**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA GRADUATE SCHOOL REVIEW
REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM**

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Prologue

The University of South Florida has ambitious goals for its graduate programs,
particularly its doctoral programs. The Florida Board of Governors and the USF Board of
Trustees have determined that the delivery of doctoral programs will be limited to the
USF research campus in Tampa only. Compelling regional needs for doctoral delivery
could be accommodated through Tampa-based doctoral programs being "hosted" on one
or more of the regional campuses. The new leadership of the university is seeking to
grow in numbers and stature, and understands that a well-functioning graduate school is
vital to those goals. The Provost and the Vice President for Research and Innovation
understand that growing the research enterprise and doctoral production is critical to
university advancement if USF aims to become an AAU institution. In its Quality Plan,
the Graduate School aims ambitiously to expand per capita funding for graduate students,
increase doctoral degrees, shorten time to degree, and shift students from part-time to
full-time. We think the Graduate School can accomplish its goals only if the Dean has the
clout and the resources to affect policy, and is fully supported by the University's
leadership and academic colleges.

I. Responses to Charge Number One

A. Policies, guidelines, procedures

Several of USF's current actions and plans are promising. Allying the Dean of the
Graduate School with Research and Innovation is a good idea. It signals that your
graduate programs will train students more intensely in research, and the move will align
faculty research programs more closely with graduate education. The additional
responsibility for the dean will require some reorganization within the Graduate School
staff. The Graduate School website is excellent: well organized, clear, and easy to
navigate. A user can arrive at needed information quickly. On line catalogs and
application procedures are a necessity in today's world, and USF has brought them into
being.

Several of the University's policies and procedures regarding graduate education,
however, actually hinder growth and flourishing of viable programs.

  1. **Absence of a centrally appointed graduate faculty**

Your peer universities all have graduate faculty appointed by a Dean of Graduate Studies or a Dean of the Graduate School. Having this centrally vetted and centrally available on your web site allows you, first, to showcase and publicize your research-active faculty in one location; second, to allow your students quick access to an interdisciplinary group of mentors; and third, to develop a consistent and high set of university-wide standards for serving in graduate education. It is a filter against SACS accreditation violations in meeting criteria for faculty qualifications. (All graduate deans have found that some programs play loose with the rules at times). Thus we recommend that you establish a method of graduate faculty appointment by the Dean of the Graduate School and a central database for this. We further recommend that you have two levels of Graduate Faculty appointments – associate membership for those who teach graduate courses and serve on master's committees, and full membership for those who can serve as chairs of committees and on doctoral committees. Having two levels of membership will focus your faculty's research initiatives and provide your students with only the highest quality and most research-intensive faculty as chairs and mentors. These should be appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School on the recommendation of the Director of Graduate Studies (or graduate coordinator) and the department chair. A centralized graduate faculty can facilitate the formation of interdisciplinary initiatives and break down the "silos" of parochial interests in the university.

2. **Lack of consistency in the application process**

In your current application system, students send supplemental materials either to the Graduate School or directly to the program. We recommend changing this system, since it generates confusion and misplaced materials. Most graduate schools now accept the on-line application, test scores, and all official transcripts, but require students to send supplemental materials (letters of recommendation, etc.) directly to the program. To expedite the review process, some universities require applicants to send two official transcripts, one to the Graduate School and the other directly to the program to which they are applying. Since the Graduate School does not evaluate the supplemental materials for quality, there is no value added in gathering them centrally for later distribution. Applications and copies of official transcripts should be held by the Graduate School, since some students will seek two degrees or additional certificates, and there should not be duplication of submitted transcripts, test scores, and applications. It is imperative that transcripts are evaluated and held centrally. Good graduate schools train their admissions officers to recognize fraud and to properly evaluate international transcripts. As your university grows in reputation, you will have an increase in international applications and will need to address these issues head-on.

3. **Perceived lack of flexibility on application deadlines**

We heard from several deans that the Graduate School enforces a March 15 deadline for all students, and that programs are not allowed to set earlier or later deadlines. That is clearly not the case, since many programs do have alternate deadlines. We encourage the Dean of the Graduate School to meet with the college deans to hear out complaints about processes, so that misunderstandings such as this one can be minimized. We also question the rationale which many USF programs have used to

set their application deadline date at March 15. The national deadline for prospective students who have received offers of admission to a graduate program(s) to declare their intent to enroll at their school of choice is April 15. Therefore, a March 15 application deadline seems, for obvious reasons, much too late to us. Moreover it is well out of sync with the much earlier application deadlines which are set by most peer institutions. Generally, programs have a spring deadline of November 1, a fall deadline of January 15 or February 1 for all who want consideration for financial aid and for international students, and a summer deadline of April 1.

