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ABSTRACT

A statement of principles and practices of graduate education in the 1980's offers to help institutions plan and evaluate the organization and administration of their graduate schools. It is argued that institutional goals and practices in higher education will be subject to close scrutiny and change in the coming decade. Changes forecast include budgetary shift and reevaluation of societal needs that will require assessment of traditional objectives in advanced educational programs that have been assumed in times past. A total commitment to quality of the educational experience will be demanded of academic institutions involved in graduate programs. In order for this commitment to be implemented, it will be essential for institutions to define the appropriate administrative structures and intellectual environments necessary to meet and participate in events that will shape advanced education in the future. Each institutional environment will be called upon to meet unique needs that will serve different kinds of students and programs. It is suggested that the chief graduate school officer be a person who occupies a prominent position in the decision-making processes of the academic institution. Such a person should participate directly in academic and resource allocations and administration of research. In addition, the graduate school officer should be responsible for the administration of such graduate student affairs as admissions, financial aid, examining committees, degree requirements and, jointly with the graduate council, the review of graduate programs for their educational quality. (CC)

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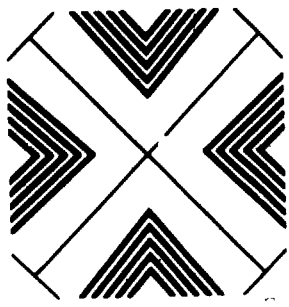
Council of Graduate Schools

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THE ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS IN THE U.S.

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
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The Council of Graduate Schools in the United States

HE 014 448

TASK FORCE ON GRADUATE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

John J. Salley, Chairman
Virginia Commonwealth University

James B. Bartoo
Pennsylvania State University

Allen G. Marr
University of California, Davis

Evelyn L. Oginsky
University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio

L. Evans Roth
University of Tennessee at Knoxville

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Johns Hopkins University

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PREFACE

During the last two decades the dimensions of graduate education, including research, have expanded in numerous directions. Universities have established a variety of centers and institutes for research; many graduate programs are now interdepartmental and interdisciplinary; off-campus graduate education arrangements have increased; part-time graduate study has expanded vastly; and the distinction between the traditional academic programs and the professional programs is less distinct than in the past. The demand for graduate level education by a larger portion of the adult population continues to grow. These modifications in graduate education call for an examination of the effectiveness of existing plans of organization and administration.

With this in mind, the Board of Directors appointed a task force to develop a statement on this subject. This task force, under the chairmanship of John J. Salley (Vice President for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University), has responded to this charge.

The original draft prepared by the task force has undergone many revisions. First there were revisions by the task force, followed by revisions suggested by the Board of Directors, and finally revisions made by the Editorial Committee. The final statement as published herein is endorsed by the Board of Directors of the Council of Graduate Schools in the U.S.

Michael J. Pelczar, Jr.
President

June, 1981

INTRODUCTION: GRADUATE EDUCATION IN THE 1980'S

The Council of Graduate Schools in the United States assumes as a fundamental responsibility the development of a statement of principles and practices in an effort to help institutions plan and evaluate the organization and administration of their graduate schools. Institutional goals and practices in higher education will be subjected to close scrutiny and change in the coming decade. These changes should be made in such a way as to strengthen and enhance the participation of the graduate school in the establishment of quality in all graduate programs.

Graduate schools in the United States are more than 100 years old and have evolved into major sites of scholarship and research. Significant features of the present configuration of graduate education emerged in the post-Sputnik era. In prior times, comparatively few institutions sought to accommodate part-time students, working adults, minorities, women, or those who could not afford full-time graduate work. Increased federal support for research and training led to the rapid expansion of graduate education which was oriented toward full-time, in-residence study for the Ph.D. degree. The resulting external support, much of which was directed toward research in the sciences, created the form and tempo of modern graduate education.

The 1980 report of the Carnegie Council on Policy Study in Higher Education poses certain challenges about the quality, integrity, and purpose of graduate education in the United States. The reports suggests that some institutions may be re-oriented from research and graduate education to other educational activities; in addition, anticipated demographic changes may lead other institutions to seek better methods to accommodate the part-time student residing off campus. Economic and social conditions are likely to reduce support for research, decrease financial aid for students, and to lessen the availability of tenure-track positions for young scholars.

