

**Council of Graduate Schools
Strategic Consultation Report
Graduate College of Missouri State University
Springfield, Missouri**

**Report from the Site Visit Conducted November 18-19, 2015
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Introduction

The site visitation to Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri, was conducted over two days beginning with an informal dinner with Dr. Julie Masterson, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate College, on Tuesday, November 17. The consultant met with 14 groups of administrators, faculty, and staff who provide leadership, affiliation, or support for graduate education and with graduate students throughout the day on Wednesday and Thursday, November 18 and 19. Meetings were held with 1) Vice Provost and Dean Masterson, 2) Associate Dean and Professor of Biology Tom Tomasi, 3) President Clifton Smart, 4) Coordinator of Recruitment and Marketing Misty Steward, 5) Collegiate Deans, 6) Graduate Council Executive Committee, 7) Vice President and Provost Frank Einhellig, 8) Graduate College Office Staff, 9) Interdisciplinary Graduate Program Directors, 10) Graduate Student Senate, 11) Graduate Admissions Staff, 12) MSU Admissions and Enrollment Services Staff, 13) International Recruiting Staff, and 14) Graduate Program Directors. A copy of the Consultation Agenda is located in Appendix A. On the final day of the site visit the consultant conducted an exit interview with Deans Masterson and Tomasi.

Throughout the consultation, members of the University community were enthusiastic about the valuable contributions that graduate education makes to the identity of Missouri State University as a large master's comprehensive university, to the mission that the University articulates as its identity and to the vision the University has crafted to guide its future. In addition, MSU constituents enthusiastically contributed important insights about the Graduate College's strengths and about challenges that the College could change or modify in order to further advance graduate education to create a competitive and sustainable future for the University. Equally important, constituent groups were committed to helping Missouri State University achieve its vision of being a *University of Choice* for its master's focused and professionally focused doctorate graduate programs. Groups embraced the opportunity to work with Dean Masterson to contribute to building on existing graduate education strengths and to engage with her in new models of graduate administration and programming that have the potential to reduce or eliminate areas of challenge in order to achieve the University's desired graduate education vision.

Mission, Vision, Planning and Organizational Structure

The University articulates its mission in the following way: *Missouri State University is a comprehensive institution offering undergraduate and graduate programs, including the professional doctorate. The University educates global citizen scholars committed to public affairs.* The University's aspirational

goals are reflected in its Vision Statement: *Missouri State University will be the University of Choice for developing successful citizen scholars who excel at ethical leadership, cultural competence and community engagement.* The University recently concluded the goals established within the current long range plan and is organizing its communities to prepare for a new plan. Many constituent groups noted that graduate program development has been discussed as an area of focus in the new planning process so the Graduate College will have opportunities to advance the University's mission and aspirational vision. The Graduate Mission offers the following focus: *The Graduate College mission is to be an advocate for graduate education and provide quality service to graduate programs, faculty, and students with the goal of developing individuals who have advanced abilities to address issues of significance for the quality of life.* Throughout this report, I have reflected back on these statements as a potential way to calibrate approaches to change that directly support the mission statements and advance the vision.

Current and future graduate programs are embedded within academic units in 8 traditional schools and colleges that include the College of Arts & Letters, the College of Business, the College of Education, the College of Health and Human Services, the College of Humanities & Public Affairs, the College of Natural and Applied Sciences, the Graduate College, and the School of Agriculture. The Graduate College engages in shared governance through the Graduate Council and the Graduate Student Senate.

Graduate Education Challenges and Opportunities

The Graduate College invited the consultant to focus on the following areas; however, the College also invited observations of suggested modifications in any area that could further advance the mission of graduate study at MSU. The areas of focus included:

- Distinguishing Features: What distinguishes graduate education at MSU from other Missouri institutions and how can the Graduate College further optimize that distinction?
- Promotion/Advocacy: Is the Graduate College optimally promoting graduate education, and if not, what are the most important steps it can take to improve its advocacy and promotional efforts?
- Admissions/Marketing/Recruiting/Holistic Review: Marketing, recruiting and admissions practices have evolved rapidly; what specific ways can MSU improve its marketing, recruitment, and admission strategies?
- Nimbleness/Portfolio of Degrees: Master's education and professional doctoral education are the most nimble and rapidly evolving areas of graduate education; what processes need to be established to ensure that MSU can take advantage of these opportunities?

Graduate College and Graduate Education Strengths

As stated in the Introduction, formal meetings were held with 14 groups and informal discussions occurred over several breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. Throughout the conversations, constituents identified these essential strengths of the Graduate College that inspire the University to tackle its challenges.

1. Current graduate candidates who represent a regional, state, national and global talent pool that, with continued investment and advocacy, have the potential to enrich the reputation of Missouri State University at all of these levels.
2. A graduate faculty committed, excited, and ready to advance graduate education and who already have a reputation for reaching out to graduate candidates at all stages in the application process from inquiry to alumni.
3. Confidence in Dean Masterson and Associate Dean Tomasi and the Graduate School staff to provide essential leadership to advance graduate education and to serve as agents of change.
4. Strong Presidential, Provost, and Collegiate Dean support for the mission of graduate education and a desire to further invest in graduate education through priorities in strategic planning and investments to advance the competitiveness of graduate education for Missouri State University.
5. Current funding for graduate students and a willingness to enhance and expand funding opportunities.
6. A growing enrollment pattern that provides the University with many assets for visionary planning and opens the opportunity to attract new and well-qualified graduate candidates.
7. A visionary, future-focused, well-regarded, diverse, and growing portfolio of master's and doctoral degrees and certificates that include interdisciplinary, accelerated, online, joint, and cooperative degrees.
8. An impressive infrastructure that includes new buildings, facilities, laboratories, and performance spaces that are required to support state-of-the-art study at the graduate level.
9. An impressive commitment to research, scholarship, and professional capstone experiences by the faculty, students, and administration that provides the foundation required for all forms of graduate study.
10. A focus on the fastest growing sector of higher education: the master's degree: in 2014, master's students composed 73% of graduate education and earned 83% of the graduate degrees in the United States (Allum & Ohahana, 2015).

Focus 1 Distinguishing Features

What distinguishes graduate education at Missouri State University from other Missouri institutions and how can the Graduate College further optimize that distinction?

Constituent Analysis

In order to understand how constituents defined distinctiveness of graduate study at Missouri State University, I asked all 14 groups to offer perspectives on the features that distinguish graduate study at Missouri State University from other institutions. While many different ways to express the distinctiveness emerged, 5 distinctiveness themes related to graduate study at Missouri State University consistently emerged from these sessions. A description of each theme follows.

Feature 1: Faculty-Student Mentoring Network = A Thriving Vibrant Graduate Community

This distinctive feature was identified by each of the 14 groups. However, it was the distinctive feature most valued by the current graduate students. Furthermore, the students explained that the comprehensive faculty-student network was the feature that had the most significant impact on their decision to attend graduate school at Missouri State University. MSU graduate students organized their description of the faculty-student mentoring network around the concept of *from the very beginning of the application process to beyond completion of the degree*. They stated, for example, that faculty members invited them while they were still applicants to participate in projects even before they had made a decision to attend. This personal invitation at this early stage in the application process had a profound and lasting impact on the students and consistently distinguished MSU from all other institutions. Repeatedly, creating a strong faculty-student bond from the very beginning was a key factor in making the decision to attend graduate school at MSU. Current graduate students further confirmed that rapid response to an inquiry about the program integrated with enthusiasm for their decision to attend MSU from a faculty member or Graduate Director consistently distinguished Missouri State University from other similar institutions. The immediate and enthusiastic early response affirmed that as new graduate candidates they would have access to the kind of mentoring that was not revealed during the application process at other institutions or that they did not find at other master's granting institutions because this level of interest and commitment was reserved for PHD candidates. Graduate candidates who had completed undergraduate degrees at MSU reported that the distinguishing feature of faculty mentoring began with faculty members who mentored them as undergraduate researchers. MSU undergraduates who returned for graduate study were significantly influenced by their undergraduate mentors to further extend their research, professional skills, and networking by remaining at MSU for graduate study.

