

# **The University of Georgia Graduate School Annual Report 2008**

## **Highlighted Achievements**

The Graduate School launched its Initiative to Optimize Doctoral Completion, the latest phase of a grant-funded project on issues surrounding doctoral completion. The initiative was designed to keep faculty members well informed about the trends and issues surrounding doctoral completion, to provide faculty with information necessary to realistically assess their own programs' successes, and to support individual programs in their efforts to improve completion rates. It included best practices seminars for faculty.

Graduate student enrollment reached an all-time high with 7,160 students in fall 2008 – considerably higher than the previous record enrollment set in fall 2007. Communicated by the Graduate School in a news release, the achievement garnered record publicity for graduate education at the university through a variety of media outlets.

In its July 2008 edition, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* ranked the University of Georgia 18th in the nation for doctoral degrees conferred upon African Americans, up from 21st in last year's rankings.

For the first time in its history, the Graduate School solicited all known graduate alumni, approximately 50,000, in a successful annual fund drive designated for fellowship support of graduate students in all disciplines at the University of Georgia.

The Graduate School formalized the Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Program in fall 2008, which created a portal for entrance into graduate study in the life sciences.

## **Strategic Plan Changes**

No substantive changes to the strategic plan have been made. A Five-Year Program Plan was submitted and approved for the Graduate School four years ago and revised in 2008. It continues to serve as the guiding document for the Graduate School. The revised version is attached.

## **Strategic Plan Progress**

This year's Annual Report details progress directly related to the Five-Year Program Plan. The following sections address progress the Graduate School has made in respect to the goals submitted in last year's Annual Report.

### **Steps to Enhance Graduate Student Education and Experience**

- In January 2008, the Graduate School launched its Initiative to Optimize Doctoral Completion. This initiative continues the work begun under the original \$200,000 grant from the Council of Graduate Schools, which focused on strategic intervention for doctoral completion. The current grant (\$50,000) expands the focus from 12 doctoral programs to all doctoral programs on campus.

As part of the initiative, a series of best practices seminars was organized by the Graduate School, which addressed the four conditions necessary for optimal doctoral completion: the right people apply; the right applicants are admitted; students and faculty form productive working relationships; and students experience social support from fellow students. Faculty panelists at the seminars shared their departments' successes in the areas of examining a student's total portfolio in admissions decisions and Web sites as effective recruitment tools. The remaining two of the four seminars, which will address fostering productive relationships and supportive environments, are to come in 2009. The first two seminars were well received with faculty implementing recommendations they learned from the seminars.

Information about the initial collaborative project, Strategic Intervention for Doctoral Completion, and the UGA Initiative for Optimal Doctoral Completion, including the best practices seminars, is available at [www.grad.uga.edu/cgs](http://www.grad.uga.edu/cgs). The Web site also offers a "drillable" database for UGA departments to research their own programs' rates of completion and compare them to similar programs' rates or to those of the university as a whole.

- Professional Development Seminars

The Graduate School continued to offer to graduate students seminars by subject matter experts on topics such as academic culture, formatting and submitting theses and dissertations, interviewing techniques and grant proposal writing.

The Graduate School sponsored the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program Workshop to assist all eligible graduate students in the process of applying for the NSF grants. Information offered to participants included topics such as responsible conduct of research and the proposal submission process. As a result of this workshop, 21 students applied for NSF fellowships.

The Graduate School held two seminars for Presidential Graduate Fellows during which Presidential Graduate Fellows with advanced standing presented their research.

- Multimedia Offerings

The Graduate School continued to create podcasts of the ongoing professional development seminars held on campus, enabling students and the general public to access the information from the seminars anywhere. The podcasts add to the other media offerings of the professional development seminars, including video-streaming and printable synopses (*5 Minute Mentor*), all available through the Graduate School Web site.

The Graduate School created and produced a video available on the Web site showcasing the Emerging Leaders Program. Participants shared their experience in the intensive, invited leadership development program and related, year-round activities sponsored by the Graduate School for the benefit of all graduate students.

The 2008 Graduate School Orientation, held in the fall, was filmed and is offered via the Graduate School Web site to anyone interested in the information provided to incoming graduate students at the August orientation. The video was intended to assist graduate students who begin their graduate study in semesters other than fall or at the extended campuses of the university.

- Graduate School Teaching Portfolio Program

The Graduate School worked with members of the UGA Teaching Academy and the Center for Teaching and Learning to increase participation in the program. Thirty students total participated in the program in both the spring and fall 2008 semesters.

