Framing the Issues for Graduate Studies at CWU
Spring 2014

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1. Introduction

From ongoing conversations with CWU stakeholders over the past year, it is clear that an overwhelming majority of deans, chairs, and faculty strongly support the efforts of the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SGSR) to promote graduate studies and research as a crucial institutional component of academic life at CWU. Graduate studies and active research, in fact, are what make CWU a true university rather than simply a college. Particularly in this time of increasing competition for quality students and faculty, from even community colleges now offering their own four year degrees, the very presence of graduate studies and active faculty research is what gives CWU a competitive edge. It is also an important marker of the most up-to-date higher education teaching and research capacity that is most attractive to the best and brightest student and faculty applicants. In short, graduate studies and research is the competitive difference that makes a difference for CWU, especially at this time of increasing institutional privatization and the full implications of tuition-based funding. Having a formal School of Graduate Studies and Research with identifiable leadership ever promoting graduate programs, faculty research, and graduate student success is thus instrumental to the unique brand definition of higher education at CWU in both the state and the greater region.

There currently exist 28 graduate programs across 23 departments at the Ellensburg campus. Graduate education at CWU, however, has undergone some recent struggles and significant changes will be necessary to help graduate studies reach maximum quality and efficiency in the coming years. Within the current budgetary context, there is an urgent need to create more professional master’s, nonthesis, creative 4+1, and even 3+1, degree programs to add to, or replace, existing traditional master’s degree offerings. These latter, in turn, will need to be thoroughly assessed to determine their continuing financial and programmatic viability. The SGSR will take the lead in the development of such new and revised programs, including first-ever graduate certificate options, and will actively promote such programs as the new brand of graduate studies at CWU.

In addition, the funding of graduate assistantships needs to be self-sustaining on the basis of adequate or, indeed, increasing net graduate tuition generation as well as by maximizing the use of graduate assistants in the classroom and in teaching labs. The SGSR will take the lead in monitoring this, as well as in providing university-wide strategic planning for the efficient distribution of assistantships among graduate programs, including designated research assistants for those faculty most active and successful in externally sponsored research.

In fall 2012, a new dean of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research came on board and was assigned to address the need for a more focused structure and purpose for the unit. She attempted this with a reorganization of the Graduate Council, setting up standard committees, proposing a focused academic research grant program, developing a scaled-down model of graduate assistantships (with the idea of putting more monies into competitive stipend awards), and proposing to support the marketing and recruitment efforts of existing graduate programs, and the development of new graduate programs. With the exception of changes to the graduate assistantship model, these changes were widely praised and should be maintained. Graduate assistantship issues will be discussed in a separate section of this report.

After the abrupt and unexpected resignation of the new dean in early spring 2013, an interim dean, Kevin Archer, was appointed and tasked with determining, on the basis of much more discussion and deliberation among CWU faculty and administrators, the best way to move forward toward a more focused structure and purpose for the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. He proceeded to meet with all of the graduate program coordinators individually for in-depth and intimate discussions about their respective programs as well as about their overall sense of the status of graduate studies at CWU. He also, as per Provost Levine’s advice, convened an advisory task force of faculty and administrators to help him evaluate the current situation and suggest possible future directions for graduate studies at CWU. A brief summary of these efforts to date follows.

The interim Dean first established the mission and membership of the Graduate Studies Task Force in late spring 2013:

**Task Force Mission**
The task force will examine the role of graduate studies across the Central Washington University campuses. Within the purview of this exploration is the structure of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, the administration of sponsored research, the function and roles of graduate assistantships, governance of international graduate programs, effective advertising and promotion guidelines, compliance with desired standards, oversight of learning outcome measures, and development of a framework for nontraditional certification and professional master of science programs. The task force will solicit feedback from across the institution and provide recommendations to the provost.

