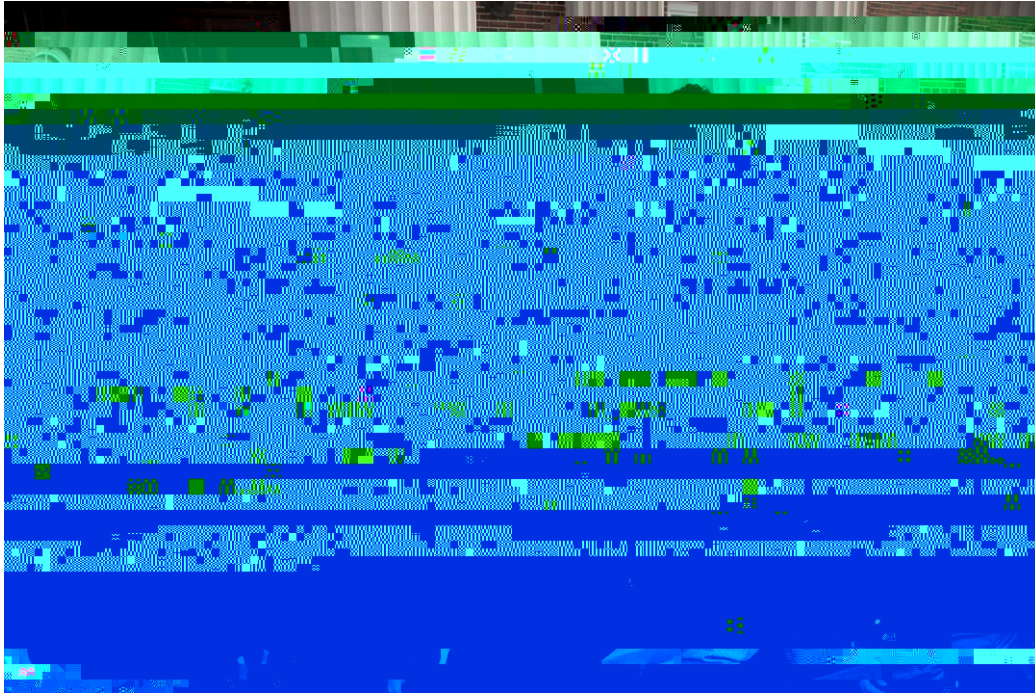


Associate Vice President of Research and Dean of
Graduate Studies
Graduate School Task Force



Southern Methodist University

December 18, 2018

SMU's Strategic Plan, *Launching SMU's Second Century*, states that to improve its competitiveness, SMU must continue to advance its standing among pre-eminent national universities. Emphasizing the importance of Ph.D. programs to achieving this goal, the Provost's Task Force on Scholarly Research and Creative Impact recommended creation of a Graduate School "to manage and facilitate non-professional graduate and especially doctorate of philosophy programs to build efficiency and standardization across programs" and "prioritize national recruiting efforts." Reinforcing this recommendation, *Continuing the Ascent: Recommendations for Enhancing the Academic Quality and Stature of Southern Methodist University* calls for creation of an SMU Graduate School to oversee University-wide guidelines such as admission standards for doctoral programs, support for doctoral students, and degree completion.

This report presents the recommendations of a Graduate School Task Force established by the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies and charged with recommending appropriate roles and responsibilities for a graduate school at SMU. Participants on the Task Force included representatives from the Faculty Senate and all schools with Ph.D. programs. Their recommendations are based on an assessment of the state of graduate education at SMU and a review of graduate schools at SMU Aspirational Peer and Colonial Group institutions.

The Task Force was in complete agreement that the role of a graduate school should be focused on facilitating program success and efficiency, ensuring financial support, and providing oversight of University standards for graduate education, but should not reduce or subsume important faculty responsibilities in creating graduate programs and curriculum, and in recruiting, admitting, mentoring, and graduating outstanding students. Shared governance must play an important role, and a first step in the creation of a Graduate School should be

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SMU's Strategic Plan, *Launching SMU's Second Century*¹, states that to improve its competitiveness,
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Graduate education is complex and multifaceted. To meet the needs of a wide variety of disciplines, an array of distinct degree types have evolved including Master's degrees, some of which are terminal, Master's and Doctoral professional degrees, and Ph.Ds. Post-Doctoral appointments, while not strictly constituting a degree program, offer additional training opportunities for recent Ph.D. recipients and are important positions in a research institution.

