral education in areas of signature research strength

The key questions the Working Group was asked to address:
1) What is the optimal centralized organizational structure for graduate and professional education at UD at this juncture in its history?
2) What is the optimal leadership and governance structure? What are the advantages/disadvantages of "college" vs. "school" vs. "office" or "division" nomenclature?
3) Should UD have a "Graduate Faculty" and if so, what should the process for appointment be?
4) Should online graduate education (blended/hybrid as well as fully online; degree programs as well as non-credit professional education) be managed through a graduate school/college organizational structure, or should it be managed through an entirely separate reporting structure?
5) Would interdisciplinary graduate programs be managed more efficiently by a graduate school/college? Should all other programs continue to be managed by their current colleges?

6) Should both academic and non-academic support services (e.g., in particular, career services, housing, student life functions like RSOs, a Graduate Student Association, Graduate Student Government) be coordinated through a graduate school/college, or should non-academic student support services for graduate students be provided by units that report to the VP for Student Life?
7) What is the optimal organization of staff and staff/student ratio?
8) What resources are required to launch a graduate school/college at UD?
9) How will the anticipated growth in graduate enrollment impact existing staff in other units or initiate other university-level reorganizations?

Deliverables and timeline:

February 15, 2017	Draft of a white paper and business plan for review by senior leadership (deans, provost and provost's senior staff, president and president's executive committee)
March	Preparation of final version of white paper and business plan (including space planning)
April	Review of white paper and business plan by campus community, University Faculty Senate, and the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee
September	Final proposal ready for submission to University Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees
July 1, 2018	Implementation

Work to date: The Working Group has met weekly since December 16. In addition to the Hanover Benchmarking Study commissioned specifically for this Working Group, the materials assembled for the group's review and consideration have included: reports from University Archives on the history of graduate education infrastructure at UD; the 2011 Graduate and Professional Education APR and external review committee's report; the 2012 and 2013 Online Task Force reports; AAU and U.S. News & World Report ranking criteria; Council of Graduate Schools, Hanover and Education Advisory Board reports on organization and administration of graduate education; snapshots of UD's 25 peer institutions (specifically focused on diversity recruitment and retention resources and online programming); the 2012-15 UD data on graduate enrollments, as reported to CGS each February; and 2015 internal reports on program-level data that were prepared and shared with program directors, department chairs and deans last summer and early fall.

Additionally and importantly, the college representatives and the leadership of Professional and Continuing Studies have developed SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analyses for the Working Group's consideration, summarizing current challenges, obstacles and disincentives to graduate enrollment growth and program development as well as current strengths to capitalize on in planning ahead for graduate enrollment growth and program development. Revised/vetted/approved by each of the college's deans, these unit-level SWOT analyses have functioned as central guidewires in our conversations to date regarding organizational infrastructure, and will be especially critical to planning for enrollment growth and program development as the Working Group continues to meet this spring.

A list of operational process issues and process automation suggestions has been distilled from the college SWOT analyses and is being addressed through a series of meetings involving Office of Graduate and Professional Education (OGPE) leadership and the Registrar's leadership team separate from but in tandem with the Working Group's meetings. The decision to focus on these operational efficiency issues outside of the Working Group's meetings was made in order to keep the Working Group's focus initially on higher-order concerns regarding organizational infrastructure; any process change decisions that will have an impact on staffing in OGPE or other units will need to be factored into the final business plan.

The Working Group has reached consensus on the questions it was asked to address regarding organizational infrastructure (Questions 1-6). Our recommendations on these questions—including, notably, unanimous agreement on the overwhelming advantages of establishing a graduate college at this juncture in UD's history--are detailed below.

