

**Pathway Goal:** Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity

**Action Item #**  
2-2

**Report:**

- Mid-Year: December 2016  
 Year-End: April 2017

**Action Item Description:**

Create Campus wide Graduate Enrollment Management (GEM) Plan: Focus on high-demand, placement possible professional Masters and doctoral programs; enhance career services/support; reduce time to degree while increasing completion; and track alumni to assess success. Generate Campus wide R2PC (Recruitment, Retention, Progression, and Completion) Plan for strategic grad recruitment, enrollment, progression, completion, and time-to-degree. Identify key areas of strategic research and doctoral growth (to guide faculty hires and GA growth); hire research intensive faculty and invest in GAs. Initiate process to increase graduate enrollment overall, and research doctoral enrollment specifically, beginning in FY16. Establish streamlined pathways for strategic graduate program realignment (fewer boutique; more professional masters; more bachelor to PhD paths; 4+1 programs; 5+2 programs, etc.)

**Submitted By:**

Name	Department
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**Working Group Members:**

Name	Department
Rebecca Benfield	Nursing
Jennifer Buck	GPSA student representative
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**Provide a written overview of the year-long process for your working group.**

The GEM/R2PC working group has met monthly since September 2016 to carry on the progress and planning that was initiated during AY 2015-2016. One important point to recognize relative to both planning and synthesis of this report is that several of the action-items reported here overlap with charges of the Student Achievement Initiative (SAI).

In September 2016, this committee organized into six sub-committees. These included: 1) Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs, 2) GEM/R2PC, 3) Information/Data Management, 4) Graduate Student Funding, 5) Post-doctoral Fellows, and 6) Policies, Procedures and Mentorship. Each respective sub-committee chair will be presenting their respective year-end report. As Chair of the GEM/R2PC subcommittee, the focus of this report will be on the work of this sub-committee.

The GEM/R2PC committee identified several focus areas for discussion and action during AY 2016-17. Relative to recruitment, these included: 1) Graduate Student Recruitment Packages, 2) Application Deadlines, 3) Campus Tours, and 4) Graduate Student Open House. On the retention, progression, completion side, three primary areas were of focus this year including: 1) Program Milestones, 2) Progression Bottlenecks, and 3) Dissertation Committee Chairs/Mentoring. Primary discussion points and recommendations across these seven areas are reviewed in the remainder of this document.

*Recruitment Packages*

Significant discussion over the course of the year centered on what to include, how flexible to make this (departmentally), and how to disseminate the information. It was determined that we should choose positive aspects from the Sperling “Cost of Living Comparison Study,” which includes a number of attractive findings such as “UNLV’s average rent of \$853 is lower than the national average of \$1030” as well as Las Vegas highlights including housing affordability, climate, outdoor/recreational activities and the cultural diversity of our unique urban environment. It was recommended that a template be generated to allow departments to add their own highlights. The best means of disseminating this information will likely be through “Drip” communications in the Grad Rebel Gateway. The “Drip Campaign” is meant to be a series of automated, tailored messages—testimonials from alumni; a welcome letter from the chair; and perhaps specialized financial appeal—that departments use to sell their program/institution to prospective students. This is still a work-in-progress and is recommended to become one of the future tasks of the Graduate College’s new Communications Specialist.

*Application Deadlines*

This topic is of concern in that there is a perception that some academic units are losing good students due to the fact that other institutions have earlier application deadlines, thus forcing students to make choices much earlier than required at UNLV. Data from several aspirational peer institutions (ASU, UC-Boulder, Central Florida, Houston, Oregon) were reviewed and compared to UNLV’s deadlines. While there was no clear pattern across the board, many institutions had deadlines between December 1 – December 15 (or earlier) for the fall of the subsequent year. This is well in advance of UNLV’s April 15 deadline for state appointed GAs. The notion of “priority deadlines” for some programs was discussed. The committee did not support this idea as practical for UNLV at this point in time. The overall committee recommendation is for departments to strongly consider setting application deadlines as early as December for doctoral programs, and to adjust international student deadlines appropriately.

**Written overview (cont'd)***Campus Tours*

UNLV will be among only a handful of its peer institutions that offers tours specifically for prospective graduate students (see table below). The committee recommends that a graduate campus tour must be professional and cater specifically to graduate students. Whereas undergraduate tours include many gimmicks, fun facts, and activities generally designed to attract high school students to a university, a graduate tour should be more direct and focus on areas of specific interest to prospective students. The academic program of interest should be incorporated into the tour and a representative from the academic department (faculty or current graduate student/ambassador) should meet with the prospective student as part of the tour. This will necessitate that tours are booked in advance giving adequate time for a representative to be identified. A highly professional graduate tour webpage and online form for booking tours should be created to facilitate this process.

