Pathway Goal: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity

Action Item # 2-4

Report:
☒ Mid-Year: December 2016
☐ Year-End: April 2017

Action Item Description:

Reevaluate the GA Program and realign to support Top Tier efforts.

Submitted By:

Name                Department
Merrill Landers     Physical Therapy

Working Group Members:

Name                Department
Brianne Henle       Graduate College
Jason Scott          Sociology
Kendall Hartley     Graduate College
Terry Miethe         Criminal Justice
Rod Metcalf          Geoscience
Hasan Deniz          Education
Pasha Rafat          Art
Rebecca Benfield     Nursing

Provide a written overview of the year-long process for your working group. (You may use the “Process and Timeline” information from your action plan, if still applicable.)

This committee (those listed above) met 4 times Fall 2016 and came up with a list of recommendations on each of the process and timeline items, including a couple of additional items not listed in the RSC Action Plan.
What will your final product be at the end of the year? Such as, what metrics which will be used to assess your progress/achievement, will a report be generated, etc?

A list of recommendations has been generated (see attachment).

Describe what has been accomplished so far this year.

Please see the attachment.

Next steps

There are no next steps as we feel that have sufficiently addressed each of the charges.

You may have additional reference material. Please review the list below and click on the appropriate box to select.

- ☐ No additional reference material
- OR
- ☐ Potential resources required (if identified)
- ☒ Any reports generated by this working group (if completed at this time)
- ☐ Metrics to be used

Any additional information you wish to share.

There were several committee members that did not attend any meetings. We had great discussion with those that did attend.
Top Tier Graduate Student Funding Committee

Committee: Chair – Merrill Landers
Committee members: Brianne Heinle, Kendall Hartley, Terry Miethe, Rod Metcalf, Hasan Deniz, Pasha Rafat, Rebecca Benfield, Jason Scott
Committee members that did not participate: Donovan Conley, Nader Ghafoori, Rebecca Gill

Committee recommendations:

1. Promote Handbook
   a. The committee recommends the following in order to “advertise” and “promote” the handbook: 1. increase GPSA links and also social media links (e.g., Grad Rebel Gateway); 2. send a link to the handbook to Graduate Coordinators yearly and encourage them to distribute it to graduate faculty in their departments; and 3. add the handbook to the GA training session in Fall.
   b. The committee also recommends that consideration be given to changing the name of the handbook to better reflect its intent. Our recommendation is that it be named “Graduate Assistantships: A Handbook for Graduate Assistants and Supervisors.”

2. Lead TTDGRA review and recommendation process
   a. The committee recommends that these assistantships be awarded to the applications that best support and impact the Top Tier Initiative and apportionment should not be based on equity among the different units.
      i. Alternative funding sources should be made available to other disciplines who may not be competitive with the purpose of this funding mechanism.

3. Consult and collaborate on state distribution for AY17-20
   a. The committee recommends that the any decisions or redistribution about allocation should be made by the Graduate Council.

4. Begin assessing how state funds are expended: relationship between state funded GAs and scholarly productivity
   a. The committee recommends that the teaching/research allocation be made at the programmatic level and in accordance with current practice.

5. Who should teach at what level
   a. Being handled by Peter Gray’s committee

6. PTIs for GAs proposal
   a. Being handled by Peter Gray’s committee

7. Review and Recommendations of Sperlings Cost of Living Report
   a. The committee would like to make it known that the recently implemented increase in stipend has had an unintended consequence; the increase, in some cases, may make some students ineligible for Medicaid. Thus, the increased stipend actually costs the students more money as they must now purchase health insurance.
      i. The committee recommends that individual units seek internal funds to handle these cases as they arise.
      ii. The committee also recommends that a couple of questions be added to the yearly GA survey to better understand this and other issues related to graduate student funding (e.g., financial needs, child care, health insurance)
   b. The committee recommends that if additional money come available for distribution that those funds be allocated to paying a greater portion of the tuition/fees (full tuition waiver) and/or health insurance as those allocations do not carry the same tax burden as a stipend increase would.
   c. The committee recommends that individual units consider using their own internal resources to incentivize the progress of PhD students (e.g., additional stipend for those passing comprehensive exams).
   d. The committee recommends that the Graduate College consider hosting a grant writing seminar that specifically targets federal training grants programs with an emphasis on underrepresented graduate student education (e.g. NIH T32 grants).