Recommendations on Questions 1-6 of our charge

1. **What is the optimal centralized organizational structure for graduate and professional education at UD at this juncture in its history?**
2. **What is the optimal leadership and governance structure? What are the advantages/disadvantages of 'college' vs 'school' vs 'office' or 'division'?**

Background:
Graduate studies at the University of Delaware have been organized in different ways since the first graduate programs were offered in the nineteenth century. These programs were offered at the master's level and were primarily focused on teaching. **In 1936, a Division of Graduate Studies was established**, headed by a Chair with faculty rank who reported to the president. In the immediate post WWII years, undergraduate and graduate enrollment at the University of Delaware increased and the first doctoral programs were introduced. **In 1949, the School of Graduate Studies was established**, headed by a dean who reported to the provost. This School of Graduate Studies was considered to be "at the same level" as the other UD schools. A Committee on Graduate Study and Research served as a "Cabinet" to the Dean, and the School of Graduate

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Studies was served by a "Graduate Faculty." The 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s marked a period of significant overall growth for UD, and during this time the whole university was reorganized into colleges. **This resulted in the creation of the College of Graduate Studies in 1965**, still headed by a Dean. Sponsored research began to gain importance and **in 1968 the formerly independent Office of the Coordinator of Research was merged with the College of Graduate Studies**. By the mid to late 1970s graduate enrollments were falling, and there was a perceived uneven quality across graduate programs as well as inefficiency in graduate admissions and inadequate graduate student funding. This prompted a reassessment of the College of Graduate Studies, following which **an Office of Graduate Studies was formed in 1977** and the position of Dean was eliminated in favor of an "officer" to head the Office of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Faculty was abolished and graduate education at UD became more decentralized. Many years later, as recommended in the university's Path to Prominence Strategic Plan, **the Office of Graduate and Professional Education (OGPE) was established in 2008**, reporting to a Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education, rather than the Vice Provost for Research. Since Fall 2015, OGPE has been headed by a Senior Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education.

As noted in the Council of Graduate Schools' still durable 2004 report on "Organization and Administration of Graduate Education," "there is considerable variation in the titles and reporting lines for the chief academic officer responsible for oversight of graduate education" nationally, as institutions deploy nomenclature—school, college, division, office; vice president, vice provost, associate provost, etc.--differently in local contexts (3). This is certainly the case not only among the 25 aspirational peer institutions identified by President Assanis in 2016 for the University of Delaware but also across the cohort of 39 universities reviewed for the Hanover Benchmarking Study (our 25 aspirational peers plus 14 AAU public universities not among the 25 aspirational peers). A key finding of the Hanover Study, however:" **the University of Delaware is the only institution that does not have a Dean** to serve as the leadership for the graduate programs" (9).

Organizational Structure:
The Working Group recommends unanimously that a Graduate College is the most appropriate organizational structure for graduate studies at the University of Delaware at this juncture in its history, in keeping with the institutional culture/context in which colleges are the highest academic units at UD. In our view, the unit must be seen as having equal status and representation as our other top-level academic units on campus. Significantly enhancing graduate and professional education and creating a Graduate College at UD have been recommended twice during the last decade, in the 2008 Path to Prominence Strategic Plan and in the 2015 Delaware Will Shine Blueprint for a Pre-eminent Learner-Centered Research University, respectively, and the University's tri-partite commitment to graduate, professional, and undergraduate education has been clearly articulated in the University's mission statement since at least 1993. The 2011

External Review of OGPE noted how "highly decentralized" graduate education is at UD and added that this is "not the norm at first tier institutions." Further, the 2011 APR external review team suggested that it was "not clear that the [Path to Prominence] goals of UD can be accomplished with the current [decentralized] structure."

Establishing a Graduate College at this juncture would increase the visibility of graduate and professional education at UD with internal as well as external constituents, signaling the University's commitment—as a research university—to offering the highest level of education and research training to a continuum of learners that includes mid-career professionals pursuing "just in time" training or preparing for career transitions as well as traditional 18-21-year-old residential undergraduates, students pursuing a graduate degree in tandem with an undergraduate degree (which is increasingly common), and students who matriculated elsewhere as undergraduates and come to UD for graduate certificates, master's, and doctorates.