, such as Doctors of Engineering (D.E.s) and J.D.s, deepen a student's education in their specific field, preparing them to function at a higher level in the industry or organization for which they will work. The importance of these degrees has increased to meet the expanding demand for knowledge and specialized skills and training in research tools and creative methods that are beyond the scope of undergraduate education. Graduate education in these programs plays a crucial role in meeting this demand and in preparing the next generation of real world leaders and innovators. In providing these programs, a university contributes in a very important way to workforce development and economic expansion in its region and beyond. For some students, these programs serve as stepping stones to doctoral programs and academic research.

have come to be viewed as essential components of the intellectual ecosystem of a 21st century research university. It is widely understood in higher education that quality Ph.D. students dramatically enhance the overall intellectual environment of a university and the productivity of its faculty. They are also important contributors to a university's teaching mission. Whether through leading discussion sessions, supervising laboratories, or working with the faculty on course syllabi and presentations, these students extend and deepen the capacity of a university to offer the very best undergraduate learning experience available, including undergraduate student mentoring and research experiences. As scholars in training, graduate students play a key role in research, constituting the majority of the workforce of productive research programs that successfully attract external funding and generate greater exposure for both the university and its faculty.

Ph.D. programs differ from Master's and professional degrees by requiring that a student demonstrate the ability to (1) identify an important problem in their field, (2) develop and execute a research plan to address the problem.

The Task Force reviewed the administrative structures for graduate education at our 18 Aspirational Peer and Colonial Group institutions. ***Two-thirds of these institutions have graduate schools*** charged with responsibilities summarized in Table 1. All of these graduate schools offer special fellowships, set baseline policies and best practices, and offer student life and professional development programming. The majority of these graduate schools also provide some sort of admissions oversight, and about half administer tuition waivers to their doctoral programs, as applicable, and are the source of general financial support for graduate students exclusive of Teaching Assistant (TA) and Research Assistant (RA) positions.

School	Admissions Decision Oversight	Tuition Waiver	Stipend Funding	Special Fellowships	Best Practices and Policy Baselines	Student Life and Professional Development
Boston College		N/A				
Boston University Brandeis University		N/A	GS or Department			

A subset of the Task Force conducted site visits at the University of Notre Dame and Vanderbilt University during July 2018 to further research the practices of two of our aspirational peer institutions that historically shared several strong similarities with SMU. Both are private research universities that have historically focused on undergraduate education, but have strategically expanded services and support for graduate students to increase institutional stature in graduate education and research. Both now feature graduate schools that were until recently joined with an Office of Research (Notre Dame until 2007, Vanderbilt until 2015). Appendix B

programs in the face of the challenges pressing graduate programs at institutions across the country, such as the increasing time and rising cost to produce a Ph.D.⁵

Figure 1. Number and ranking status of programs at other universities that are equivalent to the 17 SMU Ph.D. programs ranked by US News and World Report for 2019. (Note: All Aspirational Peer Institutions offer ranked programs for which there is no equivalent at SMU; these are not included in this figure.)

Currently, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS) operates in the role most similar to a Graduate School at SMU. ORGS oversees University-Wide Fellowships such as the University Ph.D. Fellowship and to a limited extent has introduced broader student life and professional development opportunities for graduate students, including a graduate student orientation, professional development workshops, and monthly student social events. Originally part of Dedman College, ORGS was moved under the Provost's Office in 2007. This historical connection influences some of the work done by the office today with the result that ORGS continues to work closely with Dedman College to oversee admissions policies and procedures, process current student forms, review Ph.D. dissertations, and finalize graduation requirements.

Recognizing that a Graduate School is the vehicle of choice by a majority of our Aspirational Peer and Colonial Group institutions for optimizing university resources and establishing standards and procedures for graduate education, the Task Force strongly endorses creation of a Graduate School at SMU with the following recommendations.

