



---

# The University of Georgia

---

30 March 2012

Provost Jere Morehead  
Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost  
University of Georgia  
203 Administration Building  
Athens, GA 30602-1651

Dear Provost Morehead,

As a culmination of our discussion at the Unicoi Faculty Teaching Symposium, it is our pleasure to articulate a series of recommendations for further integrating research and teaching in graduate education at the University of Georgia. The discussion and recommendations of this group were premised on the idea that graduate education inherently involves teaching and research. Yet, there are insufficient incentives and supports in place to ensure these elements of graduate education are integrated.

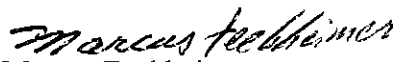
1. Research mentoring of graduate students by faculty, and undergraduates by graduate students is not sufficiently recognized or rewarded. Moreover, graduate students need better preparation to successfully mentor undergraduates in research. In an effort to mitigate these issues, we recommend:
  - a. Establishing a task force to identify ways to recognize and reward faculty for their service as graduate major professors and members of graduate advisory committees. This group should review the ways that 9000-level credit is allocated, and explore the viability of merit raises, non-permanent salary supplements, or other tangible rewards for consistently mentoring students in completing graduate degrees. Such reward systems may offer unintended benefits, for example, by addressing issues of salary compression for senior faculty. (Task force is near-term, low cost. Resulting program likely to be longer-term, higher cost.)
  - b. Identifying ways to credit graduate students and postdoctoral associates as shared Instructor of Record or some other "official" recognition of their role in mentoring undergraduates in research. (Near-term, low cost.)
  - c. Encouraging graduate programs to offer courses on mentoring for graduate and postdoctoral mentors of undergraduate researchers, based on the University of Wisconsin's Entering Mentoring curriculum, which has been adopted by the UGA Microbiology Department. (Mid-term, low cost.)


2. Graduate students need to further develop their abilities to teach and communicate about their research. To support graduate students in developing these skills, we recommend:
  - a. Better publicizing and providing more incentives for graduate students to earn the Graduate Teaching Certificate and for both graduate students and faculty to participate in the CIRT network. (Near-term, low cost.)
  - b. Encouraging graduate programs to offer courses beyond GSC7770 on scholarly communication, including oral presentation and scholarly writing. (Mid-term, low cost.)
  - c. Developing and implementing a support structure to increasingly involve graduate students (and possibly postdoctoral associates) in teaching a specific course. For example, programs funded by the National Institutes of Health Institutional Research and Academic Career Development Awards (<http://www.nigms.nih.gov/Training/CareerDev/TWDInstRes.htm>) involve postdoctoral associates in first observing a course, then participating in teaching the course, and finally serving as an instructor for part or all of the course. The entire experience is mentored by an experienced faculty member who is recognized for their teaching expertise. (Mid-term, low cost.)
  
3. The University does not have sufficient infrastructure and incentives in place to support interdisciplinary graduate education. In order to build this infrastructure at the graduate level, we recommend:
  - a. Designating selected programs, such as the Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Program, as primary recruiting portals and ensuring they are supported in advertising and recruitment. (Longer-term, mid cost.)
  - b. Providing administrative support and appropriate instructional relief to encourage writing of proposals for interdisciplinary graduate training, such as National Science Foundation Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT; <http://www.igert.org/>), NIH IRACDA or Science of Team Science. (Mid-term, mid cost.)
  - c. Establishing a task force to identify and mitigate departmental obstacles to interdisciplinary teaching, which are especially prevalent in the Humanities. Approaches that should be explored by this group include crediting teaching in a way that co-teaching does not add to a faculty member's teaching load (i.e., counting co-teaching as one course for both instructors, with the expectation that both instructors are teaching together, not in series). (Task force is near-term, low cost. Resulting program likely to be longer-term, mid cost.)
  - d. Developing and implementing a "study in a second discipline" program for graduate students. (Longer-term, mid cost.)
  
4. Finally, graduate courses and curricula need to be re-evaluated and revised to promote better integration of research. To facilitate this, we recommend:
  - a. Modularizing graduate courses to allow for more flexibility and tailoring of individual students' or programs' curricula. For example, a one credit hour module would last for 5 weeks. This structure would make graduate education more flexible, and adaptable to the interest/needs of the student. (Cost and timeline depends on the extent to which courses are modularized.)

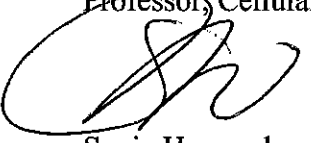
- b. Publicizing and creating additional mini-grant opportunities for faculty to revise graduate (not just undergraduate) courses to integrate research and active learning, especially teaching strategies through which the students' contributions could lead to scholarly products (e.g., manuscripts, conference presentations). (Near-term, low cost.)
- c. Publicizing CTL Maymester Institute as a venue for faculty to revise graduate (not just undergraduate) courses. (Near term, low cost.)

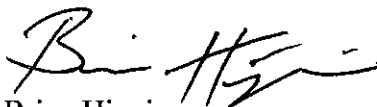
Thank you for considering our perspectives and recommendations.


Respectfully submitted,


  
 Marcus Fechheimer  
 Professor, Cellular Biology

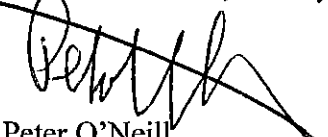
  
 Erin Dolan  
 Assoc. Professor, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology


  
 Sonia Hernandez  
 Asst. Professor, Wildlife

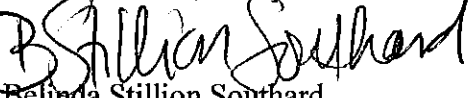
  
 Brian Higgins  
 Asst. Professor, GHSU/UGA Medical Partnership


  
 Brian Jordan  
 Graduate Student, Poultry Science

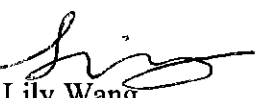
  
 Russell Malmberg  
 Professor, Plant Biology

  
 Peter O'Neill  
 Asst. Professor, Comparative Literature

  
 Paul Schliekelman  
 Assoc. Professor, Statistics

  
 Belinda Stillion Southard  
 Asst. Professor, Communication Studies

  
 Buck Tribble  
 Undergraduate Student, Ecology

  
 Lily Wang  
 Asst. Professor, Statistics