2009-14 Graduate School Strategic Plan

Introduction: Vision Statement

The mission of the Graduate School is to support the overall mission of Buffalo State at the graduate level, including a commitment to access, transformative experiences, and high quality education. The Graduate School seeks to make significant contributions to students’ professional and intellectual growth by providing a challenging and supportive environment that integrates advanced study and scholarship/research and that asks students to exert leadership in their chosen profession.

Because of its commitment to access, the Graduate School:

- Supports flexible admissions practices—offering students various ways to prove their ability to succeed and evaluating students through a comprehensive review process.
- Promotes supportive advising throughout a student’s graduate education.
- Promotes collegial practices toward students outside the major.
- Promotes flexible scheduling, including the use of weekend, summer, distance, and hybrid courses.

To assure transformational experiences, the Graduate School:

- Promotes the use of beginning/initial courses as immersion into graduate study and purposeful initiation into a graduate program.
- Supports mentoring for sophisticated research and writing.
- Promotes purposeful mentoring into professions or advanced course of study.
- Supports capstone/culminating experiences that demonstrate significant accomplishment.

To maintain and improve quality, the Graduate School:

- Supports unified/coherent programs of study.
- Promotes the assessment of student learning and accomplishment.
- Advocates for the recruiting, hiring, and ongoing professional development of qualified faculty who are committed to the goals of graduate education at BSC.
- Promotes continual support of current quality programs that attract students to BSC.
- Promotes the development of new programs that will bring distinction and new populations of students to campus. The development of new programs is aided by collegial, cross-campus relationships, a nimble approval process, and support from administration, and the Graduate School is committed to advocating for all three.
STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

1. Create and begin implementation of a comprehensive plan for graduate programs.

   • Assess programs’ plans, capacities and growth potentials. Work with academic deans and chairs to plan for the future of their programs. Work to resource and improve programs as appropriate.
   • Work with deans, chairs, and faculty to identify new programs that make sense for BSC and help bring them to fruition.
   • Assess campus-wide policies regarding graduate staffing levels, course quotas, remuneration for faculty, and resourcing programs and make recommendations to maximize and enhance the delivery of graduate education.

2. Develop and implement an enrollment management plan for graduate programs.

   • Solicit feedback from faculty deans and graduate chairs/program coordinators regarding enrollment trends and issues and assist the provost and associate vice president for enrollment management with the establishment of reasonable graduate enrollment targets and the coordination of those targets with the college’s overall enrollment targets.
   • In collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research and Computing Services, maintain, review, and disseminate comprehensive data about graduate admissions and enrollment to assist central administrators, deans, and department chairs in maximizing enrollment (e.g., lists of current and potential students who have not registered, list of recently admitted students who have not registered, enrollment trends by program).
   • Develop recruitment plan, communication plans, and engage in year-round activities to recruit and enroll students.
   • With College Relations develop a comprehensive, targeted marketing campaign for those graduate programs with capacity and/or high growth potential.
   • Work with various departments and College Relations to assure that the college, graduate office, and department Web sites provide up-to-date information in an accessible and attractive format.
   • Assess recruitment strategies to determine which are most effective and spend resources on those. (College fairs; Web sites such as petersons.com, gradschools.com, gradsource.com; e-mail blasts; targeting marketing, etc).
   • Find ways to brand the graduate school in relation to the applied nature of its degree programs and to market the graduate school mission of access, transformative experiences, and quality education.
3. **Advocate for the quality of graduate programs.**

- Maintain and review comprehensive data about graduate programs to assist central administrators, deans, and department chairs in making wise decisions about graduate programs (e.g., benchmarking data regarding qualifications for graduate faculty, course loads, course quotas, productivity, etc., as well as data regarding applications, admits, current enrollment, time to graduation).
- Review graduate policies, and revise as necessary, to assure quality of graduate programs.
- Survey graduate students regularly to provide data about the quality of their graduate program and college services.
- Working with AVP for Curriculum and Assessment and academic deans, work to develop a five-year cycle for assessment of graduate programs. This cycle should be coordinated with the current schedule for accreditation reviews and reviews of undergraduate programs to insure that graduate programs and their corresponding undergraduate programs, if any, are reviewed at the same time.
- Working with academic deans, chairs and coordinators, encourage departments to provide effective advisement for graduate students.
- Work with deans and departments chairs to provide high quality faculty for graduate programs.
- Educate deans and chairs about the regulations from NYSED and SUNY regarding graduate faculty criteria and assure compliance with these regulations.
- Provide professional development opportunities for graduate faculty.
- Support graduate faculty scholarship, research and creative activity.

4. **Enrich the campus experience for graduate students.**

- Establish a Graduate Student Advisory Committee to advise the graduate dean regarding matters related to the graduate student experience.
- Survey grad students regularly about their non-academic experience at BSC.
- Establish outstanding thesis/project award(s). Organize a Graduate Awards Dinner.
- Support graduate student research and provide funds for students who present at professional conferences. Encourage graduate students to present their research at the Scholarship & Creativity Celebration. Promote availability of funds for students.
- Work with departments and offices across campus to improve availability of campus services to graduate students.
- Explore creation of a Buffalo State College graduate student association.
• Promote development of departmental graduate student associations.
• Appoint a graduate student to Graduate Advisory Council.
• Increase graduate student participation in college governance by appointing graduate students to the College Senate and to Senate committees.
• Explore the feasibility of establishing a graduate student activity fee to fund more comprehensive services and programs for graduate students.

5. **Establish procedures for collaboration, communication, and consultation among Graduate School staff, academic deans and associate deans, department chairs and coordinators, graduate faculty, and students.**

• Establish a Graduate Advisory Council to advise the graduate dean regarding graduate matters and policies and conduct regular meetings. Make agenda items known via the Graduate School Web site.
• Solicit regular feedback from graduate department chairs and program coordinators regarding graduate policies and procedures.
• Keep graduate faculty informed through Graduate School Web site and periodic meetings.
• Advocate for graduate school issues with deans at the Deans Council.

6. **Recognize faculty and staff who have provided exemplary service to graduate students and programs.**

• Revise description of the President’s Award for Excellence in Academic Advisement to recognize unique issues associated with graduate advisement and encourage submission of nominations of faculty and staff who have made significant contributions to graduate advisement.
• Explore the development of additional awards to recognize outstanding graduate faculty-- graduate coordinators, those who advise outstanding theses and projects, those who mentor students into PhD programs.
• Find ways to link graduate students to faculty who have helped and supported them, similar to the process for Honors Convocation.

7. **Assure efficient operation of graduate admissions processing, record-keeping and graduation reviews.**

• Provide assistance and training, as necessary, for current graduate office staff to implement and improve BANNER systems.
• Continue to work to develop an online graduate admission process.
• Continue to utilize and look to maximize College Net Customer Relations Management (CRM) system to better recruit and attract students to our programs.
• Continue to advocate for the implementation of document imaging for graduate admission materials.
• Assist BANNER staff with the development and implementation of graduate records processes and functionality
• Continue to work with the Registrar’s Office to move graduate students and programs into Degree Navigator.
• Review the candidacy process to make it meaningful and productive.

8. Graduate assistantships

• Sponsor discussions at Deans Council regarding distribution and purpose of graduate assistants.
• Collect feedback from chairs and coordinators about the need for and roles of graduate assistants.
• Benchmark our stipends against comparable institutions, assess budget issues, and determine if changes to amount of awards or number of assistantships should be revised.

9. Work with Institutional Advancement and Research Foundation to seek external funds to support graduate programs, students, and faculty.

• Solicit, when appropriate, endowments, private gifts, and grants to support graduate programs and students.