Faculty Senate Resolution 328

Introduced by Senate Executive Committee and Graduate Council

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF Graduate Council’s report, “Graduate Studies at the University of Wyoming: Institutional and National Leadership”

WHEREAS, the Graduate Council was charged with examining whether the University of Wyoming should establish a Graduate School as a formal entity; and

WHEREAS, this issue has simultaneously been explored by members of UW administration, including in the draft of University Plan 4, finding in favor of establishment; and

WHEREAS, the Graduate Council has crafted a detailed report supporting the establishment of a revised Graduate School at UW (attached); therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate of the University of Wyoming supports the proposal of the Graduate Council to establish a Graduate School at the University of Wyoming; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate of the University of Wyoming supports revising UW Regulations to establish a revised Graduate School at UW; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in the spirit of shared governance, this process involve the Graduate Council (representing the Faculty Senate) and members of UW administration.
Institutional and National Leadership

The University of Wyoming is a land grant university and the state’s flagship educational institution. As such, it has a responsibility to deliver graduate education at a level competitive with the national and international markets where the university and its students compete. Meeting this responsibility requires effective leadership within the university and representation of the institution in national graduate education venues, such as the Council of Graduate Schools.

Historically, institutional leadership for UW graduate education was provided by a Graduate School. As a result of restructuring in 2010, the Graduate School was eliminated and many of its functions were reassigned to units throughout the University. The charge given to the Graduate Council was to develop recommendations regarding the need(s) for a Graduate School, staffing and funding levels for the School, outcomes expected of the School, and any exceptions/exemptions from the Graduate School. In considering this charge, the Council focused on identifying the need(s) and defining the primary functions of the Graduate School. The Council believes that the issues of staffing and funding cannot be addressed effectively without further input from Administration. Additionally, the issues of expected outcomes and exceptions/exemptions cannot be addressed until the structure and assigned functions of the Graduate School are determined.

The Need for a Graduate School*

The Graduate Council has identified two aspects of the current system that indicate a need to establish a Graduate School. First, the delivery of graduate education is, and should be, the primary responsibility of individual departments/programs, however, there is currently a lack of coherence, quality, consistency, and transparency in practices of graduate education across the institution. Despite the efforts of dedicated staff, these inconsistencies have caused student dissatisfaction, inequitable application of policies and procedures, and broad inefficiencies in all aspects of graduate education. Second, the lack of dedicated institutional leadership has adversely affected the University’s standing/participation in national registers and rankings.

The Graduate Council therefore proposes that the University of Wyoming:

- Re-establish a Graduate School.
- Provide high-level leadership for that school—at the Dean or Vice President level.
- Provide the School and its leadership a robust budget that is capable of supporting the School’s primary functions.
Centralize, as necessary for efficiency, the administrative tasks associated with graduate education.

Build a strong presence for the school among faculty and students.

Build a strong presence for the school online, and in national venues.

**The Primary Functions of the Graduate School:**

- Develop, institute and ensure consistent application of graduate education policy, including policies for creating/eliminating degrees, admission and degree requirements, graduate faculty expectations and standards, assessment, and procedures for addressing student grievances. Ensure UW graduate education policies are consistent with program accreditation standards where necessary (e.g. law school). Regulations governing the Graduate School should provide for, and clearly establish, roles for the Graduate Council in developing and approving graduate education policy.

- Provide support to Deans/Directors and faculty to build and strengthen graduate programs. Support should include resources focused on recruitment, marketing, admissions, and degree analysis.

- Provide guidance to graduate programs on developing similarly formatted descriptions of programs, policies, and procedures for use with web pages and handbooks. Insure all program descriptions are consistent with University and national (e.g. Title IX) regulations.

- Provide guidance to graduate programs on the development and implementation of assessments of learning and program effectiveness that focus on the dimensions of greatest importance for individual disciplines while concurrently adhering to evolving assessment norms for graduate programs in higher education.

- Allocate state GAs to support graduate program excellence and to further specific graduate education initiatives.

- Collect data on graduate education to support internal and external reporting.

- Provide training for graduate directors, faculty and GAs, such as orientations for GAs and new faculty and workshops on policies/procedures.

**Issues for Further Discussion**

The Council believes there are areas that require input from the Administration and/or broader
campus-wide discussion. The following comments identify those areas and offer issues that should be addressed.

- **Graduate School Leadership:** Traditionally, Graduate School leadership is located at the Dean level, thereby creating an administrative position that focuses exclusively on graduate education. However, many functions of the Graduate School may be more appropriately suited to an Associate VP/Provost within Academic Affairs (e.g., reallocating GAs across colleges or developing policy on graduate committee membership, both of which have implications for faculty that are within the purview of Academic Affairs).

- **Graduate School Support:** Graduate School support should provide a clear line of reporting, supported by centralized and cross-trained staff, to allow one-stop for faculty and students on graduate issues, to ensure consistency in practices, and to raise confidence in standards. The variety of support envisioned here suggests the need for at least three dedicated staff positions (one focused on recruitment, marketing and admissions, one focused on degree analysis/paperwork processing, and one focused on budgeting and GA management).

- **Centralization of Personnel:** Whether centralization requires all personnel to share the same physical location should be determined by Administration. Inefficiencies from having staff and supervisors physically separated versus inefficiencies from having related staff (e.g., undergraduate and graduate admissions staff) separated should be considered along with the space and budget implication of alternative location options.

*To develop this document, the Graduate Council consulted with the following:*

- Susan Frye, Dean of Outreach
- Maggi Farrell, Dean of Libraries
- Bill Gern, VP for Research and Economic Development
- Khaled Gasem, former Associate VP for Graduate Education
- Kris Brewer, formerly of the Graduate School
- Michele Peck, Graduate Coordinator
- Don Roth, past Dean of the Graduate School

*The Council reviewed the following documents & websites:*

- University Regulation 508 Revision 1
- The Graduate School, as previously defined in the Graduate Bulletin
- Elimination of Graduate Faculty document, 6 November 2009
- Graduate Education at the University of Wyoming; report from the Graduate Education Taskforce June, 2010
- 2009 Budget reports for the Graduate School, including budget, financial aid and program disbursements
- Regional comparators