Message: *Thrive through MSU: Be Funded, Mentored, Engaged, Networked, & Employed!*

The most compelling and distinguishing concept was expressed in this way: *It is the interaction among MSU's assets that include competitive funding, premier mentoring, discipline engagement related to program size, professional networking, internships leading to employment, and extended social support that create a thriving and vibrant graduate community from admission through degree completion and beyond.* This expression is in direct support of the institutional vision: *Missouri State University will be the University of Choice for developing successful citizen scholars.* I felt this message from current graduate candidates provided one answer to the question of how MSU distinguishes itself from other master's granting institutions.

Feature 2: Graduate Study Cost Effectiveness & Funding = Affordability and Low Debt

Of the variables that the Council of Graduate Schools (2004) and Noel Levitz (2012) consultants have identified as having the greatest impact on admitting desired candidates and completing degrees, funding of graduate students consistently emerges as top factor. MSU has achieved this goal in multiple ways. The first and most frequent message of cost effectiveness was to state that the institution offers tuition and fees that are below the costs of other schools in Missouri, below national averages, below states that share a border with Missouri, and well below costs at private institutions. This message of cost effectiveness was reinforced by the second message; the availability of graduate assistantships for master's candidates. The third message, and one that sets MSU apart from most institutions today, is that low costs reinforced with assistantship support results in completion of a degree with low student debt. President Smart articulated one of the most compelling messages about MSU when he noted that 50% of MSU students leave with no student debt and that those who have debt are carrying an average debt that is below the national average. This key message is essential to the future of MSU as CGS has documented that undergraduate student debt is one of the key factors that prevent talented students from pursuing graduate study. CGS and its partner TIAA-CREF have invested significant resources to develop new tools and strategies for reducing undergraduate and graduate student debt in order to foster participation in graduate study; yet MSU has already created a distinction in this area that needs to be amplified and reinforced in communications about the institution. MSU constituents also noted that MSU's cost effective culture is extended to international students who may study for the residential tuition rate via an international scholarship. This is a powerful asset that will be attractive to numerous international student markets throughout the world and requires additional development and amplification. Constituents noted that 500 assistantships are available along with some newly launched scholarships and some funding for graduate

student research and “graduate student excellence awards” that help graduate students with travel costs when presenting papers.

Message: *500 Assistantships to 500 Scholars*

Articulating the expression “500 Assistantships” leading to “500 Scholar Practitioners” as the distinguishing feature of MSU if the institution could collect evidence to show that its assistantship recipients are producing outcomes that amplify the applied/professional focus of the institution directly reflects the institutional mission *to educate global citizen scholars* and vision *to be the University of Choice for developing successful citizen scholars*. It could be the expression that creates powerful pipelines of potential candidates. There may be a way for such a distinguishing feature to appear on print and web communications as this message is perhaps the most powerful that any master’s granting institution may hold. The graduate students stated emphatically that they selected MSU because they received funding for master’s study; funding that is not typically available at PHD granting institutions that offer master’s programs. Many current graduate candidates reported that they were offered admission to prestigious institutions, but funding was the distinguishing feature of MSU that trumped the competition: *500 Assistantship to 500 Scholars*. This has attention grabbing appeal!

Feature 3: Breadth of Portfolio of Graduate Programming + Broad Access Points

The administration, collegiate deans, faculty, and graduate directors consistently identified the breadth of the portfolio of degrees and certificates (interdisciplinary, professional, and cooperative) and the availability of many access points (accelerated, online, joint degrees) as another distinguishing feature of graduate study at MSU. An impressive feature of MSU is its continued work to increase its graduate degree options with the emerging graduate degree program in agriculture. This feature amplifies the university’s responsiveness to workforce demands within the state of Missouri and distinguishes MSU from other institutions that are not focused on the critical workforce needs that are emerging from applied professions.

Graduate College Advisory Board

This commitment to the state directly supports this element of the institutional mission: *The University educates global citizen scholars committed to public affairs*. Students also mentioned that there were many choices for graduate study at MSU and this was a continuing distinctive feature of the university. CGS (2013) offers an important document titled *Guide to Advocacy for Graduate Education Leaders*. This monograph documented that meeting workforce demands is an essential factor for attracting advisory board members to the Graduate College. Advisory boards can support the College with

resources, networks, and discipline enhancements that attract positive attention from philanthropists and policy makers and assist presidents and provosts with the important task of building institutional resources and gaining support for new investments in infrastructure, scholarships, internships, and alumni placements. MSU's consistent distinction of meeting Missouri workforce needs should be strategically articulated in print and in special events, receptions or meetings designed to inform these groups.

Graduate College Spotlighting Workforce Advancement

The Graduate College might consider an annual event titled *Transforming Missouri through Graduate Study at MSU*. An event similar to this one is being used by many master's granting institutions in order to bring students, faculty, policy makers, and philanthropists together to network and create new opportunities for the university. Nothing motivates policy makers and philanthropists more than an opportunity to see how their investments are fostering new ideas that improve the economy of the state via the future-focused thinking of talented graduate students and their mentors. Constituents indicated that the Graduate College is not currently supported through the philanthropy office. This will reduce MSU's competitiveness because the most visionary Universities are using their graduate enterprise as a key player in establishing the policy maker and philanthropy network that elevates the visibility of advanced study and ultimately regional and state support.

Feature 4: High Quality Professionally Focused Programs Related to Accreditation, High Impact Capstones and Impressive Career and PHD Placements

Almost every group identified MSU's focus on professionally focused master's programs, many with discipline accreditation and almost all with high-impact requirement or capstones, as a distinction of the institution. Constituent groups noted that it was the networking during the high-impact experience that connected students to potential employers and launched careers. Students praised many of their programs for offering these high immersion experiences in some of the most important sites in Missouri and that the programs are continually adding new sites and new opportunities. Students reported that these placements provided direct access to career placements often before the students completed their degree programs. Students further noted that their teaching and research assistantships were key assets for achieving consistently high PHD placements in certain disciplines that are aligned with advancing to this level of graduate study. Recent research by Sean Gallagher (2014) verified that master's candidates are attractive to top employers because of competencies that are acquired at the intersection of courses, applied learning, and high impact capstones. These competencies include: leadership, communication, critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration/teaming, and employee networks. Using examples in written stories and videos to provide evidence that MSU graduate candidates in professionally-focused

master's programs acquire these employer-desired competencies, are eagerly employed during or at the conclusion of their studies, and are receiving awards and recognition for their expertise will create the messages that will attract future candidates and additional advisory groups with the potential for more support. This puts MSU at the forefront of competencies-based programming. Professionally-focused degrees have been identified as a key area of growth for business and industry and MSU is aligned with this area of demand and has tied it to its vision: *Missouri State University will be the University of Choice for developing successful citizen scholars.*

Graduate College Awards Program for Internship Sites

The Graduate School should consider establishing an annual set of awards for internship sites and related organizations that offer applied learning experiences to its graduate students. Formal recognition from the university and display of a plaque or certificate at the site advertises Missouri State University's appreciation. Congratulatory messages from the administration strengthen the institution's reputation for outreach. A message from the President heightens the potential that other internship sites, particularly the most prestigious in the state or surrounding states, are appreciated and desired by MSU as a partner. Publicizing the prestigious sites that have earned the *Graduate College Award of Excellence for Internship Experiences* in public areas of the university and on websites strengthens the reputation of the university and offers visitors clear evidence of the excellence available through graduate study at MSU.

