Report of the

Ad Hoc Committee for the Redesign of the Functions of
the Office of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School

August 1996

Committee Members

Allen M. Goldman, Institute of Technology Professor and Head
School of Physics & Astronomy

James A. Grant, Professor and Head
Department of Geology - Duluth

Patrice A. Morrow, Professor and Head
Department of Ecology, Evolution & Behavior

Thomas J. Bouchard, Professor
Department of Psychology

Mark L. Brenner, Vice President & Dean*
Office of the Vice President for Research &
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Mariah Snyder, Professor
School of Nursing

Kenneth N. Brooks, Professor
Department of Forest Resources

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*Mark Brenner's participation was limited to the information-gathering process and responding to the committee as necessary; he was excused from discussions related to recommendations.
Executive Summary

The Office of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School ("the Office") was created in the Spring of 1992 to provide leadership and integration of the University's research activities and graduate education programs. It provides oversight for a number of interdisciplinary research units and support units (e.g., ORTTA, IRB), and has played a pivotal role in establishing policies, procedures, and guidelines that have brought the University into compliance with federal rules and regulations, many of which are new or may not have been rigorously addressed in the past. The Office sets standards for graduate education and provides an array of services to graduate students that ensure their fair treatment. Because of its importance to the mission of the University, the Committee recommends that:

- The Office be positioned at the highest level under the Office of the President, no matter whether the present organizational structure remains or a different structure emerges with a new administration. It must champion the idea that research, scholarship, and graduate education are inseparable at the University of Minnesota.

The Committee reviewed activities currently centered in the Office and felt that, in general, they are appropriately housed. The Committee disavows the view that the operations of the Office are overly bureaucratic, inefficient and unnecessary.

The Office should maintain and strengthen its role as steward of the ideals of the academy and academic excellence. In addition to the oversight of graduate programs, the Office has developed review processes to evaluate individuals and research proposals of faculty and graduate students. In this context, the Committee recommends:

- The Office modify the program review process to make it more discerning and useful for graduate programs and departments and to tie it more closely to the allocation of resources in which the Office has responsibility.

- Under the policy of Responsibility Center Management, the Office should ensure that the financial considerations of units within the University do not jeopardize standards of academic excellence.
The Office is a logical place in the University structure to ensure that programs remain academically sound in this new environment.

The Office must forge stronger linkages between chancellors, provosts, deans, directors, and department heads in research and graduate education. In this regard and in reference to a greater role in program review (stated above), the Committee recommends that:

- The University provide the Office with increased responsibilities for the distribution (and coordination) of indirect cost recovery and make it the principal office to which users of such funds are accountable.

- The Office play a major role as a facilitator of intellectual change and of interdisciplinary programs. The Office can foster emerging interdisciplinary education and research that often cuts across several departments, colleges, and provostal units. A process is needed within the University to facilitate the maturation of such programs into new disciplines, with the prospects in some instances of creating new departments.

In the face of changing national priorities, which have dramatically decreased research funding, the Office must play a strategic role in facilitating research. In this regard, the Committee recommends:

- The University empower the Office to take a lead role in charting the new course necessary to maintain and strengthen the University's position as a major research institution.

*It is the considered opinion of this committee that if the graduate research enterprise is to remain world-class in these times of more difficult finances, it is necessary but not sufficient for the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Office to play a more central role in decision-making and in the operation of the University. This does not preclude the need for other actions to achieve this goal. The function, authority, and accountability of this office must become more clearly defined than is now the case.*
1. Introduction

According to the Mission Statement of 14 January, 1994, the University of Minnesota is dedicated to advancement of learning and the search for truth, sharing of knowledge through education, and application of knowledge.\(^1\) The mission has three aspects: Research and Discovery, Teaching and Learning, and Outreach and Public Service. Graduate education and research are core activities of the University of Minnesota, because they are central to each aspect of the mission. They are the University's principal contributions to the state, the nation, and the world, and make the University of Minnesota a research university, an entity very different from all of the other units of higher education in the state. The University of Minnesota is the only comprehensive Ph.D. granting institution in the state. It is a national and international resource graduating approximately 675 doctoral students and 1,700 master's students each year. The University annually spends $426 million on research (1995 data)—approximately 85% of it generated by the faculty—and has a national ranking of 20th among major U.S. research universities.\(^2\) The presence of graduate students and the integration of undergraduate and graduate education, including opportunities to participate in original research, provides an invaluable learning experience for undergraduates in the state of Minnesota. Apart from the long-term benefit of research and training carried out at the University in the creation and dissemination of new knowledge and new enterprises, there is a direct, short-term benefit to the state of 36.5 jobs created for each one million dollars of research money (based on figures for 1993).\(^3\)