**Task Force Membership**
1. Kevin Archer (chair; interim dean, OGSR), archerke@cwu.edu
2. Kirk Johnson (dean, COTS), johnsonk@cwu.edu
3. Marji Morgan (dean, CAH), mmorgan@cwu.edu
4. Connie Lambert (dean, CEPS), lambertc@cwu.edu
5. Carey Gazis (ADCO/Geological Sciences), cgazis@geology.cwu.edu
6. Anthony Gabriel (ADCO, Geography/Distinguished Research Professor, gabriela@cwu.edu
7. Laila Abdalla (associate dean, OGSR), abdallal@cwu.edu  
8. Robyn Brammer (Graduate Council), brammerr@cwu.edu

Advisory members:  
1. Julie Guggino (research)  
2. Melody Madlem or Eric Cheney (Faculty Senate)  
3. Sarah Swager (Student Success)  
4. Sandy Martinez or Ruth Ann Stacy (Human Subjects Review Committee)  
5. Sherer Holter (chief of staff)

The task force then helped develop, and eventually approve, the new Mission and Vision statements for the Office of Graduate Studies and Research (since changed to School of Graduate Studies and Research).


In fall 2013, the Office of Graduate Studies and Research became the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SGSR) on the basis of the interim dean’s recommendation that CWU conform to best practices of peer and aspirational institutions of higher learning as well as those recommended by the Council of Graduate Schools. The new mission and vision statements for the graduate school and its offices were approved by the Graduate Studies Task Force in June 2013 and by the Graduate Council in October 2013.

**The School of Graduate Studies and Research**

*Mission statement:* The mission of the SGSR is to prepare graduate students for enlightened, responsible, and productive lives. The school facilitates the community of scholars among faculty and students; encourages the advancement of knowledge and service through innovation, research, and creative expression; oversees sponsored research and active research programs; and facilitates the missions of the Office of Graduate Studies and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

*Vision statement:* The SGSR will guide CWU programs toward nationally recognized graduate education and research. The SGSR is dedicated to developing new scholars, researchers, and practitioners who will become leaders in academic discourse, discovery, creative expression, innovation, and service.

**Office of Graduate Studies**

*Mission statement:* The Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) provides leadership and direction for the university’s graduate programs. It assists in creating environments that will ensure the highest quality graduate programs in keeping with the university’s overall mission of teaching, research, and public service. In working with graduate students, faculty, scholars, and departments, the primary roles of the OGS are to (1) promote and support graduate education,
creative expression, scholarship, and research; (2) recruit, admit, support, and matriculate qualified students of all racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds; (3) assess and assure the excellence of CWU graduate programs; and (4) work in concert with the Graduate Council to strengthen and review programs, policies, faculty development, and academic standards.

Vision statement: See above.

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
In the following text, the term research is used to include not only the diverse activities that comprise scholarly inquiry, but also public statements of results, such as publication, performance, or presentation.

Mission statement: The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) promotes excellence in sponsored and non-sponsored research across the Central Washington University campuses. To accomplish this, the ORSP supports the pursuit of external funding from public and private sources, serving as the central coordination point for all sponsored program grants and contracts, and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and institutional requirements and policies. The ORSP provides leadership to administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community leaders in exploring research opportunities and developing proposal writing skills to best position CWU for the acquisition of external funding for research endeavors.

Vision statement: The office will protect the interests of the university, departments, and faculty by ensuring compliance with sponsor and university rules and regulations. It will build alliances with programs; departments; corporations; foundations; and federal, state, and other governmental entities to bring high-quality, funded research to the university.

