



SENATE RESOLUTION #2766

TITLE: ASUW Support for the Creation of a School of Graduate Education at the University of Wyoming

DATE INTRODUCED: November 30, 2021

AUTHOR: President Swilling

SPONSORS: Senators Ewalt, Houghton, and Talamantes

1. WHEREAS, the purpose of the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming (ASUW)
2. Student Government is to serve our fellow students in the best manner possible; and,
3. WHEREAS, the University of Wyoming Board of Trustees has approved a Notice of Intent
4. for the creation of a School of Graduate Education at the University of Wyoming (UW), as
5. outlined in Addendum A; and,
6. WHEREAS, the purpose of this graduate school is to “elevate the visibility of [our] advanced
7. degree education mission, and to better support [our] broad portfolio of graduate programs and
8. the university’s research mission.”; and,
9. WHEREAS, the new School of Graduate Education would continue the essential functions
10. currently performed by the Office of Graduate Education, including strategic leadership for
11. and oversight of all UW graduate programs, allocation of graduate teaching assistantship
12. funding, implementation and enforcement of graduate education policies and procedures,
13. graduate student marketing and recruitment, and advocacy and support for graduate students;
14. and,
15. WHEREAS, the new school would build upon these by raising the visibility and presence of
16. graduate education to both internal and external stakeholders; and,
17. WHEREAS, the creation of this school would also provide an administrative home for
18. multiple projects to enhance graduate education at the University of Wyoming, including the
19. re-establishment of the Graduate Faculty, the creation of a Graduate Student Council, and a

PASSED 25-0

20. clarification and elevation of the role of UW's Graduate Council; and,
21. WHEREAS, the need for a graduate school has been well documented, with the Faculty
22. Senate passing a resolution in support of its recreation in 2015, and the Graduate Council
23. also noting that they strongly believed such a project was necessary in their 2015 report; and,
24. WHEREAS, despite this, the School was not created; and,
25. WHEREAS, this school has the support of almost every single Dean or school Director at the
26. University of Wyoming; and,
27. WHEREAS, among UW's peer institutes, only one institution (West Virginia University)
28. lacks a Graduate School, only one institution (Utah State University) lacks a Graduate Dean,
29. and no peer institutions lack both a Graduate School and a Graduate Dean, which is what
30. UW currently has; and,
31. WHEREAS, this School will not require any additional, recurring funding nor any new
32. positions; and,
33. WHEREAS, in its November 2021 meeting, the Board of Trustees approved the allocation of
34. funds to create a new, student-centered home in Knight Hall for this School of Graduate
35. Education; and,
36. WHEREAS, ASUW supports and represents graduate students at the University of
37. Wyoming, and is dedicated to helping support and represent their needs and interests.
38. THEREFORE, be it resolved that ASUW fully supports the creation of a School of Graduate
39. Education as outlined in Addendum A.

Referred to: Advocacy, Diversity, and Policy

Date of Passage: December 7th, 2021 **Signed:** 
(ASUW Chairperson)

"Being enacted on December 7th, 2021 **, I do hereby sign my name hereto**

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and approve this Senate action.”


ASUW President

Addendum A



Academic Affairs
Office of
Graduate Education

NOTICE OF INTENT

University of Wyoming
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

Executive Summary

The University of Wyoming intends to establish a School of Graduate Education to elevate the visibility of its advanced degree education mission, and to better support its broad portfolio of graduate programs and the university's research mission. Establishing this school will be accomplished through the renaming of the current Office of Graduate Education and will not require any additional, recurring funding nor any new positions. Subject to Board approval, the university intends to establish this new school in FY23.

The new School of Graduate Education would continue the essential functions currently performed by the Office of Graduate Education, including strategic leadership for and oversight of all UW graduate programs, allocation of graduate teaching assistantship funding, implementation and enforcement of graduate education policies and procedures, graduate student marketing and recruitment, and advocacy and support for graduate students. The new school would build upon these by raising the visibility and presence of graduate education to both internal and external stakeholders. Furthermore, the school would be the conduit through which significant improvements to UW's graduate education functioning will be made, including the re-establishment of the Graduate Faculty, the creation of a Graduate Student Council, and a clarification and elevation of the role of UW's Graduate Council.

