Graduate Education at Miami University

The Role of Graduate Education at a Distinguished Doctoral Intensive University
Graduate Education at Miami University: A Discussion Paper

The United States is the leading nation in the world in higher education. Among the thousands of universities in the U.S. are the foremost research universities, such as Harvard, Yale, CalTech and The University of California at Berkeley. Such elite universities concentrate educational efforts on doctoral and postdoctoral education, and their research enterprises, which are among their primary missions, are among the most productive in the world. Our nation is also host to the premier undergraduate institutions in the world; distinguished colleges such as Amherst, Swarthmore, Oberlin and Williams invest exclusively in undergraduate education, and eschew graduate and postgraduate education and the attendant investment in the research enterprise.

A small number of institutions exist in the U.S. that have been called “Universities of the Third Kind,” and Miami University is a leader among them. At these universities, the primacy of the undergraduate liberal arts mission is combined with select graduate programs that attract distinguished scholars, graduate students and external sponsorship for scholarly efforts and the research infrastructure. The combination of excellence in undergraduate and selected graduate programs leads to unique opportunities for undergraduate students, who remain the raison d'être of those universities, as well as opportunities for remarkably talented graduate students to undertake world-class research at a distinguished liberal arts university.

Miami University thus offers a unique environment for graduate education. Post-baccalaureate education at our University has not often been highlighted, but as we approach the third century of education at Miami, it is essential that we examine the role of graduate education at Miami University and the ways that it can enhance our overall educational mission in light of the First in 2009 initiative. We offer this document as a vehicle for initiating discussion on Graduate Education at Miami University, and urge and welcome a campus-wide discussion of this topic.

John M. Hughes                                Carolyn Haynes
Dean of the Graduate School                     Chair, First in 2009 Coordinating Council

August, 2004
The Evolution of Graduate Study

The United States is the world leader in education. The level of education in the nation has evolved over its history at a remarkably linear rate, seemingly on 40-year quanta. For example, in 1880 a well-educated white man earned an 8th-grade education (one of the shameful aspects of the early education system in our nation is the exclusion of women and persons of color from the system). Forty years later, in 1920, a well-educated American had earned a high-school degree, and women had been largely accepted into the (pre-college) educational system. By 1960, a well-educated person in the United States held a baccalaureate degree, and legislation enacted shortly thereafter provided new, yet tentative, opportunities for persons of color in our system of higher education. Forty years later, in the year 2000, the Master’s degree became the professional degree required for entry-level employment in an increasing number of disciplines, and, certainly not without exception, underrepresented groups were included in the groups privileged with access to that education.

It is difficult to predict the future evolution of higher education in our nation, but in many disciplines we predict the future on the basis of the past. Already an increasing number of disciplines require the doctoral degree or even postdoctoral experience for entry-level employment, particularly in emerging disciplines such as nanotechnology. It is not inconceivable that by 2040 a well-educated U.S. Citizen will hold a doctoral degree, necessary to address the complex problems in science and technology of that time, as well as providing new and profound insight into areas such as business, education, the humanities, the fine arts, and the social sciences. As we participate in the First in 2009 initiative, it is imperative that we begin to chart the future of graduate study at Miami University as we are doing for all aspects of the university.

Miami University: A Profile of Graduate Study

Miami University is classified as a Carnegie Doctoral Intensive University (Appendix 1). As such, the University awards fewer than fifty doctoral degrees per year or awards the doctorate in fewer than fifteen disciplines. In 2003, Miami University awarded 52 doctoral degrees, and, with the addition of the doctoral program in Social Gerontology in 2004, offers the doctorate in 11 disciplines.\(^1\) The Carnegie classification reaffirms that Miami is not an

\(^1\) Botany, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Educational Leadership, English, Geology, History, Microbiology, Political Science, Psychology, Social Gerontology, and Zoology
institution that focuses exclusively on undergraduate education, nor a research university that concentrates its efforts on doctoral and postdoctoral education; its educational role is more complex. It is important that we recognize this complexity, with its attendant responsibilities, and include graduate study in conversations regarding advancing our university. It is also important that we applaud the recognition that our complex educational role brings to our university; among the top 50 National Universities – Doctoral in the 2004 U.S. News & World Report rankings of public universities, only four institutions were included that are Doctoral Intensive universities: The College of William and Mary (6), Miami University (25), SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (35), and Michigan Technological University (48). Thus, Miami is one of two doctoral intensive liberal arts universities among the top 50 national doctoral public universities.