The Task Force then oversaw organizational and personnel changes in the SGSR:

Changes in the Graduate School’s Organizational Structure and Personnel
A. The Office of Graduate Studies. It will maintain the existing structure, but will incorporate additional duties and functions.
   1. New associate dean: Robyn Brammer was hired 10/15/2013 and was tasked with:
      a. Unit strategic planning.
      b. Assessing internal graduate school procedures and forms to ensure enhanced organizational efficiency.
      c. Helping determine and manage more efficient and modern modes of graduate program promotion for enhanced student recruitment purposes, including Web site redesign and social media presence.
      d. Emphasizing the recruitment and retention of students from historically under-represented populations and international students.
   2. New administrative assistant (half-time): Lynn Niemi transferred from CHCI in September 2013.
B. The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.
1. Director for sponsored programs and pre-award manager (newly full-time).
   a. Julie Guggino
2. Post-award manager (report writer/editor/works in Accounting Office).
3. Human Subjects Review Committee (reports to the provost).
   a. Sandra Martinez, Human Protections Administrator
4. Administrative assistant (half-time).
   a. Lynn Niemi
5. A proposal for a new full-time grant writer to assist the Director was submitted to
   the Provost in summer, 2013.

C. Graduate Council.
1. Prior to 2012-2013, the Graduate Council was run by a select group of faculty. The
   council was expanded in fall 2012 to include a faculty member from every graduate
   program on campus.
2. During the 2012-2013 academic year, the council created standing committees and
   the new faculty governance system is well regarded and better able to oversee
   structural changes to the SGSR.
3. New officers were elected in May 2014.

D. Office staff.
1. Completely revised PDPs were prepared for all SGSR staff and professionals in fall
   2013 in order to provide better efficiency of workflow. Previous PDPs were out of
   date and not, in fact, properly formulated.
2. New job descriptions are also being developed based on new leadership observation
   over this past year in order to document more adequately actual work assignments of
   SGSR staff. These will be distributed to Human Resources in late summer, 2014.

Faculty Survey on Graduate Studies and Research at CWU
After these initial administrative tasks were undertaken the Task Force oversaw the
development and dissemination of an on-line survey of CWU faculty concerning their
perceptions and recommendations about the present issues faced by graduate studies as well
as future prospects in this area. As discussed in detail as part of the July 8, 2013 interim Dean’s
report at the Provost Standing Meeting, faculty participation in this online survey was quite
good with 151 valid faculty responses to a wide range of questions concerning graduate studies
and research as well as specific graduate studies participation on the part of individual faculty
members (again, see attachments provided at the July 8 meeting). Notable multiply expressed
faculty concerns included: 1. Better task and performance evaluation of GAs; 2. More effective
research and grants assistance on the part of the SGSR; and 3. Greater stability of leadership
and staff efficiency in the SGSR.
4. A New Strategic Plan for the SGSR

The previous dean submitted a strategic plan for the 2012-2013 academic year. However, the plan did not conform to the major themes of CWU’s current strategic plan. Thus, with the guidance of the Graduate Studies Task Force, the current SGSR leadership created a whole new strategic plan in fall 2013 which was formally accepted by the university in December (see actual plan included as an attachment to this report). Briefly, the following themes were provided for the 2013-2014 academic year (many of these have been accomplished or are in the process of being accomplished):

A. Assist with the development and revision of the Information Technology and Administrative Management (ITAM), Public Administration, and Law and Justice master’s degree programs. (Completed with major effort.)

B. Create official placeholders for Professional Science, Professional, and Executive master’s degrees. (Completed with the aid of Academic Planning.)

C. Create the Graduate Student Association for retention purposes. (Completed.)

D. Automate and create protocol for responding to potential student inquiries. (Completed.)

E. Revamp the faculty development awards to make them more competitive, comprehensive, and outcome based. (Completed; new emphasis on research award accountability and the creation of new graduate program development awards for faculty.)

F. Create a comprehensive marketing strategy that will target students who have taken the GRE. (Completed our end; in process with Enrollment Management.)

G. Create grant-writing trainings and inspire more faculty to participate in grant proposals. (Completed first training in spring 2014, with over 150 faculty attending; others scheduled for the coming year 2014-2015.)

H. Assist with the NWCCU accreditation report. (Completion expected soon.)

I. Build assessment strategies that will highlight programs competing at a national level. (Still working through the already existing academic assessment bodies to obtain authority for the SGSR to conduct assessment of graduate programs.)