- Interdisciplinary Certificate in University Teaching

The Graduate School implemented a public relations plan to encourage participation in the Interdisciplinary Certificate in University Teaching, which is designed to better prepare doctoral and master's candidates for the challenges of instruction at the university level. Students in all disciplines work with academic departments and administrative units that support teaching, such as the Center for Teaching and Learning. Participants enroll in courses related to teaching strategies, methods of learning and assessment, technology to support teaching, and professional development for the academy. They also must complete classroom or laboratory teaching assistantships at the university. The course work and teaching assignments, along with submission of a teaching project and portfolio, aim to improve the effectiveness of graduate students as they enter the professoriat. Concentrated publicity efforts are credited toward an increase from 8 to 18 in the program.

- Graduate School Emerging Leaders Program

Twenty-five students representing a range of disciplines and backgrounds were selected to participate in this annual two-day, off-campus opportunity during fall semester to explore leadership styles and professional goals. Workshops and other opportunities for networking among the participants were held throughout the fall semester and have been planned for the spring 2009 semester.

### **Steps to Build Graduate Enrollment and Increase Competitiveness of Graduate Programs at UGA through National and International Recruitment**

- Enrollment Policy

The enrollment policy, phased in for all graduate students in fall 2007, has had a continued positive impact on graduate enrollment in 2008 by increasing headcount for returning students. The total graduate enrollment for fall 2007 was 6,947 with 1,804 new students and 5,143 returning students. The fall 2008 enrollment totaled 7,160 students, with 1,860 new students and 5,300 returning students. There was an increase of 157 returning students, yielding a 3 percent increase in returning students.

- Awards and Assistantship Competitions

Nominations for and renewal of all awards competitions were conducted electronically for the first time in 2008, completing the move toward streamlining the assistantship and awards process begun in 2007. The online process, which includes

archiving all nominations materials and facilitating the review stages, has simplified the enterprise for faculty nominators and reviewers, increased efficiency in resources at the Graduate School, and accelerated the entire process.

- Graduate Student Funding

In fiscal year 2008, the Graduate School allocated \$4,534,558 to provide funding support for more than 300 graduate assistantships in disciplines across campus. In addition, the dean allocated \$668,641 to departments out of the Special Dean's Fund in order to provide graduate assistantships for various projects and programs.

The Graduate School supported approximately 266 doctoral students with travel awards to present papers at regional and national conferences in 2008. The number of travel award recipients in 2008 represents an increase from 224 recipients in 2007.

- Communication with Domestic and International Applicants

Recruitment at the Graduate School continued to seek innovative ways to reach prospective students. In addition to e-mail campaigns, other e-mail messaging targeted faculty contacts throughout the United States. This communication objective was to increase awareness of graduate programs and to increase the number of applications. A Facebook campaign was initiated, and CONNECT, an inquiry management software system, was implemented with a portal on the Graduate School Web site.

- Collaboration with Departments and Other Academic Units

The Graduate School's implementation of CONNECT enabled academic departments to more quickly receive and access information about prospective students interested in their programs, creating a more efficient line of communication and offering departments the opportunity to begin a dialogue with prospective students earlier than before in the graduate admissions process. The goal of the use of this software is to increase the number of highly qualified applicants.

The Graduate School Outreach and Diversity office created more than 1,122 travel packages for faculty to take and distribute at professional conferences and recruiting events.

The Graduate School hosted workshops for 65 departments to enhance recruitment practices at the program level, an increase over the 40 offered in 2007.

Collaborative sessions were held with faculty and staff in nine academic programs to develop individual recruiting plans.

The Graduate School provided departments with \$25,000 from the Dean's Fund for Student Recruitment to bring prospective graduate students to UGA for campus visits.

The Graduate School allocated \$15,000 to increase the number of graduate assistants able to participate in study abroad. The Graduate School worked collaboratively with

the Office of International Education to develop a competitive process to select the 16 recipients.

- **Interdisciplinary and Joint Ventures**

The Interdisciplinary Toxicology completed its third year under the auspices of the Graduate School. It was reviewed by the university for the first time and received a very positive evaluation. The program, which spans five colleges at UGA, is gaining strength with the addition of three new department heads and two faculty members, who are toxicologists. The quality of student applicants is at an all-time high, and the number of applicants has remained stable over the last two to three years, with 30-45 applicants each year.

The Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Program was approved by the Board of Regents in fall 2008 and also came under the auspices of the Graduate School. The program is designed to serve as a portal for doctoral students entering life sciences programs, enhancing recruitment, retention and funding efforts in the participating departments.

