

August 24, 2000

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Graduate Faculty

**FROM** Ronald Rogers

**SUBJECT:** Report of Graduate Council and Graduate School Activities for 1999-2000

**Activities of the Committees of the Graduate Council**

Committee on Financial Aid: (Dr. Brian Gray, Chair; Dr. Margaret Johnson; Dr. Carol Pierman; Dr. David Roskos-Ewoldsen; Dr. Will Schreiber; Dr. Cynthia Sunal; Dr. Pat Harrison--Graduate School Representative).

The budget for Graduate Council Fellows was increased to provide a \$1,000 increase in the stipend in each fellowship category. In addition, the Graduate Council approved special supplements to be awarded on a competitive basis to selected Graduate Council Fellows. The goals of the supplements are to (a) give students a multi-year offer, and (b) increase the value of the fellowships. To be considered for the supplement, departments must commit to a .50 assistantship for the student's second year. If selected for one of the new supplements, a master's student would receive an extra stipend of \$5,000 during the year of the Graduate Council Fellowship. A doctoral student would receive an extra stipend of \$5,000 during the year of the Graduate Council Fellowship plus an extra \$5000 during the second year, when he or she is on departmental assistantship. For example, an out-of-state doctoral student who receives a regular Graduate Council fellowship, receives the special supplement, and plans a career in college teaching could receive the following two-year offer:

- A total of \$25,222 counting stipend and tuition for Year 1
- A .50 assistantship, full tuition, and a \$5,000 supplement for Year 2

During 1999-2000, the Financial Aid Committee considered 186 nominations for Graduate Council Fellowships. A total of 56 students received awards from the available pool of \$680,000 (see table below). The fellowships carry full tuition and fee scholarships.

| Fellowship Type                 | Amount   | Number Awarded |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| Regular-with special supplement | \$16,000 | 9              |
| Regular-no special              | \$11,000 | 25             |

|              |           |    |
|--------------|-----------|----|
| supplement   |           |    |
| Thesis       | \$11,500  | 3  |
| Dissertation | \$12,000  | 8  |
| Research     | \$11,000  | 11 |
| TOTAL        | \$670,500 | 56 |

Students who are beginning graduate study in 2000-2001 received 33 of the 34 Regular Fellowships.

In addition, 22 fellowships were awarded for the summer of 2000 with stipends of \$3,500 each. There were 9 Dissertation Fellowships, 4 Research Fellowships, and 8 Regular Fellowships in the group of summer fellowships.

The Committee completed a follow-up analysis of students who held Graduate Council Fellowships during the 1993-94 to 1999-2000 academic years. The data are summarized below:

- The Graduate Council Fellows had average graduate GPAs ranging from 3.62 to 4.0, in comparison to the university-wide averages of 3.7 for 500-level courses and 3.3 for 600-level courses.
- Data taken from the Graduate Council Regular Fellows' original graduate applications indicated that average undergraduate GPAs generally were in the 3.5 to 3.6 range, and average GRE scores were in the low 2000s.
- Data about Graduate Council Research Fellows that held fellowships in 1998-99 indicated that a total of 83% of the Research Fellows prepared proposals for grants or funded research, and 22% of the Research Fellows received funding for their grant and research proposals.
- Data indicate that 75-80% of the Regular Graduate Council Fellows receive multiple years of funding, with departmental assistantships following the fellowship.

Committee on Research and New Programs. (Dr. Stephen J. Thoma, Chair; Dr. Jeri Dunkin; Dr. Lea McGee; Dr. L. Michael Freeman; Dr. Thomas Lee; Dr. John Schmitt—Graduate School Representative).

The committee had no new graduate program proposals to consider this year.

Committee on Program and Degree Requirements. (Dr. Joseph A. Hornsby, Chair; Dr. Daniel Arce; Dr. Kathryn Oths; Dr. Harry Price; Dr. Elizabeth K. Wilson; Ms. Christi Howell; Dr. John Schmitt—Graduate School Representative)

The committee evaluated a proposal from the Department of English that its doctoral students admitted directly to the Ph.D. program from the baccalaureate rather than master's degree be given an eight-year time limit. The Council approved the Committee's recommended adoption of the policy change.

Committee on Admissions and Recruitment. (Dr. Joan Atkinson, Chair; Dr. Catherine Pagani; Dr. Barrie Jo Price; Dr. Joe Thrasher; Dr. Paul Stuart; Ms. Demetria Shabazz, Student Representative; Dr. Pat Harrison—Graduate School Representative).