J. Create a clear assessment strategy for awarding assistantships to programs. (In process for the next round of GA assignments.)
K. Explore external sponsors for new graduate programs (including endowed chairs) and graduate assistantships. (In process with University Advancement.)

L. Create a diversity platform for minority students. (In planning stage.)

5. SGSR Efforts at Program Development and Promotion

The current leadership of the SGSR put major time and effort this year into the formal establishment of new master’s degree programs in ITAM and Public Administration including helping to (1) initiate, write, and revise new graduate program proposals and (2) advocate for their approval via the various evaluative committee stages of new degree approval at CWU. Both proposals were formally approved and the new degrees are up and running. In addition, the SGSR coordinated the transfer of the Law and Justice master’s degree program out of Continuing Education and initiated and oversaw the complete revision of the program to better fit the formal academic regulations of graduate studies at CWU. This newly revised degree program was also approved and is now admitting a new graduate student cohort. The SGSR also oversaw the transfer of the Computational Science Masters degree out of Continuing Education. In the end, the SGSR believes that these new, more professional master’s degrees will be attractive to new, particularly nontraditional, students who would not normally be attracted to CWU graduate programs.

Other program development activities undertaken by the SGSR include the following:

A. The approval of new degree types: Professional Science, Professional, and Executive Master’s, as mentioned. Now the SGSR can begin to negotiate with individual programs to create such degrees here at CWU.

B. Discussions are just now taking place with programs in Education about the possibility of creating more 4+1 master’s programs like the one the SGSR helped initiate last year in chemistry.

C. Discussions have taken place with Elvin Delgado in Geography concerning the possibility of an actual 3+1 master’s degree option in Integrated Energy Studies.

D. The SGSR continues to promote the creation of new format/delivery of graduate courses (online, multimodal, 3-day weekend, and bootcamp). Beginning in 2014-15, program development funds will be made available by the SGSR to faculty proposing to create such offerings.
E. The SGSR has spoken with all college deans about the possibility of offering graduate certificates. The most likely first such certificate will be in Geographic Information Systems.

F. The SGSR has had a number of meetings with the associate provost, the director of operations, and the University Centers about the possibility of offering more graduate courses and perhaps degree programs at the Westside centers or via the portal approach. We believe that the market for graduate education on the Westside is there to be had, as long as what CWU offers is distinct, timely, and appropriately delivered, particularly for nontraditional and mid-career graduate students.

In terms of the program promotion, the recruitment of graduate students has been another major focus of the SGSR this year and will certainly be in coming years. As to this, graduate students, unlike undergraduate students, are not usually recruited by means of “fairs” or “mailings” or even direct contact by enrollment managers. Graduate students are usually self-selecting of their program and place of study on the basis of academic networking on the part of mentoring faculty, student identification/recognition of specific faculty research interests, academic conference participation, and now individual Web site and social media investigation. As a result, random paper-based advertisement and random graduate fair participation is fast becoming a thing of the past with regard to graduate student recruitment. With this in mind, the SGSR has done the following:

A. Completely revised the SGSR Web page to make it much more attractive, informative, and user-friendly. It is now possible to find all graduate program directors, links to their degree programs, contact information, the Graduate Council, the Graduate Student Association, and all necessary application and academic forms and documents quickly and in a very user-friendly manner.

B. Provided staff support for the complete revision of individual graduate program Web pages as requested by departments.

C. Provided funding as requested by program directors for academic conference and symposia recruitment including CWU graduate student participation in such fora.

D. Provided funding for enhanced disciplinary advertising such as off-site Web pages and digital/paper disciplinary newsletters.

E. As suggested by Linda Schactler, the SGSR purchased a 1/3 page advertisement in a special edition of the Seattle Times in December 2013. Between January 26 and February 1, 2014 (when the edition was active) there were 219 hits on the Web page we developed to track views of this advertisement.
F. Made plans to conduct a survey of new, incoming graduate students in late summer/early fall to determine how they heard about our graduate programs and why they made the choice to come to CWU.

