

**University Faculty Senate
Graduate and Research Committee
Report to the Fall Plenary Meeting, October 17-18, 2008**

Standing Charge to the Committee:

The Committee will serve as a source of professional advice and guidance to the Senate on matters relating to the quality, operation, and encouragement of graduate programs and research. To these ends, the committee may be concerned with the procedures, criteria, and support of existing and new graduate programs within the University. The Committee may review and recommend policies and procedures relating to moral and ethical concerns of research and graduate studies and other matters involving support and furtherance of research and graduate studies in the University.

Committee Actions

The committee met in Syracuse on September 18-19, 2008 to review past committee work and discuss agenda items for the upcoming year. The following items were discussed.

1. Research Road Show

The Research Road Show presented by the Research Foundation was a huge success last year, and this year's fall session held in Buffalo was fully booked. To date, every indication is that the program is beneficial and helping facilitate grants development across the system. The committee recommends that the UFS continue supporting this effort, but noted some possible enhancements that might be explored to engage a larger population of faculty.

Considering the limited enrollment and cost of travel, the committee, working with the Research Foundation office, would like to investigate options for making materials available electronically. The electronic formats might range from archived video tape of the proceedings to a real time webinar format. While this would limit some of the personal interactions that take place during the symposium, expansion to a larger audience is worthwhile.

Members suggested that the products it generates might measure the value of the symposium. It was suggested that the efforts of participants be followed to evaluate the number grants submitted and success rates. This should not be misconstrued as an evaluation of the participants, but rather to demonstrate the value added by the program.

2. Graduate Education

The committee discussed numerous aspects of graduate education, and recognizes that there are numerous and diverse issues facing SUNY and each campus. The committee has recommended that one issue be addressed this year, the preparation of graduate

students for their role in the classroom. Graduate students often serve as teaching assistants at some time during their graduate studies, and/or may be moving into careers as educators. It may be advantageous for these students to receive some preparation for this role. The committee will investigate successful programs being used at other universities and develop a compendium of potential best practices. The compendium will only be a resource document with recommendations on programs to address the issue, but will not attempt to initiate any policy position.

Additional topics will be developed during the year to evaluate other issues that might be addressed.

3. Collaborative Research

Creating opportunities for collaborative research has the potential to benefit SUNY faculty and the system. Collaborative efforts may be fostered between SUNY campuses, with CUNY, NYS agencies or private universities. The committee discussed the challenges in fostering the development of and sustaining collaborations within the system. Two major hurdles were identified, 1) encouraging faculty to look inward for new collaborations when existing collaborations exist and 2) time and distance associated with finding, developing and maintaining collaborations.

In meeting the first challenge, committee members discussed the need to be able to better identify potential collaborators within SUNY. This would, at a minimum, give those seeking a collaborator within a certain specialty an easy point of reference. The committee will investigate mechanisms that will allow faculty to self-identify their own areas of expertise and interests for collaboration as a first step in developing a research resource site.

The second challenge raised interesting possibilities for fostering collaborations, with some presenting opportunities for faculty development. While time and distance may be easily conquered with computer resources in some instances, interactions that are more significant require in person meetings. Several options were discussed on how effectively to promote these interactions, which may lead to collaborations that are more productive. One mechanism is to establish a faculty exchange program. This could take several forms ranging from a SUNY Scholar program where faculty would be given time and a small budget to travel around the system to present their research to other campuses to more elaborate semester or year long exchange of faculty between campuses. We also discussed the possibility of enabling graduate students, who might be able to relocate easier, to complete part of their studies with a faculty member in residence at another campus for a portion of their course of study. The latter could effectively engage faculty from around the system in graduate education.

4. Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate research has become an important component of the undergraduate experience. Research opportunities may present themselves in a variety of venues, not

simply within the academy. The committee recognizes the importance of these opportunities and is working with the undergraduate committee to begin planning for an undergraduate research poster day in Albany to showcase the scholarly and creative accomplishments of our students, and to reinforce the need to support these efforts.

The committee also recognized a lack of data to effectively document and convey the number and diversity of the accomplishments of these young scholars. We are investigating ways in which we might better accumulate and disseminate this data.

5. Sustainability – SUNY’s next step.

A discussion of sustainability led to two different interpretations of the term and how they apply to the role of the committee. Members felt that the issue of sustainability of SUNY’s research efforts in light of current economic and budget situations is an important issue to track and advocate. It was felt that the importance of research within the system, and its role in fueling the economy of the State, needs to be recognized more fully. This may lead to the development of a resolution.

Concerning the issue of sustainability as related to environmental, energy and economic issues, the committee discussed options for following up on the positive feedback generated from the sustainability conference organized by the UFS and held last spring. Given that the UFS has taken a leadership role in this area, the committee felt that it would be appropriate to continue this effort. Recommendations were made that the committee investigate, with input from the Research Foundation and after discussion with the new sustainability committee, mechanisms to foster system-wide collaborative research efforts within some of the key areas of the sustainability issue ranging from technology areas to economics, social sciences and education.

Membership of the Committee:

Chair, Mark Noll - Brockport
Khalid Siddiqui - SUNY Fredonia
David Berger - SUNY Cortland
Jill Murphy - Upstate Medical University
Cindy Bird - SUNY Fredonia
Philip McCallion - University at Albany
Kathleen Kost - University at Buffalo
John Thompson - Buffalo State College
Harrison Hao Yang - SUNY Oswego
Esther Arkin - Stony Brook University
Paschalis Alexandridis - University at Buffalo
Thomas Mang - University at Buffalo
Harold Silverman - System Administration Liaison
Bobbi Teliska - System (RF) Liaison
Mike Cassidy - SUNY Student Assembly Liaison