Establishing a Graduate College and re-thinking several other elements of organizational infrastructure (to be discussed below) would also be a means of achieving greater accountability and quality control in graduate and professional education. Achieving a university "brand" of excellence in post-baccalaureate education will require university-level coordination of effort in enrollment and program development planning, iterative assessment for the purposes of program improvement, and sustained engagement in national conversations about best practices and trends in graduate and professional education that the current state of decentralization does not facilitate.

Resourced appropriately, a Graduate College could also incentivize excellence and innovation in masters as well as doctoral programming. And it could be charged with enhancing UD's effectiveness in attracting external funding (private philanthropy as well as federal, corporate and foundation grants) for graduate education and research training, in particular for inclusive excellence initiatives and interdisciplinary graduate education in areas of signature research strengths. The latter are two arenas of activity that have emerged as top priorities for enhanced functionality, and will be discussed further below.

Having reviewed the Council of Graduate Schools' guidelines on "The Role of the Graduate School in the University" and after substantial discussion of the UD colleges' SWOT analyses, the Working Group reached consensus on the following priorities for increased centralized functionality through a Graduate College:

- Market research capacity, which will be critical to strategic planning for new program development
- Recruitment PR and recruitment travel (international as well as domestic)
- Diversity recruitment and retention initiatives

- Professional development support services that have high-value for students, regardless of discipline, and that would help build a distinctive UD "brand" for excellence in post-baccalaureate education
- Graduate student life support services
- Academic and non-academic support services for postdoctoral fellows and postdoctoral researchers

Appropriately resourced, a Graduate College would offer services in these areas that either complement what is currently available within individual programs or colleges (if either is in place) or address dimensions of student support that are not discipline-specific, and therefore delivered most efficiently via centralization.

We also envision a Graduate College both providing and working closely in partnership with other university-level units on the coordination of four additional critical functions:

- Career services and career pathways support services for students, regardless of discipline, who are interested in or actively seeking employment beyond the academy (as the higher education ecosystem continues to evolve, this will be increasingly important across the full spectrum of disciplines)
- "Future faculty" professional development services related to preparation for teaching careers, grant-writing, and both community-based research and research outreach training
- Non-academic support services such as student conduct, housing, counseling services, and support services related to the distinctive needs of adult students with dependents (children, spouses, adult dependents)
- Support services for international students and postdoctoral fellows and researchers

We also recommend unanimously that non-degree professional and continuing education be managed through the Graduate College. UD's current organizational infrastructure—management of professional and continuing studies through a "division" reporting to an "office" of graduate and professional education—is not typical in the Hanover cohort of 39 institutions. However, we see enormous opportunity in the nesting of professional and continuing studies with a Graduate College, especially in the context of the University's commitment to inclusive excellence and interest in growing graduate enrollment substantially over the next ten years. At present, the Division of Professional and Continuing Studies' post-baccalaureate non-degree, part-time student population is substantially more diverse than UD's full-time degree populations (graduate and undergraduate). As more of the colleges develop the kind of open access "pathways" opportunities (courses, training institutes, certificates, etc.) that both Lerner and Engineering currently offer, which can very intentionally be structured as opportunities for non-degree students to move easily and seamlessly into degree programs, UD will have an opportunity to position itself more strongly in the regional higher education ecosystem. The potential here lies in strategically marketing and

"branding" post-baccalaureate education as a key UD contribution to workforce development in the state and the greater Philadelphia area as well as in national and global markets, and planning for increased capacity accordingly.

We also recommend unanimously that online education – which is both graduate and undergraduate – should be managed centrally, but not through the Graduate College. We also recommend unanimously that cross-college interdisciplinary graduate programs should be housed in and managed by the Graduate College. These issues will be discussed further below in response to Questions 4 and 5, respectively.