The committee believes that the stops on the current tour make sense, but that a large part of the tour should involve the academic program. While the Graduate College staff tries to involve representatives from academic programs, responsiveness can sometimes be an issue. In order to make these tours as useful to prospective students as possible, it is critical that a representative from each program is identified that can meet with prospects who tour. This representative could be a current graduate student, faculty member, graduate coordinator, or staff member, so long as whoever is identified has a good understanding of the program and its requirements and is able to answer prospective student questions in a clear, helpful, and appropriate manner.

Current Tour Format

Currently, tours are run by either the Recruitment & CRM Specialist or one of the Graduate College graduate assistants. Tours are booked via phone or email and last approximately 30 minutes. Attendees are asked ahead of time if they have any specific areas of campus they are particularly interested in visiting, and those areas are incorporated into the tour if possible. Currently, the most frequent requests from prospects include:

- information regarding the program/department building;
- where to get a student ID;
- where to purchase a parking pass;
- funding information (graduate assistantship availability, off-campus work opportunities)
- housing information
- life in Las Vegas outside of the Strip

The tour begins in the Graduate College on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Flora Dungan Humanities (FDH) building. At a minimum, the tour includes the following locations:

- Lied Library
- Student Recreation & Wellness Center
- Parking areas
- Student Enrollment Services (SSC buildings) – Financial Aid, Cashiering & Student Accounts, Registrar's
- Student Union
- Academic department's building

### Written overview (cont'd)

If there is a representative from the academic program of interest who is willing to meet with the prospective student, the tour will end at the department. If there is no one available to meet, the tour will end back at the Graduate College.

### Aspirational Peer Data

Institution	Graduate Tour Offered?	Notes
Arizona State University at the Tempe Campus	Once monthly, on the second Monday of each month at 2 p.m.	<a href="https://students.asu.edu/graduate/visiting">https://students.asu.edu/graduate/visiting</a>
University of Central Florida	Not offered. Prospects are referred to Undergraduate Admissions for tours.	
University of Houston	Not offered. Prospects are referred to Undergraduate Admissions for tours.	
George Mason University	Graduate schools, colleges, and institutes at Mason offer program-specific information sessions and events throughout the year. Some of these events include a campus tour. Reservations required.	<a href="https://www2.gmu.edu/admissions-aid/visit-mason">https://www2.gmu.edu/admissions-aid/visit-mason</a>
Texas Tech University	Not offered. Prospects are referred to Undergraduate Admissions for tours.	
Georgia State University	Not offered. Prospects are referred to Undergraduate Admissions for tours.	
University of Oklahoma Norman Campus	Led by Graduate College Student Ambassadors, tours must be pre-booked and can incorporate prospective academic departments.	<a href="http://www.ou.edu/content/gradweb/student_resources.html">http://www.ou.edu/content/gradweb/student_resources.html</a>
University of Massachusetts Amherst	Not offered. Prospects are referred to Undergraduate Admissions for tours.	
The University of Alabama	Not offered. Prospects are referred to Undergraduate Admissions for tours.	
University of Oregon	Not offered. Prospects are referred to Undergraduate Admissions for tours.	
New Mexico State University-Main Campus	Not offered. Prospects are referred to Undergraduate Admissions for tours.	
University of Nevada-Reno	Website says, "To visit campus, contact your graduate program director." with a link to a list of graduate program directors.	<a href="http://www.unr.edu/about/visit-campus">http://www.unr.edu/about/visit-campus</a>
University of Rhode Island	Not offered. Prospects are referred to Undergraduate Admissions for tours.	
University of Mississippi Main Campus	Graduate School representative conducts tour and prospects are introduced to a representative from the program of interest. Visits available M-F 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. and must be booked online at least 7 days in advance.	<a href="http://gradschool.olemiss.edu/prospective-students/schedule-a-visit/">http://gradschool.olemiss.edu/prospective-students/schedule-a-visit/</a>
University of Maine	Not offered. Prospects are referred to Undergraduate Admissions for tours.	

