School of Graduate Studies

Assessment Report
2010-2011

Mission/Purpose
The School of Graduate Studies will provide effective administrative services and quality programs that are accessible to qualified students, particularly those who are employed and seek to enhance their professional credentials.

I. Goals and Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Achievement Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

A. Goal 1: Provide effective administrative services
Provide effective administrative services for the University. The School of Graduate Studies will provide effective administrative services in support of graduate programs.

1. Objective: Provide a portion of tuition for GA
The School of Graduate Studies will provide a portion of the tuition for each semester (Fall and Spring) for each Graduate Assistant.

a. Measure: Recruit and retain qualified GAs
Recruit and retain qualified Graduate Assistants by providing a portion of tuition costs

Source of Evidence: Administrative measure - other

1. Achievement Target:
Provide Fall and Spring tuition assistance for 22 Graduate Assistants.

2. Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Not Met
Providing a portion of tuition for Graduate Assistants is an ongoing goal of the Graduate School, but due to budget restraints this has not been possible. As a result, five of the twenty-two Graduate Assistant positions for the 2010-2011 academic year were filled by undergraduate students serving as Lab Assistants.

3. Action Plan:
Attract qualified graduate assistants for all positions
Increase funding for graduate assistants in order to fully staff all positions with graduate students.
Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High
Implementation Description: Seek additional funding to increase graduate stipends. The School of Graduate Studies will promote graduate assistant opportunities among UWA graduate students.

Additional Resources Requested: $200 per month x 24 graduate students = $4800 per month x 9 months = $43,200 + $1800 to cover 12 month graduate students = $45,000

Budget Amount Requested: $45,000.00

2. Objective: Students will meet admission requirements in the School of Graduate Studies
Students will meet all admission requirements in the School of Graduate Studies.
a. Measure: Students will submit all required paperwork for admission to the School of Graduate Studies
Students will submit all required paperwork including GRE or MAT scores to be kept on file in the School of Graduate Studies.

Source of Evidence: Existing data

1. Achievement Target:
   All students will have a complete file including application materials and GRE or MAT scores prior to their application date for graduation.

2. Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Not Met
   After reviewing student files, there were several students that did not have GRE or MAT scores in their files by their application for graduation. As a result, the School of Graduate Studies will begin instituting a candidacy program for graduation.

3. Action Plan:
   Establish candidacy requirements for graduating students
   As a result of discovering that several students did not have the required test scores on file prior to application for graduation, the School of Graduate Studies will establish candidacy requirements for all students. This will ensure that all student files contain the required test scores and other application materials prior to graduation.
   
   Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
   Implementation Status: In-Progress
   Priority: High
   Implementation Description: A committee addressing Candidacy requirements has been formed in the Graduate Council. This committee will bring final recommendations to the Council for a vote in August 2011 and Candidacy will be implemented in Spring 2012.
   Implementation Notes:
   8/8/2011 A committee addressing this issue was formed within the Graduate Council during the Spring 2011. Final Candidacy criteria and implementation strategy is expected to be brought to a final vote by the Graduate Council in August 2011 and put into place for the Spring 2012 term.

b. Measure: Collaborate with department to offer prep sessions
The School of Graduate Studies will collaborate with academic departments to offer preparation sessions for comprehensive examinations and the Praxis II test.

Source of Evidence: Administrative measure - other

1. Achievement Target:
   The School of Graduate Studies will collaborate with academic departments to offer preparation sessions for all degree programs.

2. Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Partially Met
   The School of Graduate Studies worked with the Instructional Leadership and Support Department to provide preparation sessions for the Praxis II. However, based on the number of students submitting the Application for Degree and the number of students who are actually awarded degrees, an average of 85 percent do “meet all requirements for graduation.” Because 15 percent were not eligible to graduate, The School of Graduate Studies will work with all relevant academic departments to offer preparatory sessions.
3. **Action Plan:**

**Collaborate with departments to offer preparation sessions**

The School of Graduate Studies will collaborate with all relevant academic departments to offer preparatory sessions for comprehensive examinations or the Praxis II test for all graduate degree programs.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011  
**Implementation Status:** Planned  
**Priority:** High  
**Implementation Description:** Collaborate with departments offering graduate degrees to offer preparation sessions for their respective comprehensive examinations or Praxis II tests.  
**Additional Resources Requested:** None  
**Budget Amount Requested:** $0.00

3. **Objective:** **Provide effective support and services to graduate students**

The School of Graduate Studies will provide effective support and services to graduate students in all programs.

a. **Measure:** **Provide adequate staff to meet the needs of students**

The School of Graduate Studies will review its current administrative structure to determine if there is an adequate number of staff to meet the needs of all students.

Source of Evidence: Administrative measure - other

1. **Achievement Target:**

The School of Graduate Studies will seek funding to add an additional staff person for every 500 student increase annually.

2. **Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met**

While enrollment did increase, the increase was not large enough to increase full time staff. However, based on Student Satisfaction Surveys the objective of "effective support and services" has been met.

