Report of the Committee to Review
the Graduate School

Fall 1992

University of Minnesota
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Committee Members

Bianca M. Conti-Tronconi
Professor
Department of Biochemistry (CBS)

Leo T. Furcht
Professor and Head
Laboratory Medicine and Pathology

Paul G. Gassman
Regents’ Professor
Department of Chemistry

Paul E. Johnson, Committee Chair
Carlson Professor of Decision Sciences
Information & Decision Sciences

Anne E. Sales
Graduate Student (COGS Representative)
Institute for Health Services Research

Craig E. Swan
Professor and Chair
Department of Economics

Graham A. Tobin
Professor
Department of Geography - Duluth

Gloria Warren
Graduate Student (COGS Representative)
Home Economics Education

Richard A. Weinberg
Professor and Director
Institute of Child Development

Susan M. Wick
Associate Professor
Department of Plant Biology
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In spring 1992, Vice President for Research and Graduate School Dean Anne C. Petersen charged a committee of graduate faculty and graduate students to review the Graduate School at the University of Minnesota with the goal of improving graduate education.

In fulfilling its charge, the committee has attempted to formulate a coherent set of recommendations that foster excellence in graduate programs without simply proposing the addition of resources. These recommendations reflect a belief that graduate education is fundamentally a process between faculty and students, and that a Graduate School should act to support and enhance this process. From its analysis of data, which included input from faculty, graduate students, and administration, as well as information provided by graduate schools at peer research institutions, the committee concluded that the Graduate School at the University of Minnesota has evolved a regulatory stance toward graduate education that creates frustration for faculty and students alike.

The committee believes it is both timely and appropriate to give faculty greater authority in the central functions of graduate education. Its recommendations therefore make the faculty action the final action in several areas, while leaving administrative processing in the Graduate School.

The committee's recommendations should entail no additional burden or cost for graduate programs. As faculty are given more authority over graduate education, however, they must also accept greater responsibility for ensuring its quality. Thus the committee recommends vesting authority for evaluating the quality of graduate programs in newly constituted Policy and Review Councils that spend less time on routine processing matters and more time on substantial issues of graduate education.

Increasingly, graduate schools at major research institutions have become a focus of advocacy and leadership for high quality and innovative graduate education. The recommendations contained in this report are made with the intent of encouraging such a role for the Graduate School at the University of Minnesota.
INTRODUCTION

For the past century, graduate education and research have been fundamental to the University of Minnesota. They have been both a source of strength and at the core of contributions the University has made to the social, cultural and economic development of the state. At a time when knowledgeable leaders are forecasting a significant reduction in the number of research universities, it is in the best interest of the state and the University that the Graduate School take steps to insure that Minnesota is not only among the surviving institutions, but that its programs of graduate education and research continue to be vital centers of national leadership.

It is in this context that Vice President for Research and Graduate School Dean Anne C. Petersen this past spring appointed a committee to review the Graduate School. In her letter Vice President Petersen raised five questions:

- Are there models for effective relationships of the Graduate School and graduate programs to departments and colleges, especially in terms of decision-making processes about priorities and expenditures?

- What improvements can be made in the admissions process?

- What improvements can be made in the other support services provided by the Graduate School for graduate programs?

- What approaches are needed to support interdisciplinary graduate programs?

- Are special approaches needed for strong applied programs? If so, what are these?

Following Vice President Petersen's charge, the committee met over the summer to develop a work plan and procedures that would allow broad opportunity for faculty, students and staff to bring issues to the attention of the committee. Subsequently, announcements about the committee's composition and charge were featured in relevant university news outlets, including the newsletter of the Council of Graduate Students. The chair of the committee wrote to all department chairs, deans, Directors of Graduate Studies (DGS) and graduate faculty soliciting comments. Members of the committee met individually with deans, the Council of Graduate Students, each Policy and Review Council, the Graduate School Executive Committee, the staff of the Graduate School and faculty and deans on the Duluth Campus. The committee
received 61 letters from individuals. (An abstract of issues raised in these letters is included in Appendix I.) Additional information was collected from graduate schools at other universities. Over summer and the fall quarter the committee held seven full committee meetings to review this material and to formulate its recommendations. Numerous meetings of three subcommittees were held as well.

