GSS Report on Graduate Education
May 2019

This report describes the state of graduate education at Sonoma State University (SSU) as of May 2019 and provides recommendations for actions to support graduate education.

In the fall of 2018 the Academic Senate requested the Graduate Studies Subcommittee (GSS) of EPC to provide this report in early spring 2019. The Senate's request followed Senate discussion of the Brief Summary Reports of Graduate Faculty and Graduate Students issued by GSS in May of 2018. These two reports indicated that while graduate students and faculty were very satisfied with the education and training received and provided by SSU, and the mentorship provided in research, teaching, and internship, there were marked deficits in funding, administrative leadership, support services, professional development, and access to resources for SSU graduate programs. These accompanied widespread perceptions of invisibility, under-appreciation, and lack of support for graduate programs on campus.

This report reviews the current status of graduate programs in four key areas and provides recommendations in each area. It closes with general recommendations.

Data is provided by the Office of Reporting and Analytics for fall 2018 except where otherwise noted.

Key Recommendations:

1. Create an administrative and faculty governance infrastructure focusing specifically on graduate education at SSU. Insure funding for this division with appropriate administrative leadership and operating expenses. Part of the purview of this office is to review state-support and self-support program policies and compensations to insure equitable use of resources.
   - The new half-time faculty position of Director of Graduate Studies, and the full time Graduate Analyst position, are significant achievements toward this goal.
2. Create an integrated financial support system across state-supported and self-support programs that provides funding for graduate education, paid teaching and research positions, tuition fee waivers, scholarships and awards, and grant development for graduate students, so that an integrated funding package can be marketed and offered to incoming and continuing students.
   - The attention that Faculty Affairs is giving in 2017-18 and 2018-19 to insure that graduate students are paid for their teaching and research work is noted.
   - The review and revision of the campus' Tuition Fee Waiver policy and procedures, and the funding promised for them in 2019-20, is a positive step toward this goal. GSS recommends campus commitment to future funding so that programs can market this as an admissions incentive.
3. Create an integrated graduate program development strategy for fundraising and program-specific projects.
4. Create integrated support services across state-supported and self-support programs that meet the needs of graduate students which differ in important ways from undergraduates, including career services, professional development, IT support, and mental health.
   - Discussions are underway with the Faculty Center and Career Center to provide services targeted specifically to graduate students.

Introduction

SSU has 15 graduate master's programs. Graduate students make up 7% (n=636) of the total 9,201 student population.

Graduate programs provide discipline-specific training that enables the student to acquire skills, receive individual mentoring, develop professionally, and prepare for doctoral study. As alumni, graduates enter their communities equipped to be leaders. Graduate alumni are respected in their fields and compose a nexus of professionals in northern California. They carry the stamp of the Sonoma State experience: responsible professionalism, thoughtfulness, leadership, valuing of individual relationships, ethical awareness, creativity, valuing of cultural diversity, and research and practical skills.

Infrastructure

The structure of graduate education is inserted within faculty governance and administrative decision-making structures focused on undergraduate eduction. This was observed by the October 2017 WASC accreditation site team visit as a deficiency to be addressed in future planning. This structure creates a structural imbalance that results in a lack of focus on graduate education within the administration, and a lack of resources directed toward graduate education. This has left graduate education invisible within the administrative structures, including funding for, support services for, and mandates concerning, graduate education at SSU.

Infrastructure Recommendations

- Create an administrative and faculty governance infrastructure focusing specifically on graduate education at SSU. Insure funding for this division with appropriate administrative leadership and operating expenses. Part of the purview of this office is to review state-support and self-support program policies and compensations to insure equitable use of resources.
- Systematize funding streams for graduate students so that an integrated funding package can be marketed and offered to incoming and continuing students. This includes paid teaching and research positions, scholarships and awards, and grant development for graduate students. This recommendation requires top-level agreement on the part of the Provost, school deans, development personnel, scholarship personnel, and financial aid personnel.
- Create integrated support services that meet the needs of graduate students which differ in important ways from undergraduates, including career services, IT support, mental health counseling, etc.
- Create an integrated-service graduate student targeted professional development center that offers workshops in skills particular to graduate students.
- Consider in the future making the Graduate Studies Subcommittee a Standing Committee of the Academic Senate. Such a move acknowledges the differences in graduate curricula and the necessity for graduate program participation in SSU's administrative structures, giving graduate programs more visibility, voice, influence and distinctiveness within the university faculty governing process.

Graduate Funding

There has been very little university funding targeted specifically to graduate programs, and there is no overall Operating Expenses (OE) fund for graduate programs. Specific funding for graduate students comes from two areas: Tuition fee waivers for a limited number of graduate students in state-supported programs, and limited funding for graduate student Teaching Associates (TA) and Graduate Assistants (GA). Funding for program Coordinators comes at the discretion of School deans, and in self-support programs from line items in the program budget paid for by the program.