4. **Lack of central oversight on assistantship qualifications**

We find that the qualifications of graduate assistants may not be monitored sufficiently. The departments and hiring units are charged with making sure students are full-time and not on probation, and that they work no more than 20 hours per week. It is our experience that there needs to be a double-check on student status for this hiring. The Graduate School should ensure that all graduate assistants meet the minimum requirements. There needs to be a centrally located contract which lays out specific position responsibilities for the TA, GA or RA positions.

B. **Governance and accountability**

We believe that the organization of the Faculty Graduate Council is appropriate for the university, and seems to function well. We would encourage the dean to use the Council for helping the Provost set priorities for specific areas for growth in the university.

We find that the Dean of the Graduate School at USF has great responsibility and accountability, but little true authority. Authority usually is associated with control of resources. The immediate past dean was held accountable for increasing the number of graduate students (recruitment), increase in number of degrees granted, time to degree, and for growth in numbers of doctoral programs. She was given neither the authority nor the budget to affect those numbers. Our own experience teaches us that recruitment is predominantly carried out at the program level, with assistance from the Graduate School, which provides tools and some centralized materials. Recruitment success grows with program reputation. A graduate dean can make a difference in these numbers only if he / she controls most competitive fellowship money and all tuition waivers and can make a difference through strategic investments.

1. **The dean of the Graduate School should hold more competitive fellowship monies and all tuition waivers, in order to carry out his/her accountability for increasing graduate numbers.** By controlling these investments, the Dean can reward programs that are selective in admissions; finish students promptly, get research grants, and mentor and place students effectively. While college deans can also do this redistribution internally, the reallocation process needs to be system-wide to be most effective. At many research universities, TA stipends are also held centrally and managed by the Dean of the Graduate School. We recommend that USF give consideration to centralizing this stipend pool.

2. **The Dean of the Graduate School should administer the graduate certificates**. Currently, graduate certificates are not administered through the

Graduate School, but through University Outreach. We are surprised that the certificates are not located in the Graduate School, as they are in most universities. Graduate certificates are closely associated with current graduate students seeking extra specialization or qualifications in related fields. Minimum entry qualifications should be the same for all graduate students, as determined by graduate admissions. The quality of coursework and program of study must be monitored to make sure the standards remain at the graduate level. This scrutiny is best carried out by a Graduate School.

3. **There should be clear understanding of the accountability of Dean of the Graduate School for masters and Ph.D. programs across the university, including USF Health.** We understand that in some instances USF Health has different budgetary arrangements for its students (e.g. tuition waivers are handled differently). We think it is important to maintain accountability and consistency in policy, particularly in Ph.D. programs, across all sectors of the university. We therefore recommend that there be a unified budget under Graduate Education with full authority and accountability granted to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Provost needs to ensure that the Dean is given this responsibility. There should be a clear understanding about the consistent financing of research assistantships in Ph.D. and medical professional programs (D.P.T., D.N.P., and M.D.). There should also be a clear understanding about the role of the Graduate School in program evaluation of masters and Ph.D. programs in the medical sciences. The Dean should provide information for periodic reviews of graduate programs, meet with outside review teams, and advise the Provost on the quality of the programs.

4. **The dean should maintain oversight of graduate programs at USF Tampa, USF SM, and USF Polytechnic.** As long as these campuses are part of the university system, they should stay under the responsibility of the Dean of the Graduate School at USF Tampa. They should be subject to the same standards as graduate faculty and programs on the Tampa campus. When they become independently accredited, they should no longer be under the administration of the USF Graduate School. Faculty may, however, continue to serve as graduate faculty appointees on the Tampa campus, if they are nominated by the Tampa graduate program and meet Graduate Faculty standards. Oversight of graduate education across the USF System (including separately accredited campuses/institutions) must be conducted by the Academic Affairs Management Council (AAMC), and the Board of Trustees Academic and Campus Environment Workgroup (ACE). This will limit unnecessary duplication in delivery of graduate programs across the region and provide for academic quality assurance.

C. Budget

The Dean should have a budget that reflects university priorities for increasing doctoral education. Specifically, there should be more funding available for competitive stipends, tuition waivers, ad hoc commitments, and competitive student travel grants.

1. The competitive fellowship fund should be increased.

The Dean of the Graduate School should have at least twice as much competitive fellowship money to award than what is now available. A budget of $4 million is modest for a university of your size. We encourage the Dean and Provost to work with the university's development office in seeking resources for general fellowships.

2. Dean's Commitment Account

The Dean of the Graduate School needs to have a commitment account of about $500,000 for minority recruitment opportunities, matching commitments for grants, support of conferences, support of editorships of nationally recognized journals, and contingency funds for other emergencies and opportunities. One of us was able to bring in five separate doctoral students and one small lab group in the wake of Hurricane Katrina with such a fund, and it increased doctoral productivity and recruitment significantly.

3. A student travel fund

USF Graduate School needs to have at least $250,000 in a competitive student travel fund. Most of this should be for travel to national and international conferences to present a paper; some should be reserved for summer travel for research projects and dissertation research.