Feature 5: New State-of-the-Art Facilities and Investments in New infrastructure

Students and President Smart both shared that MSU, unlike many other institutions, had opened and added new state-of-the-art facilities and invested heavily in its infrastructure while holding down tuition and fees. The distinction of having the best facilities and the lowest cost is an impressive achievement that merits amplification in marketing and advocacy messages as graduate students want to know that the laboratories, clinical facilities, performance studios, and galleries where they learn and advance their expertise reflect the state-of-the-art facilities in those disciplines. Students noted that selection of MSU was influenced by the new and advanced facilities available at the institution. Upon visiting other institutions, students were able to affirm that working in a new laboratory, clinical environment, or performance venue that had advanced technologies and offered the most current training with the most current tools was a distinction that influenced their choices. This should be a top priority for the institution's video staff.

Graduate College Virtual Tours of MSU Facilities

The Graduate School should lay out a planned project to partner with the institution's videographers to create online virtual tours of the new state-of-the-art facilities, to offer powerful views of what graduate students can achieve in these new facilities, and to use these facilities, while they are still brand new, to distinguish the premier status that graduate study in such facilities offers. This is an incredible marketing opportunity that needs high priority while the facilities are brand new. Aligning MSU's facilities as a reflection of best-practice preparation for careers in some of the best professional venues is an important distinction that has an important message for students, future faculty, and employers.

Focus 2 Advocacy

Is the Graduate College optimally promoting graduate education, and if not, what are the most important steps it can take to improve its advocacy and promotional efforts?

Constituent Analysis

Dean Masterson noted that advocacy for graduate education was a key feature of the mission of graduate education at MSU and Associate Dean Tomasi reinforced this view by discussing his role with the Graduate Student Senate and the Senate's effort to advocate for graduate students. Associate Dean Tomasi also expressed concerns that the Graduate College has difficulty attracting the best graduate scholars to participate in the Graduate Student Senate and that the Senate has not gained the momentum needed to be a strong advocate for graduate education at MSU. Both President Smart and Provost Einhellig amplified the advocacy role of the Graduate College. Graduate Directors and the Graduate Council Executive Committee expressed their support for Dean Masterson's role as an advocate. Graduate Directors and faculty representatives from other constituent groups reported that they felt the current faculty mentor award was an important advocacy tool, but they did not know how to participate and suggested that advocacy efforts include a reanalysis of this award.

Graduate Student Advocacy

Advancing advocacy for graduate students is the top priority for Graduate Colleges and CGS offers the following guide to assist: *Guide to Advocacy for Graduate Education Leaders* (CGS, 2013). The Consulting Firm of Noel-Levitz (2012, 2013) affirms with their research that the best practice for advocating for graduate students is to secure and advance funding as this is the top reason that graduate applicants select an institution: availability of graduate assistantships. Further research has shown that

Graduate Colleges that offer a distinctive set of student awards that attract the top candidates, who, in turn, become key advocates for the value of graduate education to the institution and to audiences outside the institution, are essential for reaching aspirational goals of attracting and graduating an institutional share of the best and brightest applicants. Classic examples of such specialized scholars include the McNair Scholars Program, the Rhodes Scholars Program, and the Gates Millennium Scholars Program. These nationally recognized scholars program were a direct outgrowth of locally developed scholars programs that were establishing a vision for their institutions. Ultimately, the institutions attracted donors who then funded and expanded the opportunity. MSU is uniquely positioned to develop its own new scholars program that will create a continuing advocacy opportunity that may attract private support and related rewards. The MSU Graduate Scholars & Leaders Program described below may be an initial starting point for student advocacy along with Collegiate Distinctiveness Research Awards, and the flexible funding models to follow.

MSU Graduate Scholars & Leaders Program

In a signature publication titled *Organization and Administration of Graduate Education* (CGS, 2004), CGS states: *The graduate school should establish and articulate a standard for intellectual excellence that pervades all discussions and decisions about faculty, students, curriculum, and research direction* (p 4). A key to advocating for the highest standards to optimally promote graduate education includes *taking an active role in identifying, securing, and distributing funds for graduate student fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid* (p. 23). To advocate for best-practices for graduate assistantship management, the graduate Dean must administer a specialized set of assistantship resources that reflect the highest aspirational ideals of graduate study for the institution and that become the aspirational standard for all other awards that may be available through colleges, schools, and other campus entities. Currently, MSU aspires toward several critical goals: a) to be the school of choice for master's candidates seeking professionally focused master's and doctoral programming, b) to distinguish itself from other institutions offering concurrent opportunities, c) to attract graduate student leaders for its Graduate Student Senate, and d) to create opportunities for these leaders to connect with key internal and external audiences. To achieve these goals, investment in a new series of awards that might be called *MSU Graduate Scholars & Leaders Awards or MSU-GSL Awards* for the Graduate College is the top advocacy goal. The MSU Graduate Scholars & Leaders Awards would meet key criteria to achieve the institutional vision of being the *University of Choice for developing successful citizen scholars who excel at ethical leadership, cultural competence and community engagement*. Approximately 20 awards would ensure opportunities for competition among all of the colleges. The MSU-GSL Awards will meet criteria established by the Graduate College for meeting highest standards of graduate study, for pursuit of

professionally-focused research in an area of distinctiveness, will require that the recipients form the nucleus of the Graduate Student Senate, and require that the recipients meet and are recognized by the Provost, President, and key external audience representatives in a signature event each year where they advocate for graduate study by sharing their research and leadership agenda. The MSU-GSL Scholars will also select their Student Senate President from among their colleagues and that scholar's graduate program will receive the Graduate College Leadership Award through formal recognition during the signature event. This program award offers an additional opportunity for advocacy by acknowledging the value of attracting and supporting graduate student leaders through the MSU-GSL Scholars program. Finally, the Graduate College's marketing and recruitment messages will amplify the distinctiveness of these scholars through stories about these award recipients and about the programs that were recognized for their distinctive brand of graduate study.

Collegiate Distinctiveness Awards

In addition to MSU-GSL Scholars Awards, the colleges may collaborate to identify aspirational criteria of distinction to advocate for each college's own identified mark of distinctiveness. Some of the areas of distinction outlined earlier in this report may be considered. Graduate assistants hosted by the colleges will apply for recognition by aligning professional research and or assistantship contributions with achievement of the Collegiate Distinctiveness Award. Dean Masterson may engage a Steering Committee composed of the Collegiate Deans and one of their Graduate Council representatives to create one Collegiate Distinctiveness Award in each of the colleges. For example, if the College of Education determines that its graduate programs are distinctive because all programs offer the opportunity for candidates to become competent with the application of action research models and the College has acquired evidence that their graduates are known in the region and state for this distinctively MSU competency; then candidates who apply for the College of Education Collegiate Distinctiveness Award might include a summary statement in the application on a classroom problem that they plan to study during their funded graduate program in education at MSU. If this candidate is selected for the COE Collegiate Distinctiveness Award, their graduate study would directly reinforce achievement of that College of Education hallmark of distinctiveness. In this way, marketing and recruitment statements are then crafted from collegiate areas of distinction determined by the collegiate faculty and reflected in the colleges' financial investment. Now, both the Graduate Dean and Collegiate Dean have a consistent way to demonstrate distinctiveness, to identify graduate candidates who exemplify that distinctiveness, and to advocate for support and resources by providing evidence that the programs are achieving the institutional expectation to achieve a distinctive achievement in graduate study.