The Master of Avian Health and Medicine, a new degree to be offered by the Graduate School, is a distance education program approved by the Board of Regents in August 2008. It is being developed by the Population Health Department of the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine in collaboration with the University of Melbourne.

### **Steps to Increase Diversity**

The Graduate School, through its Outreach and Diversity office, continued efforts to create an inclusive environment and increase enrollment among historically underrepresented groups, which include income background, representation of gender within the discipline, first generation college students and non-traditional aged students.

Creative use of technology has resulted in budgetary savings as well as in more efficient, effective and frequent contact for students accustomed to “instant” communications. Introduction of a Facebook campaign has netted more than 1,200 “fans.” The implementation of CONNECT has resulted in more than 250,000 e-mails sent to prospective students. Departments receive weekly a list of new inquiries through the CONNECT system from the Graduate School.

Use of the software system CONNECT also enabled the Graduate School to offer to departments customized templates to assist in recruiting plans at the departmental level.

Record enrollment of graduate students in 2008 was reflected across the board in the graduate student population, particularly among historically underrepresented populations. Enrollment of African-American students showed a 5.6 percent gain over 2007, and Hispanic graduate students increased 9.6 percent for the same period.

In August 2008, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* (formerly *Black Issues in Higher Education*) ranked the University of Georgia 18th in the nation for the number of doctoral degrees conferred upon African Americans, up from 21st in the ranking in 2007.

UGA continued to recruit and fund students from Albany State University, Florida A&M University, Fort Valley State University, Morehouse College and Spelman College through signed agreements between these institutions and the UGA Graduate School Feeder Scholars Program. For fall 2008, nine UGA Graduate Feeder assistantships were awarded versus fall 2007 with two awarded.

### **Steps to Build Graduate Education Development and Funding Opportunities**

The Graduate School continued to fulfill a key objective of its Five-Year Plan with measurable outcomes through its formal development program. The year 2008 represented the fourth full year of the program. Initiatives included the following:

- The first recipient of the Mary Erlanger Graduate Fellowship was announced in fall 2008, funding a graduate student interested in the process of aging.
- A third Verizon/HopeLine Fellowship was awarded in fall 2008.
- The Graduate Education Advancement Board agreed to underwrite the Emerging Leaders Program in October, representing \$13,700 in funding to an area that had suffered budget cuts.
- For the first time in its history, the Graduate School solicited all known graduate alumni for an annual fund gift designated for fellowship support. Both goals of bringing in gifts sufficient to cover the cost of the campaign and to plant the seeds for future dialogue on giving were accomplished with this inaugural annual fund drive reaching 50,000 graduate alumni.
- Two planned-giving campaigns for retired faculty members living in the Athens area were conducted, one in February and one in December 2008.
- The Graduate Council was solicited to make gifts through payroll deduction in December 2008.
- The Graduate School held a reception for area graduate alumni at the Jepson Center for the Arts in Savannah in conjunction with an exhibition from the North Carolina Museum of Art. The director of the NCMA, a graduate alumnus, led a tour of the exhibition, which attracted more than 75 alumni and friends of UGA.
- New initiatives were made to corporations and foundations in 2008.

### **Public Service and Outreach Contributions**

#### **Recruitment**

- The Graduate School Conference Participation  
The Graduate School participated with other UGA academic departments at conferences that supported students of color in the sciences: the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minorities in Science (ABRCMS); and McNair conferences at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, North Carolina A&T University and the University of Maryland.

- **Recruitment Programs**

In the spring of 2008, the Graduate School held its annual “Preparing for Graduate School” workshop for UGA upperclassmen. More than 220 students attended the event designed to encourage application to UGA graduate programs.

In the summer of 2008, the Graduate School held its eighth annual Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP), designed to introduce undergraduates from historically underrepresented populations from institutions around the nation to graduate-level research by pairing them with faculty mentors.

- **Recruitment Presentations and Visits**

Graduate School recruiters attended 25 graduate fairs across the country in 2008 and hosted six information sessions at various institutions in continued efforts to build its relationship with the Associated Colleges of the South.

- **Peach State Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation**

Through its Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP), the Graduate School participated in the Peach State Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (PSLSAMP) grant, for which the University of Georgia leads the consortium of four other state colleges and universities whose goal is to boost the number of underrepresented minorities earning bachelor’s degrees in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines. Six of the 41 SURP participants were PSLSAMP students.