Schools, departments, and faculty should retain important authority and responsibilities. Subject to standards and minimums set by the Graduate School, schools and departments should always retain responsibility for:

- 1) Applicant review and admissions decisions
- 2) Financial awards outside of special fellowships
- 3) Admissions policies beyond those baselines set by the Graduate School
- 4) Degree requirements and curriculum
- 5) Field-specific academic standards and progress milestones
- 6) Monitoring of student academic progress through annual reviews
- 7) Appointment of faculty members within a program
- 8) Program and curriculum development
- 9) RA and TA assignments
- 10) College oricuw4.CID 4t13.5 (o-1.2 (n)3.7 (1)TJ01 e h2 (m)-0.7 (ef)39(6i1u35 0 Td())Tj/TTTJ01 n9J01 n9

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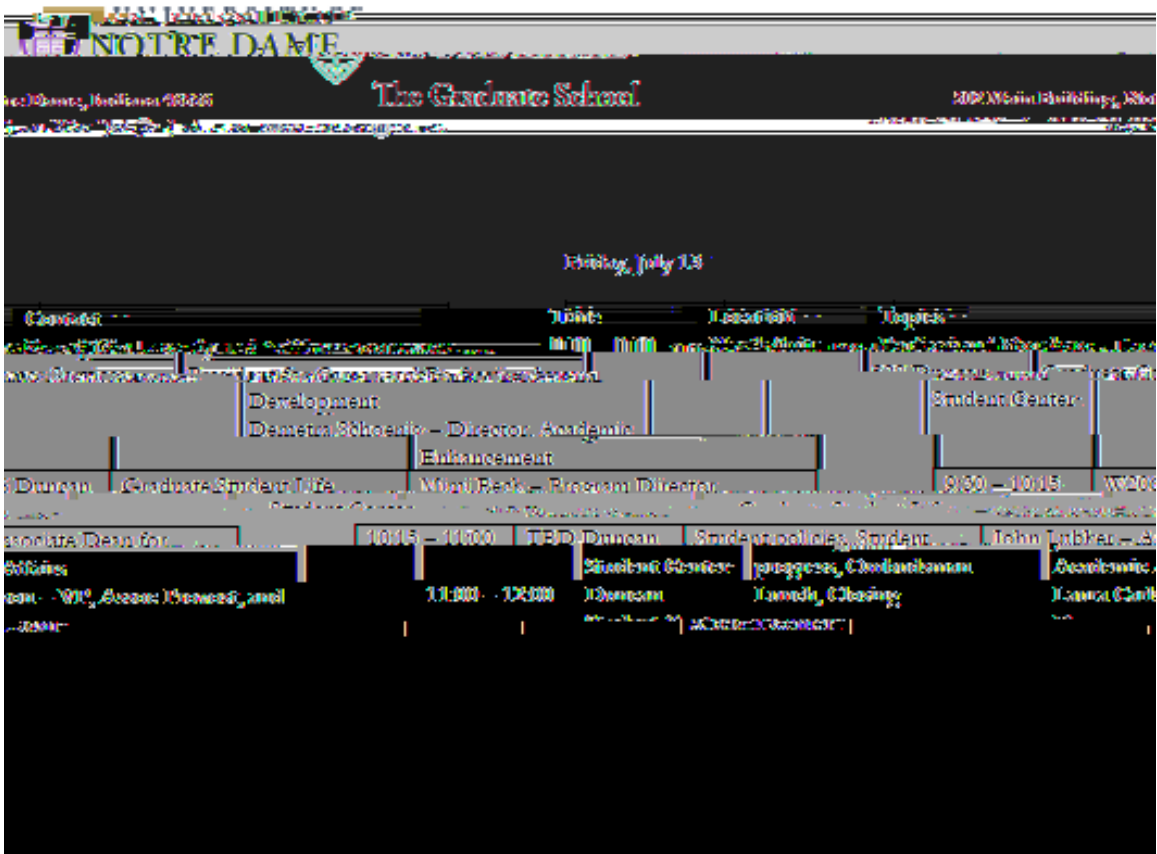
After the production of a draft Task Force report in Spring 2018, a diligent effort was made to receive input from the stakeholders across campus. In June, July, August, and September, a total of seven town hall meetings were held that were chaired by Dean Quick, including one devoted to graduate student input. In summarizing the comments, it should be emphasized is that virtually all of those who spoke at those meetings lauded the idea of creating a Graduate School at SMU.