Flexible Funding Models

Repeatedly during the site visit, constituents identified graduate policies that prevent award flexibility as a deterrent to the most effective use of graduate assistantships and this was expressed most adamantly by collegiate deans and graduate faculty. The issues included that a) additional resources cannot be added to the stipends to make them more competitive; they must remain on the 2 existing levels in order to retain “equitable” awards; and b) awards cannot be shared across departments or colleges. Competitor institutions advocate for their graduate assistants by offering flexible policies to ensure that Graduate Directors who are trying to recruit top graduate candidates who typically have other offers, have a range of flexibility to improve the stipend to attract that candidate. This is similar to how other contracts are negotiated and typically there is a minimum and maximum range. In addition, resource sharing is used frequently by institutions in order to create more opportunities for graduate assistants. I recommend that the Dean or her designee conduct a comprehensive review of current MSU assistantship policies. She should then collect such policies from peer institutions and from aspirational institutions to study and compare these policies. This analysis will guide development of policy modifications for MSU-based desired outcomes developed for the new policies. The updated/flexible policies could be piloted with selected programs for 1 to 2 years to determine if these changes improved the competitiveness of the awards and achieved the specified outcomes for policy modification.

Graduate Faculty Advocacy

Advocacy for graduate faculty who teach graduate courses, mentor graduate research, provide academic and career advice, and participate in graduate program events requires a focus on policies and processes essential to the health and development of graduate study.

Faculty Support for Graduate Study

During meetings with the faculty, three key concerns emerged. The most frequent was related to the issue that members of the faculty who teach graduate courses are often provided with additional support to teach advanced courses. Graduate courses typically require an additional level of preparation, execution, and assessment related to the advanced nature of graduate study. The second issue included the uneven support for mentoring graduate student research. The outcomes of uneven support included insufficient support or lack of support from the graduate faculty in a given program for the large commitment that research mentoring requires. The third issue, and one that relates back to the first two, focused on inconsistent incentive programs for engaging in graduate teaching and research mentoring that have emerged among the colleges. This has created intense frustration among the graduate faculty who feel that the collegiate deans should work together to create a systematic approach to such incentive programs

in order to make the incentives equally accessible to graduate faculty across the colleges. Additional guidelines regarding the faculty can be found in *Master's Education: A Guide for Faculty and Administrators* (2005).

Graduate College Steering Committee

A review of recent consultations with other Universities revealed that developing a Steering Committee to study the standards of quality essential to a thriving graduate faculty community can guide the Graduate Dean's advocacy for faculty. At MSU, Dean Masterson may consider an agenda for a Steering Committee to study the best-practices of institutions MSU aspires to compare itself to, create an objective discussion about incentive models that have the potential to be applied consistently, and outline a phase-in plan to systematically improve the quality of support offered to members of the graduate faculty for teaching graduate classes, for mentoring graduate research, and for launching new initiatives. The importance of this approach must be amplified. If MSU seeks to improve the quality and, ultimately, competitiveness of its graduate offerings, it must secure the commitment of its most productive and recognized graduate faculty scholars who are both engaging teachers and active scholars. In order to maintain collegiate commitment, the Graduate College should always engage in communications across the colleges. Effective communication creates the trust needed for collegiate investments that result in standards of excellence for existing graduate programs and motivates excitement about how the institution as a whole can be stronger and more competitive at both undergraduate and graduate levels by launching new graduate programs in key areas.

Graduate Research Partnership Grants

The Graduate College's Graduate Student Research Awards were consistently identified as one of the most important investments in graduate education; however, faculty expressed a need for systematic renewal of investments to strengthen their value from the current level. This is an opportunity for further advocacy as these awards can be aligned with two additional desired outcomes for MSU. These include strengthening external partnerships and recognizing faculty commitment to research mentoring. Re-envisioning the current Graduate Student Research Grants as Graduate Research Partnership Awards so that each award given requires a letter of support from an external partner will strengthen the University's desire to partner with businesses, education facilities, health care facilities, and related agencies that acknowledge the value of the area of research. Such partnerships maintain the name of the institution, student, and faculty member within the discussions of those agencies. At some institutions such Research Partnership Grants also require the participation of several undergraduate research assistants who receive their initial mentoring and training in research. The addition of undergraduate researchers to the team

creates a synergy where a graduate faculty mentor, graduate candidate, undergraduate(s), and research partner(s) together embark on studies that foster multiple learning outcomes. Employers consistently identify that leading teams, collaborating with other colleagues and cultural competence are factors they seek in master's candidates and this type of grants program fosters all of these competencies. These are the same competencies reflected in the institutional mission and vision documents.

Faculty Mentor Awards for Graduate Research Partnership Grants

At the conclusion of the Graduate Research Partnership Grants, a faculty panel should judge and provide awards to the faculty mentors and research partners who were most instrumental with achievement of the desired research outcomes. If possible, the faculty mentors may also earn an honorarium in recognition of their work and the external partner should receive a form of recognition that can keep the name of the university visible at the agency. These consistent partnership investments heighten the value of graduate research and strengthen the institution's reputation as a valued external partner. Recognition of the faculty mentors acknowledges that the institution values and rewards extraordinary research mentoring. This will align the faculty mentor award with a Graduate College priority and clarify how to participate.

Graduate Director Advocacy

Graduate Directors provide the local leadership required to integrate new approaches, improve quality, expand access, develop partnerships, and launch new initiatives. Advocacy for the tools and training required for this role is essential if the institution is to attract and retain highly qualified faculty to these positions and if the institution expects these leaders to advocate for change and new initiatives in their respective programs and across the spectrum of graduate disciplines. There were three specific areas of development identified as essential for the successful and effective leadership of Graduate Directors. The Graduate Directors need tools and training with the use of a basic data set to manage their program enrollments. The Directors need an administrative structure to acquire the knowledge essential for implementing rapidly evolving opportunities in graduate study including accelerated programs, interdisciplinary programs, joint and dual degree programs, and online and hybrid programs. Finally, the directors require initial training and orientation to ensure that they are fully up-to-date on graduate education at MSU.

Graduate Directors Data Portfolio

Sustaining and advancing leadership for graduate enrollments is a partnership among the Graduate Dean, Graduate Directors, Deans, Admissions Directors, and Marketing Directors. However, the key starting point requires that all of these constituents have access to a longitudinal (5 or more years) set of data

about the programs they are responsible for leading. Once the key data set is identified, it should be easily accessible and shared transparently so that annual enrollment goals can be established based on an understanding of where key investments are required guided by the data. A standard set of key data may include the number of applications, the yield, the total enrollment, the degree output, the completion rate and finally the placement rates. While many other data points may be considered or added later, best practice models begin with a small data set that everyone can use. Graduate Directors need training in how to access these data points, how to follow the trends, and how to observe if changes in a program's curricular structure, new initiatives, and marketing messages impact these data. The Graduate Directors should be educated with effective practices for sharing the data with their colleagues during department meetings in order to discuss and address program declines, enrollment expectations, and enrollment increases. The Graduate Directors Data Portfolio provides the key data needed for advocacy to support, sustain, or review programs and every Graduate Director should have the tools and training to access, interpret, and use these data for program leadership. These data should guide every marketing decision so that any new marketing approach would allow Graduate Directors to determine how the applicants responded to the marketing process. Typically, one meeting each term with this group should be convened to review the data, to analyze the trends, and to create recruitment and marketing plans for every program that can be assessed using these or other data deemed appropriate to leading graduate programs.