6. Regularizing Graduate Assistant Provision and Funding

The Graduate Studies Task Force and the new SGSR leadership have determined that the two most pressing concerns regarding graduate assistantships at CWU are (1) creating stability and predictability in the funding process and distribution schedule and (2) ensuring that the funding process is sustainable. Recent years have seen both a notable increase in the availability of funds for assistantships (largely due to significant fluctuations in work-study funds distributed to the SGSR) and a notable decrease in such funds (for the same reason, as well as because of decisions made by past SGSR leadership). There has traditionally also been overreliance on ad-hoc funding of additional assistantships by college deans and the provost. Because of this irregularity in total funding, as well as the ad-hocery of funding sources, there has been much confusion among program directors as to how many graduate assistants will be funded in any given year in their respective degree programs. Moreover, this information sometimes is conveyed by the various funding sources much too late in the recruiting year to attract the most promising graduate student candidates. On the basis of researching peer graduate institutions, the Graduate Studies Task Force and the current leadership of the SGSR now believe the following:

A. Funds should be made available to support assistantships at the level of between 40% and 65% of enrolled graduate students. Given the history and present characteristics of the graduate student body at CWU, we believe that at least the lower population of 40% of graduate students should obtain such funding. This percentage should change as our degree programs become more attractive and successful.

B. At current levels of enrollment, meeting this 40% target necessitates funding about 119 graduate assistants at the current level of stipend and benefits ($10,600). The current SGSR budget for assistantship funding can only accommodate 95 positions (2014-15) with the rest, then, needing to be funded by other sources. This ratio of funding should change, however, with Responsibility Center Management budgeting—with individual colleges funding more and more graduate assistants from their increasing graduate tuition-driven budgets.

C. In any case, setting this 40% target (at least based on the present situation) will render it clearer from year to year how many, and, importantly, when (create base assistantship budget by October, secondary budget by February at the latest), assistantship positions will be made available to graduate programs for early recruitment purposes.
D. The 40% target of assistantship funding is currently within the realm of SGSR/college budgetary sustainability at least at the level of current assistantship stipends as well as that of current unit budgets.

E. There needs to be discussion, however, about raising our current stipend level (which is at least ~$7,000 below the national norm for master’s students) if not across the board then at least for the more competitive and successful degree programs (e.g., Music, Biology, Geology, and Primate Behavior). This differential stipend policy is followed by most of our peer institutions (easily observed at Western Washington University).

F. There also needs to be discussion about differential graduate tuition rates for more popular, in-demand, degree programs (like those above, ITAM, and Law and Justice).

G. However, there is one big unknown in these discussions about funding graduate assistants—that is, the trajectory of student health insurance rates, especially given the new Affordable Care Act. The SGSR will need to monitor this situation closely and perhaps engage in a conversation with university stakeholders about the future provision of health care insurance for GAs.

H. Finally, one of the biggest misperceptions of graduate studies at CWU is that it is overwhelmingly graduate assistantship, and therefore tuition waiver, driven. This is not true. As can be seen by the snapshot data from fall 2013 provided in the attached table, the vast majority of graduate programs are graduate student tuition driven.

Formal graduate assistant responsibilities also will need to be assessed more thoroughly in the coming year. At CWU, assistantship responsibilities currently include (listed in order of ranked usage) the following 5 areas as determined by the SGSR leadership:

1. Class support (teaching labs, grading papers, etc.). Each teaching assistant provides 20 hours a week of service to CWU academics (600 hours per academic year).

2. Research assistance (not grant funded). This needs to be more closely monitored by the SGSR to be sure that formal, peer-reviewed research or sponsored product is actually being produced by faculty assigned such research assistance.