4. Flawed policy on TA tuition waivers.

Tuition waivers have generated much disagreement at USF. We understand that colleges hold some tuition waivers, while the Graduate School distributes others. We strongly recommend that tuition policy and resources for the whole university, including USF Health and the branch campuses, be regularized and put in the hands of the Dean of the Graduate School. We were not given information on the breakdown of tuition waivers for TAs compared to those for RAs and GAs, but the balance should be approximately 1:2 if you aim to become an AAU institution. We recommend the following:

a. Gather data on assistantships that associate the individual student with all aspects of the position: individual student; stipend amount; tuition waiver; cumulative years of support; academic standing; program quality/ranking. Only with such data can the Dean make an educated allocation of awards. We witnessed that the USF operating systems cannot deliver this information, since multiple systems are in play. Apparently an interface is needed to provide these data on a continuing basis.

b. **Teaching assistants are part of the instructional team, and thus help generate undergraduate tuition revenues.** Teaching assistantship stipends should be allocated on the basis of program excellence, not solely instructional need. They can be allocated by either the Provost or the Dean. The Provost should review TA distribution with advice from the Graduate Dean annually. Instructional need can be met by many means, while TAships should be used to encourage and enhance competitive programs. All TAships should carry a full, automatic tuition waiver, administered by the Dean of the Graduate School in a separate account from RA and GA tuition waivers.

c. RA **tuition waivers for the out-of-state portion of tuition should be granted to students supported on all competitive research grants which have written RA stipends and in-state tuition into those grants.**

d. Any **surplus tuition funding for GAs and RAs should be awarded by the Dean of the Graduate School on a competitive basis.** Criteria for making these awards should be quality of the graduate program (selectivity, funding record, placement, etc.) and state and regional needs. This competition should be carried out annually (ca. January for the next academic year). That way, programs can use these tuition waivers as part of their recruitment strategy. The dean should appoint a faculty committee to assist in evaluating the requests.

e. USF **should encourage the Florida state system to change its payment policies for full-time tuition.** Student course load should be determined solely on academic grounds, once students meet the threshold of 9 credit hours. They should not be charged more tuition as long as they stay in the range 9-15. This will help graduate students progress in a timelier fashion and improve time to degree.

D. Staffing, structure, infrastructure, and reporting lines

Unfortunately, the University finds itself with a large number of interim positions in key roles: the Provost is on a longer-term interim contract. The Vice President for Research and Innovation, the Graduate School Dean, the Associate Dean, and the Assistant Dean are all officially interim. The deanship has been particularly difficult, and has changed hands several times over the last ten years. Traditionally across America, the graduate dean is one of the longest-serving deans at most institutions. Instability and uncertainty about leadership can be demoralizing to staff; it leads to burnout and cynicism. Instability also means that real structural reorganization never happens, procedures never get fully updated, and change is never brought to fruition. We think that modest institutional support (predominantly fiscal, but also in terms of solidifying the position) over the years has caused this graduate deans' revolving door. Searching for a new dean under these circumstances will be a great challenge.

We believe that the graduate dean should be held accountable, but have firm support from the Provost and with provision of appropriate additional resources as they become available. During the coming year, the Provost should regard the Dean as part of the "inner circle" of academic and strategic decision-makers. This may help put the university in a better position for future recruitment.

The immediate past structure of the Graduate School is very flat, with a large number of direct reports and relatively low-pay employees, a significant number part-time. We understand that the new Interim Dean has already begun with some rearrangements of staff in the Graduate School. She has changed the report of the admissions/recruitment team directly to the incoming Associate Dean. We encourage her and the Provost to take advantage of this interim period to address some of the staffing issues. We recommend a gradual shift to more streamlined procedures and fewer, but more highly paid and skilled employees. We recommend a paradigm shift for the whole team from procedure management to true academic service and support—a shift from rule enforcement to problem solving.

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This paradigm shift can only be accomplished through charismatic leadership from the dean and the associate dean. We recommend that they travel to other graduate schools of similar size and mission to learn from others. We recommend regular retreats and brainstorming sessions for the senior staff and professional development activities for all staff. The following questions might be addressed:

- Is there integration of academic quality assessment and fiscal decision-making about graduate funding?
- Is graduate school money better spent on centralized recruitment staff or on competitive recruitment grants to the departments?
- Can paper processes be reviewed, eliminated, or reassigned to a different level?
- Is the fiscal affairs staff right-sized?
- Would full-time positions and professionalization make more sense for the enrollment management staff?
- Can the services of the Graduate School (admissions and academic services) be personalized by assigning a staff member to specific programs or colleges as their bailiwick?