Graduate Directors Orientation and Training

New Graduate Directors require orientation and training to ensure that they receive development to acquire resources (Graduate Director Handbook, Graduate Assistant Policy Manual, and Technology Guide for Graduate Directors) or any other support that will be needed to meet leadership expectations. They also require a structure where they can ask questions and become knowledgeable about management of legal issues in graduate education, consider best practices for resolving conflicts, and acquire the ability to advocate for their program needs. An annual orientation program for new Graduate Directors and an annual Issues Update for continuing Directors is required to stimulate conversations about new degree opportunities, share successes of other programs, discuss unresolved concerns, and find solutions.

Focus 3 Admissions, Marketing, Recruiting, & Holistic Review

Marketing, recruiting, and admissions practices have evolved rapidly, what specific ways can MSU improve its marketing, recruitment, and admission strategies?

Constituent Analysis of the Graduate Application and Application Process

The following quote emerged during the session with graduate students: *“MSU has the worst ever application process of all of the schools that we applied to. Other schools offer clear guidance such as a summary of average GPA and GRE scores to help you know if you will be competitive for admission, an effective process for leaving messages to ensure a rapid response, and a demographic profile of the program so that applicants know in advance if a program is or is not diverse.”* The Vice President for Enrollment Services and the Director of Undergraduate Admissions affirmed these student concerns by stating that the University needed a new application to guide the admissions process from point of entry to enrollment. They further noted that they planned to request funding for a new admissions plan along with an application fee to cover the costs assessed for each application by the company that hosts the application program. The Coordinator of Graduate Admissions provided the following assessment and vision for graduate admissions: The Banner application software currently in use sends all of the application data to the Graduate College but the data cannot be uploaded because it loses its formatting and currently the application software cannot be modified. The Coordinator summarized an impressive vision for the admissions process to the Graduate College. He explained that his aspirational goals are to help create an admissions application and development program that would provide Graduate Directors with electronic access to their admissions portfolio, training to create reports needed to answer individual program questions about the program’s admission success, access to an electronic manual, and newsletters to orient and update the Directors on admissions tools and to host an annual meeting to review best practices. A key asset of the Coordinator is that he is a member of the National Graduate Admissions Professionals Association (NAGAP) and can seek the professional development and tools to advance his strategic goals related to the graduate admissions process. He might also contact Dr. Maureen Grasso, Dean, North Carolina State University. Dean Grasso has implemented many of the aspirational tools that the current Coordinator identified and a long conversation with her could help him advance his plan. In conclusion, the Graduate Directors praised the achievement of electronic access to applications and were relieved that paper documents were being eliminated. In addition, *An Essential Guide to Graduate Admissions* (2012) should also be consulted.

Constituent Analysis of the Graduate Marketing/Recruiting Process

Graduate students, who are the most recent consumers of the University's recruitment and marketing products, offered this view: *Marketing of graduate programs at MSU is extremely limited across all marketing areas including its web presence and web pages, print literature, and social media. Web pages are outdated and do not attract applicants and do not amplify all of the options, particularly, the opportunity to initiate graduate study in accelerated programs. Marketing is focused on Missouri; yet the University aspires to attract out-of-state students and international students with its competitive tuition rates. The Graduate College offers exciting accelerated programs but you can barely find these in any promotions materials. Materials are not suited for attracting diverse applicants and you cannot determine if the program you seek actually has diverse candidates and faculty.* Collegiate Deans identified the marketing and recruiting processes as the top priority for the Graduate College although they also added that a "Graduate College Recruitment Initiative" should be integrated with the institutional strategic plan. The Deans further recommended that an analysis of the use of social media and related tools for marketing of graduate programs be completed. They invited Dean Masterson to make this both a priority and a collaborative initiative with the colleges. They further noted that there had been prior collaborations and resources marketing and recruiting from the Graduate College that were successful and appreciated. The Graduate College's Coordinator of Recruitment and Marketing explained that the College's current recruitment and marketing strategies include attending graduate recruitment fairs and research conferences and placing ads in certain graduate-focused publications such as *Peterson's Guide to Graduate Study* and *Latin Correspondent*. She further outlined that the University has not invested in a customer relations management (CRM) software program that allows Graduate Directors to track admissions from initial inquiry to candidacy; so tracking can only be handled via spreadsheets and these approaches are not competitive with institutions using CRM programs that provide such guidance. The Associate Dean of the Graduate College observed that concerns about the Banner admissions process has been repeatedly identified, but the Graduate College has not yet made the Information Technology Services (ITS) priority list to address these concerns. He further noted that the new Coordinator of Recruitment and Marketing has significantly assisted the Graduate College by attending development programs and trying to implement updated practices, but technology to track and assess marketing outcomes is completely lacking. Extending views about admissions, marketing, and recruiting, the Graduate Directors stated that marketing and recruiting are distinct problems that need clear acknowledgement from the Graduate College. These problems must be addressed with an understanding that the "one size fits all" approach that MSU has used in the past makes the institution noncompetitive and new alternatives must be implemented. Finally, the Provost expressed enthusiasm about several points of pride in graduate education including the breadth of the graduate portfolio and the

value of the master's degree as the institution's area of focus in contrast to many universities that put their graduate emphasis on traditional research PHD programs. He further agreed with the students that MSU's accelerated programs are a valuable recruitment tool for the university. However, the Provost noted that the graduate programs themselves need to take responsibility for their marketing and that the Graduate Dean needed to ensure that those conversations are occurring. Finally, the Graduate College Staff expressed significant concerns for the most important marketing and recruitment group; the graduate alumni. The staff explained that there is no development officer for the Graduate College and no graduate alumni outreach specifically focused on graduate alumni, including that there are no awards that recognize the success of graduate alumni. In particular, the Graduate College staff noted that current Alumni Services may not be reaching out to graduate alumni from future-focused programs such as the interdisciplinary, accelerated, and online programs. The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) identifies lack of skilled alumni outreach to graduate alumni as a common oversight at comprehensive universities where alumni offices are aligned with long-standing alumni traditions such as homecoming and sporting events. Graduate alumni, particularly online alumni and alumni from intense professionally-focused graduate programs were never engaged in these University traditions; yet paid equivalent tuition and fees to attend the University. These alumni are often overlooked as prospects because they do not have the traditional "friendships" with the University that alumni development offices know and understand. However, CASE research shows that these alumni are often the best recruiters to these programs and if provided with a different opportunity to create a "friendship base" with the University they can be effective philanthropy prospects. CASE offers a development program for deans and Dean Masterson should consider attending after a commitment from the University is made to help her establish an outreach program with this important recruiting base.

Graduate College Initiative in Admissions, Recruiting, and Marketing

Based on the analyses of the constituents who were interviewed during the consultation and, in particular, on the strong support from the Collegiate Deans to launch a collaborative and integrative initiative, the Graduate College may consider the following Graduate College Initiative. This Initiative is designed to address the desired change that constituents said they were seeking in the areas of admissions, recruitment, and marketing. I reinforce the Graduate College Dean's perspective that this is an essential priority for the Graduate College and the University and that it needs a commitment of staffing, time, partnering, and advocacy to succeed. I also reinforce the perspective that the Admissions, Recruiting, Marketing (ARM) Initiative aligns with the institutional mission to educate global citizen scholars; aspirational vision to be the university of choice for graduate scholars who excel at leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement; and the Graduate College's mission to advocate for and

provide advanced services to scholars seeking the advanced study that graduate candidates are admitted to pursue. The ARM Initiative or the Dean's adaptation of it may inform the new strategic plan.