Background

In 2009, the University of Wyoming discontinued its graduate school as part of a \$18.2m budget cut. Six staff positions were eliminated or retrenched (not including the graduate dean, which was also eliminated). Nearly overnight, the central support structure for U.W.'s ~100 graduate degree programs disappeared, and the university rapidly transitioned from a centralized graduate education model to a very decentralized one. Various administrative duties that had been performed by the Graduate School, were dispersed among Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, the colleges, and departments. The university regulation regarding the Graduate School (7-580) was sunset and along with it such universal elements of graduate education as the Graduate Faculty and the Graduate Dean.

Initially, the vacuum created by the discontinuance of the Graduate School left UW's graduate programs, faculty, staff, and students lost and confused. The one-stop shop for all graduate education-related processes and support was no longer. Many of the Graduate School's functions were moved under other units (usually with no additional support provided). Yet, some other Graduate School functions just disappeared or were left to the graduate programs, faculty, staff, and students to handle. These circumstances and the concurrent lack of oversight

meant that academic units realized tremendous flexibility in how they administered their graduate degree programs and how they treated their graduate students. Such flexibility and lack of oversight led to greater variability among the graduate programs, which in turn led to both perceived and real inequities for graduate students and faculty in different degree programs.

As the lack of oversight and regulation of graduate programs continued, a variety of problems arose that required attention. These problems included disparities in: the admissions and curricular rigor of graduate programs, what sort of university personnel were serving on graduate thesis/dissertation committees (and in which roles), and in graduate assistant workloads and pay, among others. In response, the administration implemented new policies and procedures in an ongoing attempt to re-regulate graduate education at UW. Although these new policies did address many problems, some key policies, such as that regarding graduate committees, needed frequent patching in an imperfect attempt to re-establish standards and practices that had been in place with the Graduate School.

Graduate Council's 2015 Report

By 2015, the need for a re-centralization of graduate education functions was clear. In their review of the state of graduate education at the university, U.W.'s Graduate Council called for the university to do the following:

- *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 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.*

From the 2015 U.W. Graduate Council report: "Graduate Studies at the University of Wyoming: Institutional and National Leadership."

In the spring of 2015, U.W.'s Faculty Senate passed a resolution ([SR 328](#)) in support of Graduate Council's recommendations.

The Office of Graduate Education

In 2017, the Provost charged the newly appointed Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education to grow and improve centralized administrative support for graduate education. In response, the Office of Graduate Education (OGE) was established in 2018. In order to have guidance regarding how to strengthen U.W.'s graduate education, the university requested a strategic review by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS). This review took place during AY18-19 with the [Council of Graduate School's final report](#) delivered to the university in March 2018. In general, the CGS report affirmed recommendations made by Graduate Council in their 2015

report including establishing a strong, central administrative unit and the appointment of a Graduate Dean to lead and support U.W.'s graduate programs.

In response to the Graduate Council and CGS reports, significant investments were made in the new Office of Graduate Education (OGE) so that it could broaden U.W.'s centralized support and leadership of its graduate programs. In particular, OGE's (non-administrator) staffing grew from 1 FTE in 2017 to 6 FTE by 2021 (Figure 1).

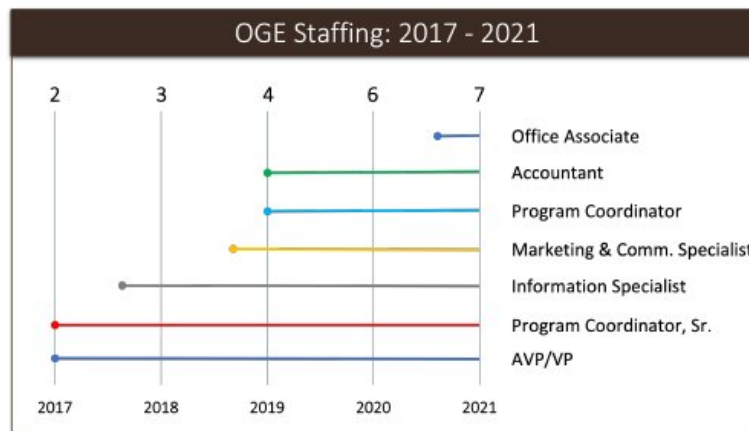


Figure 1. Office of Graduate Education staffing growth, 2017 – 2021.

