



GSE Academic Programs & Fiscal Sustainability Task Force

Prepared for the EVCP and GSE Dean
June 16th, 2021

Executive Summary

Charged in October 2020 by the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost (EVCP) and GSE Dean, the faculty-led Academic Programs & Fiscal Sustainability Task Force embarked on a holistic examination in an effort to make “specific recommendations about how to best secure the strongest future for the GSE” in preparation for the anticipated dean transition in mid-2021. This endeavor culminated in a [Feedback Assembly](#) in May 2021 with the entire GSE community, which underscored the strong desire of GSE faculty, students, and staff to come together and implement the changes outlined in this report under the leadership of their newly appointed Interim Dean.

Research. The GSE’s national ranking ([tied for #19](#)) has been negatively impacted by its lack of research dollars compared to peer programs, despite the faculty’s expressed commitment to the GSE reasserting itself as a major contributor to Education scholarship, leadership, teaching, and justice-affirming reform. Historical data indicates that research funding peaked in 2000 and declined thereafter; likely resulting from the ending of the GSE’s prominent, federally-sponsored research centers and the retirements and/or separations of PIs with major grants. Improved research infrastructure, spearheaded by a newly created Associate Dean for Research role within the Dean’s office, would support the identification of funding opportunities; grant writing, review and submission; donor development strategies; the strengthening of community partnerships; and reinvigorating GSE researchers via large collaborative projects and national or foundation-funded centers.

Student Credit Hours and Teaching. [2018-19 Benchmarking data](#) indicates that GSE senate faculty teach nearly half as much as the campus average (238 vs 553 SCH), and delegate 10% more teaching to lecturers and academic coordinators. This trend is shared among professional schools (except GSPP) given the accreditation requirements and relevance of practicing professionals to teach practice/applied courses, particularly at the MA/credential level where senate faculty are perceived as being less fluent in K-12 teaching and leadership practice. The GSE’s SCH can be substantially increased by embracing and investing in senate faculty teaching across all programs, particularly at the undergraduate level, as would be necessitated by the proposed Education major¹.

Structure and Governance. Historically, individual GSE senate faculty have had significant autonomy regarding what and when they teach. Conversely, communication and consensus-building efforts between faculty and the Dean’s office in advance of

¹ The target cohort size for the proposed Education Major is 700, based on the growth of Irvine’s Education major. More information is available on UCI’s [Data Hub](#) and [Dashboard of Historical Enrollment \(select "Education" in the drop down list\)](#).

decision-making have been limited. Looking forward, the GSE cannot sustain itself as a functional organization without an effective structure for communication, information sharing, and distributive leadership between GSE administration executives and faculty. In addition to adding chair positions for professional programs, undergraduate studies, and MA/Ph.D. programs and regular “State of the School” briefings by relevant GSE administrative units, timely change management could be facilitated by an organizational consultant external to the GSE.

Financial Management. The GSE must effectively manage and grow its resources to sustain itself and thrive, which cannot be achieved by programmatic changes alone. The GSE’s financial administration could benefit from closer partnership with central campus and faculty directors to reconcile the chart of accounts and program structures, mitigate inconsistencies, and enable informed decision-making.

Fundraising. The last 5 years marked a full reorganization of the GSE Development and External Relations team, as well as the absence of a concerted major gifts program. As of late 2020, major gift activity and the annual donor count is building momentum, which could be further developed by stronger partnerships with faculty; leveraging UDAR resources to pursue transformational, fellowship, and legacy giving; and strategically rebuilding the GSE Advisory Board.

Graduate Student Funding. Consistent with the GSE’s commitment to the professional and financial wellbeing of its students, we encourage that strategic planning and decision-making be anchored in quality of life and academic progress; race, class, sexual and gender diversity; and excellence in research and teaching. More specifically, the graduate student experience can be optimized by a commitment to balanced funding (first 4 years) across the GSE’s PhD programs, seeking endowments earmarked for graduate students, and enhancing resources to support students’ fellowship and grant proposals.