E. Communication and Collaboration

We found a serious disconnect between self-perception of the Graduate School leadership and staff and the way others viewed them. The senior staff members think of themselves as highly efficient and well–organized. Both the deans group and the enrollment management team considered the monolithic Graduate School to be rule-bound, slow to process materials, and bureaucratic. They regarded the Graduate School, at least historically, as paperbound, stuck in the past, and ineffective. To address the misperceptions of the Graduate School's role in the University, we recommend the following:

- Focus on meaningful, quality service to departments and students.
- Train and monitor staff members in good customer relations. Reward those who "get it", and remove from front-line service those staff members who are not willing to improve.
- Engage staff members in planning quality professional development activities for students.
- Provide a small fund for professional development activities for staff members themselves (for books, seminars, etc.)
- Survey "heavy users" of Graduate School services (other administrative offices) and hold a staff retreat to review the results.
- Encourage staff members to serve on university committees and to take part in volunteer campus activities and events supporting students.
- Organize department visits to new directors of graduate studies by front-line staff in enrollment management, recruitment, and/or student funding. Use these visits to better understand the faculty's needs and to explain processes in a helpful environment.

Upper-level communication

A budget crisis always exacerbates confused lines of communication. It is doubly important in the current fiscal situation that deans and department chairs know who is giving directives. Communication from the Provost to the Dean, and on to the graduate programs, must be clear and timely. The Dean should be able to indicate when a directive is straight from the top, and he/she is the messenger, or when it is her decision. Although the buck stops at the Provost's desk, and sometimes at the desk of the Dean, it is imperative that both have as open and collaborative approach to decision making and communication of policy and procedures changes down line as possible, both with each other and with the deans and program directors.

II. Responses to Charge Number Two

A. Evaluation of the USF Graduate Catalog

The graduate catalog, which can be downloaded as a PDF document, represents a comprehensive compilation of basically everything both prospective and enrolled graduate students need to know about graduate studies and being a graduate student at USF. It is well designed and complete. What follows are a few observations and comments that represent suggestions which could make the document even more complete and useful. We also include comments about policies that differ from those at most other institutions.

One piece of information that is missing from the catalog which prospective students often want is a statement regarding the minimum scores expected on the Verbal and Quantitative components of the GRE. One usually does not wish to imply that there is a specific "cutoff" below which a score is unacceptable so a qualifying statement such as: "students who are accepted into our programs usually present with Verbal and Quantitative GRE scores of XXX and XXX (your institution's expected levels) or above, respectively." This can be qualified even further by indicating that individual programs may expect higher minimum scores and that prospective students should contact program directors to inquire about program specific practices.

Although it was obviously not possible to investigate all of the direct click links to web pages that are incorporated into the Graduate Catalog PDF, a random check revealed some of them to be broken, or to lead to a web page that contained incomplete information. There are also some misspelled words or words that convey the wrong meaning in the section of the document that outlines overall policies and procedures.

It might be useful to review and strengthen the definitions and requirements for faculty to be designated as Graduate Faculty members (page 92).   At most institutions, to become a member of the Graduate Faculty requires meeting more comprehensive criteria than just being a tenured or tenure track faculty member in one's own discipline. Moreover, usually all faculty members who participate on doctoral dissertation committees are expected to "engage in current and sustained scholarly, creative, or research activities, such as publications, performances, exhibitions, patents, inventions and research grants," not just the committee chair. These criteria would normally apply to committee members on Masters thesis committees as well. This is not specified in the USF document. There is apparently no current role for the Graduate Dean to approve Graduate Faculty membership. Appointment of membership to the Graduate faculty appears be made at the individual department or college level. As was indicated earlier, at most institutions, recommendations for appointment to the Graduate Faculty are submitted to the Graduate School from the department or program at the college or school level and approved by the Graduate Dean. In fact, according to policy number 11-001, approved effective 11/12/91 which can be located on the USF web site (Policies and Procedures Manual), the Dean of the USF Graduate School is supposed to "administer the credentialing of graduate faculty" whereas this does not appear to be the case currently. Thesis and dissertation committee composition is approved at the program or college level. Practices at other institutions vary in this regard so the current practice at USF is not unusual. However, at schools where the committee composition decision is made at the

program level, a record of who is serving on the committee, and any changes that occur before the student defends and graduates, is usually forwarded to and kept by the Graduate School.

In some ways it is useful to include the detailed descriptions of all of the programs alphabetically in the Graduate Catalog PDF. However, because the number of programs is quite large, doing so makes it somewhat difficult to scan the document for, or scroll to a particular program of interest. Using the "Find" feature of the PDF document is only useful if one includes the full program name in the search box. For example, if one just types in the word 'Biology" the search finds the first instance that the word biology appears in the text. Alternatively, if one types "Biology Program" into the find box, the search takes one to the Title of the section that outlines the details of the Biology Program. In order to help students find the program information in which they are most interested expeditiously, it would be useful to provide written guidance regarding the way in which to use the search function most effectively. Alternatively, the detailed program descriptions could be moved to a web site with only the links provided alphabetically in the Graduate Catalog PDF.