OGE's staffing growth has been instrumental in expanding the university's centralized support for its graduate programs. Before 2018, almost all staff efforts were focused on graduate assistant budgeting, allocations, and hiring with very little capacity to address the myriad of other needs. With the growth in staffing have come:

- policy and procedure standardization;
- data analytics to support planning, assessment, and student success, wellbeing and funding;
- recruitment and marketing (at both the institutional level and direct support for individual graduate programs);
- coordinated and dedicated internal and external communications regarding graduate education;
- dedicated staffing support and leadership for U.W.'s transdisciplinary graduate programs;
- support for DEI efforts in graduate education;
- growth in professional development opportunities for graduate students; and
- increased coordination with other U.W. units regarding admissions, degree evaluation, financial aid, and international student recruitment and support.

The Landscape of Graduate Education A Comparison with Our Peers

The Graduate Council and Council of Graduate Schools recommendations for establishing a graduate school and appointing a graduate dean reflect contemporary best practices in graduate education. In terms of how graduate education is administered, the University of Wyoming is a clear outlier among its [peers](#) (Figure 2) and nationally. Among our peers:

- Only one institution (West Virginia University) lacks a Graduate School.
- Only one institution (Utah State University) lacks a Graduate Dean.
- No peer institutions lack both a Graduate School and a Graduate Dean.

As the University of Wyoming looks to raise its research standing, including a move toward Carnegie R1 (Very High Research Activity) status from R2 (High Research Activity), it should be noted that none of our R1 peers lack a Graduate Dean and only West Virginia University lacks a Graduate School.

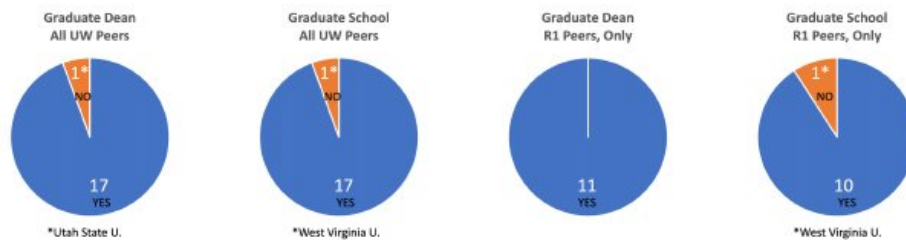


Figure 2. A comparison to U.W.'s [peers](#) in terms of presence/absence of graduate schools and graduate deans. The University of Wyoming currently lacks both a graduate school and a graduate dean.

What a New Graduate School Should Be

The new School of Graduate Education will take on the full responsibilities of a graduate school. According to the Council of Graduate Schools' *Organization and Administration of Graduate Education* (2004), a graduate school should have the following responsibilities:

- Articulate a **vision of excellence** for the graduate community.
- Provide **quality control** for all aspects of graduate education.
- Maintain **equitable standards** across all academic disciplines.
- **Define** what **graduate education** is and what it is not.
- Bring an **institution-wide perspective** to all graduate endeavors.
- Provide an **interdisciplinary perspective**.
- Enhance the **intellectual community of scholars** among both graduate students and faculty.

- Serve as an **advocate for graduate education.**
- Emphasize the importance of adequately **training future college and university teachers.**
- Develop ways for graduate education to **contribute to and enhance undergraduate education.**
- Support graduate **student services.**
- Serve as an **advocate for issues and constituencies** critical to the success of graduate programs.

While many of the above responsibilities are ones that the Office of Graduate Education has successfully taken on, many others require a unit that is stronger and has a more visible, identifiable presence than an “office” has. For example, while an “office” may serve graduate faculty and students, a “school” would serve as an academic home and hub for these faculty and students in a way that will enhance intellectual community. Furthermore, a graduate school has an identifiable presence that means it and its dean can serve as effective advocates for graduate education, issues and constituencies. Very crucially, a School of Graduate Education will be a beacon for fundraising for graduate education in a way that an “office” cannot be.

Fundamentally, the new School of Graduate Education will carry out the responsibilities outlined above, and it will:

- Provide key services as the **centralized support and leadership** for U.W. graduate education.
- **Provide resources** in alignment with need and strategic vision.
- Be a **hub of collaboration** that will foster scholarship and interdisciplinarity.
- **Promote and elevate** the centrality of graduate education in U.W.’s mission.