In spite of these external pressures and changes, American higher education must be able to provide intellectual leadership in society. The life sciences and earth sciences are two examples of those disciplines making dramatic progress in the last two decades by asserting new leadership. The mathematical sciences may be experiencing a similar revitalization. In the years ahead graduate education in the arts and humanities is expected to offer new options for students and to respond

to needs for career preparation outside academia, perhaps by adding programs that are less specialized and more interdisciplinary.

In the 1980's, new programs in graduate education will rely on interdepartmental efforts from traditional university units rather than be created from new departments or altered colleges. Graduate programs under the auspices of interdepartmental, intercollege faculties will allow institutions to serve different student populations, encourage faculty initiative, and provide greater institutional flexibility in spite of budgetary and demographic constraints. As universities respond to social, economic, and academic changes in the 1980's, graduate schools will need to assume the leadership role to a greater degree in promoting quality of experience in graduate studies.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF QUALITY GRADUATE EDUCATION

In order to provide high quality graduate programs, an institution must have the following:

- A governing board and administration committed to graduate education as a central mission designed to interact symbiotically with the other institutional missions of undergraduate or professional instruction, scholarship and research, and public service.
- Faculty who are active in scholarship and research and dedicated to the intellectual enhancement of themselves and their students.
- Graduate students who are highly motivated and intellectually capable of meeting the challenges of a rigorous graduate degree program.

In addition to the specific elements above, the governance of graduate education must be a shared responsibility between department and interdepartmental committees on the one hand, and the graduate faculty and the chief graduate school officer on the other. The former offer programs of instruction and research (and administer the graduate degrees authorized to them); the latter establish the policies under which the graduate school coordinates the institution's total graduate program. The chief graduate school officer is usually appointed to supervise the administration of all graduate programs in the institution and to maintain the data base on graduate matters throughout the institution. Thus, the establishment of standards of quality and the overall coordination of graduate policies and procedures have the necessary attention devoted to them.

ADMINISTRATION OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

Graduate education involves a diversity of programs ranging from the professional master's degree to the research doctorate and to post-doctoral study. These levels of achievement can be expressed in the arts and humanities, the sciences, engineering, and the practitioner-oriented fields such as education, clinical psychology, and urban services. All graduate programs share the same need for intellectual rigor in the curriculum, for students of high quality, and for creative excellence among the faculty. These three attributes of graduate education are fundamental to all disciplines—traditional and professional—and as such should have significant bearing on how an institution organizes and administers its graduate programs.

Doctoral study is characterized by a close relationship between the professor/preceptor and the student/apprentice with a particular research problem as the focus. Such an environment may be characterized as either formal or informal with structured or unstructured curricula. Many master's programs and some doctoral programs have more formalized relations between faculty and students, with highly prescribed curricula. Each mode has value, and the policies governing graduate education should be flexible enough to accommodate the talents and styles in individual environments.

GRADUATE SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

The following categories emphasize relationships which benefit not only graduate education but also other missions of the institution. In describing these relationships particular emphasis is given to the chief administrative officer for graduate education in the institution in the belief that this leadership position is essential to conducting a successful graduate program.

Institution

The chief graduate school officer has institution-wide responsibilities to foster and facilitate interdisciplinary and inter-college graduate programs and research activities. This individual performs a major role in both academic and budgetary planning and in institutional organization. The chief graduate school officer should be a member of, or be represented on, councils or committees whose actions have an impact on graduate education (such as budget policy, library, computer resources, and research facilities).

Faculty

To ensure the quality of the faculty component of graduate education, the chief graduate school officer should play a significant role in the important academic personnel decisions which are made within the institution—decisions concerning appointment, promotion, tenure, compensation, and working conditions.

Some institutions identify separately a faculty for graduate instruction and for the supervision of graduate student research. A graduate faculty may be organized separately from the undergraduate or professional faculty. Regardless of organizational structure, the instruction and examination of graduate students and the supervision and evaluation of theses and dissertations should be reserved for those faculty members trained and experienced in their appropriate functions. The interests of these faculty members can best be represented within the institution through an elected graduate faculty council. The chief graduate school officer and the graduate council should have joint responsibility for granting graduate faculty status.