State-Support vs Self-Support Funding

The funding situation is complicated by two quite different funding streams that derive from the nature of the programs: state-support and self-support tuition-support programs. Ten graduate programs are funded through the state, and seven graduate programs are funded through self-support.

State-Support Graduate Programs.

Only state-funded graduate programs are eligible for state funding which include tuition fee waivers and Cal grants. Release time for Coordinators is at the discretion of School deans and department chairs.

The ten state-funded programs are:

Biology	English
Business Administration	History
Counseling	Interdisciplinary Studies
Cultural Resources Management	Nursing
Education	Public Administration

Seventy-five percent (n=592) of graduate students are in state-supported programs.

Self-Support Graduate Programs.

The seven self-support programs are not eligible for university funds, state support, or tuition fee waivers. These programs are administered by the School of Extended and International Education (SEIE) under a self-support tuition-funded model. Programs are required to meet basic expenses, pay for SEIE services, and run a profit for distribution to SEIE and home Schools.

Each self-support program budget is determined individually by a combination of factors: student enrollment, tuition rate, CSU overhead, and SEIE salary costs. Program sustainability is dependent on the financial health of the program. Services for self-support graduate programs come from line items in each program budget. There have been inconsistencies and inequities across self-support programs in access to resources, graduate student employment, support services, skills development, research, recruitment, teaching opportunities, and compensation for coordinators. Release time for Coordinators is at the discretion of School deans and department chairs.

The seven self-support tuition-funded graduate programs are:

Business Administration	Nursing
Computer & Engineering	Organization Development
Science	Psychology
Film Studies	Spanish

Twenty-five percent (n=172) of graduate students are in self-support programs.

Graduate Student Funding

Specific funding for graduate students has come from two areas: tuition fee waivers for a limited number of graduate students, and limited funding for graduate student Teaching Associates (TA) and Graduate Assistants (GA).

Funded TA and GA Positions.

Some Schools, particularly Arts & Humanities and Science & Technology, and departments, particularly Biology and English, have regularly funded graduate student Teaching Associates (TA) and Graduate Assistants (GA) to teach lower-division classes. This funding is independent of the program's source of funding (state- vs self-support). Schools use funds from their part-time hiring pool, and departments use funds from a department hiring line to hire graduate students. Undergraduate

classes in Biology, English, Native American Studies, and Spanish have been regularly funded in this way.

In the School of Arts & Humanities, Cultural Resources Management, History, and Psychology master's students have been TAs for Native American Studies classes. [check are the NAMS positions funded by A&H, or by whom] Since 2013 Arts & Humanities has funded 3-4 Spanish master's candidate TAs each semester to teach lower-division Spanish classes for the Modern Languages Department. Positions are funded by the Modern Languages Department through its allocation from Arts & Humanities.

The School of Social Sciences has occasionally funded Public Administration master's student TAs or GAs through the part-time hiring pool, and in spring 2019 a Psychology master's candidate was hired to teach an undergraduate course with funding from the Psychology master's program Graduate Continuation account and the School of School of Social Sciences.

Student Tuition Fee Waivers.
In the past the President approved an average of 30 annual tuition fee waivers for graduate students. Only program coordinators in state-support programs who employ TAs or GAs have been eligible to apply for tuition fee waivers. Tuition fee waivers have been approved in the summer, which has restricted a program from advertising tuition fee waivers and using them as a recruitment tool and incentive to attend SSU.

Three of the ten state-supported programs have benefited from the tuition fee waiver program. Tuition fee waivers have been awarded principally to the Biology MS program for TAs who teach labs; to the English MA program for TAs who teach or assist with course sections; and occasionally to the Public Administration MPA program.

Self-support graduate programs do not have a tuition fee waiver program. Fee Waiver applications for the Spanish MA students have been rejected in the past on the grounds that the Spanish MA program is not a state-funded program.

Coordinator Compensation

Coordinator compensation varies across graduate programs with marked inconsistency and a lack of agreed-upon standards for compensation. Compensation ranges from none, to release time from 2-4 units, to paid compensation.

Graduate Funding Summary

There is no overall OE funding for graduate programs. There are inconsistencies across and within schools in using school and department part-time hiring pool funds to fund TA and GA positions. The criteria and procedures for the school deans' decision-making in allocating TA and GA funding are not clear. Few graduate programs are able to access tuition fee waivers because of inconsistencies in funding TA and GA positions.

Compensation for faculty Coordinators is inconsistent across programs, and criteria for compensation is not known.