What a New Graduate School Should Not Be

Just as the University of Wyoming has learned through experience what it now needs in terms of graduate education, the institution has also learned -- in particular from how its past Graduate School operated -- what it does not need. The new School of Graduate Education:

- Should not duplicate services that are best provided by other units. For example, graduate admissions processing should remain with the Office of Admissions and graduate degree evaluations should remain with the Office of the Registrar.
- Should not amass resources and should not be siloed. The new school must be better integrated with Academic Affairs and must be under more direct control of the Provost than either the former U.W. Graduate School was or how other U.W. schools and colleges currently are.

Structure and Organization of the School of Graduate Education

The structure of the new school would, at least initially, mirror the current structure and organization of the Office of Graduate Education. Internally, the School of Graduate Education

would be identical to the Office of Graduate Education, aside from the lead administrator's title change to include "Dean." That structure is shown in Figure 3.

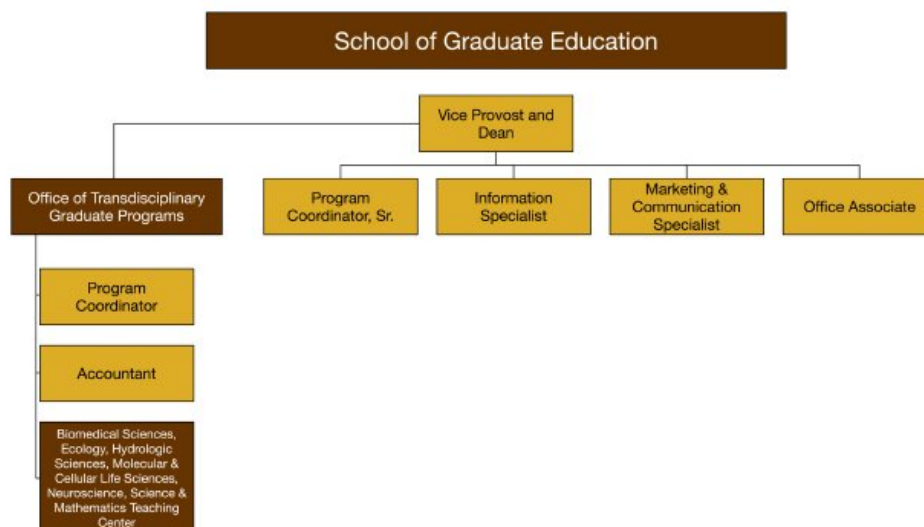


Figure 3. Organization Chart for the School of Graduate Education. Eventually, the Graduate Faculty and the Graduate Student Council would also fall under the School of Graduate Education. The Graduate Council potentially could become either solely a committee of the school or become a joint endeavor of the School and Faculty Senate.

As part of the implementation process, the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and the Graduate Council will develop preliminary by-laws for the new School. A key element of these by-laws will be the establishment of the Graduate Faculty. Once the Graduate Faculty are established, the Dean and Vice Provost and Graduate Council will work with the Graduate Faculty to establish full by-laws for the school. The formation of a Graduate Student Council, a representative body common at other doctoral universities, will likely be written into the by-laws. Furthermore, through collaboration between the school and Faculty Senate, the administrative positioning and function of the Graduate Council will be reviewed and possibly modified.

The establishment of the School of Graduate Studies will further U.W.'s diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. In collaboration with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Office of Graduate has developed recruitment funding and professional development opportunities for diverse graduate students and their mentors as well as DEI training opportunities for all graduate students. Nevertheless, U.W.'s diverse graduate student enrollments remain well below the national average. As recommended in the 2018 Council of Graduate School's review of U.W., the future School of Graduate Education will need to further its DEI efforts by having a DEI coordinator dedicated to recruiting, supporting and advocacy for diverse graduate students and graduate education DEI as well as by creating more funding support, in the form of fellowships, for diverse graduate students. Securing funding, especially

from external sources, for these important efforts will be a priority for the School of Graduate Education.

The establishment of the School of Graduate Studies will form a foundation to support interdisciplinary scholarship. The Office of Graduate Education's staffing support center for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary graduate programs will continue as part of the new graduate school. Currently serving six cross-college programs, this office can provide support to additional cross-college programs as they arise from U.W.'s Grand Challenges program and other interdisciplinary efforts.