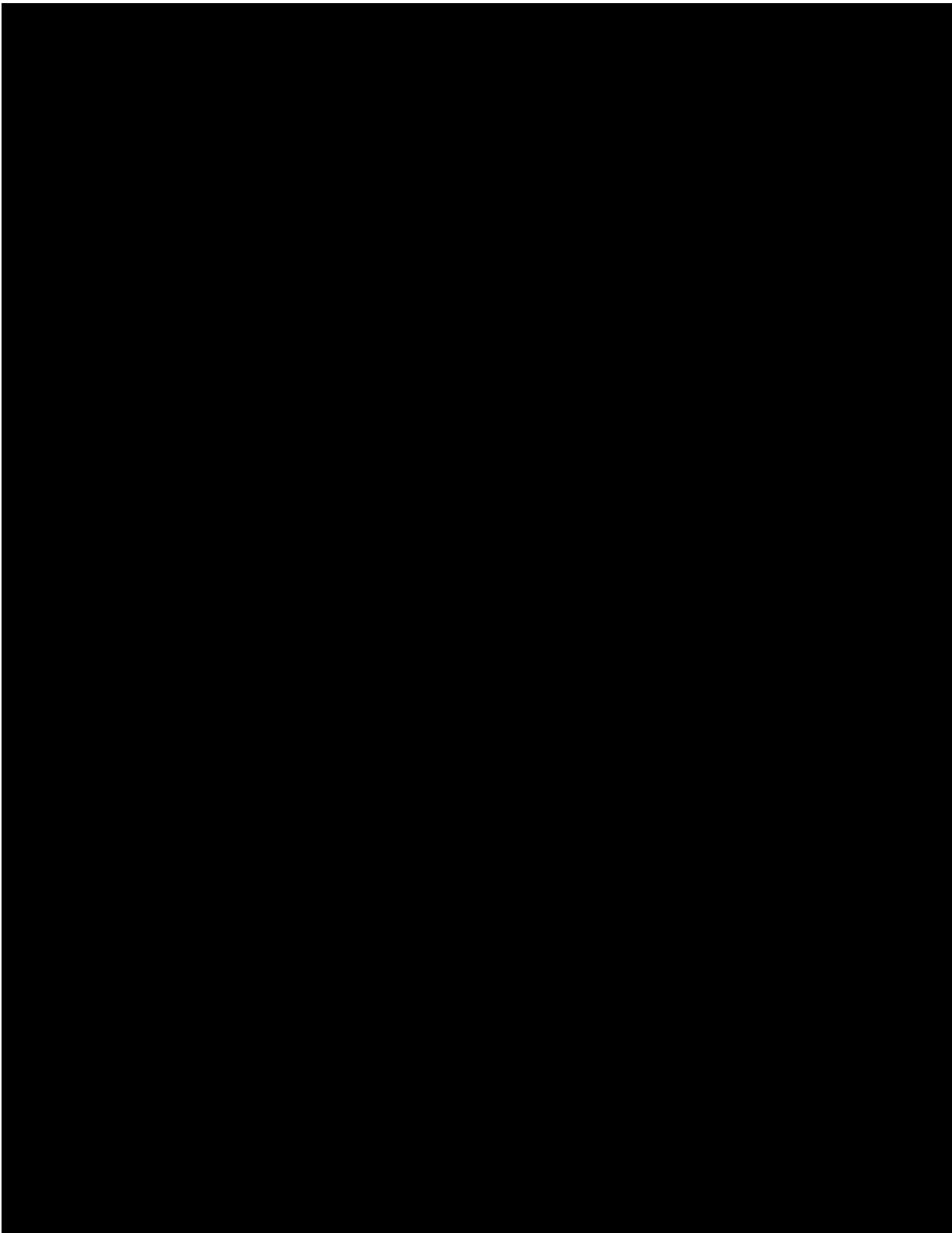
The comments from those meetings can readily be split into two groups. First, many articulated goals that they would like to see instituted by the new school. For instance, many said that they felt it important that the Graduate School be an advocate for graduate students to help make stipends nationally competitive and provide support for health insurance, as well as to guide them in the areas of professional development and raise the overall visibility of graduate education at SMU. Several faculty and students also mentioned that staff at the school could help with conflicts that cannot be resolved by the department.