Admissions, Recruitment, and Marketing (ARM) Initiative Team

The Dean, Associate Dean, Admissions Coordinator, and Coordinator of Recruitment/Management should form the nucleus of the ARM Initiative Team. Because this is a Graduate College, Collegiate Dean, and institutional initiative, the Graduate Dean may decide to add others based on the final goals and objectives established for the Initiative. The ARM Team should establish a weekly meeting agenda to rapidly create the action plans needed to conduct essential research required and assessment of current admissions, recruitment, and marketing tools, to analyze the assessment data, and to create the strategic plan essential for effective marketing/recruitment for current and emerging graduate programs. The ARM Team should meet and review progress with the Collegiate Deans and enlist their partnership to share resources, data, and action plans to advance graduate study. The Graduate Dean needs to advocate for convening regularly scheduled calibration meetings with the Vice President for Communications & Marketing, the Vice President for Enrollment Services, the Director of Undergraduate Admissions, and the Coordinator of International Recruitment. The Graduate College ARM Team must be fully integrated with the institutional administrators in these areas to protect against the common failure made by other comprehensive universities of adopting admissions, recruitment, and marketing technologies and plans that fail to acknowledge the vital needs of the graduate student population. The Graduate Dean should advocate through the Provost's Office if she is not successful with integrating her team with the institutional team. Every admissions, recruitment, and marketing conversation must include acknowledgement of the Graduate College's perspective if the University is serious about achieving the vision of being a university of choice for graduate scholars and every advocacy effort must be made to amplify to the administration that MSU is a comprehensive university that requires it to serve the needs of both undergraduate and graduate students. It is not a baccalaureate college that only serves undergraduates.

ARM Initiative Foundational Study

The ARM Team should study and discuss key documents to initially guide its planning. Suggestions include: *Online Graduate Education* (CGS, 2013), *Capitalizing on Innovation: Entrepreneurship and Graduate Education* (CGS, 2007), *Hobson's Graduate Marketing Research: CRM for Higher Education: White Paper by Intelliworks and Demandesign* (Intelliworks and Demandesign, 2014), *Noel Levitz Recruitment Data Report*, and *Graduate Recruitment Strategies*, (Noel Levitz 2012, 2013). Recent Noel Levitz research identified the following top 10 recruitment strategies for comprehensive universities: 1)

Email follow-up on incomplete applications, 2) Dynamic web pages that quickly lead to desired programs or study options, 3) Availability of graduate assistantships, 4) Open house/visits for those who inquire about the programs, 5) Phone follow-up on incomplete applications, 6) Aid-based financial support (scholarships), 7) Open house/visits for admitted students, 8) Web pages attracting international applicants, 9) Calls to admitted students, and 10) Ensuring the institution is listed in a Google search. The most recent research identified these as the least effective recruitment tools: 1) Ad in publications such as Gradschools.com, 2) Social media as an application generation tool, 3) Print ads in newspapers, 4) Social media to encourage applications and 5) Billboard ads. These documents will help the Team develop an outline of best practices for the Graduate College to consider as it formulates its recruitment strategies.

ARM Initiative Focus on Recruitment & Marketing Prior to a CRM Investment

Without current access to a customer relations management tool (CRM) (sometimes referred to as a client relationship management tool) that can be used to assess the individual recruitment/marketing efforts of each program, a comprehensive analysis of current practices used by each program becomes the priority. To conduct a timely analysis, the whole ARM Team must engage in this study. Each member of the team should be assigned to a specific college or colleges. Key information must be collected and assessed in order to create strategic collegiate-based plans that may vary based on the graduate programs within each college.

The Team needs to create a Marketing & Recruiting Profile that Graduate Directors can complete electronically by a given date. Guidance from the ARM Team members may be required to assist with completion of the Profile the first time with the expectation that Graduate Directors will update it annually. The Profile must identify minimally these key pieces of information: identification of each of the current recruitment strategies used by the program, the audience (regional, state, national, etc.) that each strategy was designed to recruit and the potential diversity the strategies were designed to attract (domestic, international, women, men, veterans, non-traditional, working professionals, etc.). After each strategy is listed, the Graduate Director should add the expected and actual outcome for each strategy. An example of such a tool is provided in Appendix B. The Profile should guide the decisions that the Provost supported about program documentation of the strategies they are using and some evidence regarding their success. This will allow the ARM Team to create a Graduate College Program Recruitment & Marketing Profile for each of the colleges. The Profile may identify programs without any current strategies. The Profile may also help understand which strategies are achieving desired enrollments and which are not. The Profile can guide recruitment and marketing for individual programs, programs by college, or programs across the institution. It can lead to publication of successful practices

that can be shared with other programs and colleges as well as failed practices that are not achieving desired enrollment goals. An annual meeting to review and discuss these tools provides Graduate Directors and other leaders with a clear understanding of what is working. A critical asset of this approach is the creation of Action Plans to change and track strategies until the institution makes the decision to invest resources in a CRM program that is flexible enough to create these profiles and guide graduate program marketing and recruiting.

ARM Initiative and CRM Investments

When the institution is ready to initiate discussions about a CRM program, the Graduate College needs to contact peer institutions that have already made this investment and obtain information about what parameters must be included for effective assessment of graduate programs recruitment/marketing strategies. Having completed the initial ARM Initiative would provide a baseline understanding of the kinds of parameters that graduate programs must track in order to be successful. Careful reading and analysis of Hobson's *Graduate Marketing Research: CRM for Higher Education: White Paper* by Intelliworks and Demandesign will ensure that graduate programs and all programs at the University gain maximum benefit from this investment. For the best review of the use of social media and graduate recruitment/marketing, Dean Masterson should consult with Dean Karen DePauw at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, Virginia. Dean DePauw has done the most work in this area.

ARM Initiative and Admissions Investments

I repeat for emphasis here what MSU's current graduate candidates said about the admissions process: *"MSU has the worst ever application process of all of the schools that we applied to. Other schools offer clear guidance such as a summary of average GPA and GRE scores to help you know if you will be competitive for admission, an effective process for leaving messages to ensure a rapid response, and a demographic profile of the program so that applicants know in advance if a program is or is not diverse."*

Admissions Survey, Focus Groups and Analysis

The ARM Team may consider beginning its admissions analysis using a two-point process. One process may be to develop an online survey that current graduate candidates could complete in order to validate the problems with the current admissions processes. The second process would be to share the findings with a representative sample of graduate students who can serve as a focus group. This group may be able to identify not only the processes that are failing, but can provide an informed opinion on the admissions processes they found effective. From these two forms of analysis, the Team may identify one to three Universities that were recognized as having successful online admissions processes and then visit

those institutions to gain a clear understanding of why these processes were judged as superior. From that study, the Team should be in a position to make a list of the functions that an online application process should have to meet the needs of its graduate student population and can share those perspectives with the institutional admissions team. Having several members of the ARM Team join the Coordinator of Admissions at the annual NAGAP Meeting may further inform the admissions process as the Coordinator would then have collaborative partners with whom to discuss best practices. Clearly, applicants are attracted to an application process that offers easy access to the Graduate Director or a related member of the faculty who holds responsibility for responding to questions. Note that the Noel Levitz Research firm identified responding to questions from inquiries and from admitted students were 2 of the 10 most effective admission strategies. Offering development programs to Graduate Directors on how to establish an effective response program and keep it active should be among the discussion items. Since a responsive faculty was also identified as an area of institutional distinctiveness, further analysis of those programs that have a successful response strategy in place may allow for sharing and integrating this strategy across all programs.

Graduate Program Snapshots

Some of the desired elements of the application process focused on providing applicants with key information about the programs of interest, including information about requirements for a competitive admissions portfolio, a summary of the program's diversity profile, and access to the research/creative activity interests of the faculty. Working with the colleges and programs to ensure that web sites present this information in easy to access format may further advance the competitiveness of the institution. Including a Graduate Program Snapshot for each program that provides basic statistics such as the average GPA and GRE scores or related data of admitted students during the past three years, the cultural diversity profile of the program over the last three years and the areas of research of the faculty would meet this desired admissions expectation. Including information on the many access points of a program such as accelerated and online programs will also advance the admissions process.