The graduate council should have legislative authority on all matters pertaining to graduate education, subject to administrative review according to the customs of the institution. The actions of such a body should be considered as independent and of concern to undergraduate legislative bodies only if those actions impinge upon undergraduate educational matters. The graduate council may delegate certain authority to the officers of individual graduate programs, but the exercise of this authority should be monitored carefully by the council.

Students

In concert with the graduate council and/or with graduate program administrators, the chief graduate school officer should be responsible for:

1. admitting applicants to graduate student status;
2. reviewing academic progress;
3. awarding fellowships and coordinating all financial aid for graduate students;
4. appointing committees to conduct qualifying examinations and to supervise research for master's and doctoral degrees;
5. certifying the completion of degree requirements and recommending granting of the degree; and
6. overseeing the adequacy of student services and promoting the welfare of graduate students.

It is most important that the chief graduate school officer be accessible to graduate students for discussion and resolution of problems, and to the graduate student associations for counsel, adjudication and, if appropriate, financial support.

Graduate Programs

1. Program Governance

The responsibilities of the graduate council, the chief graduate school officer, program officers, and committees should be delineated. Faculty and/or committees in charge of individual graduate programs should report administratively to the chief graduate school officer but also report programmatically to the appropriate educational office responsible for the discipline. Graduate student participation in governance should be encouraged. Each graduate program director should be aware of the curricular needs of graduate programs in related fields and cooperate in the development of interrelated programs.

2. Program Evaluation

The chief graduate school officer and the graduate council should review, periodically, all of the institution's graduate programs for quality, effectiveness, and consonance with institutional goals and resources. Such review should consist of an annual monitoring of all programs. An in-depth review of each program at five-to-seven-year intervals is essential. Annual monitoring of programs should include the following considerations: size and quality of the total accepted applicant pools, student attrition rate, number and level of content of course offerings and size of enrollment, the service of faculty as research advisors or as members of thesis or dissertation committees, time requirements for degree completion, extramural research grants to faculty, fellowship awards to students, and placement of graduates.

3. Program Initiation/Consolidation/Termination

The chief graduate school officer should evaluate proposed new graduate programs in terms of faculty strength, manpower needs for program graduates, adequacy of institutional resources, and compatibility with existing graduate programs (and with the academic plan of the institution). The chief graduate school officer should encourage consideration of new programs by clusters of faculty members from different departments (with comparable levels of expertise) who have related interests in research and graduate training. Such pro-

grams require considerable monitoring and support (both financial and administrative) to be successful.

The graduate council and the chief graduate officer should participate in decisions regarding program initiation, consolidation or termination. Such decisions should be based on detailed evaluations that incorporate institutional goals for graduate education.

Research

The chief graduate school officer should be associated actively with the university's organized research effort, and, therefore, should be a member of the institutional councils or committees whose actions are significant to the research mission of the institution. Specifically, the chief graduate school officer should be involved directly in the university's mechanisms for administering intramural research funds and making grants to faculty members in support of research. The chief graduate school officer should have wide and intimate knowledge of the faculty's research activities and, therefore, should be expected to provide assistance in the grant allocation process.

Legal and Regulatory Concerns

The chief graduate school officer should interact closely with other principal officers and with legal counsel in complying with laws and regulations affecting graduate education, in developing institutional responses to proposed legislation and regulations which affect graduate education and research, and in reviewing statements in the graduate school catalogs and bulletins about purposes, goals, content, and requirements of graduate programs.

The chief graduate school officer should be responsible for the formulation of institutional policies regarding grievance procedures and due process in resolution of academic problems when those policies apply to graduate students and graduate faculty.

Professional Organizations

The chief graduate school officer should be the institutional representative to national and regional bodies which deal with graduate education and research, such as The Council of Graduate Schools in the U.S., the Graduate Record Examinations Board, and the Association of Graduate Schools. This officer should be responsible also for institutional liaison on graduate education matters with associations such as the American Council on Education, the National Association of State Uni-

versities and Land Grant Colleges, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

THE STRUCTURE OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

Graduate education within the university should be organized in a manner consistent with the institution's overall structure. Historically, the title, "Dean of the Graduate School" was used to designate the chief graduate education officer. Today, several titles are used including Vice President, Provost, Dean, Director, and Coordinator of Graduate Studies or Coordinator of Graduate Studies and Research.

