

College of Graduate Studies and Research
Annual Report - March 25, 2018

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The College of Graduate Studies and Research annual report highlights key accomplishments and updated practices that have been implemented in our College over the past year. Our goals have prioritized graduate enrollment growth, growth of grant proposal submissions and awards, improved satisfaction with grant development and grant management processes, improved satisfaction with the IRB and IACUC protocol submission and protocol review processes and established a presence in advancement and alumni relations. Additionally, we continued to improve our efforts of providing exceptional customer service and fostering a collaborative environment. Our team strives for faculty, staff, and students alike to have a great experience when working with us and to partner with us in achieving shared goals.

I. GRADUATE STUDIES

I.A. Graduate Admissions and Graduate Recruitment

Following a period of enrollment decline, in fall 2015, the graduate enrollment headcount stood at 863 students. Since then, the College of Graduate Studies and Research has undertaken a massive effort to transform our approach to graduate recruitment. **In two years, our enrollments have increased by 15.9%, standing at 1,000 students in fall 2017.** A new graduate recruitment and marketing plan was established that centered on being: (1) personalized, responsive, and focused on high touch practices, (2) data-driven and targeted, (3) both general and program-specific in nature, (4) aligned with the University's mission and brand identity, and (5) highly collaborative. Our approach includes strategies such as:

- utilizing data-driven recruitment and marketing strategies
- using application fee waivers as incentives to apply to our programs
- collaborating with University Relations on program webpage development and migration
- expanding our social media presence with targeted social media marketing campaigns (e.g., see [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#))
- enforcing faster response times to student inquiries, including personal phone calls and emails
- expanding our visibility on campus with additional classroom visits, information sessions, Career Fairs, hosting information tables in the Bonnie, displaying pull-up banners, sidewalk springboards, and Heth bridge banners, providing hot cocoa information sessions during finals, and GradHog Day (celebrated on Groundhog Day)
- increasing collaboration with graduate program coordinators
- conducting numerous recruitment visits to other college and university campuses
- implementing a texting services strategy for recruitment
- prioritizing the staff's attention on all phases of the recruitment funnel, from inquiry through enrollment

Our program growth can also be attributed to our graduate program coordinators and department chairs that have invested their time and efforts into recruiting for their programs. Further, in fall 2015, we were approved to add a second graduate recruiter to our staff. The new position has since helped to enable our recruitment success while also generating new revenues for Radford University.

Outcomes for graduate enrollments:

Term	Headcount Enrollment	Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Enrollment
Fall 2015	863	654
Fall 2016	948	692
Fall 2017	1,000	726

Additional new recruitment initiatives:

- Working to develop accelerated degree program partnerships with Emory and Henry College that will enable cross-institutional accelerated degree options with Radford University graduate programs in Business Administration, English, and Strategic Communication.
- Expanding communication to prospects via development and implementation within CollegeNet's customer relations management (CRM) system, *Prospect*, of multiple targeted correspondences for graduate candidate pools.

I.B. Graduate Student Professional Development Awards

This year, the Graduate College has provided Graduate Student Professional Development Awards of up to \$500 each for 50 graduate students to present their research and scholarship at professional conferences. The funding provided by our college has allowed graduate students to present their work internationally in Japan, Australia, Canada, Belize, Puerto Rico, and Germany. They have also represented Radford University by delivering national conference presentations in San Diego, Chicago, Charlottesville, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Columbus OH and SC, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Washington DC, Johnson City, and St. Petersburg, among other cities, not to mention numerous regional conference presentations.

I.C. Graduate Policies and Procedures

Over the past year, the Graduate Policies and Procedures Committee and Graduate Affairs Council have updated several Graduate Catalog policies. Rather than continuing to enforce policies that may have been rigid or outdated, we revisited and rewrote policies to better meet the needs of our current students and to better align with our graduate recruitment objectives. These revisions also help us to limit the number of academic petitions by students requesting exceptions to stated policies. Among other changes, over the past year, we revised policies to: increase the number of transfer credits allowable and to permit double counting of coursework toward multiple degrees, expand our "Permission for Seniors to Enroll" policy to enable seniors from other colleges or universities to enroll in graduate coursework at Radford University, clarify expectations for graduate-level learning outcomes in 500-level courses, clarify grade-related dismissal policies, and remove the requirement for students to submit a "Program of Study" form given that we implemented online DegreeWorks.

II. Research Development and Sponsored Programs

II.A. Research and Grant Support Services

The College of Graduate Studies and Research provided half-time reassignment for Dr. Agida Manizade to serve as Research and Grants Advisor and one-fourth time reassignment for Ms. Marissa Wilder to serve as Grant Writing Editor in 2017-2018.

The Research and Grants Advisor role was designed to enhance faculty research and grant writing productivity at Radford University by serving as a resource, mentor and advocate for faculty research

and grant program development. The Research and Grants Advisor assisted faculty with identifying possible funding opportunities for their research, provided consultation to help faculty develop their scholarly projects or agendas into competitive research programs with funding potential, helped faculty to navigate the grant proposal submission process, reviewed grant proposal drafts and provided faculty with feedback to help strengthen the case for need, supported faculty to identify internal and/or external research or grant collaborators, and provided outreach to junior faculty and faculty receiving internal college grants to encourage and promote research and grant development. The Grant Writing Editor provided editorial feedback on grants prior to submission, helped to ensure proposal compliance with sponsor expectations, and facilitated development of support letters.

Our faculty have reported these services to be extraordinarily beneficial. We are reviewing options for continuing to provide similar services in the future.