ARM and Alumni Investments

Having the Graduate College assume responsibility for building strong relationships with alumni in future-focused programs provides an effective way to market these programs. These alumni can foster interest in new candidates and can be highlighted in videos and publications about the programs. Creating alumni programs though the Graduate College has the potential to establish recruitment networks and create future revenue streams. A thriving graduate alumni community is an extension of a thriving Graduate College and should be seriously considered as part of this initiative.

Focus 4 Nimbleness & Portfolio of Degrees

Master's education and professional doctoral education are the most nimble and rapidly evolving areas of graduate education; what processes need to be established to ensure that MSU can take advantage of these opportunities?

Constituent Analysis of Nimbleness and Portfolio Focus

President Smart and Provost Einhellig specifically identified expansion of interdisciplinary collaborations to create new programs beyond those currently in place as a priority for MSU. Both identified increasing online offerings as a priority at the graduate level. The Provost also amplified the value of accelerated degree programs and the launch of new degree programs including the master's degree in agriculture. The challenges emerging from these programs is related to securing and supporting new Graduate Directors, sometimes referred to as "program champions" who will resolve the complex administrative issues associated with these degree programs. To solve the challenges for the Graduate Directors of interdisciplinary, accelerated, and online programs, Graduate Colleges need to create new administrative structures that are not organized around departments within colleges. These traditional structures do not provide the integrative and interactive support and communication models required for reaching across department, college, and service unit boundaries. Drs. Jerry Masterson and Toby Dogwiler specified these challenges: ensuring a communicative structure across many departments/colleges, solving course rotation issues, maintaining an entrepreneurial approach that allows new ideas to incubate, and maintaining a program when Graduate Directors "program champions" are no longer available. A successful practice that has addressed these challenges on some campuses is a Graduate Program Development Board.

Graduate Program Development (GPD) Board

Leading, enhancing, and expanding future-focused graduate programs that include accelerated, interdisciplinary, joint and dual degree programs, online and hybrid programs and rapidly evolving professionally-focused master's and doctorate programs requires education on best-practices. In addition, future-focused programs require an administrative structure for resolving complex problems that cross departments, colleges, and support services offices. They also require new approaches to policies and guidelines to ensure quality and to meet their unique set of needs. Graduate Directors need a consistent administrative structure and process for learning the practices, considering the opportunities, discussing the issues with other Graduate Directors already leading these programs, and solving practical problems that they may not have authority to resolve on their own. There are multiple approaches to developing the

structures needed and one that has worked successfully for some institutions is a Graduate Program Development (GDP) Board. The members of the Board usually include the Graduate Directors from the programs currently offering future-focused degree programs, the Graduate College Dean and Associate Dean, and sometimes a liaison to the Graduate Council. The GDP Board agendas focus on resolving specialized problems that emerge and creating the policies and infrastructure necessary to ensure the health and prosperity of these programs. The policies and practices created are then approved by the Graduate Council or appropriate governance group. These specialized policies help sustain the existing programs by reducing frustration for the program leaders and provide the support and confidence needed to launch new programs. Collegiate Deans and other campus leaders may be included in the Board's deliberations as appropriate to the issue. The GDP Board then becomes the place where the President and Provost share expectations for growth and create strategic initiatives to advance. As new programs are considered, the Graduate Directors are added to the GDP Board so that they can learn how to lead these programs and sustain their success. When certain areas reach a large capacity, such as online graduate degree offerings or accelerated degrees, the GDP Board may create specialized subgroups to meet separately to achieve their institutional goals. The Vice Chair of the Graduate Council may also be invited to attend the Board's meetings in order to keep the Council updated on the Board's agenda. This practical approach helps to create a sustainable administrative structure where these programs can thrive. Because "program champions" often do not have a formal structure to ensure the success of their programs, they now have a place to resolve their issues or new "program champions" can be mentored when old "program champions" leave the institution. The formal structure ensures that the Graduate Director assumes responsibility for leadership and has access to the tools and training needed for this leadership. The President noted that interdisciplinary programs and online programs are an area of focus for expansion so having a strong and effective process for developing these programs is essential to achieving that goal. The Provost specifically noted that the Dean needs to solve the many problems emerging from interdisciplinary study and needs to stimulate development of degrees in all of these future-focused areas and this approach may provide the structure needed to achieve that suggestion. The faculty noted that there are often insufficient resources to meet the degree needs for a program that is offered both as a traditional on-campus program and as an online program. The GDP Board is a place where these issues can be discussed openly in order to seek institutional resolution of long-standing issues such as insufficient resources for course rotation. These solutions can be shared transparently among the colleges. The GDP Board is also the place where departments can establish collaborative working relationships and can share information among the directors, chairs, and collegiate deans. A solution for administering these programs was specifically identified among the faculty as a need in order for a program to feel secure in its individual identity while collaborating on an interdisciplinary graduate study

initiative. This is also the place to discuss the institutional effectiveness of monetary incentives to launch new types of paradigms in contrast to other incentives. The faculty raised this issue and felt that there was not a place where this could be carefully studied for its value in achieving desired institutional outcomes for the departments that want to foster support for future-focused programs.

Capstones & Accreditation for Emerging Professionally-Focused Master's and Doctoral Programs

During the interviews, many constituents noted that MSU is focusing on the exciting opportunities for growth related to professionally focused master's and doctoral programs including achieving the Professional Science Master's (PSM) designation by the national accreditor and discipline accreditation in professional doctoral fields. The GDP Board is the appropriate place to begin establishing best-practice guidelines for capstones focused on professional graduate degrees that meet institutional expectations for excellence. The GDP Board is the place to receive guidance on how to earn the PSM designation. As guidelines are developed, they should be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Council and then made available in a manual of best-practices to guide other program leaders. Resource to consult include: Professional Science Master's Education (CGS, 2006), The Role and Status of the Master's Degree in STEM (CGS, 2010), and Professional Science Master's: A Council of Graduate Schools' Guide to Establishing Programs (Francis, Goodwin, and Lynch, 2011).

Graduate Program Development Board Annual Conference

After Development Boards are created and functioning, many institutions have their Boards host an annual campus-wide conference to get broad impact on opportunities, address questions and concerns, and establish the agenda for the coming year to ensure that these programs are integrated into the fabric of the institution. This is an opportunity to share the successes of the interdisciplinary, online, joint, and accelerated programs and to inform institutional marketing and recruiting about the special programs needed for this portfolio of degrees. The annual conference is also a place where student services personnel, faculty development offices, and financial aid staff can attend and call attention to how they are supporting these programs and find resolutions to any issues that emerge. For example, one issue that was discussed was the launching of a graduate certificate program that was unable to be aligned with a Classification of Instructional Studies (CIP) code. As a result, the students enrolled in the program were not eligible for financial aid. The conference, opened by the President and Provost, sends the important message that these programs are priorities and that all of the services and support mechanisms available to traditional students must be available to all students who are paying the equivalent tuition and fees that support these programs. The GPD Annual Conference may culminate with a research and capstone fair where candidates share their creative works with the graduate community; similar to the one that is

currently in place. The Graduate College might consider adding a criterion to its travel and research grants eligibility that participation in the research and capstone fair by each program is required if candidates are to be eligible for travel and research grants in a subsequent year. This establishes a criterion that acknowledges that participation in the fair is of equal importance to securing a grant. The President and Provost may consider offering a Presidential or Provost's Recognition Award to the most future-focused project. Consistently throughout the meetings that were held with constituents at MSU, I learned that the current Interdisciplinary Studies Research Symposium was well regarded and had the potential to become a Signature Program of Excellence at MSU, but it was not well attended. Tie it to criteria to earn grants and send the message that this is a program that requires support.