In the current national atmosphere of retrenchment, some have argued that only a handful of research universities will survive. It is essential to the economic and social fabric of the state that the University of Minnesota be one of the survivors. \textit{There are no examples of states having vibrant economies that do not also have at least one major research university.} The long-term success of the state of Minnesota is dependent upon the University being sustained as a major comprehensive research institution. Over the last 10 years the University's ranking has fallen from 16th to 20th. If further decline is allowed to occur, the University of Minnesota will not be a survivor. \textit{It is the considered opinion of this committee that if the graduate research}
enterprise is to remain world-class in these times of more difficult finances, it is necessary but not sufficient for the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School to play a more central role in decision-making and in the operation of the University. This does not preclude the need for other actions to achieve this goal.

Many research and graduate programs at the University are nationally and internationally recognized. The current structure has helped to facilitate and sustain a high level of activity and excellence. Until 1992, the Graduate School, which supervises graduate education, had existed as an independent unit for over 75 years. The University did not have a central research officer; responsibility for the research effort was spread across the institution. The Office of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School (referred to in this document as "the Office") was created in the Spring of 1992 to provide leadership and integration of the University's research initiatives and graduate education programs. In addition to its role in these areas, the Office provides oversight for a number of interdisciplinary research units and support units. The present Office has played a pivotal role in establishing policies, procedures, and guidelines that have brought the University into compliance with various federal rules and regulations, many of which are new or may not have been rigorously addressed in the past. Another fundamental task of the Office is to explain and promote this necessarily complex but important office and mission to the University's external stakeholders.

Since establishing the Office, the structure of the Twin Cities campus of the University has changed to a three provost system. Financial management of the University may change dramatically in the near future with the implementation of Responsibility Center Management. Moreover, the external political and financial climate within which the University operates is constantly changing, both at the state and national levels, posing serious challenges to the graduate education and research roles of this University. Given the importance of graduate education and research to the University, the Office must be positioned to respond adaptively to change so that these central functions are not diminished.

In the above context, this ad hoc committee was convened by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Ettore Infante, to examine broadly the roles and functions of the Office.4 In particular, this committee was mandated to:

- Examine the adequacy, effectiveness, and efficiency of the present support mechanisms for graduate education and research, with particular emphasis on those functions discharged by the Office, i.e., examine functions carried out in this office;
- Recommend changes in roles, responsibilities, and functions that will strengthen support mechanisms and their effective and efficient discharge, taking into consideration the roles and responsibilities and functions of
campus and provostal units, colleges and departments, i.e., examine interactions between the Office and Chancellors, Provosts, Deans, and Department Heads.

- Suggest an appropriate reconfiguration of relationships, and of budgetary allocation responsibilities, between the Office and the other academic units of the University; and
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current mechanisms for monitoring quality in the area of graduate education, research and scholarship.

These examinations and the subsequent report were to be carried out in a very short period of time; the report to be completed by the beginning of the summer of 1996. Consequently, the committee chose not to (1) report on within-office issues that are dealt with satisfactorily by internal documents of the Office, such as its roles and responsibilities, and (2) examine certain detailed within-office issues that were carefully addressed in previous reports, such as the Johnson Report of 1992.