**Graduate Enrollment at Miami University.** In addition to its 11 doctoral programs, Miami offers Master’s programs in 49 fields. In AY 2003, Miami reported 919 FTEs (full-time-equivalent students, calculated at 30 credit hours/yr) at the Master’s level and 456 FTEs (Doctoral I-equivalent) at the doctoral level.

Figure 1 presents the relationship of graduate enrollment as proportion of total enrollment at Miami University over the last fifty years. The conclusions that can be drawn from that figure are surprising. As Miami has sought to increase its national visibility in scholarly activity, in which graduate students should play an integral part, the proportion of graduate students at Miami has declined by approximately 1/3, dropping to 1970 levels.

But Miami University has changed since 1970, as have educational patterns in the nation. At that time Miami’s first

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2 Although there was a putative marked decline in doctoral enrollment in the past four years, a coding error was discovered in Banner that apparently accounted for the perception of the decline by not counting doctoral students who previously earned a Master’s degree. That error was corrected in AY 2003, and in that year the doctoral enrollment “jumped” from 254 to 456 FTE, compared with 445 FTE in the year immediately preceding Banner implementation.
doctoral programs were in their infancy, and nationally- or internationally-recognized scholarly activity was not held as a priority at our university. Faculty hiring was largely regional, and Miami had not yet emerged as a university that attracted scholars from around the nation and world. Today, new aspirations in research and scholarship involve graduate and undergraduate partnerships in scholarly activities undertaken with faculty, dramatically enhancing the opportunities for students to learn in new ways through closely mentored involvement in research. Externally-sponsored scholarship brought less than $1M to Miami University in 1970, compared to ca. $18M in 2003/2004. New faculty hires now seek graduate students as partners in their scholarly and teaching agendas; these hires often replace faculty members whose research relied less on the significant presence of graduate student partners, leading to intense pressure on the University to increase the number of graduate assistantships. Indeed, to hire the most talented scholars who ascribe to the Teacher/Scholar model of Miami University, there must be a significant presence of graduate education at our University.

It is not clear that graduate enrollment at Miami has been the subject of widespread discussion since 1970, but as we move to our third century of education at Miami University and seek to achieve the national recognition the university deserves, it is imperative that we make the role of graduate education at Miami part of our discussion.

**Discussion Point #1: What is the appropriate proportion of graduate students for one of our nation's most distinctive doctoral intensive liberal arts universities such as Miami, where undergraduate education remains the primary mission?** Clearly the answer is not the ~25% of a major research university such as The Ohio State University, nor the 0% of undergraduate colleges, but the decade-long decline in graduate enrollment has been unplanned and does not reflect the intense pressure for graduate positions experienced by departments. The 10% watermark on Figure 1 is offered as a starting point for discussion; i.e., if we were to reverse the decade-long decline and move back toward graduate enrollment as 10% of total enrollment, a figure below our historic high, what impact would that have on our campus? To answer this question we must not rely solely on past enrollments, but must also examine what graduate study brings to Miami University.

**Quality of the Graduate Student Body.** Miami possesses an excellent student body. Although we often see profiles of the undergraduate student body, such data are not regularly proffered for the graduate student body, as admission requirements in terms of standardized tests, etc., are not uniform across the university. It is probably safe to say that in each individual department, the quality of the graduate student body is proportional to the scholarly reputation of the departmental faculty and the intensity of their recruiting efforts.
To compare the qualifications of our undergraduate and graduate student bodies, data from the incoming graduate class for fall, 2004-5 of one of our strongest graduate departments and Miami’s undergraduate class of 2008 are proffered. The tabulated results suggest that in Miami’s strongest graduate programs the qualifications of the graduate student body provide a laudable goal for the undergraduate student body.

<table>
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<th>Test Scores:</th>
<th>MU Undergraduates</th>
<th>PSY Graduates</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE(V+Q)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Applicants/Matriculants: ~15,000/3,500 = 4.3 211/17 =12.4

Discussion Point #2: What steps can be taken to elevate the profile of the incoming graduate student body in all graduate departments to that of the most accomplished departments, in which graduate student profiles far exceed those of undergraduate students? In addition, we must find ways to measure and continuously improve the “value added” by the Miami University graduate experience by ensuring that our educational experience instills a commitment to lifelong learning at an advanced level and leads to success upon securing the degree.