Creating a graduate school is crucial to achieving U.W.'s research goals, including Carnegie R1 status. Given graduate students' crucial role in the university's research engine, a graduate school would help elevate U.W.'s scholarship as it aspires for R1 status. Furthermore, the School of Graduate Education, like many other graduate schools at doctoral universities, will provide a home to and administrative support for postdoctoral researchers. Currently, U.W. does not provide such support, and it will need to as its research engine grows.

Alignment with the University's Mission and Strategic Plan

Establishment of a School of Graduate Education is aligned with the University of Wyoming's Mission, in particular with:

- "flagship and land-grant university;"
- "accessible and affordable higher education of the highest quality;"
- "rigorous scholarship;"
- "communication and application of knowledge;"
- "graduate students who have experienced the frontiers of scholarship and creative activity and who are prepared for the complexities of an interdependent world;" and
- "cultivate a community of learning energized by collaborative work among students, faculty, staff and external partners."

The School of Graduate Education is aligned with the vision and goals given in [Breaking Through](#), the university's current strategic plan. In particular, the School is aligned with the following components of the university's strategic vision:

- Exploration and discovery;
- innovation and application;
- disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity;
- integrity and responsibility;
- diversity and internationalization;

Furthermore, it is aligned with the following strategic goals:

- Goal 1: Driving Excellence

- Promote and strengthen the university as a scholarly and creative enterprise.
- Foster entrepreneurship and collaboration in research and teaching that bridges disciplines and engage public concerns,
- Achieve consistent excellent teaching and mentoring that give students the knowledge, ability, determination, and innovation to meet tomorrow's challenges with sustainable solutions.
- Goal 2: Inspiring Students
 - Welcome, support, and graduate students of differing backgrounds, abilities, and needs and from different cultures, communities, and nations.
 - Engage and graduate well-rounded and creative thinkers, capable of meeting unpredictable and complex challenges.
 - Build pathways to academic, cultural, professional, and entrepreneurial opportunity and leadership at undergraduate and graduate levels.
 - Establish an office to support graduate education.
 - Expand and grow quality of undergraduate and graduate scholarly experiences.
- Goal 3: Impacting Communities
 - Facilitate collaboration between the university and its constituents to address complex economic, environmental, and social challenges through research, education, entrepreneurship, economic diversification and growth.
- Goal 4: A High-Performing University
 - Strengthen marketing effectiveness.
 - Enhance institutional operations and planning.

Implementation

If authorized by the Board of Trustees, the School of Graduate Education will be established via the following substantive changes that will be detailed in a forthcoming feasibility study:

- Renaming of the current "Office of Graduate Education" to the "School of Graduate Education;"
- Addition of the title "Dean" to the current administrative position overseeing the Office of Graduate Education (from the title of "Vice Provost for Graduate Education" to the title "Vice Provost and Dean of the School of Graduate Education");
- Updating University Regulation 2-411 to include the new school in the list of UW colleges and schools.

Importantly, **no new resources are required** to establish the School of Graduate Education:

- No new positions will be required since the current Office of Graduate Education has sufficient staffing for a graduate school;
- No additional, recurring funding will need to be budgeted beyond that currently budgeted for the Office of Graduate Education.

- A new, student-centered home in Knight Hall will be established for the School of Graduate Education. The Provost intends to fund the one-time renovation costs (≈\$290,000) from major maintenance funding and reserves (and is seeking permission from the Board, accordingly).

The Office of Graduate Education's FY20-FY22 budget summary is provided in Appendix A. The proposed School of Graduate Education's budget will be similar.

Timeline

Review and Authorization. If this Notice of Intent is approved by the Board, Academic Affairs and the Office of Graduate Education will move forward with development of a full feasibility study (including *pro forma* budget). This feasibility study will undergo campus review by the Budget Office, the Faculty Senate (Graduate Council and possibly the Academic Planning Committee in addition to the full Senate), the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming, and Staff Senate followed by review by Deans' Council, the Provost, the President's Executive Committee and the President. Once through full campus review, a request for authorization will be brought to the Board. Campus review will take place December 2021 – April 2022, and the request for authorization is planned for the Board's May 2022 meeting.

Implementation. The new School of Graduate Education would be established by September 1, 2022, with further elements (e.g., by-laws, Graduate Faculty and Graduate Student Council) being developed over the course of FY23.