Leadership and Governance Structure:
As is the case at all of our aspirational peer institutions and the public AAUs surveyed in the Hanover Benchmarking Study, a Graduate College should be led by a Dean. A Dean of the Graduate College would be of the same rank as the other College Deans and would be a member of the Provost's Deans Council. We recommend as well that the Dean of the Graduate College hold another title, such as Vice President or Senior Vice Provost, so as to maintain the current advantages of having "a seat at the table" in the president or provost's cabinet. Dual titling/dual reporting lines are very common nationally at AAU institutions, in and beyond the 14 reviewed in the Hanover Benchmarking Study, and would be optimal here as well, for reasons noted above.

We further assume that, as at other universities, there would be additional staff in the Graduate College, such as associate deans and assistant deans, who would be a mix of faculty and professional staff and who would be responsible for the implementation of the academic leadership and support services mentioned above.

We also strongly recommend the re-establishment of a Graduate Council, comprised of faculty, graduate program directors, and graduate students (and appropriate subcommittees) to act in an advisory capacity to the Graduate College's leadership and to be engaged in some way in university-wide graduate program reviews as a means of building/reinforcing university standards of inclusive excellence in graduate and professional education and engaging members of the university community in national best practices benchmarking.

Additionally, we strongly recommend that each of the seven colleges include oversight of graduate and professional education in an associate dean's portfolio of responsibilities or identify a college representative or representatives for graduate and professional studies who would report to her/his College Dean but also report – on a dotted line - to the Dean of the Graduate College. These college representatives would serve as a liaison and a point person to the Graduate College as well as work closely with graduate programs and directors within her/his "home" college, helping to operationalize university-wide standards of excellence in post-baccalaureate education and research training.

As demonstrated in the Working Group itself this year, enhancing college-level oversight of graduate and professional education in each of the seven academic colleges is one important corrective to the current state of extreme decentralization, which was a major concern of the 2011 APR external review team and the then-VP for Graduate and Professional Education. Strong lines of communication and full partnership between the Graduate College and the seven academic colleges—through the Deans Council, the network of associate deans or other designee, and a Graduate Council—will be necessary to achieve President Assanis' objective of taking "our graduate and professional education programs to the next level" by facilitating greater accountability, quality control, and engagement in national conversations about best practices and trends in graduate and professional education.

Finally, there is unanimous agreement among the Working Group membership that the Graduate College should provide support and oversight for the UD postdoctoral community. This is not a population that the Office of Graduate and Professional Education serves currently. These important members of the UD research community have unique work and professional development needs. An Office of Postdoctoral Affairs is increasingly common at our peer institutions, and the establishment of support services for this population was strongly endorsed by the 2011 APR external review team but not acted on at the time because of resource constraints.

3. **Should UD have a "Graduate Faculty" and if so what should the appointment process be?**

There is unanimous agreement that the University's current policy regarding the expectation that faculty supervising graduate theses and dissertations are research-active should be maintained. There is not, however, a Working Group consensus at this time on whether or not UD should have a "Graduate Faculty."

The Working Group does not recommend establishing a procedure for constituting a "Graduate Faculty" at this time. There is unanimous consensus that this issue deserves more study, and could productively be a focus in a Council of Graduate Schools consultancy (to be discussed further below).

4. **Should online graduate education be managed through a graduate college/school or through a separate organizational structure?**

As noted earlier, the Working Group consensus is unanimous that online undergraduate, graduate, and professional education degree and certificate programs should be managed by a distinct, separate organizational unit led by an Associate Vice Provost or its equivalent and reporting to the Provost. A Working Group subcommittee on this topic reiterated the findings of two recent University-wide task forces on online learning available for review in the background resources shared with the working

group. Four members of these earlier task forces are serving on the Graduate College working group as well.