During 1999-2000, the Admissions and Recruitment Committee conducted a review of recent revisions to admissions standards and evaluated their impact on graduate applications and admissions.

- *Provisional Language Admission (approved in 1998-1999).* The new admission category for international applicants affected about 10 international students who were admitted with this option in 1999. Most students admitted with a provisional language admission take and pass the TOEFL immediately after arrival on the UA campus.
- *Use of GPA of 3.0 in a graduate degree program as an option for regular admission (approved in 1997-1998).* The use of the graduate degree GPA for regular admission has proven to be helpful for recruiting and admitting students who were very successful in previous graduate coursework but had not done well in undergraduate coursework.
- *Addition of more flexible criteria for conditional admission: A student is eligible with either GPA of 3.0 or admissions test score at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile (approved in 1997-1998).* (These criteria are in addition to criteria that have been used for several years: GPA of 2.5 **and** admissions test score at the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile). The committee determined that departments appreciate the greater flexibility when considering students who have high GPAs with low test scores and students who have low GPAs with high test scores, although departments are more likely to recommend conditional admission for the former than the latter. The committee suggested that this policy change may have resulted, in small part, in the increases in applications, admissions, and graduate enrollments that we have seen over the past two years.
- *Students may apply to up to two degree programs at a time (approved in 1997-1998).* The committee determined that this new policy has been useful for departments and students.
- *Departments may submit proposals to eliminate requirement for letters of recommendation (approved in 1997-1998; no departments have submitted proposals).* In addition to the policy change, the committee expressed a positive reaction to the recent procedural change resulting in letters of recommendation being sent directly to departments and not to the Graduate School.
- *Nondegree admission policy for international students (approved in 1997-1998).* The committee determined that nondegree international students who are coming to UA only for a short period (e.g., to study with a visiting scholar) would be required to take the TOEFL, but they may be admitted nondegree under the provisional language admission and take the TOEFL before enrollment in any graduate classes.
- *Departments may eliminate or modify the admissions test score requirement (approved in 1990; new department proposals reviewed continually.)* The committee reviewed the list of departments that do not require an admissions test score and determined that this flexibility is useful for the departments that have proposed an elimination or modification of the admission test requirement.

Committee on Teaching and Research Awards. (Dr. James Leeper, Chair; Dr. Carol Cassel; Dr. Gary Copeland; Dr. Susan Fleming; Dr. Min Sun; Dr. S. Allen Wilcoxon; Dr. John Schmitt—Graduate School Representative).

The Committee selected the following winners of Graduate School Awards:

| Award    | Level    | Winner           | Department            |
|----------|----------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Teaching | Masters  | Jonathan Birdnow | Communication Studies |
| Teaching | Doctoral | Stan Davis       | Accounting            |

|          |          |                   |                     |
|----------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Research | Masters  | Marcus Boccaccini | Psychology          |
| Research | Doctoral | Gary Ervin        | Biological Sciences |

Committee on Graduate Faculty Membership. (Dr. Jack W. Sulentic, Chair; Dr. Jeri Dunkin; Dr. L. Michael Freeman; Dr. Ida Johnson; Dr. Thomas Lee; Dr. James Leeper; Dr. David Roskos-Ewoldsen; Dr. Paul H. Stuart; Dr. Cynthia Sunal; Dr. Stephen Thoma; Ms. Christi Howell, Student Representative).

The Council approved the following revised policy on retaining graduate faculty status for one year after a member retires:

After a Graduate Faculty member retires, he or she may need to continue to serve as chair or committee member on students' thesis and or dissertation committees. These Graduate Faculty members may be appointed Temporary Members of the Graduate Faculty for these purposes and/or to perform other specific functions. The nomination and appointment procedures for these temporary appointments are the same as those adopted by the academic unit and University.

The committee also acted on an appeal of the decision to grant Associate, rather than Full, Graduate Faculty membership to a faculty member.

### **Financial Support for Graduate Students**

1. The University employed 1,206 graduate assistants, with an average stipend of \$8,899 per year for a 0.5 FTE assignment.
2. *The Presidential Graduate Fellowship Supplement Fund* augments graduate fellowships for new fellows and those preparing for careers in teaching. In the 2000-2001 academic year, 48 students will benefit from this fund by receiving supplements ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000.
3. *The National Alumni Association Collegiate License Tag Endowed Graduate Education Fund* provided fellowships of \$10,000 each to 26 students in 1999-00, and it will fund 28 students in 2000-01. The fund is for residents of the State of Alabama.
4. A total of \$24,225 was awarded to 133 students from the *Graduate Student Research and Travel Grants Fund* in 1999-00.
5. Again this year, the Graduate Council had at least one member serve on all committees that conducted academic program reviews of departments having graduate degree programs.

