

## VIA Milestones Review: Graduate Studies & Research

In 2004, a committee of faculty representing various graduate entities reported on the environment for graduate programming and made several recommendations for the Vision in Action with respect to graduate studies at TCU. A core premise of their report relates to the teacher-scholar model.

“At TCU, time spent on teaching and related activities generally exceeds that spent on research and creative activity. If graduate education is to grow at TCU an equitable process of recognition and reward for all graduate faculty activities should be developed.”

“The ability to sustain first-rate education at all levels depends on the development and maintenance of excellence in research programs, which in turn depend upon recruiting and retaining excellent faculty.”

Their conclusion that “[TCU] must work to ensure a supportive environment for graduate education as well as quality research and creative activity” has informed decision making since the reports’ delivery. Particular accomplishments are highlighted here, categorized with the cardinal goal they exhibit.

### **Goal 1: Recruit and retain students, faculty and staff who can achieve their full potential at TCU.**

- Established new doctoral level programs
  - Science Education (PhD)
  - Mathematics (PhD)
  - Nursing Practice (DNP)
  - Music (DMA)
- Implemented new masters level offerings
  - Mathematics (MS)
  - Environmental Management (MEM)
  - Certificate in Women’s Studies
  - Certificate in Ranch Management
- Established graduate student travel grant program
  - Provides funding to bring recruits to campus
  - Sponsored 130 graduate students’ travel to perform research/creative scholarship and to present the results of scholarship at professional meetings
- Publication of *Endeavors* to highlight faculty scholarly achievements
  - Most current issue included selected graduate student achievements
- Undergraduate research and creativity initiative
  - Provided funding for 40 undergraduate student scholarly projects. Students all participated in college showcase events and were mentored by faculty.
  - Provided travel grants for undergraduate students who presented their work at scholarly meetings.
  - Published volumes 1-3 of *TCU Journal of Undergraduate Research and Creativity*
  - Overall, project encouraged undergraduate students to consider their potential for graduate study, both at TCU and elsewhere.

**Goal 2: Design a vibrant learning community characterized by distinctive curricular, co-curricular and residential programs.**

- Established professional development programs for all TCU graduate students.
  - Hold biennial Graduate Forum program with general job skills workshops and lunch session connecting graduate students to local industry and non-profit leaders. Keynote themes have included networking, negotiating, and communications.
  - Partnered with graduate student organization and provided harassment training programs to graduate students.
- Coordinated University-wide Festival for Student Scholarship and Creativity. Built on existing showcase programs, and piloted new programs in colleges where no such showcase existed. This inclusive effort provides forum for graduate and undergraduate student scholarship, meeting students where they are in their maturity level for scholarly activities.

**Goal 3: Sustain an environment in which rich personal interaction is enhanced by outstanding facilities and appropriate technology.**

- Teamed with Dean of University Library to create space for graduate student meeting/lounge space in the current MCB Library and in plans for Library expansion.
- Moved dissertation and thesis submissions to electronic. Partnered with MCB Library to participate in ETD archives at UMI and VaTech.
- Expansion of Office of Sponsored Research
  - Additional staff member added and services for pre-award increased.
    - Grant opportunity matching, grant writing workshops, and opportunity newsletters have helped to increase grants submissions.
  - Existing position increased to full-time.
  - New software purchased to allow electronic routing for internal submission approvals.
    - Includes capability to create faculty and graduate student profiles for scholarship and creative activities.

**Goal 4: Accelerate our connection with the greater community: Fort Worth, Texas, the nation and the world.**

- Established Graduate Forum program
  - Community leaders from FWISD, non-profits, and industry have hosted graduate students for lunch and discussions related to professional preparation and job seeking.
- Graduate student travel grants have taken some 130 students to research sites and professional meetings around the world.
- Reactivated the agreement with Hungarian Fulbright program. Two students from Hungary will begin graduate study at TCU in fall 2010, supported by TCU and the Fulbright Foundation.

**Goal 5: Couple wise financial stewardship with a well-planned entrepreneurial approach to academic opportunities.**

- Conducted a review of all known graduate financial aid endowments.
  - Included review of original agreements, when available, to ensure commitments are being honored.
  - Made and kept commitments to deans to cover increases in aid based on endowments funds they raise.
  - Discovered and corrected errors and oversights in allocation of graduate aid endowments.

- New endowments established (work of deans and development officers) in MBA, Nurse Anesthesia, Nursing, and Child Development graduate programs.
- Graduate stipends increased from \$2,042,575 in 2004 to \$2,965,640 in FY11. Overall graduate aid increased by from \$6,867,715 in 2004 to \$11,750,000 in FY11. Tuition hours available have increased by 1400 since 2004; much of the increase in the graduate aid budget reflects the rise in tuition rates.
  - VIA contributed directly to the graduate financial aid budget in FY08 – FY09 (\$600,000) and FY10 (\$300,000).
    - Funds were used to increase stipend awards in English, History, Psychology, Chemistry, and Physics Ph.D. programs and the Ed.D. program.
    - Funds were used to establish stipends and tuition allocations for the Ph.D. in Science Education.
    - Funds provided additional stipends for the MBA program.
    - Funds allowed increased tuition assistantships for the MAC program.
    - Stipends were increased for masters programs in Art, Art History, Speech Pathology, Kinesiology, Biology, and Environmental Science.
- New pricing plan was set up for Master of Liberal Arts Program, using money previously committed through financial aid for that program. This allowed us to recruit students with a lower tuition rate without increased cost to TCU, and has kept enrollment at or above pre-recession rates.
- Commitment made to deans to cover endowment payouts from incremental graduate financial aid has encouraged development efforts in Neeley, Harris, and Fine Arts.