II. **Other Plans for Improvement**

A. **Items Planned**

1. **Increase the enrollment in the existing Graduate Online Program**

Increase the enrollment in the existing Graduate Online Program by recruiting efforts at Teacher Conventions in the southeast.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011  
**Implementation Status:** Planned  
**Priority:** High  
**Implementation Description:** Attend two conventions per year with booth in connection with online. Graduate school brochures.

2. **Place and coordinate 26 Graduate Assistants for the 2010-2011 academic year.**

Coordinate and place 26 Graduate Assistants for the 2010-2011 academic year and continue to work toward paying tuition for two courses for each full time GA for Fall and Spring semester.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011  
**Implementation Status:** Planned  
**Priority:** High  
**Implementation Description:** Graduate Assistants were placed in campus areas although paying tuition for these students was not budgeted.  
**Additional Resources Requested:** 22 x $2940 = $64680)
Budget Amount Requested: $64,680.00
Implementation Notes:
8/8/2011 This issue is addressed in each new budget cycle and has been discussed at length in the Graduate Council with Deans voicing concern over attracting quality Graduate Assistants without budget support for this benefit increase.

B. Items In Progress
1. Find space for new staff
Find space for new staff and re-organize current staff based on workflow and traffic flow.
Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High
Implementation Description: Remodel current Graduate School Offices in Bibb Graves Hall for greatest efficiency.
Implementation Notes: 8/8/2011 Reconfiguration of available space has been implemented. Planning of workflow and traffic flow have been considered and are being studied for best use of any additional space.

2. Increase budget to cover additional administrative expense of online program
Increase budget to cover the additional administrative (supplies, mailing, etc.) expense of online programs and additional online students.
Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High
Implementation Description: Secure adequate funding.
Budget Amount Requested: $2,000.00
Implementation Notes: 9/8/2011 Administrative costs primarily include postage for increased mail volume due to the number of online graduate students. This is an ongoing issue because of budget restraints, rising postage rates and increased amounts of mailed documentation sent to students. Other increased administrative expenses include additional office materials.

C. Items On Hold
1. Add appropriate fulltime staff to the office of graduate studies
Add appropriate fulltime staff to the office of graduate studies. Staff expansion is effectively put on-hold until re-organization of Admissions Office and electronic ("paperless") records are put in place. Staffing issues will be re-visited at that time.
Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: On-Hold
Priority: High
Implementation Description: Secure the appropriate funding to add one staff member for each increase of 500 graduate students.
Budget Amount Requested: $32,000.00
Implementation Notes: 8/8/2011 Continue to monitor closely enrollment numbers and evolving procedures with regard to the necessity of additional staff.

2. Add appropriate office equipment to the School of Graduate Studies.
Add appropriate upgraded computers and systems to the School of Graduate Studies. This item is placed on hold because of the Information Systems plan to upgrade computers on a regular basis on a four-year cycle.
Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: On-Hold
Priority: High
**Implementation Description:** Secure the appropriate funding to adequately replace the equipment

**Implementation Notes:**

*8/8/2011* New copier purchased this cycle. However, additional equipment may be needed to replace outdated equipment and to implement greater use of electronic filing. New university procedure will assure that equipment is replaced in an appropriate timeframe based on a four-year cycle.

**III. Analysis Answers**

A. **What specific strengths did your assessments show? (Strengths)**
   A review of achievement results revealed that the staffing pattern for The School of Graduate Studies adequately met student needs.

B. **What specific weaknesses or challenges did your assessments show? (Weaknesses)**
   The analysis showed that we needed to assess students' progress toward degree completion in a standardized and methodical fashion prior to their comprehensive exam or Praxis II testing.

C. **What plans were implemented?**
   To decrease the number of students who apply for degree but do not earn their degree, the implementation of a Candidacy requirement is being implemented. This step will greater prepare students for graduation by assessing their records for adequate GPA standards and test score submission.

D. **What plans were not implemented?**
   Based on the fact that all Graduate Assistant positions were not filled, analysis showed that by paying tuition for Graduate Assistants the number of quality GA’s could be increased. However, there was not adequate budget to implement this plan.

E. **How will assessment results be used for continuous improvement?**
   The number and retention of Graduate Assistants will continue to be monitored and tuition assistance as part of the stipend package will continue to be a goal. The implementation of Candidacy in spring of 2012 will be monitored to determine the effect on numbers of students who complete the Application for Degree and number who actually complete the graduation process. Results of the Students Satisfaction survey will be further addressed with additional specific Graduate School questions to continue to evolve Graduate School administrative processes to best meet the needs of graduate students in a timely manner.

**IV. Annual Reports**

A. **Key Achievements**
   The Key Achievement for the School of Graduate Studies was the addition of the following programs: Education Specialist, Collaborative Special Education K-6 Education Specialist, Collaborative Special Education 6-12 Education Specialist, Early Childhood Education In addition, just over 1000 students earned graduate degrees from the University of West Alabama in the 2010-2011 academic year.