Overall, the Graduate Catalog is well constructed and serves its purpose effectively.

Responses to Charge III

Evaluation of the Position Announcement for the Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Vice President for Research and Innovation.

The draft position announcement is well crafted. It outlines a broad range of responsibilities that are consistent with what would be expected for an individual who holds the combination title of Graduate Dean and Associate Vice President for Research and Innovation. However, there are several components which may merit reconsideration.

As recommended earlier in this report, since the satellite campuses will all eventually be expected to seek and secure independent SACS accreditation, some consideration should be given to whether the Graduate Dean on the main campus should have oversight and management responsibility for graduate programs on the satellite campuses. Unless each of the satellites has an Associate Dean who reports to the Dean on the main campus, someone who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the graduate programs on each respective satellite campus, there is the potential for the management of programs on the other campuses to become disjointed. As the satellite campuses become independent and accredited by SACS, they may wish to manage their graduate programs separately from those on the main campus. Although that might be viewed as being inefficient, issues related to differences in program quality could provide the rationale for considering that the graduate programs at each respective unit of the USF system be treated as separate entities. If that decision were to be made, then bullet number 2 in the position description, which indicates the new dean would be responsible for coordinating graduate policies and programs at all USF colleges and campuses, should be removed.

The content of bullet numbers 5 and 4 up from the end of the bulleted list of responsibilities are essentially the same and should perhaps be combined. Increasing the

numbers of postdoctoral fellows, and creating a professionally rewarding environment for these trainees represents a daunting task, one that will be especially difficult if the new graduate dean is not provided with additional resources to support staff members who could help realize these goals. Institutions which have been successful in attracting more postdoctoral trainees and improving their working conditions locally (e.g. setting minimal compensation guidelines, establishing fringe benefits for postdocs, providing eligibility for postdocs to make contributions into retirement funds, etc.) have essentially all established a separate "Office of Postdoctoral Education." Such an office could report to the Graduate Dean, or become part of the existing Graduate School office with appropriate staff expansion. Alternatively, the Graduate School staff could work with the staff of the Vice President for Research and Innovation office to accomplish this goal.

Accomplishing the task indicated by penultimate bullet in the responsibility list will also be quite difficult for the new dean if additional resources are not provided. Usually the PI on a training grant is a faculty member who is an active scholar, integrally involved in mentoring predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees, and often this person is a graduate program director. Pulling together all of the information required for a training grant application is an extremely time consuming task, a task that is not easily accomplished without significant assistance from some unit at the institution which handles much of the data retrieval. The tabular components of a NIH training grant application require the collection of a monumental amount of data, which must then be provided in prescribed formats. Most institutions which have had success in applying for and garnering additional training grants have established a centralized system of collecting the relevant data and preparing the tabular components so that the PI does not have the sole responsibility for doing so. If this additional assistance is not available, there is little incentive for a faculty member who is already extremely busy to take on the task of preparing and submitting a training grant application. One minor point also related to this bullet in the announcement draft, the difference between what is meant by a "pre-doctoral" and a "doctoral" trainee who might be supported on a training grant is not clear.

IV. Responses to Charge Number Four

A. Evaluation of USF's Graduate Education Performance

1. Academic Program Rigor and Quality Assurance: The results of the most recent NRC Assessment of Doctoral Programs have not yet been released and the NRC assessment that was done in the early 1990s is too far out of date to be of use. Most institutions consider the US News and World Report results to be so completely driven by anecdote and previous reputational considerations as to call their usefulness into question. The next best approximation to the NRC Assessment that is currently available is the Academic Analytics Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index (FSP) from 2006-2007. Academic Analytics is a relatively new company that uses several different aspects of faculty scholarly output, including citations of their publications and success in garnering grants, to rank programs based on faculty size. This levels the playing field between peer programs because the FSP results are expressed on a per capita basis. Academic Analytics includes 33 USF doctoral programs in its assessment. As you are probably already aware as an Academic Analytics client, several USF doctoral programs are ranked in the top 20 in the country in their respective disciplines. They are: Aging Studies - 5th, Computer Science and Engineering - 8th, Communication Sciences and

Disorders - 9th, Criminology - 9th, Second Language Acquisition and Instructional Technology - 10th, Education Specific Subject Areas" - 10th; Cancer Biology - 12th, Medical Sciences -16th. Admittedly, these types of analyses and rankings reflect only indirectly on the quality of graduate programs. However, in lieu of other data based approaches to program evaluation, an ever increasing number faculty and administrators nationally have elected to seriously consider Academic Analytics' approach to gauging program quality. Accordingly, USF is to be commended for supporting and retaining faculty members who are extremely productive in these eight programs. These graduate programs have obvious strength and should be among the programs that are regarded favorably in terms of resource allocation.