In conducting its assigned task, the committee identified three principles as foundational to the future success of graduate education at the University of Minnesota. These principles are:

- A close association must exist between the research and scholarly resources of the University and the policies and practices of graduate education. Just as resources for scholarly activities are a critical source of funding for graduate education, graduate students are part of the life blood of the research and educational process.

- All graduate education at the University of Minnesota must be held accountable to high standards of quality. As a major public research and teaching institution, the University of Minnesota must conduct graduate education according to standards of its best peer institutions, private as well as public.

- Graduate programs must be effectively managed; this includes setting clear goals, assessing progress towards the achievement of these goals and providing adequate resources for administering programs and funding students. To be effective, graduate education in a major public institution must also include the establishment of an academic community in which the demand for intellectual rigor is coupled with a commitment to the success of a diverse student body.

In what follows, we begin with a brief synopsis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Graduate School as presently organized. We then draw on Vice President Petersen’s questions, the above principles and our analysis of information collected in the review process to make recommendations for the structure of the Graduate School and its role in graduate education at the University of Minnesota. We conclude with a discussion of each recommendation in which we attempt to set down our reasoning. Several appendices containing summaries of material generated during the review process are attached.
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The Graduate School has a number of outstanding and committed staff. These individuals have contributed to the Graduate School’s effectiveness in administering tuition waivers, handling distribution of block grants, and administering programs such as competitive fellowships, Hill Professorships and the McKnight program. The Graduate School also appears to be efficient at maintaining a wide variety of records concerning graduate programs and graduate students. Significant initiatives in recent years include tuition cost funding for doctoral students and subsidized costs for program promotional materials (e.g., recruitment brochures).

Weaknesses in the current system of graduate education occur on several fronts. It is apparent, for example, that offices in the Graduate School that deal with graduate students and faculty sometimes cause the kind of problems they were designed to correct. For example, interactions with Directors of Graduate Studies and graduate students occasionally lack sensitivity for the personal feelings and needs of the individuals and programs involved. Graduate students are sometimes turned away without answers to questions, or are required to wait too long to get the information they seek. In other cases there appears to be little understanding and too little empathy with the plight of the individual graduate student.

We also note that when students have difficulty or experience frustration with their education there is no system that provides a well defined path to follow in order to alleviate these difficulties. Indeed, in some cases the faculty, Director of Graduate Studies or Graduate School appear to be part of the problem.

Significant among additional problems in the view of the committee is the large number of graduate programs at Minnesota. Of the 173 current graduate programs (158 on the Twin Cities Campus and 15 on the Duluth Campus), 46 have nine or fewer students and 34 have five or fewer students. Graduate programs at the University of Minnesota have proliferated to the point where they appear to have been designed for a very small number of students and faculty. Students in such programs often lack adequate funding. In some cases there may not be enough individuals to form a critical mass for interaction among students or among faculty. In the worst cases there is no substantive intellectual core of knowledge in terms of which high quality graduate education can be conducted.

There is also concern about activities of the six Policy and Review Councils. The major role of these groups appears to be that of reviewing course changes, proposals for new programs, recommended appointments to the graduate faculty, and initiatives from the Graduate School.
The activities of the Councils use a significant amount of faculty and graduate student time. It is important that this valuable resource be spent on significant problems of graduate education.

Though brief, these remarks are intended to convey major conclusions from the review process. A more detailed description of the issues examined by the committee can be found in Appendix I. We turn next to the recommendations for reorganization of the Graduate School and its programs. This is followed by a discussion of each recommendation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Graduate School should retain its current record-keeping functions and add additional ones that will assist in an on-going determination of the quality of its graduate programs.