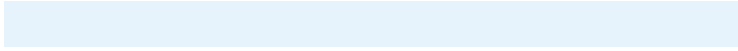
Faculty also want the school to be an advocate for programs, including helping with recruiting, development support for graduate programs, and full-ride fellowships that can be used to attract top talent. In particular, it was felt that a graduate school could provide support for two important areas for growth that are currently not well managed: post-doctoral scholars and interdisciplinary programs. With regard to the latter, a graduate school holds a unique position, agnostic with regard to field and discipline, allowing it to provide support and oversight as a neutral player.

In addition to aspirations for the school, the faculty also expressed a number of concerns. Above all, they wondered where the funding for the school would come from and were concerned that it might be drawn from existing funds for the graduate programs. Additionally, there was discussion of what might be the proper scope for graduate school oversight (in terms of admissions, degrees, and degree requirements) and a timeline for implementation of a school.

These observations have informed and supported the development of the task force report.







				Fall 2018			Fall 2017			% INCR/DECR		
				FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total
			Undergrad Non Deg	0	4	4	0	5	5		-20%	-20%
			Undergraduate	147	6	153	137	7	144	7.3%	-14.3%	6.3%

At the conclusion of the Fall 2018 semester, a Graduate School Council will be immediately constituted to move into the next phase of development for the Graduate School. The Task Force recommends that the Graduate Council meet weekly for the Spring 2019 semester, approximately 15 meetings in total, to create the policies and procedures which will govern the School's initial framework. The Task Force recommends the Council's work proceed in three steps:

Step one: Review the current catalogs of Dedman College and the Lyle, Meadows and Simmons Schools to see where there are commonalities and where there are discrepancies, and unify these segments into a single Graduate School catalog.

Step two: Review the catalogs and academic codes of select peer schools to determine where SMU's catalog might be updated to reflect best practices.

Step three: Consider other policy questions that extend beyond the catalog.

The Task Force recommends that the Council complete its work by May 17, 2019, the day prior to Spring 2019 Commencement. This would provide sufficient time for the University's catalog editor to prepare the new Graduate School catalog for Fall 2019 publication.

The Spring 2019 Graduate Council should be charged with formulating the policies governing the composition and selection of the permanent Graduate Council. For the Spring 2019 semester, the Task Force recommends that the Graduate Council comprise one faculty representative each from Dedman I, II, and III, Lyle, Simmons, and Meadows, along with an associate dean from each of the four schools.

The Graduate School must be staffed adequately to perform the functions to which it is assigned. Overseeing the Graduate School should be a dedicated Dean of the Graduate School. This will involve splitting the current role of Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies, following the recommendation of the Provost's Task Force on Scholarly Research and Creative Impact. The current Graduate Studies staff, an Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies, Director of Graduate Recruitment, and Asea1 (e)9.7 (c)(e)9.7 (-3.6 (e) (i)-3.6B-2 (t)3 (ud)13.54(i)7.2 (c)--4 (u)e)

Initial Launch of a Graduate School in the Fall Semester, 2019, *with initial focus on Ph.D. program*. Responsibilities for Dedman Masters programs currently handled by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies will also be within the purview of the Graduate School at this stage. A new position of Director of Graduate Fellowships would be added to facilitate applications for external grants and fellowships by graduate students.



Expansion of the Graduate School purview to include other terminal degrees – the Doctor of Engineering, Master’s of Fine Arts, and Doctor of Education. The Graduate School would also take on the responsibility of overseeing all university post-doctoral scholars. Stage two would include the hiring of a Director/Assistant Director of Postdoctoral Fellows, and a Director/Assistant Director of Career and Professional Development.

