



## 2017-18 Annual Report

### The Graduate School

#### A. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

##### NON-ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UNITS ONLY: Highlights of the Year:

The 2017-18 academic year was characterized by declining graduate enrollment following a national trend. Spring 2018 enrollment saw a decline to 4,937 from the Fall Semester's record 5,403. Fall 2018 enrollment is projected to be down three percent from the previous year, but as detailed below, our diversity numbers are a bright spot.

The enrollment decline placed pressure on the Graduate School's operating budget, resulting in spending controls and the Reduction-in-Force (RIF) of one position and another six eliminated through attrition.

In spite of these operating restraints, the Graduate School leadership re-focused efforts on highest priority initiatives and did an admirable job delivering some impressive results – all while remaining within our budgeted expenses.

##### A1. Highlights Related to AA Goal 1: Educate a diverse student body through an integrated academic experience that positions graduates for personal success and civic responsibility in the global environment of the 21st century.:

**Enrollment** - Enrolled a record 5,403 graduate students in fall 2017, an increase of 86 students from fall 2016. Graduate students comprised 18% of the total University headcount of 29,317 students.

Enrolled the most diverse graduate class ever: 23% (1,225) under-represented ethnic minorities and 27% (1,443) international; 67% (3,601) in-state students from 73 N.C. counties; 6% (314) out-of-state students from 35 different states; 27% (1,443) international students from 62 different countries; 56% (3,032) female; 44% (2,371) male.

Teamed with educational institutions, professional associations, educational/business/corporate entities, testing companies and graduate program faculty to recruit an excellent and diverse pool of students.

To promote Graduate Certificate programs, created a digital advertising campaign in the Charlotte, Winston-Salem and Raleigh markets running June-August. Also revised the graduate certificate website to provide a single-page submission form platform. Campaign provided access to more than 9 million people with a 380% increase in website traffic.

Developed new branding campaign to support graduate admissions to include a new showcase brochure, supplemental fliers for programs, program listing, early entry and graduate certificates, website design/rebrand for two recruitment sites and digital screen and Power Point presentation design/rebrand.

Launched an extensive review of the admissions process to improve AdmissionsPro communications process and communication tracks. Currently ongoing with anticipated rollout July 2018.

Given constantly changing trends in application submissions, the Director of Graduate Admissions evaluated monthly volume and realigned business processes to efficiently manage processing in order to quickly review and refer applications to Graduate Program Directors (GPDs) for admissions consideration.

**Admissions** - Prospects in AdmissionPros decreased to 22,825 in 2017 from 26,354 in 2016.

AdmissionPros Effort	2017 Count	2016 Count	2015 Count
Admissions Apps Reviewed for Acceptance	5,772	6,148	5,748
Admissions Apps Processed for Denial	2,799	4,150	3,892
Decision Letters Generated	8,494	10,354	9,731
Application Documents Manually Indexed in AP	6,064	9,117	10,048

Documents Linked to Applications in AP (system linked 82% of documents to applications automatically)	112,539	16,229	15,372
New Applications Processed in AP	9,418	10,852	10,295
Initial Residency Determinations on Applications	6,547	8,124	7,608
Campus Safety/Criminal Background Checks Reviewed	556	679	660
Test Score Files Imported To AP	288	311	312
Message Board Post Responses	5,985	6,481	3,919

**Enrollment Management** - 75% of graduate programs established enrollment and graduation projections in eGEM, and a lesser number developed online enrollment plans with clear goals and strategies to achieve those goals.

The number of graduate programs available as Early Entry was increased to UNC Charlotte's most exemplary undergraduate students. As a result, early entry applications increased 11.2% over the prior year as of April 1, 2018 (159 compared to 142).

Teamed with graduate faculty and staff in the Office of International Programs to serve as a resource for graduate faculty to develop international conduits to cultivate collaborative opportunities, recruit excellent graduate students, and promote the exchange of domestic students and faculty for international educational opportunities.

**Graduate Faculty Appointments** – The Graduate School reviewed and processed 428 graduate faculty appointments this year, up nine from last year's 419.