- **Inclusive Environment**

The Graduate School continued to work closely with other minority-serving units at UGA to provide an inclusive environment for graduate students from underrepresented populations. These units included the Minority Services and Program Office, the Office of Institutional Diversity, the Office of Diversity in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, USDA-Affirmative Action office and programs, the Black Faculty and Staff Organization, and the Graduate and Professional Scholars student organization.

### **Research and Student Learning**

Seminars and workshops sponsored by the Graduate School on professional development, best practices and orientation were videotaped and made available through the Web site for students, faculty, staff and the general public. This online presence enhances the students’ ability for asynchronous learning.

### **Additional Outreach Contributions**

Dean Maureen Grasso served as chair of the membership committee for the Council of Graduate Schools.

The dean participated as a presenter in a plenary entitled *The Budgetary Challenge Facing the New Administration: What Does it Mean for Graduate Education?* at the

Council of Graduate School 2008 Annual Meeting held in Washington D.C. in December.

The dean was named Fellow for the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). She also received the 2008 Exceptional Service Awards in recognition of faithful and exemplary service on behalf of ASHRAE.

The dean was nominated for the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools Achievement Award for Outstanding Contributions to Graduate Education in the Southern Region.

The Graduate School enjoyed increased visibility of its achievements and services through public relations efforts by article placement in a number of media outlets and capitalization of online avenues for information sharing. Article placement and publicity averaged at least one story a month, sometimes more, and covered seminars, orientation, record enrollment and diversity rankings. The enrollment story alone received coverage in nine separate media outlets.

Creation of new Web pages for the Emerging Leaders Program, the development office, a news page, orientation, and online videos expanded the Graduate School's presence worldwide.

## **Assessing Effectiveness**

### **Admissions and Enrollment**

The Graduate School enrolled an all-time high number of graduate students in fall 2008 semester, with 7,160 graduate students matriculating at UGA. These results are attributed to enhanced efforts at the Graduate School to recruit and retain students.

### **Recruitment**

The Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) hosted 41 students from around the country. SURP 2008 participants represented the most diverse group ever, ethnically and academically, in the history of the 9-year program.

Forty-six participants attended the Future Scholars Visitation Program in fall 2008. Twenty-four (52 percent) participants have been admitted as of March 2009. Of the 60 participants in the 2007 program, 25 were admitted (46 percent), and 19 (76 percent of admitted participants) enrolled in 2008.

## **Graduate Student Retention and Graduation**

### **Graduate Enrollment and Degrees Awarded**

The total graduate student enrollment (returning and new students) for spring 2008 semester was 6,767. This represents an increase of 68 students (1 percent) over the total of 6,699 for spring 2007 semester.

The total graduate student enrollment (returning and new students) for fall 2008 semester was 7,160. This represents an increase of 213 students (3 percent) over the total of 6,947 for fall 2007 semester.

In 2008, 2,115 students were awarded graduate degrees. This number represents a slight decrease compared to the total of 2,117 graduate degrees awarded in 2007.

### **Graduate Recruitment Opportunities (GRO) Assistantship**

The number of fall 2008 GRO assistantship recipients nearly doubled from last year (10 recipients in fall 2007) to a total of 18 students accepting the award (of 21 offers made) and enrolling for fall 2008 semester. This was the largest and most diverse cohort of GRO participants in the history of the assistantship. Of the 18 awards, nine recipients were first year doctoral students.

### **Graduate School Dean's Award Program and Other Funding**

The Dean's Award program, in its fifth year, continued to facilitate graduate students in the arts, humanities and social sciences as they move toward completion of the degree by helping to finance their research. The Graduate School supported 18 students in the arts and humanities and 17 in the social sciences.

### **Short-Term Goals (FY09)**

Goal 1: The Graduate School will increase development and fundraising efforts to support expanding opportunities for graduate education.

Goal 2: The Graduate School will serve as a catalyst to increase diversity at UGA.

Goal 3: The Graduate School will fill the positions in the information technology unit and for the assistant dean for enrollment management.

Goal 4: The Graduate School will promote quality in graduate education through best practices seminars and recognition of innovation, informed by the report of the Task Force on Graduate Education as completed in 2008.

### **Focusing on the Future**

The Graduate School will work to increase enrollment numbers of graduate students through targeted marketing and recruiting efforts with an emphasis on the use of technology to reach prospective students.

The Graduate School will continue to raise awareness of its programs, services and contributions to the UGA community through increased public relations and outreach efforts.

The Graduate School will continue to focus on building an endowment for graduate education and graduate students in all disciplines.