Community and Connection. Those who come to work and learn at the GSE should feel and be seen, heard, respected, and valued. This can be achieved through the GSE formally engaging each other across the professional lifespan (new admits to emeriti), colloquia on various topics in Education, deepening connections across allied campus units, and encouraging the creation of student organizations.

Undergraduate Studies. Building on the popularity and prominence of the existing Education Minor, the GSE faculty seek to establish an Education major with an online option and scale similar to UC Irvine’s Education Major (700-student cohort). [Campus financial modeling](#) estimates a steady and sizable annual return from the Major, Year 5 alone ushering in an additional unrestricted \$2 million that could be purposed to support additional advising staff as

well as the GSE as a whole. Sufficient interest and faculty ownership exists to develop a proposal during Summer 2021 to submit to the Academic Senate in the Fall, and the Office of Financial Planning and Analysis (OPA) anticipates continuing to provide necessary data and analysis.

Teacher Education. The Berkeley Educators for Equity and Excellence (BE3) program, established in a 2018 reorganization of the GSE's teacher education programs, has grown steadily with applications doubling over the past few years and contributing significantly to the GSE's enrolling more students of color. To grow further as envisioned by its faculty director, BE3 needs to streamline its organization and financial structure to address redundancies in positions inherited from pre-2018 program iterations. Additionally, the GSE expanding its undergraduate portfolio presents an opportunity for stronger pathways into BE3, potentially including but not limited to 4+1 and 2+1 options for Berkeley undergraduates aspiring to become educators.

Ph.D. Programs. The Ph.D. program has historically been the flagship program of the GSE, but it must be considered as shifts and growth to other programs occur, such as the MA, teacher education programs, and certificates. We recommend maintaining the current number of Ph.D. invitations within each admissions cycle and focus on improving students' experience and time to degree completion. There are also opportunities to increase doctoral course enrollment by cross-listing and opening up to MA students. GSE faculty should review the GSE's organization via Clusters. While this organization may have worked well as a structure for a School that primarily identified itself in relation to Ph.D. programs, it may work less well as a way to support professional programs and undergraduate studies. Conclusions were not drawn about how Ph.D. programs can generate more revenue, other than fundraising, more analysis is necessary.

Master's Programs. The GSE recently attempted to increase the size of its MA student cohort by refining course descriptions and creating specializations, which can be helped by requesting an enrollment cap increase from the Graduate Division and streamlining the application process. Though explored, the prospect of generating new revenue via a 100+ student self-supporting degree program (SSGDP) is likely to require significant start-up costs and is likely to lack sufficient faculty support given the relatively high anticipated tuition costs (i.e. \$67k/yr).

Certificate Programs. The GSE has a long-established set of single course certificate programs that could be better integrated into degree programs, have the potential to contribute to the School's financial vitality, and provide opportunities for faculty research productivity and grants. These certificate programs currently operate relatively autonomously and might be better integrated into the GSE by fostering faculty discussions about the relevance and potential implications of these programs on their research and teaching; dedicating a staff

position to organize and develop collaboration within and beyond Berkeley; and piloting new certificates aligned with faculty and market interests (i.e. Social Justice Leadership in Post-Secondary Education).

Mills Collaboration. The Task Force explored potential collaborations with Mills College counterparts, as one component of the University's overall exploration of a merger with Mills. A series of deep conversations and analysis was conducted between members of the institutions' faculties. Comparing programs, courses, pedagogies, and curricular vision, we discovered an uncommon degree of overlap in our commitment to serving students of color and minoritized groups in local communities, especially Oakland, as well as continuities across certain courses and programs. Further, Mills offers some programs that the UCB GSE expects to create. There would also be opportunities to create new programs that currently do not exist at either school. In the meantime, while a comprehensive merger is considered, we recommend immediately promoting cross-enrollment in the two schools of education. Longer term, we should consider the development of partnerships among existing programs and the development of new joint programs. There is also potential to seek fundraising opportunities for new major endowed programs in areas such as teacher preparation and leadership development.

This report ends with a list of projects that can be completed within the next 24 months, start dates, and resources needed for implementation.