2. The Graduate School should retain its current financial authority in areas of tuition waivers, block grants, fellowships, faculty research grants, and funds for the recruitment and retention of minority students.

3. The Graduate School should maintain an office to assist individual graduate programs in evaluating applicants from those schools or countries where the graduate program in question has little knowledge of standards and practices.

4. Authority for graduate student admissions should rest solely with graduate programs.

5. Authority for approval of student programs should rest solely with graduate programs.

6. Authority for admission to the graduate faculty (as well as limited teaching status) should rest solely with graduate programs.

7. Each graduate program should act promptly to establish program goals that include maintaining appropriately high standards for admissions and the education of its students, as well as a process for regularly assessing progress toward these goals.

8. Each graduate program should provide to each new graduate student, on arrival, a written statement (bulletin) of the requirements for each degree offered by the graduate program.

9. Newly constituted, smaller Policy and Review Councils should be composed of Directors of Graduate Studies, faculty at large, and graduate student members.

10. Policy and Review Councils must play a significant role in maintaining standards for graduate education.
11. The Graduate School, with the assistance of its Policy and Review Councils, should oversee an immediate reduction in the number of graduate programs via the closing of programs of marginal quality and/or consolidation of closely related programs.

12. The Graduate School should establish an Executive Council made up of a small number of individuals who are recognized as outstanding members of the graduate faculty and at least two graduate students.

13. The Graduate School should take major responsibility for determining the overall goals of graduate education at the University of Minnesota.

14. Where the administration of graduate programs has budgetary implications, there must be an appropriate adjustment of budgetary resources.

15. The Graduate School should provide resources for the administration of cross-collegiate (interdisciplinary) programs.

16. Graduate programs should provide resources for the support and evaluation of their DGS function.

17. The Graduate School should aggressively seek funds to support multi-year graduate fellowships.

18. The Graduate School should aggressively seek funds to support better recruitment and retention of minority graduate students.

19. The Graduate School should take immediate steps to seek a better alignment between the cost of graduate education and the activities of its graduate programs.

20. The Graduate School should create a central office that coordinates functions now found in the Graduate Assistants Office with those associated with graduate student employment and fringe benefits.

21. The University should create an ombudsperson system for graduate students to use in dealing with dissatisfaction with any aspect of their graduate education and grievances not already covered by a separate grievance policy.

22. The position of Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Administration at the University of Minnesota at Duluth should be combined with the position of Associate Dean of the Graduate School at Duluth.
23. The University should establish a task force on graduate education to identify and examine issues relating to graduate programs not currently within the Graduate School.

DISCUSSION

Recommendation 1. The Graduate School should retain its current record-keeping functions and add additional ones that will assist in an on-going determination of the quality of its graduate programs. The records kept by the Graduate School should include all of the data now collected, plus additional data that can serve as benchmarks of program quality. Among these additional kinds of data are time of enrollment for an advanced degree and the history (e.g., placement) of each degree recipient (see also the discussion of Recommendation 7). Such data provide one of the most significant ways of evaluating the success of a given program in training advanced degree candidates. Obviously, separate records need to be kept for masters students and for Ph.D. students.

Recommendation 2. The Graduate School should retain its current financial authority in areas of tuition waivers, block grants, fellowships, faculty research grants, and funds for the recruitment and retention of minority students. While not unanimous, there seems to be general agreement that the Graduate School is successful in its administration of block grants, tuition waivers, fellowships, faculty research grants, and McKnight and Hill Professorships. These should continue with the stipulation that the process by which individuals are selected to serve on committees and the criteria used to make awards be clearly stated and made readily available to programs. We also believe the Graduate School should retain oversight for such activities as funding minority recruitment and retention at the graduate student level.

