



The Graduate School

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans

FROM: Len Roberson, Dean
The Graduate School

DATE: August 28, 2012

RE: Ideas for Increasing Graduate Enrollment

Graduate enrollment needs to be a focus for each of the colleges. The management of graduate enrollment is a priority of mine, and my staff, this year. We are working on an overall graduate enrollment management plan that includes the development of accessible data by programs to track the enrollment trends. Each year we share program profiles with your graduate program directors and are working with IR to develop a data dashboard that will be extremely helpful in monitoring enrollment in the graduate programs. In addition, we will be offering, as we have in the past, workshops for graduate program directors (and others who may be interested) for enhancing enrollment, student recruitment, and retention strategies. What we know about enrollment management is that students respond best to those who are closest to their academic preparation – program faculty.

I wanted to offer you several ideas that you could incorporate into your college to increase graduate enrollment. We have found success in these strategies in the past and most of them have been utilized by some of our graduate programs. My staff and I are always eager to meet with Graduate Program Directors, chairs, and of course you to discuss and plan for ways to increase graduate enrollment. Many of the ideas given below are easy to implement and can be done immediately. Some are more time intensive or require long range planning.

Please let me know how I, or my staff, can assist you in this effort.

Ideas to increase graduate enrollment:

1. **Review the current graduate program profiles** with your Department Chairs and the graduate program directors to examine any trends and be familiar with overall enrollment trends.
2. **Share the goals, share the work!** Hold the programs accountable and provide the support needed to accomplish the goals. Enrollment targets should be known and owned by the department chairs and graduate program directors.

3. **Analyze current graduate course schedule** to be certain such courses are offered when graduate students can take the courses.
4. **Move your application deadlines back** as far as possible. The concept of a deadline really serves two purposes: to control enrollment or to allow us time to give a decision. We can produce a decision within 48 hours if everyone is willing to work.
5. **Require mandatory program orientations** weeks before classes begin. This sets expectation, builds community, and helps GPDs make last minute enrollment adjustments.
6. **Involve your newly admitted students** in your program and college activities from the time of admit until they attend their first class. Invite to a special welcome meeting, include in program social activities, send them regular updates, etc.
7. **Develop a college marketing & recruitment plan for graduate programs** to include both what to share, with whom to share, and how to share.
 - a. Develop **marketing materials** (brochures, fact sheets, videos) for each program so that you have something to share. High quality doesn't have to be high cost.
 - b. **Electronic document sharing** is inexpensive. Develop info that can be sent via email.
 - c. Consider a tool such as **Constant Contact** to assist you in organizing such outreach.
 - d. **Program webpages** must be current and useful. It's helpful if department/program people can update.
 - e. **Social Media** is great way to get programs out there. Facebook, Linked In, Twitter are all ways to do this.
8. **Contact all students in the college who are in their third semester of not being enrolled** in an effort to get them to return to their studies. This is something best done by the graduate faculty but could also be done by an academic advising unit. The graduate school reaches out via email each semester to this population, but programs have had great success when the faculty reach out.
9. **Reach out to prospects in an ongoing fashion.** Gather prospect data and create just one event or send at least one email to encourage applications. For example, invite the prospect pool to the college for an info session or to an online Webinar that covers current research, employment success, etc.
10. **Strategically market your graduate programs to current UNF undergraduates.** Consider partnering with UG programs that are logical leads to your graduate programs.
11. Hold **regular program open house meeting** at various times. Keep them short, informative, and upbeat. Advertise across the campus and with specific groups.
12. **Build and maintain recruitment pools.** If each program made just one legitimate contact--business, career fair, feeder university--each semester, then there would be exponential growth in real interest.
13. **Develop new graduate certificate programs** that are current and meet the needs of the local community. Graduate certificate programs are great for meeting needs but also for attracting new degree seeking students.

14. Consider **corporate or executive type degrees or even cohorts** that meet specific needs of a given organization (business, education, medical, etc.).
15. Consider **increasing your distance learning offerings** by adding new sections.
16. Examine the feasibility of **adding accelerated (4+1) programs** that lead to a Master's degree.
17. **Visit feeder schools and programs** in the region and the state. Have a team to visit. We've had programs take faculty, students, and advisors to hold orientations and open meetings at various schools across Florida.
18. Collaborate with the Graduate School to **attend graduate recruitment fairs**, especially from universities with a history of sending students your way.