_The committee did, however, review activities currently centered in the Office and felt that, in general, they are appropriately housed. The committee disavows the view that the operations of the Office are overly bureaucratic, inefficient, and unnecessary. This is not to say that the functioning of all activities is optimal, but it is clear that under the current leadership the Office is actively pursuing the streamlining of activities to make them less bureaucratic, and is constantly examining its role in pass-through funding and other financial matters so as to make them efficient and administratively simple. The decentralization of graduate admissions decision making is an example of the progress that has been made along these lines. The committee recommends that streamlining of such functions be ongoing._

The committee recognizes the Office plays an important role in facilitating interactions between graduate students and faculty. _The Office provides an array of services, establishes rules on the fair treatment of graduate students that are uniform throughout the University, and provides a place where students can bring questions, problems, and suggestions. The Office acts as a resource to the Council of Graduate Students and seeks its input in policy making_. These activities are essential for upholding University standards and insuring that all student concerns are treated consistently. Faculty and administrators within departments, colleges, or even provostal units could not provide the breadth of student support activities as efficiently as the Office. The Office provides support to graduate programs through its evaluation and interpretation of international student records and maintenance of a database on graduate student performance. Without such central support, each unit would need to provide these services leading to considerable duplication of effort.
The American research university is a unique institution quite distinct from a corporate business entity, and due to its success is being emulated throughout the world. In considering organizational changes that may have an impact on the Office it is important to keep in mind certain important aspects that are key to the success of research universities. Most research/scholarship is faculty originated. It comes from the bottom up rather than the top down. The faculty normally creates new ideas either without external prompting, or in response to international, national, state, or private sector needs (not all university research is curiosity-driven). Support for the development of these ideas is then sought from some combination of foundations, business, state, federal, and international funding agencies and internal sources. The financial scale of such activities may vary greatly in a manner that depends upon the field, but the need for generating support and the general entrepreneurial character of the activities are always present. Unless viewed as a community of independent scholarly entrepreneurs and a forum for propounding and testing ideas, the University and its operation may be perceived as chaotic to those accustomed to the corporate world of top-down management. Attempts to over-organize and over-regulate the process from above to create a top-down management structure run the risk of being counterproductive by stifling creativity. Indeed there is a certain parallel between the forum of ideas in successful research universities and the "free market" in ideas and innovation that might be found, for example, in the electronics and computer industries where a similarly chaotic and creative environment exists.

It is also important to realize that the time scale to achieve results in the University may be much longer than the time to bring products to market in the business world, and that some research/scholarly activities have no obvious financial returns but contribute to the ultimate advancement of our understanding of the world. It would be a serious mistake to base all decision-making on a perception of financial value.

In this report we discuss the following activities as they relate to the Office:

- its role as steward of the ideals of the academy and academic excellence
- its role in linking administrative units (departments, colleges, provostal units, campuses) with graduate education and research functions,
- its role as facilitator of intellectual change and the development of interdisciplinary programs and new disciplines,
- its strategic role in facilitating research.

With regard to some of these issues the Committee has specific recommendations. Essential to their successful implementation is the position of the Office in the administrative structure of the University.

The Office carries out a number of activities that involve critical review of the accomplishments of individuals and programs, in addition to its oversight of graduate programs. In some instances these activities are perceived as intrusions into the operation of units, but they are essential to ensuring high standards and promoting excellence. A process of critical review is central to a culture of excellence, and to the effective use of resources. Among the activities that involve the review of the credentials of students and faculty, and the proposals of faculty are the following: the Grant-in-Aid of Research, Artistry, and Scholarship program, the Summer Faculty Fellowship Program, funding for interdisciplinary research centers, the McKnight Land-Grant Professorship program, the Distinguished McKnight University Professorships, the Hill Visiting Professorships, first-year graduate tuition fellowships, graduate dissertation fellowships, and block grants to graduate programs. The Committee believes it is essential that decision-making processes for the distribution of funds continue to be review-based rather than formula-based passthroughs of resources to units outside the Office.

The distribution of indirect costs is not well understood, and the principles and methods of returning indirect costs to units where they are generated need to be clarified. Indirect costs should, however, generally be used to support the research infrastructure. They should not be used to supplement faculty salaries or activities whose cost should be borne by the University. Some provision should be made for successful researchers to have direct access to some of the indirect costs they generate. This will help to make researchers even more competitive and enhance their productivity. The Office should have a prominent role in designating the use of indirect cost moneys, and should be the office to which users of such moneys are accountable.