II.B. Sponsored Programs and Grants Management Office

Effective August 2017, the Office of Sponsored Programs and Grants Management (SPGM) within the College of Graduate Studies and Research began providing centralized administrative support for post-award grant-related activities. In fall 2017, SPGM established and implemented a more proactive customer support function to allow PIs to have a single point of contact within SPGM for all grant expenditures during the post award process. Additionally, the post-award staff have implemented services to:

- Provide administrative support to ensure all funds are properly spent in accordance with University, state, federal and grant requirements
- Create a timeline of deliverables throughout the grant period that identify the administrative tasks needed, relevant dates and responsible parties
- Advise on proper University protocol and offer assistance to ensure objectives are met
- Work with other administrative departments, as well as administrative assistants to ensure necessary processes are performed with little burden to the PI
- Prepare all necessary personnel hiring paperwork (e.g. PR-40)
- Hold mandatory kick off meetings at the beginning of every new award
- Send monthly summaries of grant activity to PI
- Hold mandatory close-out meeting within 90 days of the grant end date with the PI

SPGM has also enhanced its commitment to faculty professional development. In January 2018, the office announced availability of Travel Stipend Awards, to be competitively awarded to faculty members with expressed interest in pursuing external grants to support their research, scholarship and creative activities. Stipends for travel were offered to the following three workshops in spring and summer 2018:

- Spring 2018 [National Science Foundation grant conference](#), to be held June 4-5 in Detroit, MI.
- Spring 2018 [NIH Regional Seminar on Program Funding and Grants Administration](#), to be held May 2-4 in Washington, DC.
- [Grant Writing USA](#) offered grants training in Roanoke, VA March 22-23, 2018.

On April 6, 2018, SPGM will offer an all-day grant writing workshop in Heth Hall, Room 016. Dr. Robert Porter, a national leader in the growing field of research and proposal development, will be on campus to present a session on “Writing Successful Grants for all Disciplines.” This hands-on workshop will

begin at 9:00 AM and will conclude around 4:00 PM. Both breakfast and lunch will be provided to those who register for the event. Announcements have been distributed to all faculty.

II.C. Outcomes in Research Development and Sponsored Programs

The College of Graduate Studies and Research's implementation of strategic research and proposal development services have corresponded to the following growth over the first two quarters of 2017-2018, as compared to the first two quarters of 2016-2017. Third quarter outcomes will be available in April 2018.

- Growth in proposal submission values from \$1,556,306 last year to \$2,626,738 this year.
- Growth in the total number of proposal submissions during this period from 19 to 24.
- Increase in the total number of first-time principal investigators involved, from 4 to 14.
- Increase in awarded grant value from \$2,249,073 to \$5,710,415, representing 154% growth.
Note: This increase is largely accounted for by the annual award from the ASSET grant for competency-based education of \$3,039,197. Without that grant included, the increase would be from \$2,249,073 to \$2,671,218, representing 18.8% growth.

III. Research Compliance Office

Several changes have been implemented in the Research Compliance Office (RCO) to improve its overall efficiency and ability to serve principle investigators and student researchers, all while remaining compliant with federal regulations for human subjects and animal research.

College of Graduate Studies and Research funding was utilized to pay for a designated member of the IRB to review all exempt and expedited protocols. Additionally, Dr. John Brummette, the Acting Associate Dean and Interim Research Compliance Manager, was also designated by the IRB to serve as an additional reviewer for exempt and expedited protocols, as well as protocols that have been submitted for continuation or modification. Both make the approval process as efficient and expedient as possible for researchers.

An IRB subcommittee was formed and tasked with creating a new, shorter and more user-friendly protocol form for human subjects research. The work of this committee culminated in the development of a new form that was sent to the IRB for review and approval during the April full board meeting.

Members of the RCO staff worked with Info Ed to complete a six phase process of correcting various bugs and issues that have been identified within the Info Ed system. This process, which was initially started by the former RCO manager, involved working with Info Ed to retest the remainder of the fixes they initiated as a result of individual items tickets submitted by the RCO staff. This process was completed at the beginning of the spring semester.

The RCO staff worked with University Relations to functionally and aesthetically improve the RCO website.

The RCO has worked extensively with Dr. Sara O'Brien, the IACUC chair, and Dr. Steven Smith, the attending veterinarian for the RU IACUC, to ensure that RU's animal program is compliant with federal animal use and care regulations. Duties related to this goal have included facilitating the efficient review of all IACUC protocols according to federal regulations and IACUC assurance policies, scheduling all IACUC meetings, and maintaining animal care and use records that are inspected by the USDA on a semi-annual basis.

IV. Advancement and Alumni Relations

At least in recent years, the College of Graduate Studies and Research had not been active in advancement or in developing alumni relations. Over the past year, we have worked closely with Advancement and Alumni Relations to begin establishing relationships with our alumni as we look toward our future. We have distributed mailings to graduate alumni, sponsored a table at the Women of Radford event, participated in an advancement trip to Washington DC, and perhaps most significantly, established a founding Advisory Board. Initial objectives for the Advisory Board have been established related to enhancing the College's visibility and reputation, strengthening graduate alumni relations and engagement, and helping to guide fundraising priorities and strategies for the College. Our Board will be meeting for the first time in April 2018.

Outcomes:

Largely as a result of our mailings, from July 1, 2017 to March 25, 2018, we received 32 donations (77.8% increase over FY17) totaling \$5,850 (85.0% increase over FY16). We plan to continue expanding our advancement operations in the upcoming fiscal year.