The current policy of a guaranteed minimum level of future support gives programs important flexibility for multi-year planning, while it gives the Graduate School the necessary flexibility to adjust commitments in response to changes in the quality of programs. The Graduate School should avoid pressures for across the board entitlements. The allocation of support monies needs to reflect the quality of programs and the opportunities for programs to generate their own forms of support through external grants and fellowships. There may be an appropriate analogy with an optimal program of state aids to local communities. It is more important to look at revenue capacity than revenue raised. A community with a large tax base but low tax revenues due to an unwillingness to tax itself is not a deserving candidate for state aid. Evaluation of the ability of units to generate their own support will require new comparative information on the sources of support from similar programs at other institutions. We urge the Dean of the Graduate School to
work within relevant regional and national associations to develop the necessary comparative data.

Recommendation 3. The Graduate School should maintain an office to assist individual graduate programs in evaluating applicants from those schools or countries where the graduate program in question has little knowledge of standards and practices. We recognize that for many small graduate programs, the Director of Graduate Studies and any existing admissions committee may have only limited experience in judging the qualifications of applicants who come from certain schools or from countries where the individual graduate program has no prior experience. In those cases, it should be possible to turn to knowledgeable individuals within the Graduate School to obtain information about the relative training of a prospective graduate student.

Recommendation 4. Authority for graduate student admissions should rest solely with graduate programs. There are several aspects of Graduate School activities that the committee feels are best left to the individual graduate programs. The first of these is admission. Obviously, standards need to be maintained and there is always the fear that individual graduate programs may diminish their requirements in order to increase the size of their graduate student body. Thus, there must be oversight of the practice of decentralized admissions (see recommendation 10). In general, however, we believe that individual programs are best equipped to judge the qualifications (e.g., GPA’s, test scores) of individuals who apply for admission. Similarly, Graduate School staff are generally not familiar with the individuals providing letters of recommendation and the quality of various colleges and universities in specific disciplines. We believe there is a strong case for individual graduate programs handling their overall admissions policy and its implementation.

Recommendation 5. Authority for approval of student programs should rest solely with graduate programs. While recognizing that graduate programs sometimes approve forms that are not consistent with Graduate School guidelines, we believe it is better to provide training and oversight for Directors of Graduate Studies than to attempt to regulate what is fundamentally a matter between individual students and their graduate programs. As with admissions (recommendation 4) and graduate faculty status (recommendation 6), the Policy and Review Councils are the appropriate body to perform the necessary oversight function.

Recommendation 6. Authority for admission to the graduate faculty (as well as limited teaching status) should rest solely with graduate programs. Departments/graduate programs are best qualified to make judgments of admission to the graduate faculty. While addition of faculty to a graduate program should be at the discretion of faculty in that program, continued membership in
graduate programs should be reviewed by the individual Policy and Review Councils (see recommendation 9). We recommend that Policy and Review Councils conduct a periodic review of all members of the graduate programs under their respective jurisdictions. Dismissal from a graduate program is warranted for those members of the graduate faculty who have failed to meet at least one of the following criteria during a specified period of time (e.g., three years): (a) teaching graduate level courses, (b) supervising graduate student thesis research, (c) acting as an advisor to graduate students, and (d) serving on graduate examination committees. Clearly, an individual who has no involvement in the teaching, research, or examination process within a given graduate program over a reasonable period of time is not an active member of that graduate faculty and should not be viewed as such. In appropriate cases, the Policy and Review Councils should recommend dismissal to the Dean of the Graduate School and indicate why such action is being recommended. The ultimate decision should be made by the Dean of the Graduate School. Individual graduate programs are encouraged to give careful consideration to those individuals who they choose to appoint to graduate faculty status within their programs in view of this policy.

Recommendation 7. Each graduate program should act promptly to establish program goals that include maintaining appropriately high standards for admissions and the education of its students, as well as a process for regularly assessing progress toward these goals. Current policies and practices of the Graduate School lack two critical tools for the effective management of graduate programs:

- **Periodic setting of program targets and goals.** In addition to long-term goal setting (e.g., every ten years), relatively frequent (e.g., every two or three years) goal setting procedures should also exist; such long-term and short-term sets of goals give a much needed reference point for assessing the success and the quality of graduate programs.

