Graduate Division
Assessment Plan

Mission Statement

The Graduate Division serves to promote, advance, and support intellectual discovery, scholarly achievement and life long learning for our next generation of leaders. The Division fosters collegial partnerships to ensure excellence in the quality of its programs and services and to advocate for the needs of our graduate students.

We uphold the pioneering spirit and mission of our campus, affirm our diverse community through fairness and equity, and respond to the varying requirements of a dynamic environment and to complement the needs of a changing society.

University of California, Merced Mission Statement and Principles of Community

In 2005, a campus mission statement was approved and is located in the following website:

http://www.ucmerced.edu/about_ucmerced/mission.asp

The Graduate Division's mission is congruent and supportive of the campus' mission "…of teaching, research and service, benefiting society through discovering and transmitting new knowledge and functioning as an active repository of organized knowledge. As a key tenet in carrying out this mission, UC Merced promotes and celebrates the diversity of all members of its community."

Further, the Graduate Division subscribes to the philosophical convictions of the Principles of Community: http://studentaffairs.ucmerced.edu/principles-community Thus, while recognizing the importance of student learning as an important component of graduate student success, the operational tasks of the Graduate Division is to ensure that implementation of various administrative support duties results in the contribution toward a comprehensive analysis of the quality of our graduate student experience at University of California, Merced (UCM).

The Role of the Graduate Division

The Graduate Division encompasses all post-baccalaureate advanced academic degree programs at University of California, Merced and all academic graduate students. The Dean of Graduate Studies (Graduate Dean) is responsible for the administration of graduate and post-doctoral study at UCM in accordance with academic policies established by the Academic Senate via the Graduate Council, and is the Academic Dean of all graduate students at UCM. The Graduate Dean is also the Vice Chancellor for Research, responsible for campus-wide research policies and administration of a number of research functions including contract and grant administration, research conduct, interdisciplinary research units, and technology alliances with the commercial business sector.

The Graduate Division serves as the campus-wide advocate for the advancement of graduate education and strives for standards of excellence, fairness, and equity in all graduate programs at UCM. To fulfill this mission, the Graduate Division:

- Facilitates programmatic activities that help develop and promote academic quality through strategic planning, policy development, and effective resource allocation.
- Articulates the views, needs, and priorities of graduate education within the context of general policy and budget development to ensure that academic goals properly inform campus-wide decision-making.
- Facilitates communication among schools and administrative offices to ensure that the academic policies established by the Academic Senate's Graduate Council are implemented through efficient and rational administrative procedures.
- Protects the general welfare of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in all areas of concern, including, but not limited to, financial support, apprentice personnel conditions, intellectual property, equal opportunity, and sexual harassment.
- Administers appropriate regulatory activities designed to ensure campus-wide and UC system-wide accountability aimed at ensuring academic quality standards and other institutional policies and regulations related to graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.
- Encourages timely completion of graduate degrees by monitoring student degree progress, encouraging faculty advising and mentoring, and ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all students.
- Provides campus-wide student services that facilitate academic progress.
- Enhances access, representation, and the educational experience of underrepresented students in order to achieve the University's diversity objectives. Develops institutional initiatives to enhance the pool of qualified applicants and, by implementing Graduate Council policies, ensures the academic excellence of entering students.
- Works with the Graduate Council to develop local graduate education policies. Provides information, institutional data, and analysis of issues impacting graduate education to support the Council's policy functions, and recommends new policies. Implements Graduate Council policies and provides outcome assessment and analysis.
- Works with the Council in evaluating new program initiatives and assessing continuing programs.
- Provide central administrative services that help sustain and improve the quality of graduate education.

<u>The Role of Graduate and Research Council</u>

The Graduate and Research Council is a standing committee of the Academic Senate, Merced Division, charged with reviewing and regulating graduate education within the framework of Academic Senate regulations. The Graduate Council reviews all proposals for new degree programs and carries out, on behalf of the Academic Senate, mandated periodic reviews of existing graduate programs.

Representatives include members of the Academic Senate, the Vice Chancellor of Research and Graduate Dean (ex officio), and two graduate students. One Council member is appointed campus representative to the UC System-wide Academic Senate Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA). There is a monthly meeting schedule during the academic year.

The Graduate Council sets policies and standards for admission to graduate student status, eligibility for fellowships and assistantships; establishes policies relating to graduate degrees; approves changes in degree requirements; establishes procedural rules for graduate study; sets policy for satisfactory academic progress, graduate student course

loads, transfers of academic credit, part-time study, and leaves of absence.

Planning Goals for Graduate Division

In the next ten years, it is the goal of the Graduate Division to encourage substantial growth in the numbers, quality and diversity of the graduate student population, to foster high quality doctoral programs and to expand the services it offers to academic units, faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.