In American universities various systems of administrative organization for graduate education have emerged. One of the major differences is in the degree of centralization of their organization and administration. Examples are shown in the organization chart at the end of this document. Examples A through D are of centralized administration of graduate education. The most commonly used title of the chief graduate school officer is that of Dean (Example A), but in those institutions which emphasize doctoral programs, there has been a recent trend to combine administration of research and graduate studies under a single university administrative officer, often a vice-president who reports directly to the president (Example C), to the provost (Example B), or to both as in Example D.

A graduate school by its very nature is interdisciplinary in scope, and the graduate faculty is derived from the entire institution. The graduate council is the elected or appointed representative body of the graduate faculty and is its legislative policy-making arm. The council should consist of graduate faculty in the university acting on behalf of the preservation of quality and the pursuit of excellence in creative scholarship in all disciplines. The chief graduate school officer, whether as a dean or vice-president, serves the institution as a whole, and as chairman (member, ex officio, or liaison) to the graduate council, acts as university counselor and spokesperson on graduate education, scholarship, and, frequently, for issues in research.

Example E depicts a decentralized administration of graduate studies without the presence of a chief institutional graduate school officer. Authority and administrative controls are assigned to the deans of the various schools and colleges. In this

example each school/college dean has organized graduate studies differently. There is no graduate school as such, only separate graduate schools. Campus-wide coordination of graduate studies, if accomplished, takes place at the level of Provost or Vice-President for Academic Affairs. In the decentralized models there is usually less overall faculty participation in graduate education policy.

A highly decentralized system of graduate education, organization, and administration has several potential drawbacks. Some are described below.

- Today, more than ever before, there is a need for inter-departmental cooperation and participation in the development of programs. Too much decentralization creates communication gaps.
- Presently graduate education suffers from the lack of an adequate data base. More comprehensive data are needed to support beneficial planning for graduate education. A decentralized system fractionates the acquisition and compilation of these data.
- The surveillance of quality of the institution's graduate degrees is an essential responsibility of the total graduate community. A decentralized system is likely to view the graduate programs as isolated parts rather than as an integrated system within the institution.
- A blurring of boundaries is developing between "graduate" and "professional" education. A highly decentralized system of organization favors the emergence of jurisdictional disputes.
- A decentralized system of organization fractionates and weakens the representation of issues involving graduate education to the university president's office and to the community outside the university.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It is apparent that there are many forces impinging on graduate education today which will create changes in academia for decades to come. Budgetary shifts and the reevaluation of societal needs will require a careful assessment of traditional objectives in advanced educational programs which have been assumed in times past. A total commitment to quality of the educational experience will be demanded of academic institutions involved in graduate programs. In order for this commitment to be implemented it will be essential for institutions

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to define, anew, the appropriate administrative structures and intellectual environments necessary to meet and participate in events that will shape advanced education in the future. Each institutional environment will be called upon to meet unique needs that will involve different kinds of students and programs. Such differences may encompass a broad spectrum of issues, from those associated with the part-time student participating in a relatively unstructured program to those of the professional student in a highly formalized curriculum.

In order for academia to take advantage of opportunities in graduate education which may be available in the future, the Council of Graduate Schools strongly recommends that the chief graduate school officer be a person who occupies a prominent position in the decision-making processes of the academic institution. Such a person should participate directly in academic and resource allocations. In addition, the graduate school officer should be responsible for the administration of such graduate student affairs as admissions, financial aid, examining committees, degree requirements and, jointly with the graduate council, the review of graduate programs for their educational quality. These duties may be coupled with the responsibility for administration of research. A combination of such duties does represent a logical consolidation of scholarly and creative activities on campus.

Various degrees of centralization of administrative organization are in practice, and there are successful examples at each of these levels. However, it is extremely important to give focus and coordination to the administration of graduate education. Such leadership can be effected more easily if there is a centralized organization in place with a chief graduate school officer as the spokesperson for issues in graduate education.

EXAMPLES C ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF GRADUATE EDUCATION IN U.S. UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