Program reviews by faculty from outside the University (external committees) are organized by the Office and are another very important activity that can foster excellence at the University. At the University of Minnesota these reviews are frequently broadened to include reviews of undergraduate teaching activities associated with the department within which a graduate program is fully or partially embedded. Reviews are essential to maintain high quality; they foster excellence by detecting and correcting problems in a timely fashion. They also publicize the program to the broader academic community. These external reviews must be continued, but they can be made more effective. Reviews are currently on a seven-to ten-year cycle, which the committee felt was too long for some programs. Other approaches to program review should be explored. We propose a pilot study using a shorter cycle, perhaps three to four years, with the external review committee acting as an on-going advisory committee to the program or department. The length of the cycle could vary according to graduate program characteristics and needs. A shorter cycle could, with continuous service by the external advisory committee, result in more
knowledgeable reviewers. This procedure would not be onerous because it would require updating self-study documents rather than creating them anew on a periodic basis. Because of the continuity of an external advisory committee with members having overlapping but fixed terms and answering to the Office, it may be better able to suggest dissolution, merger, or continuance of programs, or internal changes and reallocation that do not require new resources. A shorter cycle, with more knowledgeable reviewers, could result in more timely feedback on corrections needed in programs, facilitating closure of the process.

A second problem with current program reviews is that there is no requirement of a written response from the administration to suggestions by external reviewers or subsequent followup by both departments and administration. Procedures should be developed to ensure that reviews are used and that the review process is brought to closure. A mechanism is needed to adjust resources for changing existing programs in addition to providing funds for the creation of new ones. Implementation of these mechanisms requires cooperation between the Office and the appropriate deans and provosts.

The committee recommends that program reviews be coupled with accreditation reviews, where the latter are relevant. Synchronization of the cycles of these two different types of reviews would be efficient, and may also lead to more effective closure when problems are identified. Synchronization of these reviews should align the interests of the departments and colleges, which control resources and may be focused in part on undergraduate education, with the interests of the Office, which is focused on graduate education.

The Office, in conjunction with provosts and deans, should consider the use of cluster reviews of related programs. Examples might include engineering programs, biological sciences, education, social sciences and languages. This would facilitate optimum use of resources.

The biennial reports on graduate education currently submitted to the Office should be expanded to include research accomplishments and should be forwarded to the appropriate dean(s) and provost(s). Departments must be involved in supporting this activity since graduate and core faculties are not always coincident. This would serve to provide a continuing updating of the "self-survey" document, which is a valuable part of program reviews. Such reports would provide a basis for a dialog between the collegiate deans and the Office regarding the allocation of block grant awards.
3. Linkages to Other Administrative Units.

The implementation of Responsibility Center Management will dramatically change decision-making processes in the University. It has a strong danger of producing a culture in which financial considerations rather than academic excellence drive decision making. The Office is the one organization that may be able to hold these tendencies in check by its ability to set standards through its monitoring of all graduate programs and many professional masters programs. It should be able to ensure that all programs are academically sound. This is an important role given the certain proliferation of professional masters and certificate programs and the development of distance education programs, which may be revenue makers. A strong Office can help ensure that long-term vision and excellence are an integral component of decision making and resource allocation.

It will be critical for provosts, deans, directors, department heads, and chancellors to be strongly linked to the process of graduate education. As a mechanism for fostering such linkages, deans or their representatives should sit on the Graduate School Policy and Review Councils concerned with graduate programs within their units. Even if Responsibility Center Management is not implemented, it is essential that an oversight role for academic excellence be maintained by the Office.

4. Facilitator of Intellectual Change and the Development of Interdisciplinary Programs and New Disciplines.

The Office plays a central role in the University in fostering research/scholarship within disciplines, and is the key player in interdisciplinary education and research. This integrative role is carried out through the creation of programs which span departments, colleges, and provostal units. The capacity to implement such programs has been a strength of the University of Minnesota relative to other institutions that do not have this interdisciplinary flexibility. The creation of the Neuroscience program is an example of such an activity. The Office's new program of grants for interdisciplinary research centers is an additional example of a new initiative that may have an important impact on the research environment of the University.