Several advantages of a separate organizational structure were discussed by the current working group. First, an organizational framework for "best practices" in online education would span the seven Colleges; a standard national benchmark like Quality Matters could guide program development, instructional design, and assessment. Second, faculty could more readily and easily identify the central resource to integrate technology with teaching and learning at the course and program levels. Third, an incentive structure to encourage and support participation in online education would have a champion. Fourth, centralized market analysis and environmental scanning would promote synergy across program areas.

5. Would interdisciplinary graduate programs be managed more efficiently by a graduate school/college? Should all other programs continue to be managed by their current colleges?

Interdisciplinary graduate program management: This question generated extensive and robust discussion. A majority of the Working Group members feels strongly that UD continues to encounter challenges in launching and managing interdisciplinary graduate programs that could be effectively ameliorated by housing them in an appropriately resourced central unit, i.e. a graduate college/school. A majority also feels strongly that excellence in interdisciplinary graduate education and research training is critical to UD's success and distinction at the PhD-level in particular, given how STEM-intensive we are currently at that degree level, given trends in external funding, and given too our interest in preparing students at the highest levels to address the "Grand Challenges" of our time through research that requires interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and even transdisciplinary modes of investigation. A Graduate College should provide academic leadership and infrastructure for addressing cross-college challenges to program development and management, recruitment, marketing, market assessment, data collection, review and iterative assessment. UD should also consider the best ways to leverage existing and emerging research institutes when building interdisciplinary graduate programs. While the research institutes are not academic units, they effectively bring together faculty, staff and students across traditional disciplines to address cross-cutting themes.

The Working Group membership agrees unanimously that graduate programs that are contained within single colleges should continue to be managed by their current colleges (while also accessing academic and non-academic support services from the Graduate College and other central units- see #6 below).

6. Should both academic and non-academic student support services (e.g., in particular, career services, housing, student life functions like RSOs, a

Graduate Student Association, Graduate Student Government) be coordinated through a graduate school/college, or should non-academic student support services for graduate students be provided by units that report to the VP for Student Life?

Academic and non-academic student support services: The Working Group membership agrees unanimously that the needs of graduate students and post-docs are distinct from those of undergraduate students and that, even within the graduate student population, international students often have different needs than domestic graduate students, while students with spouses, children, and/or adult dependents have different needs as well. As noted earlier, we envision some academic and non-academic support services for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows and researchers being managed centrally by the Graduate College; others should be managed either centrally in partnership with other university-level units (e.g., Career Services, the Center for Teaching and Assessment of Learning, the Office of Housing, the Counseling Center, etc.) or in coordination with discipline-specific, departmentally-based and/or college-level support services.

Through centralized as well as distributed operations and delivery systems, the distinct needs of UD's post-baccalaureate degree and non-degree student populations need to be recognized, advocated for, and adequately resourced, especially as we anticipate and plan for strategic enrollment growth.

Questions 7-9 of our charge and a draft business plan

It has not been possible for the Working Group to produce a multi-year business plan for the new college, addressing Questions 7-9 in our charge in particular, by February 15.

In part this is because the Hanover Benchmarking Study was finalized much later than anticipated (February 2 rather than December 9). Mainly, though, this is because of concerns that Working Group members are raising about the viability of doubling graduate enrollment at UD in the next ten years, given enrollment projections nationally at both the masters and doctoral level (Education Advisory Board report, 5/7/2015), our own analysis of master's degree and PhD production growth at public R1 institutions 2009-10 to 2015-16, and the colleges' SWOT analyses.

The Working Group will sustain its focus on the second part of its charge—drafting a business plan and planning for graduate enrollment growth and program development—over the next six weeks.

Because the Hanover Benchmarking Study is not as richly informed by deep knowledge of graduate and professional education as we might have hoped, we are also pursuing—

with the full support of the provost—the scheduling of a Council of Graduate Schools consultancy this spring to help us assess current student funding and resource investments and to provide guidance, on the basis of national best practices, in the administration of cross-college interdisciplinary programs, program development and quality review processes.