**Written overview (cont'd)***Graduate Student Open House*

Much discussion was held on the importance of such an event. It was scheduled for January 19-20, 2017. Ultimately, this event was cancelled. It became apparent that when potential graduate students visit campus, they are typically kept busy at the department level with interviews, laboratory tours, and faculty meetings. It was recommended that this event is not a high priority relative to graduate student recruitment.

*Program Milestones*

In an effort to assist with academic progression, the committee identified a number of milestones that map with success toward degree completion at the doctoral level. These milestones include: 1) Formation of Advisory Committee, 2) Completion of Qualifying/Comprehensive Examination, 3) Dissertation Prospectus, and 4) Completion of Core Courses. The order of these milestones might vary by School/College, since some units require a Qualifying Examination fairly early into the program, while others do not. Similarly, those that do not require a Qualifying Examination typically embrace a Comprehensive Examination that occurs following completion of coursework. Thus, there is flexibility in the order of events, but completion of these milestones ordered appropriately can assist doctoral students to progress toward completion in a timely fashion. Milestones for Masters' and Clinical Doctoral degrees include completion of 15 hours of coursework and the culminating project (thesis, professional paper, etc.).

*Progression (Course) Bottlenecks*

It is not unusual to find common course bottlenecks at the department or even university level for all students. At the doctoral level, such barriers might include core content courses (*eg.*, statistics) which potentially could be opened up across program/department lines. The committee discussed specific departmental bottlenecks, and invites such a review to be done at the department level. Not only is there concern in course availability, but it is important for all units to "clean up" courses on the books that have not been taught in a number of years. The committee strongly encourages academic units to increase faculty communication with graduate students. This can be done through pro-seminars, where information can be shared in a group forum. In addition, it is recommended that doctoral students meet annually or biannually with their faculty advisor as well as the Graduate Coordinator. While this does add to the workload of each Grad Coordinator, it has great potential to improve progression toward degree.

*Dissertation Committee Chairs/Mentoring*

The Graduate College has frequently received culminating experience paperwork, alongside advisory committee appointment, and program of study forms. This suggests severe breakdowns in the process as these are supposed to be serial processes (*see Milestones* above). Whether this is simply a failure on the student's part to submit forms as steps in the process are completed, or whether this is truly a lack of understanding of the policies and procedures to be followed (*i.e.*, the advisor's responsibilities) is unknown. In either case, this can become a significant barrier to progression and completion and deserves appropriate attention.

Several potential actionable items were discussed. These include re-visiting criteria for obtaining Full Graduate Faculty status (and the associated privilege of serving as doctoral student dissertation advisor), encouraging Department Chairs to enroll new faculty in the University-wide faculty mentoring program, and encouraging new faculty to serve as a member of a thesis or dissertation committee prior to serving as

**Written overview (cont'd)**

Chair. In addition, it is recommended that a “refresher video” be developed and disseminated widely. It was recognized that it is not only uniformed junior faculty who may be out of compliance on issues relative to progression. This resource could become a convenient way for all faculty to become knowledgeable of current processes. This committee chair has reached out to the Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs suggesting a mentoring session focused on Graduate School processes be developed and conducted during AY 2017-18.

*Additional Discussion Item*

The committee was posed the question as to why UNLV is losing out-of-state students. Enrollment data were shared by members of the Graduate College (Hartley and Wada). From these data, it was observed that graduate student enrollment is generally down (in-state and out-of-state). If the data shared were adjusted for a 2-week temporal shift, enrollment trends for 2017-18 were observed to be a similar slope as the previous year. It was commented that out-of-state enrollment trends may be influenced by residency status changes. No further committee action was recommended.

**2016-17 Accomplishments**

Specific accomplishments for the GEM/R2PC Committee include:

- Initial development of a Graduate Student recruitment package (development ongoing)
- Recommendation for admissions deadlines to be moved earlier in time
- Shift primary responsibility of Graduate Student tours from the Graduate College to College/School communications personnel
- Program milestones identified for doctoral students
- Recommendation that academic units review course catalogs and offering of required classes (suggest this as an actionable item in AY 2017-18)
- Partner with the University’s mentoring program in a Faculty Mentoring session that focuses on the responsibilities of Graduate Faculty members serving as dissertation/thesis advisors

In addition to the GEM/R2PC committee accomplishments for AY 2016-17, the Graduate College has worked with committee members, their staff, and the GC executive committee, Grad Council, and GPSA to make a series of strategic top tier GEM/R2PC changes, including the following.