Graduate Support at Miami University. Miami University provides selected graduate students with support for tuition and partial remission of fees, as well as a stipend for living expenses. In return, these students assist in the instructional, research, and operational missions of the University. Miami offers Graduate Assistantships (GAs, for Master’s students, requiring 20 hours of duty per week), Modified Graduate Assistantships (MGAs, also for Master’s students, with 8-10 hours of duty per week), and Teaching Associateships (TAs, for Doctoral students, with 20 hours of duty per week). Additional students receive assistantships on faculty grants and contracts, supported by funds that are external to the University; these students act as partners in the scholarly activities of faculty members. In at least one department, more doctoral positions are funded externally than internally. These assistants and associates are essential to the operations of the university, and are particularly important to the teaching and research missions of Miami. In recognition of that importance, increase of the stipend level to regionally- and nationally-competitive levels has been of highest priority in the recent past, and will continue to be such a priority in the future.

If Miami wishes to restore its eroded proportion of graduate students to previous levels, we must examine the costs of such an increase at a time when there are competing needs for limited funds at Miami University. In AY 2003/04, Miami funded 110 Teaching Associateships for 371 doctoral students (30%) in Academic Affairs; the University also funded 509 GAs (calculated as [GAs + (1/2*MGAs) = Total GAs]) in Academic Affairs,
with a total enrollment of 919 FTE Master’s students. Comparison with other institutions suggests that these proportions (internal funding for 30% of doctoral FTEs and 55% of Master’s FTEs) are low, and we are indeed fortunate that such a large number of students choose to attend Miami University without support. Institutions with similar missions, such as Dartmouth College, provide tuition remission for all graduate students, and “most students in the Ph.D. programs receive financial assistance.” The Survey of Earned Doctorates (2002, NSF/NIH/USED/NEH/USDA/NASA) indicates that 61.3% of all doctoral graduates are supported by a Research Assistantship at some point during their graduate tenure, and 59.5% by a Teaching Assistantship. It is clear that to increase Miami’s graduate enrollment, more assistantships must be provided.

Discussion Point #3: What are the financial implications of adding additional assistantships to increase the number of graduate students and fund a higher proportion of our current students? Miami funds a smaller portion of its graduate students than many other graduate institutions. Realistically, to increase the number of graduate students, we must commit to funding additional graduate assistantships.

The Role of the Graduate Student Body in Scholarship at Miami

Graduate students are instrumental in the scholarly endeavors of Miami University. To consistently attract distinguished faculty scholars to our University and to attract significant external sponsorship for scholarly endeavors, research equipment, and opportunities in scholarship, we must have graduate student partners in research; our talented undergraduate student body will benefit greatly from all of these consequences of the faculty-graduate student partnership.

Miami University is one of the leading Carnegie doctoral intensive universities in the nation. Yet if we wish to increase our university’s stature and move to the next level of national and international recognition, one of our greatest challenges is to increase the scholarly reputation of our university. All universities strive to increase their recognition, as recognition comes from distinguished accomplishments; indeed, we exist in a highly competitive world of Higher Education.

We must recognize that an increase in reputation is not an end in itself, but that increases in a university’s reputation result from significant achievement of its students and faculty, individually and collectively. If we examine Miami University’s accomplishments, it can be reasonably argued, as noted by President Garland, that we would be listed among the finest public institutions in terms of teaching. Yet, it is clear that we would not be similarly listed
among the finest public institutions in terms of scholarly endeavors, even those endeavors appropriate for a doctoral intensive institution.

If we wish to increase our university’s recognition by increasing the recognition of its accomplishments, it can be argued that the largest incremental change will be made by efforts expended in advancing our scholarly reputation, while maintaining and enhancing our enviable reputation for excellence in Miami’s teaching mission. As we discuss graduate education at Miami University, we must recognize the essential role of graduate education in the scholarly endeavors we undertake.

**Discussion Point #4: What is the role of graduate education in the scholarly efforts of Miami University?** As we seek to increase our distinguished accomplishments that will lead to increased national and international recognition, we must examine our university’s scholarly reputation and ways that graduate education can enhance that reputation.