The difficulty with this otherwise successful mode of operation is that it works entirely outside of the standard resource allocation arrangements of the University. As a consequence, there is no mechanism for converting a mature interdisciplinary activity that becomes recognized as a discipline into a department. This conversion is a necessary step in order to secure stable, long-term funding and to broaden the opportunities for undergraduates who may wish to study the particular subject. This requires a new mechanism for resource allocation. We suggest the following model for study.
A percentage of the University budget could be set aside for interdisciplinary programs, perhaps through a tax or a budgetary set-aside. This money might be controlled by the Office. There is a precedent for such an arrangement in the financing of the University Libraries. The creation of an interdisciplinary program would then involve a partnership between the Office and the appropriate provostal unit(s) with the resources held jointly as long as the program was not a department. Upon conversion of the program to department status within a single provostal unit, all of the money would go into the new department. In this way there would be some incentive to create such new departments. The extent of this activity would have to be carefully monitored to avoid diverting too many resources from existing disciplines which also need to be strong. In instances where the interdisciplinary activity needs to be in more than one provostal unit the resources might remain entirely within the Office or could be overseen by a lead dean even though faculty hold appointments in different provostal units.

5. The Strategic Role of the Office in Facilitating Research.

The oversight functions and policy-making activities of the Office have been expanded reasonably and carried out effectively since the Office was created. The Office has been only nominally involved in the strategic planning necessary to maintain the University's position as a major research university with a full complement of programs. There have been important developments in the national environment that require monitoring. Creative responses to changing circumstances may involve new institutions and structures if the scholarly enterprise is to prosper and even survive. The University traditionally has played an active role in the setting of national policy, and it is imperative that we continue to do so in the future to represent our interests and maintain our distinguished status.

The funding of research and scholarship in the university is a major problem whose solution will require a strategic approach. The severity of the problem varies with field of specialization. Certainly research and scholarship in areas that are "practical," in that they directly influence government or the economy, will have a better chance of obtaining sponsorship. Other areas where the impact on society and technology is longer term are in trouble, and solutions and survival will require creative strategic thinking.

We illustrate the problem with an example from physical sciences and engineering. Funding has been seriously impacted by the end of the Cold War and the concomitant demise of large corporate central research laboratories. These are events that have set in motion forces that have permanently modified the political-economic picture for research in the physical sciences and engineering. The end of the Cold War has resulted in an on-going contraction of federal support of research. This has forced University research entrepreneurs to
actively seek corporate research dollars, a trend that is synergistic with the need of the corporate world which must find an inexpensive alternative to its central laboratories for its research effort. This synergism should result in an increasing inter-dependence of the corporate world and the university research community, which in and of itself can be healthy, and which could in principle bring about a replacement of lost federal research dollars. The potential downside to this arrangement is that corporate research dollars, in the present financial climate that emphasizes short-term returns, will be directed almost totally towards product development serving the immediate self-interest of the sponsoring company. It will not be directed towards "pre-competitive" research, an activity that spans the spectrum from basic to applied science, and provides new discoveries and background scientific information needed for product development. It is nonsense to forecast the "end of science," and use it to argue that there will be no new paradigm-shifting discoveries that could impact science and technology. "Pre-competitive" research is in the interest of corporations if they adopt a longer time scale for financial payoff. Indeed, consortia of companies in areas such as semiconductor manufacturing have successfully experimented with precompetitive research. Universities, with federal government support, and the most prestigious corporate research laboratories such as the IBM Watson Laboratory, and Bell Laboratories have for the last half century done most of the "pre-competitive" research in the United States, and this activity has had a major positive impact on the economy and technology of the country. This activity is endangered in the United States. It is ironic that at this time of curtailment in the United States, the governments of Japan and other countries recognize the role of such research in providing the foundation for new products, and are planning dramatic expansions of education along the lines of American research universities.

Given reduced Federal support, the basic science components of the university research community are not likely to survive unless mechanisms for garnering support from non-university and non-federal governmental sources are found. (One approach might be to convince the corporate world that it should support "pre-competitive" research at universities, another might be to convince the state to support such activities, again with its economic self-interest in mind.) Failing to find alternative funding sources, research in core scientific disciplines at American universities may become trivial in scope and importance. University research laboratories will then be reduced to "job shops" for industry.