An additional valid assessment of program quality would be possible if the university had been carrying out regular internal and external program review. We discovered that regular program review has not been carried out in the recent past. We recommend that one of the responsibilities of the new Graduate School Dean be to assure that a time dependent pattern of regular program review is put into place.

2. Quality and Diversity of Graduate Students: It is somewhat difficult to comment in detail on the quality of incoming graduate students because we were not provided with GPA and GRE data for new students. However, other parameters can be used to make an evaluation. One area of concern that we noted was the large number of programs for which the acceptance rate (ratio of applications received to acceptances offered) was quite high. This potentially suggests a lack of selectivity in the admissions process. A few examples of programs with very high acceptance rates are: American Studies, Library and Information Sciences, Mass Communications, Religious Studies, Women's Studies, many of the Education Masters programs, and many of the Engineering programs. It might be useful to examine more carefully the attrition rates in these programs to verify that the students who are being admitted are well qualified and to determine whether a high percentage of them complete their degree program.

Another way in which student preparedness can be gauged is by examining the time to degree (TTD) in each program. For many of the USF programs the time to degree data fall within the national norms for their respective disciplines. However, there are a few outliers. The aggregate times to degree for both Masters (2.99 years) and Doctoral (8.38 years) recipients in Education programs are much longer than would normally be expected. The TTD data for Nursing students, Masters (3.53 years), Doctoral (6.62 years), is equally troublesome. These relatively long TTDs are probably due to the fact that many of these individuals are pursuing their degrees part time. In fact, the time to degree data for many of USF's programs may be affected adversely by the relatively high proportion of all graduate students who are part time students. When we met with the senior staff of the Graduate School, this issue was raised and we suggested to them that, for purposes of reporting data to SACS, and perhaps also to other agencies, it might be useful to keep separate time to degree records for part time and full time students. Doing this could assure external reviewers that full time students in USF programs progress to completion of their degree requirements on a par with students in the same fields at peer institutions. Another discipline in which the time to degree for both Masters (3.79 years) and Doctoral (10.83 years) students bears scrutiny is Marine Science. Also, the Public Health doctoral TTD is 10.52 years. These are certainly outliers relative to national means in these disciplines. We also noted in the aggregate TTD data that there were

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several unacceptably long TTDs listed in the "Maximum Years" column; some even exceeded 28 years. In many peer institutions such an extraordinary TTD would not be allowed.

With regard to student diversity, although no specific data on percent minority enrollment were provided, our impression is that the diversity on campus appropriately reflects the ethnic diversity of the population pool from which the students enrolled in graduate programs is drawn.

3. Academic Success: It was not possible to extract from the data provided the attrition or success rates for students enrolled in each graduate program. Nor can we comment on placement as no outcomes data were provided. We recommend that outcomes / placement data be collected for each of the doctoral programs and that this information be placed in generic form (i.e. without identification of graduates by name) on the individual web sites of each program. Providing such information can serve as an effective recruitment too. Placement is very discipline specific, but in most national associations are the venues for good placement. Most programs should be active in national organizations and encourage their students to give presentations and posters at those conferences.

V. Responses to Additional Questions

A. Achieving Better Alignment Between the Office of Research and Innovation and Graduate Education.

This is a natural symbiosis. It is the research effort of any Tier I university that ultimately underpins the overall reputation of the institution. Obviously, the efforts of predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees contribute significantly to that research effort. Therefore, one might expect both the leadership and the staff members of the Office of Research and Innovation and the Graduate School to work synchronously to enhance the predoctoral and postdoctoral educational and work experience. One potential area in which collaboration between these two units could be beneficial has already been mentioned. These offices could work together to develop a "facilitation of training grant preparation" service. Other schools have been successful in increasing the number of both predoctoral and postdoctoral lines that are supported from training grant funds by establishing a central office which becomes responsible for the voluminous data collection and preparation of the tabular components of training grant applications. Preparation of these tables is the most burdensome aspect of developing one of these applications. When the "facilitation unit" is in place, it becomes much easier to persuade faculty members to consent to serve as the PI and to develop the programmatic components of the application. In the end it is a win-win; more applications are submitted, a certain percentage of them are funded on the first or second round of review, and more funds become available to support trainees. Whether the staff who are responsible for the output from the "facilitation unit" are housed in the Research office or in the Graduate School office should be irrelevant. In fact, having representative staff members in both offices who participate in this effort could be mutually beneficial and provide an economy of scale. The offices need not be adjacent, but do need frequent, continuing communication.

Another area in which these two offices could collaborate would be to provide a Professional Development program for graduate students and postdocs. There are many essential components of graduate education at USF which are not currently being offered to trainees. Adding a comprehensive Professional Development program would be most beneficial. Many peer institutions offer through either the Graduate School or their Research office workshops, seminars, or credit bearing courses in areas such as Responsible Conduct of Research, resume preparation, grant application writing, teaching assistant training, IRB and IACUC compliance, development of oral communication skills, academic writing, English language proficiency testing for international students, ESL course work, etc. From the information we gathered during our visit, we learned that these types of supplemental educational components are not currently being provided in any coordinated fashion. There is a unique opportunity for a collaborative effort between the Graduate School and the Research and Innovation office to develop a USF Professional Development program.