**Faculty Recognition** – Facilitated the 2018 Harshini V. de Silva Faculty Award and First Citizens Bank Scholars Medal Award competitions. Dr. Chuang Wang, Education Leadership, was this year's de Silva recipient and Dr. Pinku Mukherjee, Biological Sciences, received the First Citizens award.

**GPD Support** - Launched the rebranded eGEM as *GPDNet* (Graduate Program Director Network), a one-stop, online system to support the management of graduate programs with news and information, training, data and analytics, resources, and strategic Graduate Enrollment Management tools.

Updates to GPDNet in its first year included 287 news briefs and updates that produced over 23,000 page views.

GPDNet was equipped with a "communication toolkit" to aid communications with prospective students (<https://egem.uncc.edu/gpd-news-info/communications-toolkit/>). Since inception in March, the tool has garnered 31 Page Views and visitors spent 5:03 minutes on the page.

**Graduate Student Support** – Our front office staff fielded 9,646 calls and 2,320 walk-in requests related to Admissions and Student Affairs this year.

**Academic Affairs** - DegreeWorks was well utilized by students and faculty this year, showing increases in both categories (20% student increase, approximately 50% increase in faculty usage). More than 5,026 students accessed the system.

Student Progress Reports by Program was initiated in November, now producing 86 reports monthly.

80% of graduate students who applied for graduation were cleared within three days of the end of the term, with 723 degrees awarded in Fall 2017.

The overall number of students graduating decreased slightly this year, for a total of 1673 (Doctoral, Master's thesis, Master's non-thesis and Graduate Certificates).

**Research Integrity Office** - The University Research Integrity Office, led by Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School Tom Reynolds, reviewed seven cases in the 2017-18 academic year. Of those cases, two went to the inquiry phase, two required full investigations and three were resolved within the Research Integrity Office.

A proposal was developed and submitted to the National Science Foundation on Cultivating Cultures for Ethical STEM.

**Capital Campaign** - This year the Graduate School raised an additional \$1 million in gifts for a total of \$2.5 million in the Capital Campaign. The Graduate School's fundraising focus is on graduate student fellowships and the Center for Graduate Life.

**Student Funding** - Supported 1,082 students with tuition and/or health insurance awards using both merit and need-based aid, and managed assistantship contracts for 1,528 students, with an average of 1.5 contracts per student.

Provided daily management of the eGA system, accommodating 414 approvers and 192 workflows. Created 10 new workflows for system upgrades.

Award	Fall 2017		Spring 2018	
	Number of Students	Total Spend	Number of Students	Total Spend

GASP	638 (392 nonresidents 246 residents)	\$3,564,040	654 (405 nonresidents 249 residents)	\$3,526,440
GASP Students Who Received Tuition Support from Grants	101	\$179,991 recovered	129	\$225,157 recovered
Health Insurance	For '17-18: 584 students for a total cost of \$1,176,249			
GASP Students w/ Health Insurance paid by grants	46	\$70,556	76	\$96,264
GASP Students who Waived or declined health insurance	For '17-18: 71			
Master's Awards	347	\$658,763	352	\$668,059
GAANN Fellows	7	\$40,882	7	\$40,882
Philanthropic Award Assistance	10	\$41,836	10	\$32,951
NSF Fellows	4	\$8,885.50 (\$184K from NSF)	4	\$8,885.50 (\$184K from NSF)
Fulbright Fellows	4	\$26,868	4	\$16,793
Veteran's Awards (tuition + health insurance)	5	\$10,097	5	\$6,506
TOTAL AWARDS (fall/spring)	1,082			

Promoted Fulbright opportunities to graduate students through the development of collateral materials, [web page](#) and multiple presentations to students and graduate faculty. One new Fulbright student from Egypt was enrolled in DSBA fall 2017 for a total of five. Two Fulbright students graduated Dec. 2017/May 2018 from Ph.D. Public Policy, one from DSBA and one from MA Communications Studies. There are five Fulbright applicants for fall 2018, with three offered admission.

Provided mini grants to train eight applicants for the NSF GRFP, and one obtained the fellowship to begin fall 2018.

Awarded summer fellowships to 35 students through a competitive program to support their research and improve time to degree.

