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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
Charleston, Illinois

news

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FILE COPY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU COMPLETES GRADUATE STUDY

CHARLESTON, IL--A campus-wide study of graduate education and research at Eastern Illinois University has generated 133 recommendations which could affect the quality of graduate education and research at the University for many years.

"The results of this study clearly demonstrate a campus-wide desire to enhance graduate education and research, and it seems appropriate for the Eastern community to reaffirm its commitment to providing outstanding educational opportunities for post-baccalaureate students," said EIU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Robert Kindrick, who requested the study.

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He added, "The study of graduate education and research is a natural progression following Eastern's extensive study of undergraduate education which was completed in September 1988."

Fifty individuals from across campus, each with a particular background of expertise or experience in graduate education or research, served on six committees assigned to study academic policies and procedures; structure and governance; recruitment, admissions and retention; research; evaluation; and support services.

The study was coordinated by Art Professor Garret DeRuiter, who chaired a steering committee appointed to carry out the study. The committee was comprised of members representing all of Eastern's six colleges and a variety of other campus constituencies. Faculty, department chairs, graduate coordinators, academic deans, and current and former graduate students played a key role in the study by completing opinion surveys on various aspects of graduate education and research.

The recommendations in the study are open to reaction from the entire university community, explained DeRuiter. While some of the recommendations are already being implemented, there are others where fiscal considerations will govern implementation, he noted.

One set of recommendations suggests administrative restructuring of the Offices of Grants and Research and the Graduate School to include division of duties and addition of professional staff.

One premise established very early in the study, DeRuiter said, was that research was not and should not be an exclusive function of graduate education. "The proposed division of these offices adds further emphasis to this idea," DeRuiter said.

Other sets of recommendations would help to maintain or increase the quality of the graduate faculty and the involvement of faculty members in the governance of graduate education and research. These recommendations do not contain any "major" changes but may best be described as "fine tuning" of the existing system.

"It is felt that by assuring faculty involvement in the governance process their awareness and enthusiasm for maintaining quality will be enhanced," DeRuiter said.

The Committee on Admissions, Recruitment and Retention praised the Graduate School and certain individual programs in the area of recruitment and offered suggestions on how Eastern can continue increasing enrollments, while increasing the quality of students enrolled in the graduate programs and improving their chances of graduation.

Since 1982-83, there have been increases in the number of graduate students on- and off-campus, graduate applications received, summer graduate students, master's degrees granted, and assistantships awarded.

If implemented, another set of recommendations would not only assure high quality of courses and programs in the Graduate School, but would assure the quality of the faculty involved with graduate students. These recommendations also address the concerns of compensation for graduate faculty in their various roles with graduate students.

To ensure that Eastern's graduate programs maintain high quality, it was recommended that the University adopt an institutional policy on accreditation by outside agencies which provide support for programs which seek accreditation.

"In some cases it appears that Eastern's criteria may well exceed those established by accrediting agencies. The existence of the recommended policy on accreditation will ensure that uniformly high quality is maintained," DeRuiter said.

He noted, "Careful examination of each recommendation, its worthiness, its costs, how it can be implemented, and what priority should be assigned to it will have to be made over the coming months."