For each of the following assessment methods and measures, a brief statement of purpose and execution of the goal follows, accompanied by the office, governance, or persons responsible for the gathering, evaluation, summarizing, and presentation of information to the Graduate and Research Council and Dean of Graduate Division.

Priorities to pursue these goals for 2010-2011 academic year will require the following action:

Planning Goal #1 – Student Learning Outcomes
Offices: Graduate and Research Council, Program Chairs and Faculty, Graduate Dean

The complexity of assessment and designing methods that are dynamic, significant, and oriented toward program improvement and enhanced learning is needed at the forefront for academic program review. Student learning outcomes will assist the Graduate and Research Council in its consideration of the quality of graduate programs and will serve as a shared goal of educating our graduate students.

Objective

Graduate Division will assist and provide support for the Graduate and Research Council to create a university-wide graduate student learning goals that relate to the specific graduate group program goals and the student learning objectives that is unique to each academic graduate program.

Measures

By the end of 2010-2011 fiscal year, the Graduate and Research Council will produce university-wide Graduate Student Learning Goals.

Planning Goal #2 – Recruitment and Outreach

Offices: Graduate Division, Graduate Program Faculty and Coordinators

Expand program specific support for recruitment activities, including funding for faculty visits to campuses with underrepresented populations, on-campus visits by prospective students, website enhancements, and the revision of recruitment materials.

Objectives

Work with key personnel to review program specific outreach and recruitment activities, goals and objectives. Provide assistance, support and monetary funds as needed to execute such goals. Engage more graduate student and faculty involvement in local, regional, and national conferences.

Measures

An established plan for outreach and recruitment activities for program specific focus will engage more faculty and current graduate students in the process of outreach and recruitment. At the end of the season, administer a quick survey to analyze future planning and execution.

Planning Goal #3 – Graduate Student Survey

Offices: Graduate Division, Student Affairs, and Institutional Planning and Analysis

The purpose of the survey is to assess a student' current perceptions and experiences of the quality of graduate student learning, support, assistance and program effectiveness.

Objective

An annual survey conducted at the end of fiscal year to assess students' experiences. Institutional Planning and Analysis provides a comprehensive general summary of survey results with specific office or academic program needs analysis provided upon request.

Measures

Survey results compiled and presented to the Graduate and Research Council, Student Affairs and key offices as part of the assessment for student success and learning outcomes goals. This survey has been administered electronically since 2006.

Planning Goal #4 - Enrollment Management

Offices: Graduate Division, Student Information Systems, Registrar, and Institutional Planning and Analysis

The Graduate Division works collaboratively with the Student Information System team for variety of projects and needs. An undergraduate audit system was launched in 2009 allowing key personnel to review student records for purposes such as advising and graduation clearance.

Using the undergraduate audit system as the base foundation, create and launch a graduate audit system for implementation during this academic year.

Objectives
Continue to work with the three Graduate Group Coordinators and the Registrar's Office, in the development, test and launch of the degree audit system.

Measures
Implementation of the degree audit system this academic year. Evaluation and success of the system for users will be initiated on a monthly basis. Once launched, indicators for success of the system will require feedback and analysis by users on the system's user friendliness to assess a student's profile for purposes of persistence, success and retention in their academic program.

Planning Goal #5 Graduate Awards and Scholarship

Offices: Graduate Division and Sponsored Projects

A key component of measuring students' highest level of academic achievement is through awards and scholarship. With the recent flux of monetary funds made available to graduate students, it is imperative to adequately process such transactions in the most efficient and ethical methods available.

Objectives
Develop a document with the listing of all fellowship opportunities, eligibility requirements and deadline dates for campus community to review. Communicate the document to key constituents along with access from the Graduate Division website.

Measures

A review of the number of graduate students receiving monetary funds from fellowships and grant awards is evidence of student academic performance and scholarly achievement. The analysis will include students receiving awards from external and internal venues.

Summary

As the campus strives for full WASC accreditation, it is imperative that a comprehensive assessment of the graduate student learning outcomes and objectives are at the forefront of measuring overall quality of the graduate programs at UC Merced. An assessment plan will provide direct analysis of the current climate of programs along with providing appropriate measures for future planning.

Periodic Review of the Graduate Division

UC Merced will be eligible to join the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), in the 2011-2012 academic year. During that year the Graduate Division will conduct a self study of its practices as per CGS guidelines. In the 2012-2013 academic year, the Graduate Division will undergo a formal periodic review. This review team will include a member of the GRC, representation from another UC Graduate Division, and a formal representative from CGS.

The results of this review will be shared with the Graduate Dean, the GRC, the EVC and the School Deans.