Coached, supported and trained 200 students to apply for 273 extramural funds through the Fellowship Application Incentive Program (FAIP). To date, 21 students have received one or more awards, including:

PEO International Peace Scholarship (\$12,500);

Department of Defense SMART Scholarship (\$38,000/year stipend plus tuition and fees);

Air force Research Laboratory Internship (\$11,732 for summer 2018);

Firefighters Charitable Foundation Scholarship;

John Harper Scholarship from the American Coal Ash Association; and the

National Institutes of Health G-SOAR program paid summer internship at NIH.

**Student Funding Task Force** - Applications for Graduate School Fellowships increased this year with 229 students submitting an application through the scholarship portal.

The Graduate Student Funding Task Force is examining the state of graduate student funding at UNC Charlotte to make recommendations pertaining to two critical aspects of graduate student support:

1. Sustainable and scalable funding for graduate students, and
2. Effective and efficient use of internal and extramural resources.

The Task Force held seven campus forums for faculty, staff and students, collecting and analyzing data to identify best practices, overarching goals and guiding principles. The Task Force will develop recommendations in support of a final report to be finalized later in 2018.

**Communications** - The first GPD Summit in September included a plenary session and several breakout sessions on topics such as student funding, recruitment, and retention strategies.

As a follow-up to the GPD Summit, six individual college "Pop-Up" meetings were held in the spring where the colleges set topics for the agenda.

In addition, the Graduate School hosted regularly scheduled meetings of the Graduate Program Director Advisory Council.

**On-Boarding** - Created multiple onboarding communications strategies to improve the on-boarding of new hires to the Graduate School, including a New Hire Handbook, New Hire Procedures for Graduate School Staff, and a new procedure to welcome graduate assistant workers each semester. While Human Resources does an excellent job orienting new hires, many of the Graduate School personnel work as temporary or time limited staff, therefore they don't process through Human Resources..

Attached Files

There are no attachments.

#### **Types of Accomplishments Discussed Above::**

External Partnerships, Student Success, Faculty Success, New Educational Programs, New Student Support Programs, Student Access, External Public Relations/Outreach, Faculty Development, Improvements in Student Advising, Other Accomplishments

#### **A2. Highlights Related to AA Goal 2: To expand the frontiers of knowledge and leverage discovery for the public benefit through innovative programs that span the disciplines in research, creative activities, and graduate education.:**

**Graduate Student Affairs** – The Center for Graduate Life was visited by 4218 graduate students. Enrollment in GRAD courses offered through the CGL reached 222 for the 2017-18 year.

The New Student Orientation event was attended by 750 students and satisfaction with the event improved by four percent over last year.

Training and support was provided to 378 graduate teaching assistants.

The addition of Dissertation Days, dissertation support group and the on-going dissertation boot camps supported 92 doctoral students working on dissertations.

Attached Files

There are no attachments.

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External Partnerships , Student Success, Faculty Success, New Educational Programs, New Student Support Programs , Student Access, Improvements in Student Advising,

#### **A3. Highlights Related to AA Goal 3: To engage community partners in mutually beneficial programs that enhance the economic, civic, and cultural vitality of the region.:**

The Graduate School website was updated through an inter-departmental effort to improve navigation by placing strategic information in key places along with implementation of new Drupal content types. Website analytical measurements and audience praise increased, particularly within the revised Funding pages. Traffic on the Funding site increased from 116 to 296 average weekly hits.

DegreeWorks helped improve the clarity of curricula by encouraging programs to specify degree requirements, processing more than 292 curricular changes as of April 2018. This represents a 900% increase in proposals.

Collaborated with Graduate Enrollment Management (associate deans) to provide content and usability feedback on the new eGEM (GPDNet) system, and made suggested changes.

The inaugural **Doctoral Hooding Ceremony** this spring was attended by 400-500 guests. 75 doctoral graduates and advisors participated in the event that is aimed at helping spotlight graduate accomplishments.

Worked with the Graduate Council to approve and implement a new test policy in support of holistic admissions review. To date, 15 programs have eliminated the standardized test requirement entirely, and another 52 programs have established criteria to waive the test for specific applicants.

