



State University of New York

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## Memorandum to Presidents

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Date: September 21, 1999 Vol. 99 No. 2

From: Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Subject: Policy Guidelines on the Consideration of Graduate Programs

To: Presidents, State-Operated Campuses  
President, Fashion Institute of Technology

The purpose of this memorandum is to promulgate a new policy document on the development of graduate academic programs at State University campuses: "Guidelines for the Consideration of Graduate Programs." The purpose of these guidelines is to assist campuses in the planning of graduate programs and to make explicit operative criteria in the system-level review of graduate program proposals. This policy is a natural outgrowth of the State University Mission Review initiative. As part of that process, System Administration has been paying particular attention to issues of competition and unwarranted duplication of programs, including the expressed interest by many campuses to offer professional and specialized degrees such as the M.B.A.

In the current climate of higher education, there are notable pressures on State University campuses to expand graduate program offerings, including: 1) general movement to Master's-level entry in the professions—a trend most dramatically seen in the health sciences, education, engineering, and business; 2) increasing demand for graduate-level continuing education among adult learners; and 3) competitive pressures from private sector institutions. At the same time, countervailing factors require the State University to establish a System policy that will enable campuses to respond to the aforementioned pressures in a coordinated and efficient manner. The State University's commitment to strong undergraduate education and its responsibility to marshal resources wisely through greater collaboration among its institutions, represent additional factors that must be brought to bear on graduate program development decisions. While recognizing that no single policy can obviate all such issues, we believe that these guidelines will provide an appropriate level of guidance to campuses as they seek to focus their individual missions within the context and mission of the broader University.

Earlier this summer, this office circulated a draft policy to campuses for review and comment. Responses were received from eighteen campuses. Nearly all the respondents expressed appreciation of the need to integrate graduate offerings throughout the system, and largely confined their comments to the suggestion of specific changes in wording for the sake of precision and clarity. A small minority from among the State University colleges expressed concern that the guidelines would enforce an undue restriction of graduate education to the University centers and doctoral campuses. All responses were considered very seriously, and many campus suggestions have been adopted either wholly or in part. We are grateful for this feedback, the result of which is a policy that better reflects the historical role of graduate education at the State University while affording its institutions the flexibility they need to flourish in the current higher education environment.

Questions regarding this policy may be directed to Kathryn E. Van Arnam, Assistant Provost for Academic Programs (518-443-5496, vanarnke@sysadm.suny.edu).

Peter D. Salins  
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

### Attachment

C: Chief Academic Officers, State University of New York

This memorandum addressed to:

Presidents, State-operated Campuses  
Deans, Statutory Colleges

Copies for information only to:

Presidents, Community Colleges  
President Coll  
President Rawlings

## The State University of New York

### *Guidelines for the Consideration of New Graduate Programs*

#### Policy Principles

The following principles express the State University's policy as a System on the development and consideration of new graduate programs according to award level and campus type.

- Graduate degree programs shall be within the mission of the institution as approved by the State University Board of Trustees.
- Doctoral education shall be offered exclusively at the university centers and specialized doctoral campuses.<sup>1</sup>
- Master's and other non-doctoral graduate education shall be focused at the university centers and specialized doctoral campuses.
- Master's and other non-doctoral graduate education may be offered at university colleges and certain specialized institutions<sup>2</sup> when regional or statewide demand can be demonstrated and when the institution has a particular mission-related capability for meeting such demand.
- Whenever feasible, inter-institutional collaboration is encouraged in the development of new graduate programs at all State University campuses.

#### Policy Guidelines

The following guidelines constitute criteria for campus development and System review of new graduate programs. They are meant to inform the evaluation of a program's suitability according to the mission of the campus, the market(s) to be served, and objective standards of quality:

##### *Mission*

1. The program and award level is consistent with the Board of Trustees-approved mission of the institution as demonstrated by its master plan or other System-approved planning documents, such as the Mission Review Memorandum of Understanding.
2. The institution has significant experience, sufficient planned resources, and documented expertise at the appropriate level in the relevant discipline area(s).
3. The graduate degree program will have no negative effect on the institution's undergraduate program and commitment.

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this policy, "specialized doctoral campuses" means: SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, SUNY Health Science Center at Brooklyn, SUNY Health Science Center at Syracuse, SUNY College of Optometry, NYS College of Ceramics, NYS College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, NYS College of Human Ecology, NYS College of Veterinary Medicine, NYS School of Industrial & Labor Relations.

<sup>2</sup> For purposes of this policy, "specialized institutions" means: Fashion Institute of Technology, SUNY Maritime College, and SUNY Institute of Technology at Utica/Rome.

4. The effect of the graduate program on the State University System is positive.

*Market*

5. The need for the program at the campus and in the University system is compelling, and the program would not unnecessarily duplicate resources.
6. It can be documented that anticipated enrollment for the program justifies the campus' planned allocation of resources.

*Quality*

7. The quality of the program is documented by:
  - a. effective use of qualified external reviewers in the development of the program;
  - b. meeting relevant professional and/or state accreditation standards and/or establishing a timetable for completing the accreditation process (or providing a convincing explanation for not seeking special accreditation);
  - c. inclusion in a periodic campus graduate program review process that includes indicators of performance and success; and,
  - d. for doctoral programs, the potential of the program to achieve national prominence and distinction.

These guidelines are effective immediately and apply to all State University of New York campuses.