- **Means to assess the achievement of program goals.** Programs should regularly provide data relevant to the assessment of program performance and determination of program viability (see recommendation 10).

Each graduate program should establish goals and transmit these to the appropriate Policy and Review Council as well as to the Dean of the Graduate School. These goals form the basis for evaluation of programs by the Policy and Review Councils and external reviewers (see recommendation 10). On a short-term basis the central issue is how well a given graduate program is equipped to provide its students with the intellectual and academic resources needed for successful professional development. On a long-term basis the issue is the success of a
program in terms of placement and activities of its graduates. To help programs establish appropriate goals and to assist the Policy and Review Councils in monitoring the effectiveness of programs will require cooperative efforts to develop and maintain information relevant to the following critical issues.

- Quality of the pool of students the program attracts.

- Quality of the faculty members in the program, with particular attention to how the program interfaces with other graduate programs and utilizes other research resources available at the University of Minnesota.

- Quality and quantity of the intellectual and academic interaction occurring among faculties, and between faculty members and graduate students (mentoring function), to ensure the existence of an open intellectual environment where students and faculty can develop broad, wide-ranging intellectual interests in their chosen field(s).

- Availability of resources.

Individual graduate programs have first line responsibility for maintaining high quality standards. This refers not only to the course requirements and the academic portion of the specific graduate program, but applies also to the admission of graduate students, the selection of graduate faculty within a program and student-faculty interactions. Failure to meet specific standards should result in graduate programs being placed on probation and, if improvement does not occur over a stipulated period of time, programs should be eliminated. The Graduate School should exercise its authority to withhold funds (fellowship, block grants, research grants, etc.) from programs that fail to meet standards of quality.

**Recommendation 8.** Each graduate program should provide to each new graduate student, on arrival, a written statement (bulletin) of the requirements for each degree offered by the graduate program. Graduate students often find that degree requirements for graduate programs are described verbally but not provided in written detail. Graduate students should be provided with explicit written details of degree requirements (including appropriate milestones) in order that misunderstandings are avoided and a written document is available for referral and review. When program requirements change, currently enrolled students should be permitted to finish under existing rules.

**Recommendation 9.** Newly constituted, smaller Policy and Review Councils should be composed of Directors of Graduate Studies, faculty at large, and graduate student members. Policy and Review
Councils play an important steering function in graduate education. Many current Policy and Review Councils are too large to be effective working groups, however. We believe that each Council should consist of a relatively small number of individuals (e.g., three DGSs, three faculty at large and two graduate students). The committee endorses the current three to one ratio of faculty to graduate students. Faculty and DGSs as well as graduate student members should be appointed to Policy and Review Councils by the Dean of the Graduate School. Nominations from the Council on Graduate Students (COGS) should be considered in the appointment of student members. While we are proposing smaller Policy and Review Councils with new responsibilities, it is important that the Graduate School continue to meet with the Directors of Graduate Studies of all graduate programs on a regular basis for an open exchange of views and information. These meetings should be held quarterly.

**Recommendation 10.** Policy and Review Councils must play a significant role in maintaining standards for graduate education. Giving increased decision making authority to programs (recommendations 4-6) needs to be coupled with clear procedures for accountability. A credible program of review and oversight requires that significant effort be invested in the establishment of relevant data on program quality. Policy and Review Councils should have the responsibility for overseeing the quality of graduate programs. While the committee believes that the Graduate School should avoid a regulatory stance with respect to its programs, there is a genuine need for regular examination of a relatively small amount of data that can serve as benchmarks of program quality. We envision a three-part system of review and oversight in which the Policy and Review Councils evaluate graduate programs based on their goals and objectives (recommendation 7) and data that reflect program quality.

- Annual audits should be conducted to review the trend in data such as GPA and GRE scores of incoming students, time to completion of degree recipients, and the progress of cohorts through a program. These indicator variables are not comparable across programs. We are more concerned that adverse trends within programs be identified and corrected on a timely basis. Information for these reviews should be compiled by Graduate School staff under the direction of the Policy and Review Councils.

