



Item: AS-5

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

October 24, 2007

SUBJECT: Approval to Establish a Graduate College at Florida Atlantic University

PROPOSED COMMITTEE ACTION

Recommend approval of the FAU Graduate College

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Florida Atlantic University has a long and proud tradition of providing excellent graduate education programs at the Master's, Specialist, and Doctoral degree levels. The number of graduate programs has grown and prospered over the past 43 years such that the university now offers 71 Master's, 3 Specialist, and 19 Doctoral degrees.

Based on recommendations in the last two accreditation reports by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, FAU embarked on a path to create a Graduate Faculty to establish standards for those teaching graduate courses and to serve in supervisory capacities for graduate student thesis and dissertation research projects. In September 2005, 630 faculty members comprised the first FAU Graduate Faculty. In March 2006, the University Faculty Senate approved the amendment to their Constitution to create a Graduate Council with a charge to review and recommend university-wide graduate policies and procedures. The Due Process Committee was approved at the same meeting with a charge to review the graduate petitions processes of the colleges offering graduate programs and to ensure that each college has a procedure affording graduate students due process for student appeals.

FAU's potential to grow as a major research university is inextricably linked to its ability to attract and retain outstanding graduate students. The future of FAU depends upon a strong and vibrant graduate community, with professors and graduate students working together to advance the limits of knowledge and creative activity on all of our seven campuses. This is best achieved by having a centralized Graduate College with a Graduate Faculty who are fully engaged in the teaching, research and advising mission of graduate education. The Graduate College provides the expertise and support for effective graduate student recruitment and retention efforts, and the necessary quality control for all aspects of graduate education to grow and prosper.

For the aforementioned reasons it is proposed that Florida Atlantic University establish a Graduate College.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/DATE

The FAU Graduate College will be established upon approval by the FAU Board of Trustees.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

All of the existing functions and staff positions in the Office of Graduate Admissions and Graduate Studies would remain the same, so there would be no new resource allocations necessary to implement this request.

Establishing a Graduate College at Florida Atlantic University

Florida Atlantic University has a long and proud tradition of providing excellent graduate education programs at the Master's, Specialist, and Doctoral degree levels. The number of graduate programs has grown and prospered over the past 43 years such that the university now offers 71 Master's, 3 Specialist, and 19 Doctoral degrees. The administration of the various graduate programs has evolved in such a way that the Office of Graduate Studies now functions as a graduate college by defining and supporting excellence in graduate education and the scholarly activities that are associated with it.

As recently as the mid-1990's, campus-level administration for both the graduate programs and the research office was directed by a single administrator, with Dr. John Jurewicz serving as Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. In 1999, graduate admissions split from undergraduate admissions to become a separate entity. Dr. Nathan Dean, who was at that time Vice Provost, became the Interim Dean for Graduate Admissions and Graduate Studies. In 2001, the administration of the graduate programs again became a part of the Division of Research and Graduate Studies when Dr. Larry Lemanski became the Vice President of Research and Dean of Graduate Studies. In 2005, the Provost appointed Dr. Gary Perry to serve as the Interim Dean of Graduate Studies and changed the administrative structure to allow the Vice President of Research to devote his full attention to the research mission of the university. Dr. Leslie Terry served as Interim Dean of Graduate Studies from July 2006 until Dr. Barry Rosson became the Dean of Graduate Studies in July 2007.

Based on recommendations in the last two accreditation reports by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, FAU embarked on a path to create a Graduate Faculty. It was recognized in the reports that a Graduate Faculty was needed to establish standards for those teaching graduate courses and to serve in supervisory capacities for graduate student thesis and dissertation research projects. In April 2005, when Dr. Gary Perry became Interim Dean, the creation of a university-wide Graduate Faculty was proposed, and in September 2005, 630 faculty members comprised the first FAU Graduate Faculty. In March 2006, the University Faculty Senate approved the amendment to their Constitution to create a Graduate Council with a charge to review and recommend university-wide graduate policies and procedures, including, but not limited to: graduate student admissions and promotion/progression policies; formulating graduate faculty policies and procedures, including guidelines and appointment criteria for Graduate Faculty; and conducting graduate faculty reviews. The Due Process Committee was approved at the same meeting with a charge to review the graduate petitions processes of the colleges offering graduate programs and to ensure that each college has a procedure affording graduate students due process for student appeals.

Adequate funding levels for graduate student assistantships and tuition waivers are of primary importance to graduate programs across the country. Since 2004, the Provost and the College Deans have made it a priority to fund competitive assistantships with accompanying tuition waivers that are sufficient to maintain a large cadre of talented Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Research Assistants. These positions are critical to provide needed classroom and laboratory instruction, and to maintain a vigorous research program with the university's research faculty. At this time, there are approximately 900 graduate students on assistantships, and the annual graduate student tuition waiver budget is approximately \$8,000,000. These numbers represent a large investment in graduate education; however, given the environment in which major research universities must compete to attract and retain talented graduate students,

more must be done to increase graduate assistantship stipends. Based on 2005-2006 assistantship stipend data collected from peer institutions, there is a great disparity between FAU's stipend levels and those offered at the peer institutions. FAU must find ways to increase the stipends in all of its colleges, except perhaps the Barry Kaye College of Business and the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing. The need is especially critical in the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, and the College of Education.