Graduate Funding Recommendations
- *Graduate program operating expenses.* Create a budget for operating expenses for graduate programs that can be used across programs.
- *Funding for GA and TA positions.* Bring common agreement that funding graduate students through part-time hiring pool money meets department, school and university needs and goals. Agreement at the Provost and School Dean clears the way for program coordinators to hire TAs and GAs. Target a course or courses at the department level in which GAs and TAs can be used, or research or department activities in which GAs can be used.

- ***Criteria for School dean decision-making in allocating part-time hiring pool money toward GA and TA positions.*** Bring agreed upon values to the decision-making process of funding allocation at the department and school level. Be clear about criteria and procedures. The Provost is the key figure to discuss with school deans the value brought to the university through funding graduate student teaching and research.
- ***Tuition fee waivers.*** Diversify the programs that apply for tuition-fee waivers by clarifying the application process, number allotted to each program, and criteria for selection and deployment.
- ***Self-support programs.*** Allocate funding with SEIE for tuition fee waivers for graduate students, at a level commensurate with state-supported programs.
- ***Compensation for faculty Coordinators.*** Develop criteria for funding coordinators that is developed by faculty in collaboration with Schools.

Graduate Funding Action Steps
- The Provost has committed to 25 tuition fee waivers *in the current 2019 year* which will be advertised and applied for early in the spring semester, and which can be used as recruitment tools. The goal is to diversity the use of the fee waivers across graduate programs. In order to do this, programs must plan to use graduate students in GA and TA positions, and find the funding for these positions.
- The Provost has committed funding for 1 full-time position toward a Graduate Analyst position replacing David Hartranft. The new position will be responsible for overseeing theses and master's projects and administrative duties within Academic Affairs Graduate Studies; as well as potentially for graduate recruitment, graduate representation nationally at fairs and conferences, marketing, recruitment, etc. The job description is being vetted currently, with feedback from GSS.
- The Provost is in discussion with the AVP of Academic Affairs regarding the position of a Director of Graduate Studies. The position and job duties are still being clarified. Current thoughts are for a half-time faculty release position, renewable annually, for a 3 year term. Current thinking is that this position would oversee graduate education in both state-support and self-support programs.

Research

Until 2017 there was very little university funding targeted specifically to research funding for graduate students. In 2017 the Provost increased university funding for research by $50,000. At the same time in 2017 the Committee for Sponsored Programs specifically welcomed funding applications from graduate faculty working with graduate students in RSCAP funding.

In 2017 the Academic Vice-President's Research Award and multiple Dean's Research Awards were instituted to recognize graduate students' excellence in research. The research was evaluated by graduate faculty from different fields for students who submitted their work to the spring Graduate Student Research Symposium. The awards were funded by the Academic Vice-President's and Deans' funding sources.

Specific graduate faculty members, particularly in the Biology program, fund graduate research with individual or department grants. Some graduate faculty work with graduate students in faculty research projects. These graduate student positions have not always paid.

Research Action Steps
- In 2018-19 the university is seeking to come into compliance with CSU policy to pay graduate students to assist graduate faculty with research.

- Collaborate with the Provost's office and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs to increase funding of graduate research.

Teaching

Until 2019 there has been little university funding targeted to pay graduate students to teach courses or labs. In 2018-19 the university is seeking to come into compliance with CSU policy to pay graduate students to teach an undergraduate course (Teaching Associate) or assist graduate faculty with teaching (Graduate Assistant).

The Biology and English programs have used part of their hiring pool money, as well as grants, to fund TA or GA teaching or assistant positions. The School of Social Sciences has used part-time hiring pool money to hire as a Lecturer some master's students to teach to to TA undergraduate classes. In addition, the School of Social Sciences provides Reader funds based on an undergraduate class enrollment formula per 35 students. While a graduate student Reader is eligible for a TA or GA position, this has not yet been used.

Teaching Recommendations
- The Provost and Academic Programs Associate Vice-President are key personnel to discuss with school deans the value brought to the university through funding graduate student teaching. Bring agreed upon values to the decision-making process of funding allocation at the department and school level. Be clear about criteria and procedures.
- Once this is done, encourage Program coordinators meet with school Deans to discuss teaching opportunities for graduate students and funding sources. Disseminate information to program coordinators regarding school structure for paying graduate students for teaching.
- Once discussion and fact-finding has been completed, systematize teaching within a graduate program. If this is done, the program is eligible for tuition fee waivers for students and can advertise this as an incentive for potential students.
- Funding for tuition self-support programs' graduate student teaching needs to be worked out in discussion with the Provost, Academic Programs Associated Vice-President, and Dean of Extended Education. Extended Education is a for-profit model, and funding for graduate students has to offer value to the university, be sustainable, and align with the school's profit-based goals.