A third area, alluded to previously, would be to collaborate in the establishment of a functional Office of Postdoctoral Education. This office would establish guidelines for mentor – postdoc relationships, minimal support level recommendations for postdocs, work toward providing postdocs with acceptable fringe benefits, provide Professional Development components for postdocs (with some obvious overlap with similar services to predocs), augment faculty recruitment of additional postdoctoral trainees, and potentially take the lead in preparing specialized training grant applications such as for an NIH IRACDA grant which, if funded, would provide unique opportunities for postdocs to obtain teaching experience during the term of their postdoctoral fellowship.

B. Seamless Unification of Graduate Education on the Main Campus.

Giving the Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Vice President for Research and Innovation the responsibilities outlined in the draft position description along with the resources and staffing to provide the Dean with the credibility necessary to actually garner the respect and cooperation of the other college deans will be essential to achieve this goal. As indicated elsewhere in our report, the Graduate School Dean has not had sufficient resources, either financial or in terms of personnel, to gain the cooperation and respect of the other deans. This fact may be in large part why previous deans have been somewhat unsuccessful in improving the overall status of graduate education at USF. To be successful, the new Graduate Dean must control a significant proportion of student support resources, not just tuition waivers, but TA stipend support and perhaps funds to cover health insurance premiums for students in disciplines where provision of such support is expected. The new dean should make a concerted effort to include the other college deans in discussions about graduate education in their respective colleges. One effective way in which to "stay in touch" is for the graduate dean to schedule individual meetings each fall and spring semester with the other college deans to engage them in discussion of the graduate programs in their college, and to update the other deans on new policies or procedures that may have been developed at the Graduate Council level. In addition, the other deans should be asked to assure that their college is effectively represented in any decision making process that affects graduate education at USF. There is no substitute for the "personal touch" so we recommend that the new Graduate Dean make a conscious effort to develop an active and productive working relationship with all of the other college deans.

There are several potential changes which could be considered that may lead to better coordination and cohesiveness between the programs which reside within the Health Sciences Center and those which are part of the Academic Affairs segment of the campus. Cohesiveness and coordination could be improved if The Graduate School was funded in a unified manner with a single budget built on proportional contributions from each budgeted unit (i.e. USF Academic Affairs, Health, and the regional campuses) on the basis of graduate FTE served. If the Graduate Dean had line management authority over a single budget entity (i.e. The Graduate School), he/she would be much more likely to develop an effective working relationship with the individuals who are responsible for administering the graduate programs which reside in the HSC and on the regional campuses. Our impression is that with the current arrangement the HSC and Academic Affairs components are essentially two separate operations, both financially and operationally, thereby giving the Graduate Dean basically no authority to work with or have any influence on the HSC programs. These should be unified under the Dean of the Graduate School.

The current situation also reemphasizes the need for centralized oversight for graduate faculty appointments. There is currently limited collaboration across the USF Health Sciences and the Academic Affairs areas between the basic and biomedical sciences. A Carnegie "Very High Research Activity" institution should maximize those connections in order to intensify interdisciplinary research. Active leadership by the Provost, the Vice President for Research and Innovation and the Vice President of USF Health is a propitious beginning. Having a shared, centralized graduate faculty could augment the process of developing closer cooperation as well.

C. Actualization of "One Graduate School" Across USF's Multi-Campus System.

This may be the most daunting, and perhaps most difficult to achieve, task for the new Dean. From our admittedly limited interaction with administrators at the other campuses, our impression is that there appears to be a move toward limited independence. As each of these campuses seek and obtain independent SACS accreditation, as the St. Petersburg campus has already achieved, a tendency for the other campuses to become even more independent may evolve. In that context, it may be relevant to ask a number of questions. Is the quality and preparedness of the students in programs on the satellite campuses as high as that for the students on the main campus? Are the programs provided on the satellite campuses of the same quality as those on the main campus? Is the scholarly activity level of the faculty on the satellite campuses equal to that on the main campus? If the answer to any of these questions is no, then is it beneficial to subsume those students and programs under the central umbrella in terms of future accreditation reviews and the aspiration to become an AAU institution? Even if the answer to the first three questions is yes, the task of the previous graduate deans in trying to amalgamate graduate education across all of the campuses has been markedly unsuccessful to date. We see numerous logistical problems which already exist in the attempt to place graduate education at all campuses under one umbrella, and these problems portend to only become more difficult if each of the campuses continues to grow its graduate student population. Therefore, we strongly recommend that, even though it may not seem most efficient in terms of resource allocation and potential duplication of effort from the perspective of both students and faculty, graduate education on all campuses may be

more efficacious if the programs are administered independently on each campus particularly once they have realized separate regional accreditation. Our impression is that one of the reasons that previous graduate deans have been somewhat unsuccessful in accomplishing the goal of applying a "one size fits all" approach on all campuses is that the concept is intractable to begin with. Why saddle the new dean with what might be an insurmountable problem from day one? The inception of a search for a new dean provides the opportunity to take stock of the current situation, and to structure the responsibilities of the new dean's position so that he / she has a higher probability of being more successful than his / her predecessors.

