

University Graduate Council Meeting (11/13/2014)
President and Provost

Notes: Issues and Action

University Graduate Council Chair Dr. Paul Peluso welcomed President John Kelly and Provost Gary Perry. Dr. Peluso stated that the Graduate College structure “works” at FAU and that the Graduate College staff “work” for graduate faculty to support graduate recruitment, programs, students, success and graduation. During the discussion with the committee, it was noted that for FAU to move beyond regional university status, a investment in graduate programs, students and support is imperative or FAU will simply fail to be competitive.

Specific solutions were discussed; with the following topic areas and commensurate actions discussed.

1. Issue: Graduate Student Research Receives no funding/has no funding mechanism

FAU has a successful undergraduate research initiative, but no funds are allocated for graduate student research. The GPSA (graduate student government) administers almost 100K each year for graduate students to attend conferences and present research, but no funds are available to support their research. A pilot student research grant initiative (GRIP) was presented that was endorsed Fall, 2014 by the University Faculty Senate and the University Graduate Council. A total of 74K is needed to pilot a program to support graduate student research.

Required Action:

- President Kelly committed \$74,000 (\$60,000 for grant program and \$14,000 for graduate assistantship) immediately to fund pilot year of Graduate Research and Inquiry Program (GRIP)- awards Spring 2015. The program will be administered through the Graduate College in consultation with GPSA, the Graduate Council and others.
- Dr. Deborah Floyd (interim dean, Graduate College) agreed to follow-up with the University Development office regarding establishing a fund that will also support graduate student research.
- Support of graduate student research will be included in the University’s strategic plan.

2. Issue: Graduate student stipends and recruitment packages are not competitive.

Graduate Assistant, GTA, and GRA stipends have not increased in over a decade. FAU is unable to offer competitive graduate student assistantship stipends, fellowships and health insurance due to lack of funds. As a result, virtually every program at FAU is losing top candidates every year as a result of not being

competitive. If FAU wants to increase the number of full-time students in masters and doctoral programs, the number graduate assistantship opportunities must be increased (only 912 students are recorded as receiving assistantship waivers Fall 2014).

Required Action:

- The Graduate College Dean will work with the Graduate Council, staff and leadership to provide President Kelly with projected costs of providing competitive stipends, fellowships, and health insurance for graduate students.
- This priority will be reflected in the University's strategic plan.

3. Issue: Graduate Student Recruitment

The Graduate College administers 300K total for "pass through" money to support two programs: graduate student recruitment and fellowships. This faculty-driven program has proven highly successful over the past five years. Annually, program faculty develop written plans for recruitment, attend recruitment workshops and submit their recruitment plans for competitive funding. They also request funding for Presidential and Provost Fellowships (\$5000 and \$2500) from this fund. This year, only \$65,000 was available to distribute among 103 departments and programs to support their recruiting plans. This represented a funding rate of only 34% of total requests which is woefully inadequate.

Required Action:

- The Graduate Council requests consideration for non-recurring monies FY 2014-2015 as "pass through" funding to support department and program recruitment plans. Only 65K total was available for the entire university and those funds were dispersed Fall 2014.
- Consideration will be given to provide additional Graduate Recruitment Grant monies to the Graduate College for FY 2014-2015. If funds are available, the Graduate College will allocate resources directly to support the faculty recruitment plans.
- Consideration will be given to increasing the annual funding for Graduate Recruitment Grant and Fellowship Program in perpetuity.
- This priority will be reflected in the University's strategic plan

4. Issue: Informational Technology Support for Graduate College Efforts

Several years ago the Graduate College IT programming staff developed an electronic program of study system (MYPOS) that includes student "flight plans", monitoring and tracking, and intervention support. The system rollout has taken

several years because it is customized for each program and includes extensive faculty involvement. When the Division of Research and the Graduate College were separated, all programming staff moved to the DoR and the Graduate College has no dedicated IT Support (Programming and Technical Support for Hardware and Software) to complete the implementation and fix “bugs”. Further, only half of the application processes for graduate students are electronic due to not having dedicated programming support to finalize electronic letters of recommendation and other admissions support. Dedicated programming support is needed for the Graduate College.

Required Action:

- Provide Graduate College with one permanent programming line position to ensure that the recruitment, admissions, and programs of study processes are further developed and systems are maintained and supported.
- This priority will be reflected in the University’s strategic plan.

5. Issue: Insufficient Graduate Student Infrastructure

FAU does not have an infrastructure in place to support graduate research and graduate student life on the national scale. Housing, student study spaces, support for research, are all lacking at FAU. The graduate programs offered are simply not sustainable in the long-term with the current undergraduate “commuter” university infrastructure at FAU.

Required Action:

- The Interim Graduate Dean and Interim Vice President for Student Affairs formed a Graduate Student Life Task Force Fall, 2014 to prepare an inventory and offer recommendations for action. Their input should be considered in the strategic plan and for budgeting purposes.
- President Kelly *agreed* that housing opportunities and incentives for graduate students (including international students) should be explored with the Interim Vice President for Student Affairs.
- Support for graduate student research and an infrastructure for graduate programs needs to be strengthened.
- This area of need should be included in the university’s strategic plan.

Miscellaneous Items

- It was discussed that departments should be allowed time to fill faculty searches beyond one academic year, if necessary, in order to obtain the best candidate.
- It was discussed that the size of the Doctoral diploma should be larger.