14/AS/17/GC - Resolution for the Reinstitution of a Graduate Dean

Submitted by Graduate Council (5/2/17)

Resolved: That the Academic Senate applauds recent statements by President Junn and Provost Greer indicating a willingness to reinstate the Dean of the Graduate School and be it further

Resolved: That the Academic Senate urges the administration to act quickly to reinstate the Dean of Graduate Education and be it further

Resolved: That the Dean of the Graduate School be provided resources to support both disciplinary and interdisciplinary graduate programs, including programs with particular needs most effectively addressed at a central level, to assist graduate-level program reviews, and to further innovation in graduate education and be it further

Resolved: That the reinstitution of the Dean of the Graduate School coincide with capacity-building in the Graduate School in support of graduate education.

Rationale:

Based on the University Mission and the campus-wide Strategic Plan, Graduate Council has consistently called for the reinstitution of a Graduate Dean following the elimination of that position in 2005. As early as October 2009, Graduate Council developed the Graduate Education Action Plan. The first goal in this plan calls for the reinstatement of the Graduate School Dean to provide leadership of a "centralized, supportive, organizational structure for graduate education." Furthermore, in May 2011 Graduate Council produced a document titled "Graduate Dean Justification." Graduate Council has also generated a prior "Resolution for the Reinstatement of a Graduate Dean" as well as a position description for a "Dean of Graduate Studies and Research." With Stanislaus State's next WASC reaffirmation of accreditation on the horizon, it also should be noted that in its EER (Educational Effectiveness Review) report of April 2010, WASC recommended creating a leadership position focused on graduate studies, such as a Dean of the Graduate School.

The history of administrative oversight of graduate education at Stanislaus State demonstrates a great deal of flux. During the 1960s and 1970s, graduate education was under the purview of the Assistant Vice President. From 1978 to 1981, responsibility shifted from the Assistant Vice President to the Dean for Credential and Graduate Programs, then to the Associate Vice President in 1982. From 1983 to 2002, graduate education fell under the administrative care of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, which was renamed during this period to Associate Vice-Provost of Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate School. From 2003 to 2005, administrative responsibility for graduate education went to the Director of Graduate School and Acting Dean of the Graduate School. Then in 2005, the dean position was eliminated and has not since been replaced. Responsibilities are currently distributed across several individuals, including the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs; Library Dean; Dean of Admissions; Director of the Center for Excellence in Graduate Education; and, especially, the deans of colleges with graduate programs.

This current decentralized model has left graduate education with no singular position responsible for support of and advocacy for graduate education. An adequately resourced and empowered Dean of the Graduate School would provide this support and advocacy without usurping responsibilities appropriately held by college deans. This dean could provide leadership in numerous areas that would both strengthen graduate education at Stanislaus State and help the University fulfill its mission. These include: facilitating strategic planning for graduate education; representing the Graduate School as an equal member at Dean's Council meetings, and in Strategic Planning meetings, thereby bringing visibility to graduate education that is not currently present in those forums; supporting marketing and recruitment of graduate programs; facilitating and supporting assessment of graduate education, including the oversight and support of graduate-level program reviews; assisting the campus in developing faculty capacity to engage in research and scholarly activity, which is important for all faculty but especially for those who teach at the graduate level; working with University Advancement and external agencies to solicit funding in support of graduate education; acting as an advocate within the larger community to encourage dialog and build support for the value of graduate education in the Central Valley; representing Stanislaus State at regional and national meetings of graduate deans; and, overall, fostering a campus-wide graduate culture.

A social justice argument for a Graduate Dean exists as well. U.S. Department of Education figures show that, as an advanced degree is becoming an increasingly normative indicator of exceptional academic preparation, growth in demand for graduate degrees is outpacing growth in demand for undergraduate degrees. Disparities in degree attainment by underrepresented minorities (URMs) are greater for graduate than for undergraduate degrees. One of the roles of a Graduate Dean would be to ensure that, as a public institution, Stanislaus State ensures that URMs in our region have access to and support for graduate education.

Approved by the Academic Senate on September 12, 2017
Approved by President Ellen Junn on October 5, 2017 (Contingent upon availability of baseline budget for salary & O&E)