**The Role of the Graduate Student Body in Undergraduate Education**

Many college applicants elect to attend undergraduate colleges to avoid being taught by graduate students; we have all heard the lament that “my child went to University X, and for the first year, she/he saw only graduate students in the classroom!” It is true that matriculants at undergraduate colleges will be taught only by professors who are credentialed by the college, whether temporary or tenure/tenure track, although some of these professors may not have achieved the terminal degree in their discipline. It is also true that at some research universities, matriculants will see a large proportion of graduate student instructors, particularly in their first year or two of study.

At Miami University, we exist between these two instructional models. Therefore, it is fitting that we at Miami should take a leading role in determining how a university such as ours can utilize the time and talents of graduate assistants and teaching associates in a Doctoral Intensive university with a primarily undergraduate mission. Our goal for all graduate students should be to 1) improve their preparation for eventual careers worthy of the distinction of an advanced degree, and 2) utilize their talents to add value to the educational mission of Miami University.

Graduate students play a unique and valuable role in instruction at the undergraduate level. To undergraduates, professors often portray authority figures who have undertaken seemingly insurmountable levels of education, and are of a different generation; conversely, graduate students embody the aspirations of where undergraduate students could be in only a few years. Although we often paint the graduate student body with a broad brush, any discussion of the role of graduate students must also recognize the disparate levels of
preparation that exist in the graduate student body. Whereas some graduate students are only weeks past being undergraduates, others are merely weeks away from their new roles as assistant professors. We must also recognize the other values that the graduate programs bring to Miami, such as a more diverse student body, partnerships in co-construction of knowledge, and the enhancements to libraries and other infrastructure support that accompany the establishment of graduate programs.

As we discuss roles of graduate students in the educational and scholarly missions of our university, there are many constraints in play. Such constraints are economic, educational, and also include the particular enrollment constraints of each graduate department. There is undoubtedly not a single answer, but it is important that we discuss the utilization of the talents of assistants and associates in the context of our aspirations for Miami University as well as in consideration of our obligations to those students.

**Discussion Point #5: How can we best utilize the talents and time of graduate assistants and teaching associates to improve their career preparation and add value to Miami’s educational and scholarly missions?**

At Miami and universities across the nation, graduate students are employed in roles such as research assistants, teaching assistants, primary course instructors, laboratory instructors, discussion or breakout group facilitators, graders, residence hall advisors, student affairs staff, and academic advisors, and this list is certainly not exhaustive. It is important that we examine the roles in which we employ our graduate students and how we utilize their talents to add value to our university and contribute to the educational aspirations of these students; to begin that process we will undertake a survey of how the talents of such students are currently utilized and to assess and share “best practices” within our university. We believe that Miami can take a leadership role at the national level in this area, a role that will distinguish it in a positive manner from all other graduate colleges and universities.

**The Role of the Graduate Student Body in Multiculturalism at Miami University**

For a variety of reasons, Miami University has struggled to attain a diverse student body despite extraordinary efforts to do so and recognition of the educational benefits inherent in realizing that goal. These reasons include a decades-old, yet difficult-to-overcome reputation as a non-welcoming community, a rural/small town geographic setting that does not represent the community of the majority of multicultural citizens of our nation, and our location in a region of the United States that is historically less tolerant of difference. Despite these factors that may counter persistent efforts at attaining a diverse student body, we firmly
believe that it is our responsibility to allow our students to grow and learn in an environment that represents the world today. We simply will not provide our students with the experience and knowledge necessary to excel in that world if we do not provide that environment.

Although many factors mitigate against diversifying the undergraduate student body, many of those factors do not pertain to the graduate student body. Graduate students select a university for different reasons than do undergraduates. Typically, graduate students focus their university choice on the ability to work with a particularly faculty mentor, the ability to enroll in a program of repute at that university, or perhaps enroll in a program with a distinguished record of post-graduation placement. At Miami University, extraordinary efforts, most recently under the auspices of Associate Dean Cheryl B. Evans, have been taken to diversify the graduate student body, and those efforts have met with some success. The Graduate School has 11% of its student body as students of color and 15% international students, both proportions higher than in the undergraduate student body. When these students interact with our undergraduate students, they provide a valuable educational experience.

Yet, in many disciplines, it remains difficult to attract a multicultural student body. For example, proportions of under-represented groups in the physical and biological sciences are very low. This is a national problem and not a local one; numerous federal programs have been erected to address this national problem in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), and Miami University participates in many of those programs. It is also unfortunate that the problem of under-representation of particular populations is not limited to fields in the sciences, technology and mathematics.