Additional Information

Academic Affairs has contacted the Higher Learning Commission regarding the possibility of establishing a graduate school. Since the School of Graduate Education would be a reorganization of a current unit, the Office of Graduate Education, the Higher Learning Commission states that its approval or review is not required.

Appendix A
Office of Graduate Education Budget Summary for FY20 – FY22
(Unrestricted, only)

O_D1005: Graduate Education Unit		FY20	FY21	FY22
Fund Class - Source	Summary Level Natural Accounts	Budget	Budget	Budget
FC_105 FS_000001 UOC -	A_40206 Tuition Other	(20,000)	(45,000)	(50,000)
	A_40302 Financial Aid	-	-	-
	A_40303 Financial Aid Graduate	3,727,706	3,717,580	3,496,003
	A_40304 Financial Aid Professional	-	-	-
	A_40305 Financial Aid Other	3,000	3,500	-
	A_84400 Other Operating Revenue	(146,670)	(11,100)	(11,500)
	Total Revenue Revenue	3,564,036	3,664,980	3,434,503
	A_60551 Graduate Assistant Wages	1,480,471	1,495,644	1,315,267
	A_60001 Faculty Salary Expense FT	180,308	116,751	74,297
	A_60101 Staff Salary Expense FT	450,468	552,160	462,714
	A_60501 Other Salary Expense PT	7,425	-	-
	A_C6060 Supplemental Pay	161,256	78,500	66,600
	A_C6080 Fringe Benefits Rollup	355,341	401,432	331,266
	A_62001 Professional Services	10,500	79,025	73,050
	A_62005 Insurance Premium	362	-	-
	A_62008 Visiting Speakers/Faculty	5,500	5,500	-
	A_62011 Catering Expense	4,500	-	-
	A_62013 Other Services Expense	600	-	-
	A_63000 Travel Conversion	9,000	-	-
	A_63001 Travel Domestic Expense	46,771	36,500	24,800
	A_63002 Travel Foreign Expense	1,000	-	-
	A_63003 Hosting Expense	9,564	16,100	8,850
	A_63101 Non Employee	5,516	6,900	11,100
	A_63102 Non Employee Lodging	6,200	1,700	1,500
	A_63103 Non Employee Meals	3,334	300	300
	A_63104 Non Employee Other Travel	1,500	1,600	-
	A_64001 Lab Supplies	13,900	19,000	15,773
	A_64002 Office Supplies	11,450	15,892	8,192
	A_64005 Non capital Equipment	5,000	5,000	10,000
	A_64006 Non capital Equipment	5,000	-	-
	A_64007 Books Subscriptions &	2,100	400	200
	A_64008 Computer Software &	2,600	408	600
	A_64009 Computer Hardware	1,200	-	-
	A_64011 Postage Freight & Shipping	-	-	100
	A_64012 Other Supplies	3,500	1,800	1,000
	A_64013 Clothing & Other Apparel	-	-	-
	A_64015 Food & Beverage Non	1,240	-	-
	A_64503 Water Expense	600	700	100
	A_65002 Equipment Repairs &	1,250	1,000	1,000
	A_65501 Building/Facilities Rental	100	-	-
	A_65502 Equipment Rental Expense	500	-	-
	A_66501 Advertising/Promotional	5,950	11,696	11,861
	A_66502 Printing & Copying	7,846	900	400
	A_66504 Prizes/Awards Expense	20,920	19,900	13,600
	A_66505 Prizes/Awards Expense	-	-	-
	A_66509 Training/Professional	13,493	9,300	6,500
	A_66512 Miscellaneous Expense	316,500	241,200	76,395
	A_66515 Memberships & Dues	10,930	9,500	7,700
	A_66517 Fuel & Oil Expense	1,000	-	-
	A_66518 Maintenance Agreements	-	-	-
	A_67502 Participant Stipend	100	-	-
	A_76201 Inter Unit/Center Allocations	4,164,334	4,255,785	3,764,245
	A_76401 Intra College Allocations	-	-	268,070
	A_76601 Internal Sales Auxiliaries	3,049	5,800	4,600
	A_76001 Internal Service Allocation:	792	100	-
	A_76002 Internal Service Allocation:	4,800	4,700	3,350
	A_76003 Internal Service Allocation:	18,500	26,200	14,925
	Total Expenses Expenses	7,356,271	7,421,393	6,578,355
	Statement of Activities Net Result	10,920,307	11,066,373	10,012,858