### **Minority Affairs**

1. **Enrollment:** Enrollment of African-American graduate students has steadily increased from a low of 81 on-campus students in 1987 (3% of the total graduate enrollment). In fall 1998, enrollment of African-American graduate students significantly increased to 245 on-campus students, a 23% increase from fall 1997. In fall 1999, enrollment of African-American graduate students increased even more to 262 on-campus students, a 7% increase from fall 1998 and the highest enrollment of African-American graduate students in UA history. Thus, on-campus enrollment of African-American graduate students has increased by 32% since fall, 1997. In addition, 33 African American students enrolled in off-campus graduate programs, for a total of 295 on-campus and off-campus African-American graduate students (8.8% of total) in fall 1999.
2. **Degrees Awarded:** The number of minority students receiving graduate degrees at the University also has increased. We awarded graduate degrees to 131 minority students in 1999, which is 8.6 percent of our

total number of graduate degree recipients. In contrast, we awarded graduate degrees to 92 minority students in 1997 and 71 minority students in 1998. The University of Alabama tied for the rank of 32nd in the nation in the total number of doctoral degrees awarded to African-American students across all disciplines, according to a report in the July 22, 1999 issue of *Black Issues in Higher Education*.

3. Overall Fellowship Funding: Since 1988, the Graduate School has provided scholarships, fellowships, and stipends for over 160 minority graduate scholars and has funded minority graduate students for almost \$1.9 million in stipends and tuition scholarships. We provided funding for 30 graduate students in our minority fellowship programs during 1999-2000.
4. **SREB Fellowships:** The SREB Minority Doctoral Scholars Program encourages minority students to pursue doctoral degrees and become college professors. Over 50 major doctoral universities across the United States participate in the program. The Graduate School held the #1 ranking for number of SREB doctoral scholars in 1997-1998 and 1999-2000. In 1999-2000, 18 SREB fellows were supported by the Graduate School and departments for over \$100,000 in stipends and scholarships. We have been notified that at least four new UA doctoral students will receive SREB fellowships beginning in fall 2000.
5. Future Faculty Fellows Program: This program is for students from minority groups who plan to become college or university professors. In 1999-2000, the Graduate School supported two Future Faculty Fellows for a total of \$25,555 in stipends and scholarships. The Graduate School has selected two new Future Faculty Fellows from among nominees from several departments, and these fellows will begin their graduate programs in fall 2000.
6. Joint Minority Faculty Development Program Fellowships: The Joint Faculty Development Program with Alabama HBCUs supports practicing college teachers who do not have a terminal degree. Institutions participating in this program include Alabama State University, Alabama A & M, and Oakwood. A total of 19 Fellows have participated in the program since 1989, and eight have received degrees. In 1999-2000, four Joint Faculty Development Fellowships were awarded to faculty members of partner institutions, with stipends and scholarships totaling \$57,206.
7. UA/Stillman College Joint Faculty Staff Development Program: In 1999-2000, the Graduate School provided tuition scholarships totaling \$12,464 for six faculty and staff members of Stillman College.
8. McNair Scholars: The Graduate School assisted the UA TRIO office in obtaining a U.S. Department of Education grant for the Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program, a program for undergraduates who wish to pursue graduate study. The Graduate School has agreed to provide tuition scholarships for any UA McNair scholar who attends graduate school at UA and to assist UA McNair scholars with identifying and applying for departmental graduate assistantships. We have also conducted recruitment events for McNair fellows in the Southern region and pay the graduate applicant fee for any McNair Fellow who applies to UA. We are exploring possible graduate exchange programs between UA and other universities that have McNair programs.
9. Recruitment Forum for Faculty: The Graduate School held a forum on the "Recruitment and Retention of Minority Graduate Students" on February 10, 2000. The main focus of this forum was to provide University of Alabama graduate departments with information about current techniques, resources, and issues relating to the recruitment and retention of minority graduate students. Over 75 deans, department chairs, and graduate program directors attended the forum. Speakers included Ansley A. Abraham, Ph.D., Director of the Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB) Minority Doctoral Scholars program, and Paul B. Mohr, Sr., Ed. D., Director of Special Programs for the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) and former President of Talladega College