To even maintain present levels of diversity in our graduate student body will take diligence, concerted effort, and a university-wide commitment. Nevertheless, it can be argued that a university such as ours should take a leadership role in addressing national issues such as, but not limited to, the lack of a diverse workforce in STEM fields. With the concerted efforts embodied by federal programs that provide resources for addressing such issues, we must ensure that Miami University is doing all that it can to address these issues.

Discussion Point #6: What steps can be taken to maintain and increase the diversity of the graduate student body, and how can Miami University take a leadership role in addressing critical national issues such as the lack of a multicultural workforce in STEM fields?

John M. Hughes
The Graduate School
August, 2004
Summary

Miami University is a predominantly undergraduate institution, and should and will remain so. Despite this fact, we cannot ignore graduate education in the discussions of academic excellence at our University. Graduate education is an integral part of the mission of Miami, and affords the University its recognition as one of two doctoral intensive liberal arts institutions among the top 50 public doctoral institutions in the nation.

The Graduate School and The First in 2009 Coordinating Council are pleased to present this document in the hope that it will generate discussion regarding The Role of Graduate Education at a Distinguished Doctoral Intensive University, and allow Miami University to take a national leadership role in that arena. During the forthcoming academic year, a series of discussion fora will be held regarding the six points enumerated above, as well as other topics relating to the role of graduate education at Miami. In addition, we invite interested parties to join a listserv at GradEd@Listserv.MUOhio.edu (for instructions on how to join the listserv, please consult KB.Muohio.Edu and enter case 2475) to monitor and contribute to discussions relating to that role of graduate education at our university. A summary of the discussions will be distributed by August 2005. We sincerely hope that you will contribute to the discussions.

John M. Hughes                  Carolyn Haynes
Dean of the Graduate School       Chair, First in 2009 Coordinating Council

August 2004
Appendix 1: Public, Private, and For-Profit Doctoral Intensive Universities*

**Public Institutions, by State**

Alabama  
Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University  
University of Alabama  
University of South Alabama  

Alaska  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  

Arizona  
Northern Arizona University  

Arkansas  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock  

California  
San Diego State University  
University of California-San Francisco  

Colorado  
University of Colorado at Denver  
University of Northern Colorado  

Florida  
Florida Atlantic University  
University of Central Florida  

Idaho  
Idaho State University  

Illinois  
Illinois State University  

Indiana  
Ball State University  
Indiana State University  
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis  

Kansas  
Wichita State University  

Louisiana  
Louisiana Tech University  
University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
University of New Orleans  

Maryland  
University of Maryland Baltimore  

Massachusetts  
University of Massachusetts Boston  
University of Massachusetts Lowell  

Michigan  
Central Michigan University  
Michigan Technological University  
Oakland University  

Mississippi  
Jackson State University  

Missouri  
University of Missouri - Kansas City  
University of Missouri - Rolla  
University of Missouri - Saint Louis  

Montana  
Montana State University - Bozeman  
University of Montana, The  

Nevada  
University of Nevada-Las Vegas  

New Jersey  
New Jersey Institute of Technology  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Newark Campus  

New Mexico  
New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology  

New York  
State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry
<table>
<thead>
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<th>State</th>
<th>University Name</th>
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<td></td>
<td>University of Texas at El Paso</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>College of William and Mary</td>
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**Private Not-for-Profit Institutions, by State**

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<td>Nova Southeastern University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Clark Atlanta University</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

12
Illinois
DePaul University
Illinois Institute of Technology
National-Louis University

Massachusetts
Clark University
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Michigan
Andrews University

Minnesota
Mayo Foundation-Mayo Graduate School
University of Saint Thomas

New Hampshire
Antioch New England Graduate School
Dartmouth College

New Jersey
Seton Hall University
Stevens Institute of Technology

New York
Adelphi University
Clarkson University
Hofstra University
New School University
Pace University New York Campus
Polytechnic University
Rockefeller University
Saint John's University

North Carolina
Wake Forest University

Ohio
Union Institute
University of Dayton

Oklahoma
University of Tulsa

Pennsylvania
Drexel University
Duquesne University
MCP Hahnemann University
Widener University

Texas
Baylor University
Texas Christian University

Private for-Profit Institutions, by State
Florida
University of Sarasota

Minnesota
Walden University

*Source: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching,
http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/CIHE2000/Partfiles/DRU-Int.htm