Associate Dean Leadership Opportunity

Provost Einhellig and Dean Masterson both expressed concern that there was no funding available to provide Graduate College administrative oversight for interdisciplinary and related programs that might be organized by a Graduate Program Development Board. During the review, the Associate Dean explained that a significant portion of his time and that of a graduate assistant was devoted to the editing of theses. During the interviews, I attempted to determine if the hours devoted to fine editing by an Associate Dean and graduate assistant were key priorities that would fit into a new strategic plan. The outcome was that no group interviewed expressed this as a key priority or felt it was an effective use of leadership. However, almost every group identified administrative support for interdisciplinary and related programs as both an immediate critical need and a long term priority. Almost every group noted that the "nimbleness" that emerges with a broad portfolio of degrees and a variety of degree types keeps MSU on the forefront of emerging opportunities. Having a skilled Associate Dean devoting significant time to this important priority that directly impacts the current and future health of graduate study is aligned with actions taken by other Graduate Schools and Colleges. Associate Deans are frequently asked to provide this leadership because many of them were Graduate Directors and already know the programs of study and many of the policies associated with graduate study.

Currently, Graduate Colleges are strategically using their Associate Deans to provide leadership for the institution's key priorities for entrepreneurial program growth and direction and I recommend that MSU consider this opportunity. Having the Associate Dean provide the key Graduate College administrative oversight for the Graduate Program Development Board, along with the graduate assistant, will meet the current pressure to support this group and will provide long-term stability. Today, thesis editing has been assigned to the oversight faculty and thesis mentors who know the work. They are provided with the

technologies and development required for such work and typically they receive support from the University Library. I recommend that MSU consider this approach.

Concluding Summary

Missouri State University has established an impressive record of excellence as a master's comprehensive university. Meetings with 14 constituent groups revealed multiple strengths. A top priority for this consultation was to help identify distinctive features of graduate study based on its strengths and five emerged that will serve this institution well in the coming decade. These include the faculty-student mentoring/networking culture, low cost and funding yielding affordability, a diverse portfolio of degrees and certificates with broad access points, professionally-focused graduate degrees with high-impact capstones and impressive career paths and state-of-the-art investments in facilities and infrastructure. Marketing messages for these distinctions can be crafted that will align this University with features important to growth and sustainability of all institutions and these were suggested in that section of the report. Additional considerations included creating or enhancing a Graduate College Advisory Board and a related signature event designed to connect the College with key partners to build its networking foundation and enhance its message to leaders and policy makers that MSU is meeting and advancing Missouri workforce needs. The distinctive success with creating a high-impact capstone can be further strengthened by identifying and rewarding internship sites with a Graduate College award. This puts the name of the institution within the walls of the internship agency and sends a clear message that capstones are a distinctive feature of MSU. Finally, a virtual snapshot of MSU's new facilities will ensure the potential applicants to graduate study have a way of viewing the best facilities in Missouri for engaging in advanced study.

The mission of the Graduate College revealed that advocacy for graduate education was its top priority. Constituent reviews offered areas where advocacy was required. Student advocacy was identified as the top priority and to put MSU among the most competitive, the Graduate College requires an MSU Graduate Scholars Assistantship program that will yield the best and brightest graduate scholars. In addition, the Dean should help advocate for a series of Collegiate Distinctiveness Awards to complement the Scholars Program and flexible funding would complete the plan. Faculty would benefit from a well-developed analysis of standards by a Graduate College Steering Committee, recasting of research grants

as Research Partnership Awards, and a well-developed Partnership Mentor Award. Finally, Graduate Directors can improve their leadership with access to a Graduate Data Portfolio and Orientation Program.

Admissions, Recruiting, and Marketing were consistent areas of concern and these were identified as an area of focus for the consultation. Recommendations focused on creating a new Admissions, Recruiting, and Marketing Team to develop the basic analysis tool needed to determine the effectiveness of current marketing and recruiting strategies. The Team also needs to collect evidence from current students regarding key admission needs and study the aspirational institutions to develop criteria for its own admissions plan. As part of the admissions plan, individual snapshots of the profiles of each graduate degree program need to be created and made available to applicants. Finally, it needs to extend its reach beyond degree completion and develop its own Alumni Board to create outreach to the best recruiters for any institution, its alumni.

Nimbleness and degree/certificate portfolio were reviewed and there is evidence from the most recent Graduate Enrollment and Degrees (CGS, 2015) that MSU is focused on disciplines trending upward. This area of excitement and strength now needs an administrative structure to support it and keep it moving. Creating a Graduate Development Board is an example of how other institutions are helping Universities create new administrative tools to adapt to long-standing borders around the department and college model. The Board creates the synergy needed to cross those barriers and create new interdisciplinary opportunities, online programming, and related future-focused degrees. Adding a conference to celebrate these achievements and realigning the Associate Dean's time and talent with this priority would launch an important new era in graduate study at MSU.

I have visited many Universities in my current role at CGS and in my prior role as a Graduate Dean. Missouri State University is a well-positioned University with a talented Graduate College. It was an honor to offer suggestions for advancing graduate study in order to contribute to the excitement that the entire University shared about graduate education. I extend my thanks to Deans Masterson and Tomasi for inviting me and allowing me to be part of the excitement!

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Appendix A

Site Visit Schedule

Tuesday, November 17

Review of the Site Visit Agenda with Dean Masterson

Wednesday, November 18

8:00 Breakfast with Tom Tomasi, Associate Dean

9:00 Overview of the goals of the site visit with Dean Masterson

10:00 Meeting with Provost Frank Einhellig

11:00 Meeting with Graduate College Staff

12:00 Meeting with Misty Steward, Coordinator of Recruitment/Marketing

1:30 Meeting with the Collegiate Deans

3:30 Meeting with the Graduate Council Executive Committee

6:00 Informal dinner with the Graduate College Staff

Thursday, November 19

8:00 Breakfast with Dean Masterson

9:00 Meeting with President Clifton Smart

10:00 Meeting with Interdisciplinary Graduate Program Leaders

11:00 Lunch with the Graduate Student Executive Committee

12:30 Meeting with Graduate Admissions Coordinator

1:00 Meeting the MSU Admissions Administration

2:00 Meeting with International Recruiting Administration

3:00 Meeting with Selected Graduate Program Directors

4:00 Exit Interview with Dean Masterson and Associate Dean Tomasi

Appendix B
Graduate Program Recruitment Marketing Analysis Matrix

Recruitment Strategies	Outcome	Analysis	Recommendation
Print brochure distributed during 3 research conferences	Current candidates came from undergraduate institutions attending these research fairs	Achieving outcome	Retain but link to web page video
Web page focusing on student research	Current candidates did not know about web page	Not achieving outcome	Link to brochure aligned with research conference
Graduate mentor outreach	Every candidate was invited to the program from a faculty mentor	Achieving outcome	Retain
Email invitation to 3 international partners	No international students	Eliminate	Develop a faculty research partnership to create a student exchange and awareness program
Diversity Strategies	Outcome	Analysis	Recommendation
Campus invitations to 20 women completing undergraduate research projects	3 of 20 enrolled	Seek to increase to 5	Expand invitation list to 30
Campus invitations to 20 McNair Scholars, Waive Application, Fee, Offer Scholarship	2 currently enrolled	Seek to increase to 3	Include mentor follow-up phone call and letter