- Periodic internal reviews should be conducted to address questions concerning program goals and achievements. Internal reviews should take place on a four- to five-year cycle. Programs would be expected to prepare a brief document that addresses recent accomplishments, is candid about current difficulties and lays out directions for the future. Policy and Review Councils should recommend to the Dean of the Graduate School probation for those programs that are in trouble as well as the closing or
consolidation of programs that lack viability and/or have been a problem for a significant period of time. There is need for immediate action in this latter area; there are currently too many graduate programs, a number of which are too small to be effective. Undoubtedly, there are also larger graduate programs that are similarly ineffective and would benefit from restructuring (see recommendation 11).

- External reviews should be conducted to evaluate overall program quality using nationally recognized experts from the disciplines being reviewed. While the committee supports the continuation of external reviews, we are concerned that current reviews may not be cost effective. In numerous cases it was felt by faculty and/or college administrations that the result was not worth the effort. In some instances there was duplication of effort when a mandated review of collegiate programs (e.g., for accreditation purposes) was not coordinated with the Graduate School review process. The best external reviews seem to have focused on both graduate and related undergraduate programs. Such reviews can provide important information that complements the annual audits and internal reviews discussed above. We believe the usefulness of external reviews would be significantly improved if they focused on a limited number of clearly identified critical issues. Such issues should be discussed and communicated in writing to programs and departments in advance of the preparation of the self-study document. The identification of key issues could arise from programs, from the Dean of the Graduate School, from collegiate deans or from Policy and Review Councils. Given the basic stance of the committee to move towards a less regulatory, more decentralized model of graduate education, we believe that an in-depth external review of a program by the Graduate School using faculty outside the University should be conducted not more often than every ten years, except when the internal review points to a significant deterioration of quality or failure of a weak program to improve, or at the request of a collegiate dean, program faculty or Policy and Review Council.

Recommendation 11. The Graduate School, with the assistance of its Policy and Review Councils, should oversee an immediate reduction in the number of graduate programs via the closing of programs of marginal quality and/or consolidation of closely related programs. In the interests of better graduate education and for the benefit of applicants who are not sure of which subdivisions of a certain subject best match their interests, we believe that it is necessary to consolidate a number of existing programs. As other major universities have done, we suggest that closely related programs be grouped together under a single umbrella for administrative purposes. (In certain instances, it may be that marginal programs should not be incorporated under an umbrella group but rather should be incorporated into midsize or large graduate programs where there is a close
logical relationship.) It may also be desirable to retain individual tracks within the overall umbrella program. Using this model, a single graduate committee and single Director of Graduate Studies would handle admissions for the umbrella program and oversee standards within that program. Faculty within the individual tracks could determine specific requirements (e.g., course work) for graduate students in that track with the agreement of the graduate committee of the umbrella program. We note that the process of closing and consolidating programs must be undertaken with a clear view of the consequences to graduate students who are currently part of the affected programs. It is particularly important that any such actions provide students with the option of completing their degrees within a reasonable period of time.

**Recommendation 12.** The Graduate School should establish an Executive Council made up of a small number of individuals who are recognized as outstanding members of the graduate faculty and at least two graduate students. An Executive Council consisting of a small number of outstanding individuals from each of the newly constituted Policy and Review Councils (e.g., six faculty and two graduate students) should be appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. The Executive Council should regularly review the activities and standards of each Policy and Review Council with respect to that Council's evaluation of the individual graduate programs within its jurisdiction. If an individual Policy and Review Council fails to maintain appropriate oversight and standards, that Policy and Review Council should be reconstituted.

