

To: Risa Palm, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

From: Committee on Graduate Education Administration (Jimmie Lawson, Chair, Zaki Bassiouni, William Cooper, Margaret DeFleur, Tom Klei, Dorian McCoy, Kevin Moss-holder)

Subject: Report on committee findings and recommendations

The committee was charged with the task of how graduate education at LSU should be administered, given the projected reorganization of the duties of the Vice-Chancellor for Research. In order to try to better inform itself for this task, the committee researched the setup at other peer institutions both by online investigation and sending out questionnaires to appropriate graduate administrators at these institutions. The committee also sought and received extensive feedback from the LSU campus by sending out questionnaires to all departments and deans' offices. In addition the committee carried out interviews and informal discussions to obtain additional feedback. The committee received good response both externally and internally and judged that it had a broad and representative range of feedback upon which to base its recommendations. Summaries of responses to both questionnaires are included as appendices.

The committee was asked to address three specific topics.

*1. Should there be a graduate dean? If so, should this person report to Academic Affairs like all other deans?*

The committee recommends the appointment of a graduate dean who heads the Graduate School. The committee further recommends that this individual report to the Provost and be provided full membership in the Deans' Council. A person should be sought who can be a vigorous, focused, and effective leader of and exponent for graduate education at LSU. We judge that graduate education has a better likelihood of thriving with such an arrangement than having its oversight dispersed among various units. We are also of the opinion that moving away from a vice chancellor/dean with divided responsibilities to a graduate dean whose essentially exclusive oversight is that of the Graduate School will provide better leadership focus, authority, and flexibility necessary for the Graduate School to function more effectively and move forward.

Several advantages associated with the Graduate School/Graduate Dean structure for administering the university graduate program were pointed out in survey responses and are endorsed by the committee. These include a central organization of admissions, records, registration, and the tracking of students that provides a large logistical efficiency in the number of people and resources required to handle these activities. Such a central organization can often more ably address and respond to broad graduate issues such as the recent university undertaking to provide tuition waivers for graduate assistants. Such a system also provides certain checks and balances and allows the Graduate School and Graduate Dean both to encourage and promote high standards and maintain basic across-campus academic standards, while allowing individual units wide-ranging interpretation of what quality level they expect out of their graduate programs. And while it is true that individual units typically have a more informed understanding of standards of achievement and qualification in a discipline, a central unit such as the Graduate School can provide a broader perspective. Finally the Graduate School tends to retain a longer

institutional memory and a broader university-wide perspective in dealing with various recurring situations. The committee is of the opinion that these advantages outweigh the various disadvantages pointed out in the surveys, including the added time, confusion, inflexibility, and red tape associated with dealing with a central organization. (It also recommends serious effort be made to minimize the latter.)

In the external questionnaires we found a large preponderance of peer institutions structured with a central graduate school and dean and discovered no convincing grounds for moving to another structure, either in view of reported disadvantages of this system or advantages of other systems. In the local questionnaire there was strong support for a Graduate Dean that reports to the Provost (approximately a 4-1 favorable ratio).

*2. Should we continue the practice of appointing and renewing appointments of faculty to the Graduate Faculty?*

The committee recommends that this practice be continued, at least to the point that the university deems itself to have achieved the major goals of the flagship agenda. Although faculty standards will primarily be upheld and raised through hiring standards and promotion and tenure standards, the standards expected for Graduate Faculty can also play a role. Rather than abolish current practice or move determination of graduate faculty status into the colleges or departments, we are making some recommendations that we think will improve the current system.

- (1) Make membership on the Graduate Council more representative so that it is better able to determine appropriate standards for the diverse disciplines across campus. Specifically we are recommending that a member of the Graduate Council be appointed from each of the thirteen units overseen by a dean and engaging in graduate education and that three additional members be appointed at large. Appointments of members at large could serve such ends as providing representation for the diversity of departments found in some of the larger colleges. While seeking a broader representation, the committee does endorse continuing the past practice of seeking to appoint to the Graduate Council individuals chosen carefully on the basis of strong credentials who will look beyond the interests of their particular unit.
- (2) Encourage departments and units to avail themselves, where appropriate, of the recently created category of graduate faculty membership as a professional affiliate. This broadens the scope of graduate faculty membership to include individuals involved in graduate instruction with appropriate professional credentials.
- (3) Give deans and departments more discretion in determining who is qualified to teach 4000-level courses. Insistence that these be members of the Graduate Faculty has been one of the major sore points in the current system. We recommend that once a person has been appointed to graduate faculty membership (as an associate, full, affiliate, or professional affiliate member), from then on the approval of that individual to teach 4000-level courses would rest with the appropriate department and dean, independent of current graduate faculty membership status.
- (4) Allow the modified system of review for Graduate Faculty membership adopted three years ago more time to prove (or disprove) itself and become better known. A major point of contention and irritation in the past has been removal of faculty near the end of their careers after their being members for many years. Under the new system

faculty will typically receive reviews at the time of hiring and their two promotions, and then only one further review seven years later. Upon a positive review and appointment to full membership in the Graduate Faculty at that time their activity in the graduate program would be completely determined from then on by their department and college. We further recommend that faculty who had been reviewed as full professors and granted full membership at some point prior to the institution of the latest regulations be granted full membership for the rest of their careers.

The internal questionnaires were more-or-less evenly split over the question of continuing the current practice of graduate faculty membership, but we believe that if the above recommendations were implemented, the majority of complaints would greatly diminish or vanish.

*3. How should the current Graduate Council subcommittee on personnel operate? Should there be a provost's advisory committee on personnel to take over the same function?*

The responders to the internal questionnaire were more favorably inclined toward a provost's committee. However, after deliberation, the committee recommends the continuation of the current system or something close to it, provided the earlier recommendation on a more representative Graduate Council is adopted. First of all, in its task of reviewing graduate faculty nominations, the Graduate Council educates itself to some extent on standards in different disciplines, and hence has some preparation for reviewing promotion and tenure files. Secondly, if the recommendation is implemented to make the Graduate Council more representative, then as subcommittee membership rotates through the Council, there should be a good representation on the subcommittee of the various disciplines across campus. Thirdly, there is a certain economy of using a qualified group of individuals that have historically been very carefully chosen on the basis of their credentials and are readily at hand for this task.