*Grad Rebel Success Center is renamed Career and Professional Development Institute to reflect larger mission of professional development, career support services and postdoc services*

This unit offered a host of events over the course of the year to address retention and progression issues specific for Graduate Students. These events, workshops, tasks and programs include:

- Renamed Grad Rebel Success Center to Career and Professional Development Institute
- Created two new certifications for a total of four offerings now: Research, Teaching, Mentorship, Communication
- Created RAMP and secured funding for next cohort
- Purchased SALT - program to help students with financial literacy
- Purchased Versatile PhD - program to help students with employment outside academia
- Created Writing Boot Camps, first to be hosted August 2017 (in collaboration with UNLV Libraries & UNLV Writing Center)
- Created Graduate Student Showcase - new annual event

**2016-17 Accomplishments** (*cont'd*)

Hosted four events during UNLV's Research Week 2016

- Competed in first Region 3MT competition. UNLV Master's student awarded runner-up & audience choice
- Revamped Graduate Career Support
- Continue to grow YouTube Channel Playlists
- Created new Coffee & Donut series with the Graduate College Dean
- Collaborate with OISS to streamline New Student Orientation
- Hosted 29 workshops in 2016
- [Additional Events](#)

*Reorganization of Graduate College Records Team*

The Graduate College, under the leadership of Kara Wada (executive director of admissions and enrollment management), reorganized our longstanding “records team.” They were changed to the RPC team (retention, progression, completion team) and their roles were redirected away from paperwork and toward more outward facing campus engagement to support GEM (graduate enrollment management) and strategic RPC efforts.

*Comprehensive Campus-wide GEM Plan*

This project will be completed by the end of the spring semester. We have worked with graduate programs and deans throughout the year to update last year’s R2PC strategic plans, identify graduate radar chart goals for graduate applications, admissions, matriculations, enrollment, GAs, and graduation (by doctoral, other grad, and all). This will result in a comprehensive assessment of our campus graduate enrollment management and will drive hands-on strategies for strategic R2PC with programs next academic year.

*Data Needs Assessment*

We completed a comprehensive assessment of campus data and reporting needs related to graduate education and support for GEM. This document was shared with Decision Support but implementation is on hold until the office is more fully staffed. Without high quality and reliable, consistent data, it will be very difficult to track R2PC and project GEM outcomes.

*Grad Rebel Gateway Project*

Phase 1 of the GRG project was completed this year (applications, admissions, GAs, scholarship/fellowship applications, assessment, and decisions), though there will be ongoing development especially around recruitment communications, tracking, and reporting. Phase 2 of the GRG project was conceptualized and planned this year with our vendor partners (Salesforce, EnrollmentRx, Docusign), and early stage implementation will begin late this spring. GRG P2 will focus on RPC support to students, faculty, and staff from initial enrollment to first alumni placement. It is an ambitious, state-of-the-field approach that has already resulted in regional and national conference presentations, and an upcoming nationwide webinar to feature our system and strategies.

**Recommendations**

It is strongly recommended that this committee (or some form of it) remains in place for the 2017-18 AY. Several ideas and initiatives stated earlier in this report as well as new initiatives deserve continued attention. Student retention, progression and completion is at the forefront of the Top Tier initiative, and this is especially important at the doctoral student level.

### 2017-18 Next steps

- What should the goals / activities be for the subcommittee?
- Who should be responsible?

Primary goals should include:

1. Recruitment package development and incorporation into Grad Rebel Gateway
2. Review of course bottlenecks and barriers toward degree progression for each graduate degree plan *and make recommendations actionable*
3. Graduate Faculty mentoring – partner with University mentoring program to develop a “Graduate College specific” session
4. Develop and distribute a “refresher video” for faculty relative to Graduate College requirements to augment student progression and completion
5. Hold advanced strategic RPC training in Fall semester for graduate coordinators, chairs, deans, associate deans to begin kick-off of campus-wide GEM plan implementation
6. Work to implement data and reporting needs
7. Continue development and implementation of Grad Rebel Gateway to support GEM/R2PC
8. Development grad program “one-sheets” for recruitment, development, and advisement purposes

This committee should be responsible to see completion of these goals. Goal (2) will require partnership with Departments. Goal (3) will require partnership with the Office of Faculty Affairs. Goals (4-8) will require partnership and leadership from the Graduate College team.

**Please review the list below and “X” the appropriate box(es).**

- Potential resources required
- Any reports generated by this working group
- Metrics to be used
- No additional reference material

**Any additional information you wish to share.**

None at this time.