3. Department/program assistance (assisting with the function and organization of a program or department). This also needs closer monitoring of the academic appropriateness of student tasks by the SGSR. These staff assistants are found primarily in departments/programs such as Athletics, Recreation, School Administration, and other education degree programs.

4. Teaching classes (instructor of record). This is perhaps the most contentious role that is currently being filled by graduate assistants at CWU, particularly in the arts and in English. (See attachment for formal justification of this role for graduate assistants,
provided by the College of Arts and Humanities.) The Graduate Studies Task Force and the current leadership of the SGSR have deliberated on the issue of graduate assistant instructors of record and has determined that the primary objection to having graduate students teach as instructors of record rests in two areas: the students lack a degree higher than that of students in the course they are teaching and without having a higher degree, there could be diminished academic quality and accreditation concerns. The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) requires that instructors of record meet institutional standards across campuses. This means that if one campus is out of alignment with the practice at the other Washington institutions, it could impact our accreditation. When departments desire to offer graduate assistantship positions for instructors of record, they should submit an application to the SGSR. The report should include the practices at other Washington institutions. There should also be a method of assessing the evaluation of graduate assistant instructors, and this evaluation should be measurable against tenure-track faculty. When departments offer graduate assistant instructor of record positions, the following should also exist: a training program on how to teach the course, a standardized syllabus for the course, and a designated faculty advisor/mentor who will monitor and evaluate the instruction provided by the graduate assistant.

5. Research assistance (grant-funded assistantship positions).

In terms of graduate assistant supervision at CWU, the leadership of the SGSR has determined and recommends the following:

A. There are currently three methods in place for graduate assistant monitoring and assessment:
   1. The Quarterly Payroll Evaluation Form—a single form for each graduate assistant each quarter, completed by the supervisor(s) and signed by the student each semi-monthly pay period and kept by the graduate school as the payroll source document for audit purposes.

   2. Time keeping at the departmental level.

   3. Quarterly Graduate Assistant Work Assignment form. This form is currently under review for redesign. Its purpose is to summarize a graduate assistant’s duties and assignments on a quarterly basis. It is completed by the supervisor(s) and held by the graduate school.

B. Supervisors of graduate assistants will be required to allocate the amount of time each assistant spends in the five responsibility areas during the 2014-2015 academic year. The mechanism for collecting these data is in development.
C. Enforcement: if teaching assistants’ student evaluations are significantly below the scores received by faculty for teaching similar courses, they should undergo additional training or be terminated, depending on the results of the scores.

7. Accreditation Compliance and Assessment of Graduate Programs

Currently, the academic assessment of graduate programs is undertaken by the associate provost and his staff. This process entails the use of a standardized assessment protocol which allows for comparison between programs but does not focus on national accreditation. The SGSR leadership proposes that the assessment of graduate programs moves to the SGSR and that it broadens its focus to include issues of accreditation. If such a move is not possible, SGSR leadership needs to be heavily involved in whatever academic assessment process of graduate programs continues to take place.

While this is being worked through, the SGSR will begin to maintain a list of all accreditation timelines (currently performed by the associate provost’s office). We recommend that programs have a designated accreditation chair and committee. To the extent that these are established, the SGSR will coordinate with the program committees in determining timelines and procedures for accredited program self-studies and reevaluations. Most accreditation bodies, for example, require specific evaluation protocols. An assessment should therefore be conducted to find ways to harmonize these reports. Likely elements to include would be graduation rates, employer evaluations, and alumni evaluations.

Overall, the SGSR proposes following a version of the Council of Graduate Schools’ graduate program assessment guidelines on a 5 to 7 year cycle for individual degree programs. These guidelines, listed partially below, should be appropriately abbreviated and modified as per the specific characteristics of graduate studies at CWU. Programs failing to meet assessment objectives (to be formally determined) should be required to improve. How this program assessment requirement is implemented will take some time to develop in coordination with the associate provost’s office.