Attached Files

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#### **Types of Accomplishments Discussed Above::**

External Partnerships, Student Success, Faculty Success , New Educational Programs, New Student Support Programs , Student Access, External Public Relations/Outreach, Improvements in Student Advising,

## B. EXAMPLES OF DATA-BASED IMPROVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR

**Suspensions and Terminations** - Graduate Academic Affairs has worked to improve the accuracy of suspensions and terminations of graduate students. An analysis of terminations showed that many students had not been formally suspended. A change in this process led to a 43 percent reduction in terminated students.

**Degree Requirements** - DegreeWorks has made it possible to improve the clarity of curricula by encouraging programs to specify degree requirements, processing more than 292 curricular changes as of April 2018. This 900 percent increase in proposals should improve time-to-degree.

**Early Entry** - An Early Entry report was developed to help manage the growing number of Early Entry students (up 40%).

**Teaching Assistant Training** - The GCG revamped TA training in response to evaluations from students of in-person classes. Much of the content was converted to on-line modules and TA training is now offered in a hybrid format. The first offering received positive feedback and we expect to see increased participation.

**Enrollment Differentiators** – Applicant feedback consistently lists “Career Advancement” as the primary motivation for pursuing graduate education and place high importance on career outcomes and faculty research expertise. We continually stress the importance of including such information on program websites through GPDNet and face-to-face training.

**Application Processing** – The Director of Graduate Admissions evaluated monthly volumes and realigned business processes to more efficiently manage processing and more quickly review and refer applications to GPDs for admissions consideration.

**eGEM** - Enrollment and graduation projections were submitted by 133 (90 percent) of the graduate programs. Enrollment management plans were uploaded by 69 programs (52 percent).

Through collaboration with the Graduate Enrollment Management workgroup (associate deans), content and usability suggestions were provided on the new eGEM system.

### Major Accomplishments: Discussion:

**Enrollment** - Enrolled a record 5,403 graduate students in fall 2017, an increase of 86 students from fall 2016. Graduate students comprised 18% of the total University headcount of 29,317 students.

Enrolled the most diverse graduate class ever: 23% (1,225) under-represented ethnic minorities and 27% (1,443) international; 67% (3,601) in-state students from 73 N.C. counties; 6% (314) out-of-state students from 35 different states; 27% (1,443) international students from 62 different countries; 56% (3,032) female; 44% (2,371) male.

**DegreeWorks** – Use of DegreeWorks among students and faculty continued to increase. The number of students using DegreeWorks grew from 1,306 in April 2017 to 2,170 in April 2018.

A new DegreeWorks Student Progress Report launched this year allows program directors to see all of their students at once and understand where each stands in the program. There are currently 40 subscribers receiving 86 reports monthly.

**New Policies** – Several academic policy revisions were submitted to Graduate Council, including one that changes the C grading policy to now consider the GPA rather than the number of C grades.

A new policy supporting holistic admissions review also was approved. To date, 15 programs have eliminated the standard test requirement, and another 52 programs waive the test for some applicants.

**Student Funding** - The Graduate School saw a significant increase in the number of students applying for scholarship or fellowships through the Graduate School. This was due, in part, to improvements in the Scholarship portal and to a new Graduate School incentive program called Fellowship Application Incentive Program (FAIP). Through FAIP, support and coaching was provided to 200 students who applied to 273 extramural funds.

Through a staff initiative, more than \$500,000 was recovered from grants and contracts to support graduate students.

**Hooding Ceremony** – The Graduate School planned and executed the University’s first Doctoral Hooding Ceremony this spring, where 75 doctoral graduates and advisors participated. An estimated 400-500 attended the event and participant feedback was positive. Opportunities for improvement were identified and will be incorporated into the 2018 ceremony.

**Center for Graduate Life** – While enrollment in GRAD courses dropped this year, attendance in general remained strong, with 4,218 students participating in CGL offerings. Programs to support thesis dissertation writing were expanded through Dissertation Writing Days offered throughout the year. The CGL had an interim director for much of the year.

### Supporting Documentation:

**Start:**

7/1/2017

**End:**

6/30/2018

**Progress:**

On Track

**Providing Department:**

Graduate School

**Responsible Roles:**

Annette Parks (arparks) , Thomas Reynolds (treydol)

**Related Items**

*No connections made*