Problems similar in gravity and scope to the above example exist across the spectrum of scholarship in the research university. There is a similar threat to basic biological sciences, although the details of the emergent situation are different. For political reasons, funding for the social sciences and humanities is under even greater pressure than that for the natural sciences and engineering. The drastic curtailment of support for
social sciences research in the National Science Foundation and the efforts to dismantle the National Endowment for the Humanities are extremely negative developments. These threats to the scholarly community need to be addressed strategically with great energy and creativity, are a central challenge to the leadership of research universities, and are critical to the survival of the scholarly enterprise. The task of charting a new course and defining the appropriate new modes of funding should be undertaken by the Office. Creative solutions to these problems will not only affect the environment at the University of Minnesota, but will have national impact.

6. Position of the Office in the Administrative Structure of the University

Research, scholarship, and graduate education are inseparable at the University of Minnesota. The union of the office of the Graduate Dean with the University's chief research officer recognized that reality. In the climate of Responsibility Center Management, with vertical structures based on financial considerations and personnel management, it is essential to have a high-level officer in this position whose prime concern is academic quality. To preserve the University as a coherent entity with common high academic standards this office must have influence that crosses provostal and campus bounds even if it is managerially untidy.

While the centrality of the University's research mission is often invoked it is frequently on the sidelines in the decision-making and resource allocation processes. The present location of the Office in the organizational structure (see chart) of the University does not allow the holder of that office, who is the leader of research and graduate education, to argue the case for research and scholarship at the highest level of the University. The line operations of the University are divided into three parts under the present provostal system. The Office is not on the level of the provosts and answers to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, who is not in a direct reporting line between the provosts and the President. This further reduces the influence of the Office in decisions in provostal units which affect research and scholarship, perhaps reducing it to a mere advisory role.

*The Committee after considerable discussion strongly recommends that the Office be positioned at the highest level under the office of the President, regardless of whether the present structure remains or a different structure emerges with a new administration.* Moreover, the function, authority, and accountability of this office must become more clearly defined than is now the case. By implementing these changes, the activities of research and scholarship will achieve their rightful place at center stage in the University, and the holder of the Office will have sufficient influence to provide strategic leadership of research and scholarship
and serve as steward of academic excellence and facilitator of intellectual change and the development of new disciplines. This major organizational shift is essential if the needs of research and scholarship are to be central in decision-making and resource allocation.
ENDNOTES


2. "Summary of the National Research Council Survey of Doctoral Graduate Programs," Presentation by Mark Brenner to University of Minnesota Board of Regents, November 9, 1995, p. 3.


4. E. F. Infante to committee, March 21, 1996 (Appendix 1).

5. "Student Services Provided by the Graduate School" and "Services to Programs Provided by the Graduate School," January 1996.


8. Organizational charts (Appendix 2).
INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

C. Eugene Allen, Provost, Professional Studies
Frank Cerra, Provost, Academic Health Center
Ted Davis, Dean, Institute of Technology
Robert Elde, Dean, College of Biological Sciences
Robert Holt, Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts
W. Phillips Shively, Provost, Arts, Sciences, and Engineering

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- Report on Graduate Education (February 1995)
- The Graduate School: Adding Value to the University of Minnesota (October 1995)
- Research, Scholarship, and Management of Sponsored Programs: Roles, Responsibilities, and Requirements (Transition Task Force table, July 1995)
- The Place of the Graduate School in the University Structure (Graduate School Executive Committee statement, March 1995)
- OVPRDGS Strategic Plan (January 1995)
- Report of the Committee to Review the Graduate School (aka "the Johnson Committee Report," Fall 1992)
- Revised Final Report from the Ohio State University Graduate School Review Committee (November 1995)
- Instruction: Roles, Responsibilities, & Requirements (Transition Task Force table, July 1995)
- Constitution of the Graduate School
- Organizational Charts
- OVPRDGS Budget
March 21, 1996

TO: Allen M. Goldman, Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy (Chair)
    Thomas J. Bouchard, Jr., Professor, Department of Psychology
    Mark L. Brenner, Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School
    Kenneth N. Brooks, Professor, Department of Forest Resources
    Patrice A. Morrow, Professor, Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior
    Mariah Snyder, Professor, School of Nursing
    Mary Stoikes, President, Council of Graduate Students
    Graham A. Tobin, Professor, Department of Geography, University of Minnesota, Duluth

FROM: E. F. Infante, Professor and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Analysis and Redesign of the Functions of the Office of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School

First, I wish to thank you for agreeing to serve on this ad-hoc Committee for the Redesign of the Functions of the Office of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School; it is a most important task. For your recommendations will have a significant impact on the manner in which we restructure and modify the functions of this office in support of the central mission of research and graduate education of our University.