**Council of Graduate Schools, Program Assessment Protocol:**

**Departmental mission and organization:** If program is associated with a department, mission of the department, contribution to the institution’s mission, and departmental policies and organization

**Purpose and position of program:** Program outcomes, intellectual place in the discipline, and national and local need for the program

**Program assessment plan:** Clear statement of program outcomes, recent assessment of program outcomes, and explanation of how assessment findings are used continually for program improvement
Program demographics and metrics: Graduate faculty, support staff, master’s students, doctoral students, degrees awarded, instructional and general expense budget, portion of budget used for graduate program(s), amount of externally funded research, and amount of other externally generated funds (e.g., gifts and sponsored awards)

Faculty profile: Number and classification of graduate faculty (full/part-time, visiting, tenure/non-tenure track, junior/senior, regular/associate/adjunct); total number of faculty; number of new and retiring faculty during the past five years; and average age, sex, and race/ethnicity of tenured and untenured faculty

Faculty research and scholarly activity: Description of faculty research, scholarship, or creative activity, individual productivity, and external grant proposals submitted and funded

Faculty contributions to graduate programs: Faculty/graduate student ratio, average course load, average thesis load per faculty member and distribution across department, distribution of grades in graduate courses, and teaching evaluations

Student profile: Admissions criteria; number of applied and admitted students; actual enrollments (pre- and post-candidacy for doctoral students); average standardized test scores and undergraduate grade-point averages of applying, admitted, and enrolled students; citizenship; average age; sex; race/ethnicity; and part-time/full-time status

Professional development opportunities: Percentage of students participating in professional development programs such as teaching assistant training, internships, dissertation support groups, and workshops on topics such as grant-writing, presentations, responsible conduct of research, academic publications, and making oneself competitive for jobs in industry and academia

Financial support for graduate students: Departmental and institutional funding, percentage of students with financial aid, average level of support, ratio of grant to loan funds, number of teaching and research assistantships and fellowships, and the selection process for them

Facilities: Space (classroom, research, offices for faculty and students, social/community space), laboratory and instructional equipment, and library and computer resources

Curriculum: Degree requirements, program structure, current graduate courses, frequency of course offerings, and pass rates on preliminary and final oral exams

Student productivity: Number of theses and dissertations for the last five years; sample dissertation and thesis quality; student publications, exhibitions, and professional presentations; attrition rates and time of attrition in the program; degree completion rates; and average time to degree; post-graduation placement
**Programmatic climate:** Scholarly community, quality of student mentoring, esprit de corps, critical mass of faculty and students, and activities that support diversity among students and faculty

**Collateral support (given and received):** Interactions with other departments, units, or professional development and research programs that strengthen the program or other university offerings; and involvement of students and faculty in outreach efforts (e.g., industrial and public-sector interactions)

**Profile of graduates:** Number of graduates, job placements, and continued contributions to the profession or field

**Future directions:** Plans for new faculty hires, new courses, new facilities, new approaches to recruiting or supporting students, new or expanded research and curricular thrusts, etc.

**Overall evaluation of program:** Strengths, weaknesses, and national reputation

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### 8. International Graduate Students

The Graduate Studies Task Force and the current leadership of the SGRS acknowledge that there is significant interest in attracting more international graduate students to CWU. Increasing graduate student diversity enriches the campus and helps to improve the wellbeing of people around the world. The SGSR intends to work very closely with the newly reconstructed Office of International Studies and Programs and its new director when s/he comes on board in fall 2014. In the meantime, we propose a more flexible language policy for prospective international graduate students.

The current catalog does not have any flexibility for admitting international students. Attempting to create a permanent solution has led to more roadblocks. Our proposal permits our current policy in China, but it also allows for growth of a more comprehensive solution. We will admit students into the International Studies and Programs’ English Language Institute. This will allow the Office of International Studies and Programs to vet the students. By wording the catalog this way, it will also permit us to test the current English Placement Test in order to ensure that it meets the rigor necessary for student success. This should also satisfy the NWCCU because it shares some similarities with Eastern Washington University’s program. The SGRS reviewed 20 graduate programs at other universities in constructing this policy.