FAU College	College Stipend Average as a Percentage of Peer Institution's Stipend Average
Architecture, Urban and Public Affairs	82 %
Arts and Letters	61 %
Business	105 %
Education	57 %
Engineering and Computer Science	77 %
Nursing	98 %
Science	79 %

Over the past five years, the number of graduate students receiving degrees has increased by approximately 15%. The most dramatic increase has occurred in an area in which the university can be most proud; the number of students receiving doctoral degrees has almost doubled from 44 to 83 in this relatively short time period. This rise has occurred during an unprecedented time of increased external research funding, and it is anticipated that as funded research continues to increase, so will the number of doctoral students continue to rise.

Degree	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Degree Total
Master's	1,003	1,086	1,048	1,037	1,121	5,295
Specialist	22	19	20	15	24	100
Doctorate	44	50	63	68	83	308
Annual Total	1,069	1,155	1,131	1,120	1,228	5,703

Since July 2007, FAU has undertaken many new initiatives to strengthen and enhance its graduate programs. The Graduate Council is developing new policies and procedures for Graduate Faculty appointment and reappointment. The Due Process Committee is establishing new university-wide guidelines for due process of graduate student issues to ensure equitable standards are being used across all academic disciplines. Some of the issues they are considering involve: academic and research misconduct; disputes involving comprehensive examinations, admissions to candidacy and final thesis and dissertation defenses; academic dismissal for lack of progress or poor grades; revocation of degrees; and harassment issues.

In addition, new graduate degree program reports are being developed to assist the departments and colleges in their recruitment and retention efforts. These reports will provide them with important trend data on: applications, admissions, new enrollments, total enrollments and degrees conferred; average standardized test scores of applicants, admitted applicants and newly enrolled students; and average length of study by current status and year of first enrollment, time-to-degree for degree recipients, hours completed for currently enrolled students, and time between first and last enrollments for currently un-enrolled students.

Beginning in the fall semester of 2008, all students will be required to submit their thesis or dissertation in an electronic format to the university library. At the Graduate Council's last meeting it was decided to make this mandatory beginning next fall semester, and until then

students are being encouraged to submit an electronic version of their thesis or dissertation. This important step forward in technology will allow for greater opportunities for students to submit their work without the traditional bounds of written text, tables and figures. Audio and video files, as well as executable programs and graphics will be captured to better represent the student's research and creative activities.

The Office of Graduate Studies is currently working on the following initiatives: offering workshops for Graduate Teaching Assistants; developing new programs for international graduate students to provide instruction to improve their technical writing, reading and speaking abilities, especially for the International Teaching Assistants; implementing a new program to train graduate students in the Responsible Conduct of Research; offering a new fellowship program sponsored by the FAU Lifelong Learning Society and a new graduate recruitment fellowship program; and developing new International Agreements with foreign universities to foster relationships for graduate student exchange and dual degree programs. Currently, new agreements are being developed with Ecole Des Mines D'Ales (France), Institut Supérieur de l'Electronique et du Numerique (France), and Tokushima University (Japan).

FAU's potential to grow as a major research university is inextricably linked to its ability to attract and retain outstanding graduate students. It will need to continue to accommodate more part-time and under-represented graduate students, with a concomitant need to offer more programs that are not place-bound and are geared towards serving specific clientele. The financial resources that are needed to develop these capabilities require funds that are not traditionally obtained from the state and the various research funding agencies. The Graduate College provides the perfect platform for development efforts to provide the additional funds for assistantships, fellowships, recruitment efforts, faculty mentoring awards, graduate student teaching and research awards, and travel grants for graduate students to present their research.

The future of FAU depends upon a strong and vibrant graduate community, with professors and graduate students working together to advance the limits of knowledge and creative activity on all of our seven campuses. This is best achieved by having a centralized Graduate College with a Graduate Faculty who are fully engaged in the teaching, research and advising mission of graduate education. In this way the Graduate Faculty help to develop the necessary skills and attributes of our advanced-degree graduates to become future intellectual leaders and noteworthy contributors to society. The Graduate College provides the expertise and support for effective graduate student recruitment and retention efforts, and the necessary quality control for all aspects of graduate education to grow and prosper.

For the aforementioned reasons it is proposed that Florida Atlantic University establish a Graduate College with all of the duties and responsibilities assigned to it as outlined above. All of the existing functions and staff positions in the Office of Graduate Admissions and Graduate Studies would remain the same, so there would be no new resource allocations necessary to implement this request. The Graduate College would place the university on an equal footing with its competitors and provide a highly visible presence for graduate education to flourish well into its future as an institution of higher-learning with great respect and prominence.