**Recommendation 13.** The Graduate School should take major responsibility for determining the overall goals of graduate education at the University of Minnesota. We believe that the Graduate School must take major leadership responsibility for determining where graduate education at the University of Minnesota should be headed, and provide the necessary direction to reach those goals. Included in this leadership function is the need to recognize areas of scholarly activity that will become increasingly important. Such activity should result in the identification of potentially exciting interdisciplinary programs and the active involvement of faculty committed to these new directions. While the consolidation and elimination of some programs is essential to the quality of graduate education, it is necessary to recognize that new initiatives are important to the quality and diversity of graduate education at the University of Minnesota. As part of this effort, the Graduate School and the Executive Council will need to carefully consider both innovations and directions in graduate education for the Twin Cities campus and for the Duluth campus, where the University has made a commitment to increase graduate level education. Of special concern for graduate education is the fact that as traditional resources decline, research groups that have excelled in the graduate training of successful professionals may be irreversibly damaged. At this juncture, investment of Graduate School and collegiate resources in the protection of existing
high quality research and scholarly activities must be balanced against expansion into new programs.

**Recommendation 14.** *Where the administration of graduate programs has budgetary implications, there must be an appropriate adjustment of budgetary resources.* We have recommended that programs have increased authority in matters such as admissions, approval of student programs and membership on the graduate faculty. This increase in authority does not imply increased administrative responsibilities. The only difference from current practice in most cases is that action by the faculty (and DGS) would be the final action. We believe the Graduate School should continue to process student applications for admission, work with applicants to see that files are complete and send notification letters to students (since admission is still to the Graduate School at the University of Minnesota as well as to an individual graduate program). Moving these activities to programs would significantly increase program costs without obvious benefit. At the same time, where the administration of a given program has cost implications, there must be an appropriate adjustment of budgetary resources. It is essential that individual colleges be cognizant of the fact that they have major budgetary responsibility for graduate as well as undergraduate education. Collegiate deans should expect to support the administrative costs of graduate programs.

**Recommendation 15.** *The Graduate School should provide resources for the administration of cross-collegiate (interdisciplinary) programs.* Some graduate programs are composed of faculty from several departments and colleges. In a number of such cases there is no source of support for administrative costs or the DGS function (see recommendation 16). The Graduate School should foster the cooperative efforts required to establish such programs and, where appropriate, provide the administrative cost for programs in which the number of colleges involved makes administration by the participating colleges (and faculty) difficult.

**Recommendation 16.** *Graduate programs should provide resources for the support and evaluation of their DGS function.* The DGS has an essential leadership role in graduate education. This individual guides students (and faculty) during the crucial period when long-term advising decisions are made. As such, the DGS for each graduate program should be an individual who represents the strengths of the program. However, faculty members with vigorous and successful programs of research or scholarship have often been discouraged from assuming this role, as many DGS's are presently not rewarded for their efforts. To encourage the best members of a program to serve as DGS, appropriate incentives must be developed in programs where the work load is significant and such incentives do not now exist. These may include reduction of the teaching load, money to support graduate assistants, additional salary compensation for
summer research, etc. At the same time, programs need to assume responsibility for the training, evaluation and, where appropriate, the replacement of an individual DGS when it is in the best interests of a program.

**Recommendation 17.** The Graduate School should aggressively seek funds to support multi-year graduate fellowships. Comparison with a number of other major research universities leads us to believe that Minnesota is in danger of becoming less competitive in attracting more of the very best students. Part of this is the lack of sufficient fellowship funds to be competitive with schools that are routinely offering three- or four-year fellowships. If we are to compete with the best universities for the most talented students, we must be able to offer comparable financial aid. The Graduate School needs to establish a significant number of three- or four-year fellowships.

While the need for financial support is obvious, it is also important to note that excellence in graduate education requires support that is more than financial. It includes an atmosphere and program culture that is supportive of individual students while demanding of intellectual rigor. Mentoring and advocacy are important forms of support that are difficult to measure in terms of dollars but can be critical elements of a high quality program. It is essential that the University of Minnesota remain competitive over the coming decade, both financially and in the non-monetary dimensions of program quality, as the competition for quality graduate students is likely to intensify.