The current policy states, “If the applicant’s native language is not English, he or she is required to submit one of the following: (a) a minimum Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) IBT score of 79 (scores should be no more than two years old at the time of application), (b) a minimum International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) academic score of 6.5 (scores should be no more than two years old at the time of application), or (c) a baccalaureate degree
from an accredited U.S. university or an accredited international university where the main language of instruction is English. Please note that the Department of English requires a TOEFL IBT score of 88 or an IELTS academic score of 6.5.”

The SGRS recommends that CWU adopt instead the following new policy language: If the applicant’s native language is not English, he or she is required to submit one of the following: (a) a minimum Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) IBT score of 79 (scores should be no more than two years old at the time of application), (b) a minimum International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) academic score of 6.5 (scores should be no more than two years old at the time of application), or (c) a baccalaureate degree from an accredited U.S. university or an accredited international university where the main language of instruction is English. Applicants who do not have the required English language proficiency test score but are academically qualified, may be considered for conditional/provisional admission through admission into the International Studies and Programs English Language Institute. This training program is individually tailored to applicants (but usually consists of a 130-hour English-language training program) and requires passage of the English Placement Test. Please note, some departments have additional standards or higher score requirements. Be sure to check with your academic department for their requirements.

Admission on probation: In addition to offering remediation training, we may admit students on probation until they pass the English Placement Test. In these cases, students may include up to 15 CWU credits of pre-admission, graduate-level course work toward their graduate program degree. This only includes coursework not applied toward an undergraduate degree, and all eligible coursework must be approved by the student’s program advisor and the graduate school.

Again, the leadership of the SGSR will work very closely with the new executive director of the OISP as well as the new Graduate Council leadership to get such, or similar, changes to our English language requirements for graduate students approved at CWU.

9. Near Future Priorities of the New SGSR

The current leadership of the SGSR believes that this Graduate Studies Task Force report addresses the main concerns underscored in the “Provost’s Framing Document” for graduate studies and research distributed in spring, 2013. In addition, the interim Dean has regularly provided much other information/data about programmatic progress, goals, and future aspirations of the SGSR in individual monthly meetings with the Provost throughout the 2013-2014 academic/fiscal year. He firmly believes that all those involved in graduate studies at CWU, from the SGSR to the Graduate Council to chairs and on to graduate faculty coordinators and advisors, now fully understand that changes of the kind outlined in this report need to take place for graduate studies to remain viable here, particularly in this time of budgetary uncertainty and institutional privatization. The key will be continuing, and consistent, leadership on the part of the SGSR to make sure such changes are successfully implemented as
per the discussion above. In the end and for all the reasons outlined in this Task Force report, graduate studies and research needs to be a major part of the CWU “brand” of higher education for the university as a whole to be successful in the increasingly competitive quest for tuition revenue within the state and the greater region.

With this in mind and on the basis of the full discussion in previous sections of this report, the new SGSR is firmly focused on three major initiatives for the near term future:

1. Degree program enhancement, development, promotion, and assessment (e.g. ITAM, Public Administration, Law and Justice, Chemistry/Education 4+1, proposed Energy 3+1, graduate certificates, multi-modal degree delivery systems).

2. Graduate student recruitment and retention as well as continuing graduate assistantship financial sustainability and strategic distribution.

3. SGSR fund-raising via both collaboration with University Advancement and increasing indirect revenue generation on the basis of increasing faculty participation in sponsored research.

These three major initiatives were chosen with keen mindfulness on the part of the current leadership of the SGSR of the present necessity of efficient and competitive programmatic innovation as well as of sustainable tuition-driven financial management. In short and to the point, whatever graduate studies and research was hitherto known to be here at CWU is increasingly not the case under the new leadership of the SGSR in full collaboration with the newly reformed Graduate Council.