D. How do we:

1. Increase the number of doctoral degrees awarded? Provide more financial support for predoctoral trainees. Expand recruitment efforts to increase the size of applicant pools so that more selective admissions decisions can be made. Develop an early warning and support system to identify and assist students who might otherwise drop out in their first or second years.

2. Accelerate time to degree?   Reduce the number of part time predoctoral students. This will require provision of more support packages which sustain predoctoral trainees throughout the course of their studies.

3. Extend the array of (especially doctoral) programs, especially on the main campus (or not)? We strongly recommend against any sort of initiative to increase the number of programs currently offered at USF in the immediate future. We note in the data provided to us large numbers of programs for which the applicant pool is small, and for which it is questionable whether the number of enrolled students reaches a critical mass. Given the limited resources currently (and perhaps in the future) available, it would seem more reasonable to us for USF to perform an in depth analysis of the large number of very small programs currently offered. Why are the applicant pools and the enrolled cohorts so small? What are the outcomes / placement data for the graduates from these programs? Does it make sense to retain these programs if there is little demand for them, or if the placement record does not justify their retention? If USF has AAU aspirations, then it must build on the strengths in its graduate programs, particularly its doctoral programs. No institution can be excellent in all areas. Before considering addition of any new programs, would it not be prudent to eliminate programs for which there is little or no demand, or for which there is minimal faculty strength? Then reassess to identify the programs, such as the eight that already rank in the top 20 in the country by the FSP index, and emphasize those and others which may truly be niche programs.

4. Increase the number of full-fee paying domestic and international graduate students? Identify the strongest professional and practice-based programs at USF, those in which it is traditional for students to pay their own tuition. Then, if the applicant pool and the job market for graduates from those programs justify it, target those programs for expansion. Often these are professional Masters programs. Unfortunately, the programs which will strengthen the reputation of the university, i.e. the research based Masters and Doctoral programs, are almost always money losers. The best doctoral programs in the country, irrespective of discipline, routinely offer full tuition, stipend, and often health insurance coverage to their predoctoral trainees for the full term of their enrollment until they obtain their degrees. One tactic that can be used to attract more international

students into graduate programs is to provide "benefits of graduate education" recruitment events for undergraduate students on your campus, and then make a special effort to assure that international undergraduates are invited to attend.

5. Increase the number of full-time graduate (especially doctoral) students? Expand only those doctoral programs in which there is faculty strength, applicant demand, and placement potential for graduates, and identify resources to provide competitive support packages for the students.

6. Promote Interdisciplinary Collaborations in Graduate Education?
Interdisciplinary collaborations evolve from the grass roots. Faculty and students must recognize areas of expertise and skill sets that are complementary before they initiate conversations regarding potential collaborations. There are several ways in which one can bring researchers with disparate, but potentially complementary, interests together. One of these is to require that at least one faculty member on every student's dissertation committee be from a discipline other than the one in which the student is training. If the "outside member" is chosen judiciously, the potential for recognition of complementary interests or skill sets is enhanced. Of course, for this to happen, the student's committee has to meet somewhat regularly to discuss his / her dissertation project so that the potential complementarities can be revealed. Assuring that dissertation committees do meet on some regularly agreed upon schedule should be an additional responsibility of the Graduate School Dean. Development of interdisciplinary graduate programs is another mechanism that has been used to promote cross collaboration among faculty in different disciplines. Although interdisciplinary programs are often very attractive to prospective students, for them to be successful requires faculty buy in during the developmental stages. If faculty are not committed to the concept to the extent that they are willing to administer, teach courses in, and serve on the committees of the students in the interdisciplinary program, the program will fail. However, when interdisciplinary programs work, they can be remarkably successful in promoting collaborations. One of us can cite multiple examples of new collaborations and new research grants that evolved among faculty from different schools who may not have known that each other were even on the same campus before they worked together to execute the components of an interdisciplinary graduate training program.

VI. Conclusion

We thank Provost Wilcox and the Vice President Holbrook for the opportunity to visit the campus and to meet with a variety of constituencies. We found everyone to be committed, engaged, and helpful to us in our fact-finding mission. The support staff were gracious, highly organized, and well informed. We were struck by the intense interest of all faculty and staff in the outcome of our report. We regard this engagement with the University's future to be a propitious sign. We wish you the best in achieving your aims.