**Recommendation 18.** The Graduate School should aggressively seek funds to support better recruitment and retention of minority graduate students. It is well recognized that the University of Minnesota has not been overwhelmingly successful in attracting and retaining minority students into its graduate programs. We believe that greater effort must be made in this area. Once minority students are attracted to the University of Minnesota, programs that will help them to be successful here must also exist and be brought to their attention. The Graduate School, in cooperation with graduate programs, should move vigorously to improve programs designed to increase the diversity of our graduate student population and the success of these individuals in completing their graduate education.

**Recommendation 19.** The Graduate School should take immediate steps to seek a better alignment between the cost of graduate education and the activities of its graduate programs. While the committee is sensitive to recommending yet another change in the structure of graduate tuition, two recent changes have produced sufficient comments to justify that these issues be revisited: 1) The recent change that restricts thesis credit registration until after a student has passed his/her preliminary oral examination seems unnecessarily rigid, as many students are engaged in thesis-
related work prior to their preliminary oral examination. We suggest that serious consideration be given to a policy under which students can register for thesis credits prior to their oral prelim examination, but under which thesis credits are not eligible for the zero tuition band. 2) The recent change that eliminated low cost thesis credits after a student has completed 36 thesis credits should be reconsidered. Students caught in the transition appear to be especially hurt, and the policy appears to have been adopted largely to meet the demands of antiquated computer programs.

**Recommendation 20.** The Graduate School should create a central office that coordinates functions now found in the Graduate Assistants Office with those associated with graduate student employment and fringe benefits. As a means of solving one of the major problems experienced by graduate students at the University of Minnesota, the Graduate School should take immediate steps to coordinate those University-wide problems related to employment, health and fringe benefits. We were surprised to discover the amount of criticism directed at the Graduate Assistants Office. Though not directly within the Graduate School, this office has served, among other things, as ombudsman for employment-related problems of graduate students. It is our sense that in the current University retrenchment this function has been lost. Funding and fringe benefit problems encountered by graduate students cannot be handled by the individual graduate programs, nor by offices reporting to different administrative offices within the University. They should be dealt with by a central office that is part of the Graduate School.

**Recommendation 21.** The University should create an ombudsman system for graduate students to use in dealing with dissatisfaction with any aspect of their graduate education and grievances not already covered by a separate grievance policy. There is no carefully drawn statement that provides the individual graduate student with a plan of action when interaction with an advisor, Director of Graduate Studies or the Graduate School breaks down. We believe the University should immediately begin constructing a system that will permit graduate students to know what path to follow when problems occur between either the graduate student and his or her advisor, Director of Graduate Studies, or the Graduate School. It is especially important that such a system be set up to deal with situations before they reach the grievance stage.

**Recommendation 22.** The position of Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Administration at the University of Minnesota at Duluth should be combined with the position of Associate Dean of the Graduate School at Duluth. Unlike the Twin Cities Campus, graduate programs on the Duluth Campus lack an advocate at a campus-wide level of governance. Currently the Associate Dean of the Graduate School at Duluth is a part-time position. So also is the position of Associate Vice Chancellor. By combining these two positions the faculty on the Duluth Campus will be assured that issues such
as administrative costs of graduate programs and graduate student funding are dealt with as part of a campus-wide budgetary planning process.

**Recommendation 23.** The University should establish a task force on graduate education to identify and examine issues relating to graduate programs not currently within the Graduate School. Several graduate programs at the University of Minnesota are not currently part of the Graduate School (e.g., M.Ed. programs in the College of Education; M.P.H. programs in the School of Public Health). Moreover, with increasing pressures for mid-career professional programs there is substantial interest in developing additional programs. These programs share with those in the Graduate School an interest in the recruitment and retention of high quality students, delivery of high quality graduate education and allocation of resources, among others. There are also significant differences between many of these programs and those currently found in the Graduate School with respect to the philosophy and practices of graduate education. This is an area that the committee was unable to review in sufficient depth. We are also concerned that we may not be the most appropriate group to consider these issues. The charge to the task force should include recommending mechanisms for dialogue, collaboration and coordination between programs in the Graduate School and those based solely in individual colleges.