## Other News

1. White Paper Update. Provost Barrett provided the Council with an update on developments since the White Paper was instituted. The primary effect has been permanent funding increases of \$4.6 million to support White Paper initiatives proposed by Accounting, Chemistry, Psychology, the Center for Green Manufacturing, History, Computer Science, and the Center for Freshwater Studies. Nearly half of the funding has gone to graduate programs in several forms, including new graduate assistantships, endowed chairs, and new (not replacement) faculty positions. In April 2000 the Council approved White Paper recommendations to make to Provost Barrett in response to her request for input on the "strengthening graduate programs" section of the White Paper update.
2. Graduate School Recruitment Workshop. On September 9, 1999, the Graduate School held a workshop on "Applying to Graduate or Professional School," consisting of training on the application process, breakout sessions on fields of graduate study, and free practice administrations of admissions tests by Kaplan, Inc. Approximately 350 prospective graduate students attended the workshop. We will continue this annual event and have scheduled another workshop for September 2000.
3. Orientation for New Graduate Students. On August 16, 2000, the office of the Dean of Students provided an all-day orientation for new graduate students. Among the topics covered were registration, recreational facilities, dining facilities, child care, financial aid, grant writing, dealing with department politics, avoiding graduate student stress, and the Internet.
4. Workshop for New GTAs. The Bryant Conference Center was the site of the 14th annual workshop, held on August 17-18, 2000. Distinguished faculty, staff, and Graduate Teaching Fellows presented information on topics such as preparation of course syllabi and lectures, different models of instruction for different teaching situations, leading discussion and lab sections, and using multimedia and the Internet. There was also discussion of important policies and legal issues. All of the new GTAs were videotaped while teaching and received feedback on teaching strengths and areas for improvement.
5. Graduate Applications. Applications for fall 1999 were 15.8% higher than applications for fall 1998 (3,837 compared to 3,314).
6. Enrollment and Degrees Conferred. Graduate enrollment for the 1999 fall term was 3,475, including 511 off-campus students. Graduate enrollment for fall 1999 increased by 2.5% compared to fall 1998 (3,475 compared to 3,391). The Colleges of Commerce and Business Administration and Communication and Information Sciences demonstrated the greatest increases in enrollment. The 1999- 2000 academic year total of 1,359 graduate degrees awarded included 149 doctoral degrees, 88 educational specialist degrees, and 1,122 master's degrees.
7. Thesis and Dissertation Seminar. In 1999-00 the Graduate School provided a "Completing a Thesis or Dissertation" seminar four times to more than 125 graduate students.
8. Awards for Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation. This year's winners were: Thesis—Maurice Manning (Creative Writing) and Dissertation—Susan Stewart (Astronomy). All divisional nominees who did not win a University-wide award received an Award of Merit from the Graduate School, recognizing the high quality of their thesis or dissertation.
9. Web Site. Modifications and enhancements continue for the Graduate School web site ([www.ua.edu/graduate/](http://www.ua.edu/graduate/)). Most Graduate School publications and announcements are included on the site, including the *Graduate Catalog*, *Graduate Program Procedures and Policy Guide*, *Thesis and Dissertation Guide*, *Semester Deadlines for Graduate School*, and the *1997-98 Graduate School Annual Report and Statistical Analysis*. University-wide policy changes for graduate students (e.g., admissions policies, residency requirements) are placed on the site immediately following approval. The online application on our Web site now accounts for over 20% of our applications. We have recently

changed our Web site to allow on-line submission of applications from international students. In addition, students who do not choose to apply online often download and print our forms from the Web site and submit paper copies of our forms through US mail. We have implemented procedures to allow better tracking and recruitment of students who apply using our online application. When a student submits an online application, an email is sent automatically to the department to which the student applied; departments are encouraged to use the data for student recruitment. Prospective students are automatically sent emails immediately and several weeks following their submission of the online application. The emails thank students for their applications and encourage them to consider enrolling at UA.

10. Departments' Guide to Administration of Graduate Assistantships. Two workshops were held for faculty and staff to provide information about the activities of the Graduate School office. The Graduate School also published a *Department's Guide to Administration of Graduate Assistantships*. The *Guide* includes all of the guidelines and qualification requirements governing the appointment and administration of graduate assistantships and clarifies difficult but key areas such as the impact of income and payroll taxes on student stipends and tuition awards, the application of SACS rules for classroom teaching, and permitted combinations of work and enrollment hours.