Scholarship

The Scholarship office awards SSU scholarships to graduate students. In Fall 2018 and in Jan 2019 GSS requested a report on average graduate student awards, proportion of graduate to undergraduate funding, and comparisons with undergraduate funding. No report has been received. The Office of Reporting and Analytics indicates that this information will be difficult for them to procure. GSS notes that statistics on undergraduate funding and scholarships is analyzed and disseminated, but not graduate awards. This issue of invisibility in financial awards is attributed largely to the infrastructure problems noted in the first part of this report.

Scholarship Recommendations
- Deans and program coordinators work with Development to secure targeted scholarships and funding for graduate students.
- Scholarship Office sets target for funding graduate student scholarships and awards, commensurate proportionally to undergraduate scholarship funding and awards.

- Distinguish graduate scholarships and awards from undergraduate scholarships and awards to provide incentive to potential graduate applicants and as a marketing strategy.
- Integrate graduate scholarships and awards into a financial assistance package determined early in the application review cycle so that it can be awarded when admission is accepted into a program. This serves as an incentive to potential applicants.
- Increasing funding will make SSU more competitive in its graduate programs and over time will increase enrollment and quality of students.

Professional Development

There has been very little university funding targeted specifically to professional development of graduate students. This is attributed largely to the infrastructure problems noted in the first part of this report.

Professional development skills requested by graduate students include workshops in teaching, conference presentation skills, professional writing, time management and organization skills. Professional development opportunities such as research funding and conference travel have been wrapped into university-wide calls for research funding and individual grant funding. Individual programs have sponsored workshops in professional development, funded through program resources, offered free of charge by faculty, or at times graduate students have been charged a fee to attend (e.g., the Business MA program's salary negotiation workshop in Fall 2018).

The Faculty Center provides professional development workshops to all personnel on campus who are engaged in teaching. The Biology MA program has used these to train its graduate teaching associates.

Career Services cosponsored a workshop on Salary Negotiation in 2018 open to graduate students to address gender pay inequities. Additional skills workshops that could be programmatically offered to graduate students are in CV / resume writing, interviewing, and networking and composing LinkedIn profiles.

Professional Development Recommendations
- Create an integrated-service graduate student targeted professional development center that offers workshops in skills particular to graduate students.
- Establish a graduate student orientation.
- Create a professional employment center for graduate students in which potential employers post openings directed towards specific graduate programs and graduate skills.
- Invite potential employers to a graduate student job fair on campus.
- Enhance community outreach and employment integration with targeted graduate programs.

Professional Development Action Steps
- Meet with Career Services and the Faculty Center to discuss professional development workshops that can be offered each semester to graduate students.
- Invite Audra Grady (Career Services) and Justin Lipp (Faculty Center) to GSS meeting to brainstorm professional development workshops and offerings.

Development

There has been very little to no university fundraising targeted specifically to graduate programs. This is attributed largely to the infrastructure problems noted in the first part of this report.

Development Recommendations
- Create an integrated graduate program development strategy for fundraising and program-specific projects.
- Programs meet with school Deans to discuss fundraising ideas, opportunities and strategies.
- The School Dean can be a valuable liaison with Development personnel.

Marketing and Recruitment

There has been very little university funding targeted specifically to graduate marketing and recruiting. This is attributed largely to the infrastructure problems noted in the first part of this report.

Self-support graduate programs have line items in their budgets for marketing and advertising. The amount varies by program and depends on student enrollment, tuition rate, and financial health of the program.

Marketing and Recruitment Recommendations
- Systematize funding streams for graduate students so that an integrated funding package can be marketed and offered to incoming and continuing students. This includes common agreement on the part of the Provost, school deans, development personnel, scholarship personnel, and financial aid personnel.

Marketing and Recruitment Action Steps
- The new Graduate Analyst position will have part of the job description addressing marketing and recruitment.

International Recruiting and Admissions

Until Dec 2018, SSU had 2 positions devoted to international students: Director of International Education and an International Student Coordinator. Both of these positions were terminated due to retirement and employee loss in Dec 2018. As a result, the Center for International Education was closed in Jan 2019.

In Dec 2018/ Jan 2019, international admissions for degree-seeking students was moved to Academic Affairs from Student Affairs. A new director of international admissions position was opened to be located in Admissions. Until this position is hired, a staff member in Admissions meets the international students' needs. International admissions will issue and process I-20s, and share monitoring and compliance with International Student Services. There is an interim PDSO/RO who is the Director of Student Success and Advising. I-20s issuance and processing, and monitoring and compliance, is shared by Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. The Advising Center will oversee international student advising, co-curricular activities, and cultural and social programming. SSALI continues and is administered by Extended Ed. It provides an intensive English program for international students.

International Recruiting and Admissions Action Plan
- Consult with Dean Eyler, the Senior International Officer and Dean of Extended and International Education, regarding the current situation and future plans for international admissions. Develop an integrated recruiting plan for international students that includes funding.

5/15/19