Excellence in Delivery of Graduate Education (EDGE) Strategic Planning Committee
Preliminary Statement of Definitions, Goals, and Metrics
Oct. 12, 2009

Attributes of Excellence in Graduate Education

While acknowledging important differences across disciplines, there are several attributes of excellence that can be broadly applied. Some attributes relate more to the reputation of a program, and others to the delivery of a superior graduate education.

Reputation:
- Faculty who are acknowledged experts and leaders in their area of research or creative activity (indicated by publications, citations, awards)
- Adequate breadth of faculty expertise within the graduate program; critical mass of researchers with complementary, but overlapping interests (provides students with more than one potential mentor); large proportion of faculty involved in graduate education
- High quality of students applying to, and entering the program; attracts students nationally and internationally, not primarily from local area
- Larger numbers of terminal degree students produced (of acknowledged quality) may have more impact on reputation of program as they are a more visible presence in the field; however importance of size varies across programs; optimal size should relate to job market conditions
- Program among the best or ascending towards the top in national rankings
- Program plays a leadership role in placing URM students into high profile positions
- Large proportion of faculty with significant external support of their research (less applicable to Humanities)
- High visibility of students in publications, presentations, awards

Delivery:
- Program has well-articulated goals and a clear vision for graduate training that is communicated to the student early and often
- Graduate program provides a sense of community, students have good relationships with faculty; cohorts of graduate students combine collegiality and competition in a healthy way
- Faculty actively involved in mentoring individual students
- Good track record for funding students up to the completion of terminal degree (may be less significant for professional students not pursuing academic careers); funding commitment (duration and amounts) made clear to student at time of admission
- Placement of students into competitive post-docs, tenure-track academic positions, industry or government positions
- Program trains students from diverse backgrounds, and provides mentoring targeted to individual student needs
- Relatively low, but non-zero, attrition
- Optimal faculty-to-student ratio (if too high, students not adequately mentored by faculty)
- Most students complete program in normative time
- Appropriate facilities (labs, equipment, studios, libraries) are provided for student use

Committee Goals

The EDGE committee will focus on achieving three major goals for strategic planning, which dovetail with the overall mission, vision, and goals of UCR.

1. Evaluation. Identify best practices for fostering excellence in graduate/professional programs, including graduate recruitment. Determine strengths and weaknesses of current graduate programs. Produce an evaluation framework (most likely more than one model) to be used by graduate programs to track their own progress, and by the campus for future planning. Make recommendations on proper balance between academic and professional programs, and Master's and Ph.D. programs. *Aligns with UCR Vision/Goals 1,2,3 – achieve top-tier academic and research programs, campus of choice.*

2. Funding/Resources. Make recommendations about all aspects of graduate student funding. Identify ways to increase graduate student support, internally and externally. For professional programs, identify revenue-generating programs in existence or under development. Evaluate trade-offs involved in greater reliance on non-public funding sources. Identify resource needs for graduate student support services (e.g., housing, child care) and recommend ways to meet these needs. Consider UC structural issues as they impact graduate student support, e.g., NRT for international students, fees for non-professional students that are paid by the campus, and suggest ways to address these issues. *Aligns with Vision/Goal 11 – establishment of public and private partnerships.*

3. Graduate Student Experience. Identify strategies for increasing number, quality, and diversity of graduate population. Evaluate all aspects of the graduate student experience, and recommend strategies for improvement. Examine how mentoring is provided across programs on campus and suggest ways to improve and reward quality faculty mentoring of graduate students. Identify best practices for graduate/professional programs that enhance the student experience from recruitment through graduation. *Aligns with Vision/Goals 5,7,13 – achieving supportive, student-centered community, producing engaged alumni, healthy working environment.*