THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DUKE UNIVERSITY

THE NEXT STEP: A PLAN FOR 2001-05

Executive Summary

I. Aspirations

- To achieve distinction for Duke in graduate education and scholarship among the top tier of private graduate research institutions in this country.
- To attract the best of the country’s graduate applicants to provide a core intellectual resource for Duke’s faculty and for its undergraduate instructional programs.
- To educate and prepare the next generation of professional researchers and scholars through Duke’s Ph.D. and non-professional Masters degree programs.

II. Internal and External Environment

- A depressed academic job market has raised questions about whether or not universities are appropriately preparing Ph.D.’s for a variety of career trajectories.
- We have experienced a significant decline in the U.S. applicant pool for Ph.D. and non-professional Masters programs over the last 5 years, perhaps because of uncertainties in the academic job market, as well as a thriving economy which provides more opportunities to the nation’s undergraduates.
- An increase in the stature of many of our Ph.D. programs has allowed us to compete at the very top tier of private research universities for students in many disciplines.
- In order to offer student support packages that would be competitive in this environment, Duke has been forced to concentrate its financial resources in fewer entering Ph.D. students. This has resulted in a significantly downsized graduate population, particularly in some of our strong humanities programs, and a concurrent result that some of these programs have difficulty maintaining critical mass.
- Also, in accordance with our competitors, Duke has found it necessary to restructure its support packages for Ph.D. students, offering more fellowship support and reducing the amount of teaching service required.

III.A. Programmatic Goals/Initiatives

- Maintain a timely system of external reviews in order to monitor program quality, to pinpoint areas of faculty development that will significantly
enhance the scholarly quality of Duke’s graduate programs as a whole, and to identify programs in which Duke can no longer provide high quality graduate training.

- Develop certificate and Ph.D. programs in cutting edge and interdisciplinary areas (e.g., most recently, certificate programs are being considered in Bioinformatics and Genome Technology, Developmental Biology, Cognitive Neuroscience, and Developmental Psychology (a joint Duke-UNC initiative). We approved last year a new interdisciplinary Ph.D. program in Ecology and, together with NC State, a new sociolinguistics track in English.

- Promote development of Masters programs where appropriate intellectually and in terms of local/national needs (e.g., Bioengineering, Biostatistics, Quantitative Social Sciences, Religious Studies, Visual Studies).

### III.B. Financial Goals/Initiatives

- Develop funding mechanisms to enable each graduate program to competitively recruit and adequately support Ph.D. students through at least the 5th year.
- Reach an appropriate balance between fellowship years and years requiring some kind of service (our goal is at least 2 years of non-teaching support in the first five).
- Increase post-5th-year support for Ph.D. students in those programs that routinely take longer than six years to complete the degree (i.e., most humanities and social science programs) in order to minimize attrition and time-to-degree. This will involve "forgiveness" of 6th-year registration fees in such programs and the addition of new dissertation fellowships.
- Increase the ability of students to do research in the summer, particularly in the humanities and the social sciences, and to travel in order to complete dissertation related research.

### III.C. Teacher Training and Experience

- Ensure that we are providing teaching experiences for our graduate students that are appropriate to their individual graduate programs and likely career trajectories. This also means that we need to ensure that the instructional challenges posed by Curriculum 2000 do not overwhelm considerations of the amounts and kinds of teaching that are most appropriate to the training of doctoral students.
- Ensure that we are providing adequate pedagogical training for the instructional responsibilities of our graduate students. This will involve providing experience in the instructional use of technology and may also involve making teaching an academic requirement for the Ph.D. degree. In our view, teaching by graduate students should be part of their professional training, and not be seen (or be structured) as service-related employment by the university.
- Expand the Named Instructorship program to make a significant number of capstone teaching experiences available to advanced Ph.D. students.
III.D. Diversity Goals and Strategies

- Substantially increase the overall numbers of minority students in our graduate programs, particularly African American students, in order to achieve both internal diversity in our programs and to increase the pool of minority faculty and research professionals in the U.S.
- Develop more extensive summer research opportunities at Duke for minority undergraduates in order to interest them in pursuing graduate study, whether at Duke or elsewhere; and to improve Duke’s outreach to minority undergraduate elsewhere who are receiving such training.
- Expand acculturation programs for international students, particularly programs in English Language instruction and in TA preparation for the undergraduate classroom.

III.E. Graduate Student Life

- Enhance the quality of graduate student life by working more effectively with student organizations and other campus offices devoted to this effort.
- Develop stronger faculty mentoring programs in individual departments and within the Graduate School as a whole.
- Enhance collaboration with the Career Development Center in sponsoring programs that help graduate students consider and evaluate various career possibilities.
- Continue efforts to build a broader and stronger sense of community among graduate and professional students.

Benchmarks & Assessment

- Bring as many of our programs as possible into the top 20 of NRC-ranked doctoral programs and keep those now ranked in the top 20 and top 10 in that position.
- Systematically review all graduate programs in order to achieve feedback from disciplinary scholars as to their quality, and to annually track application, admissions, and placement statistics as these may reflect program distinction and visibility.
- Increase the selectivity of Duke’s graduate programs (currently 25% of applications are accepted and about 40% matriculate) and to improve the quality of graduate students matriculating at Duke (as shown by improved GRE and GPA scores, more research experience, and attraction of more students from the top undergraduate institutions).
- Substantially increase the number of minority students matriculating in the graduate school, especially in areas where minorities are traditional underrepresented.
- Improve attrition rates, reduce time to degree, and improve placement in our graduate programs.

Overall Financial Goals

- The goals of increased fellowships and research support for Ph.D. students at Duke, together with a decreased reliance upon teaching service as a source of financial support, must be met if Duke is to remain competitive among the dozen top private research universities. We
estimate that the steady-state incremental cost of meeting these needs would add approximately $1 million to the operating budget of the Graduate School.

- The goals of increasing Duke’s outreach to minority students; providing better pedagogical training, including training in the instructional uses of technology; providing more support to graduate students organizations and to services working to improve student life; and increasing the ability of advanced Ph.D. students to have capstone teaching opportunities, together would add between $500,000 and $1,000,000 to the annual operating budget of the Graduate School.

- Development of new graduate programs should, in the long run, be based upon the identification of new sources of tuition and/or external grant revenue.

- The Graduate School is currently financially sound for its present scope of student support and operations; it expects to meet its goals for improvement through Campaign fund raising and through increased external support of graduate students in the sciences and engineering.