Graduate education, research and scholarship, central to the mission of the University, pervade this institution from the individual faculty member, to the department, the college, the provostal and campus unit. The Graduate School and the units in the Office of the Vice President for Research play a most important role in support of this mission: they provide an organizational structure for the appropriate discharge of academic and research functions; graduate student interactions; development of policy; budgetary allocations; support and oversight of research grants management; direct operation of some interdisciplinary functions; and representation at the State and Federal levels. These are complex functions, most often exercised in cooperation with other academic units within the University; it is essential that these functions be exercised with effectiveness and efficiency for the ultimate benefit of their purpose: graduate education, research, and scholarship.

A thoughtful reexamination of the method in which these functions are discharged is most appropriate at this time for two reasons. First, to underscore the importance of the scholarly, research, and graduate education mission of the University, the effectiveness of the infrastructure of support for this mission must be ensured. Second, the ongoing development, as part of U2000, of a strong chancellor-provostal system with appropriate centralization and decentralization of roles and responsibilities imposes a reexamination of all the functions of Central Administration, including the ones exercised by the Office of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School.

Thus, in the context of the central importance of the mission of research and graduate education at the University, your charge is to:
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- Examine the present support mechanisms for this mission within the University as to their adequacy, effectiveness, and efficiency, with particular emphasis on those functions discharged by the Office of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School.

- Recommend changes in roles, responsibilities, and functions that you deem will strengthen this mission, and its effective and efficient discharge, taking into consideration the roles and responsibilities and functions of campus and provostal units, colleges and departments.

- Suggest an appropriate reconfiguration of relationships, and of budgetary allocation responsibilities, between the Office of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School and the other academic units of the University.

- Ensure the effectiveness of mechanisms for institutionalization in the area of graduate education, research and scholarship; and of proper evaluation, leadership, initiative, continuity, and responsiveness.

During the past four years a number of studies of the research and graduate mission of the University have been undertaken. Mark Brenner will provide these to you, and they should form a basis for your deliberations. I believe that a central "organization" is important for our effective discharge of this mission. What is essential is to hone the roles and responsibilities, especially regarding budgetary allocation, of the central organization and of the other academic units to ensure that roles are not unnecessarily complex or redundant and that the mission receives appropriate institutional visibility and oversight.

In my charge to you, I wish to place no constraints on the nature of your recommendations. However, at this stage in the process, I ask that your recommendations be of a general, strategic nature, sharpening roles and responsibilities and proposing appropriate administrative structures to that end. The identification of specific areas of concern where you feel subsequent detailed examination is desirable would also be most helpful. Your recommendations will provide a road map to guide such examinations. I would be most grateful to you if you could complete this first, major step in this process in a concentrated manner by May 15, 1996.

On behalf of the University, I am deeply grateful to you for your willingness to undertake this important task, to give initial direction to the strengthening of the functions that support our research, scholarship, and graduate education. Vice President Brenner, as a member of the committee, and his office, will provide administrative support to the committee. I personally look forward to interacting closely with you on this task and will work with Dr. Goldman to schedule the first meeting in the very near future.

Thank you.

EFI/If

c: Nils Hasselmo, President
    Mario F. Bognanno, Chief of Staff, Office of the President
    David C. Johnson, Chancellor, University of Minnesota, Morris
    Kathryn A. Martin, Chancellor, University of Minnesota, Duluth
    Donald G. Sargeant, Chancellor, University of Minnesota, Crookston
    C. Eugene Allen, Provost, Professional Studies
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    W. Phillips Shively, Provost, Arts, Sciences, and Engineering
    Carl R. Adams, Chair, Faculty Senate Consultative Committee