The Graduate School
Annual Report on Diversity and Inclusion
(October 01, 2007 – September 30, 2008)

The Graduate School continued activities and began new initiatives to encourage graduate programs in all colleges to recruit graduate students more broadly and more inclusively. Special efforts have continued to encourage inclusive recruitment of domestic students in all areas of scholarship, and especially in the natural and social sciences, mathematics and engineering. All workshops for career preparation and development, for orientation of new faculty and administrators, and for training or support of training and retention of graduate students contain a core emphasis upon inclusion. The Graduate School continued to provide and contribute to fellowships and awards that support recruiting, retaining, and graduating a rich diversity of domestic graduate students.

Specific examples highlight the continued efforts of The Graduate School to promote inclusion and diversity in the mainstream of training for masters and doctoral degrees.

Graduate Fellowships, Assistantships, and Awards

University Distinguished Fellowships & University Enrichment Fellowships. The Graduate School offers fellowship programs that provide financial support for outstanding students who plan to enroll in a doctoral or master of fine arts program. We are particularly aware of the special role that graduate education plays in training the next generation of leaders in academia, government and the private sector. In assisting MSU to achieve its educational mission, our goal is to foster an intellectually vital and diverse educational community that will prepare graduate students to assume their career roles in a diverse society. The Graduate School's recruitment fellowships support departments and programs in their goal of attracting a cohort of students who: (1) have demonstrated academic excellence; articulate their commitment to research goals well matched to department or program doctoral emphasis areas; (2) show evidence of leadership potential or of the capacity to make a distinctive professional or scholarly contribution; (3) contribute to a diverse educational community, as evidenced in personal history and experience, research goals, or the promotion of understanding among persons of different backgrounds and ideas; and (4) have diverse racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, geographic, and disciplinary backgrounds.

Academic Achievement Graduate Assistantships. Most graduate programs at MSU must compete aggressively with graduate programs at other universities for students whose participation fosters the varied educational experience that helps all students learn and prepares them for an increasingly diverse society. The Graduate School offers a graduate assistantship program that provides financial support for students who are accepted into a master's or a doctoral degree program and whose enrollment will enhance the educational diversity of the student body of the program into which they are admitted, as evidenced in personal history and experience, research goals, or the promotion of understanding among persons of different background and ideas, or have demonstrated significant academic achievement by overcoming
barriers such as economic, social, or educational disadvantage. In particular, the Graduate School's AAGA recruitment program is designed to assist academic units in attracting a cohort of diverse students who have traditionally not participated in graduate programs in their units. This may include applicants from bilingual households, McNair program participants, or those who have attended an undergraduate institution such as a small liberal arts college or a HBCU or HSI. Applicants with evidence of experience or leadership potential are especially sought.

King-Chavez-Parks Future Faculty Fellowships. The program was created by the Michigan State Legislature in 1986 as part of the larger King•Chávez•Parks Initiative designed to stem the downward spiral of college graduation rates for students underrepresented in postsecondary education. Future Faculty Fellows are eligible to pursue a master’s or doctoral degree at the public universities in Michigan. Future Faculty Fellowship graduates are obligated, by signed agreement, to remain in postsecondary faculty teaching or administration in a public or private, 2- or 4-year, in-state or out-of-state postsecondary institution for a minimum of three (3) years full-time equivalents. This fellowship award at MSU is made possible through a combination of funding from the State of Michigan funds and The Graduate School to support graduate students who will contribute to the development of faculty diversity in colleges and universities in the State of Michigan. The Graduate School encourages applications from historically important U.S. minorities, women, people with disabilities, and individuals from cultural, linguistic, geographic, and socio-economic backgrounds who would otherwise not adequately be represented in the graduate student and faculty populations in the State of Michigan. Following a brief hiatus, the Graduate School has resumed offering this fellowship.

Emergency Fellowship Funding. The Graduate School provides funding for graduate students for unusual or unforeseen emergency expenses. This is available for graduate students pursuing a degree program. The intent of these funds is to assist students on a “one time only” basis.

Dissertation Completion Fellowships. More than 150 $6,000 fellowships are available annually to allow doctoral students to devote full time to writing the dissertation. The goal is degree completion within two semesters. This award can be obtained while maintaining up to a one-half time assistantship or the equivalent.

Travel Fellowships to support research. Graduate students pursuing a degree program are eligible to apply for funds to travel to present their research at professional conferences.

Education Opportunity Fellowships. The purpose of EOF fellowships is to provide financial assistance to MSU graduate and professional students who meet certain eligibility requirements that include financial status with respect to student loan indebtedness.

Alliances for Graduate Education & the Professoriate (AGEP)

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Program. The Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) at MSU is an NSF program that supports recruitment, retention, and graduation of domestic students in master’s and doctoral programs of the sciences,
technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); and the social, behavioral, and economic (SBE) sciences. The focus of AGEP at MSU places special emphasis on a fully inclusive recruitment and development of domestic students in groups historically underrepresented in the STEM and SBE disciplines. A goal of AGEP is to promote changes that transform U. S. universities to embrace the responsibility of substantially increasing the number of underrepresented domestic students who will enter the professoriate in STEM and SBE disciplines. Specific AGEP program objectives are: (1) to develop and implement innovative models for recruiting, mentoring, and retaining underrepresented domestic students in STEM and SBE doctoral programs, and (2) to develop effective strategies to identify and support underrepresented domestic students who want to pursue academic careers.

**Michigan AGEP Alliance (MAA).** The four public research universities in the State of Michigan, i.e. MSU, University of Michigan (UM), Wayne State University (WSU), and Western Michigan University (WMU), form the MAA. The purpose of the MAA is to collaborate to achieve the objectives and the common goals of the NSF program by sharing human and material resources, building networks of student interactions, and experimenting to find what works to catalyze transformation of these academies. The MAA participants gather each Spring and Fall for MAA Conferences, hosted by one of the campuses, to build student networks and provide supportive activities, workshops, and other sessions for each stage of career planning and development.

**AGEP at MSU.** GEP at MSU applies funds from the NSF and The Graduate School to provide substantial support for student recruitment, career development, and to foster the emergence of a diverse community of scholars among graduate students in STEM and SBE disciplines. The Graduate School leverages AGEP funding to support direct faculty involvement in student recruitment, and to establish educational collaborations with faculty at colleges and universities that have substantial enrollments of population groups that are a focus of the NSF program goals. These are activities aimed to build trust between faculties of MSU and focal institutions for recruitment, with the goal to establish a steady stream of students into successful graduate studies at MSU. Graduate students and faculty who participate in building the AGEP Learning Community at MSU will provide a key to changing the culture of U. S. colleges and universities to embrace building world-class STEM and SBE faculties who fully reflect the diversity in race, gender, culture and intellectual talent of the U. S population.

**MSU AGEP Learning Community:** Through AGEP, MSU fosters a multidisciplinary learning community of graduate students and faculty members. Monthly meeting allow AGEP participants to create dialogues across disciplines through informal oral presentations about current research. The learning community also provides opportunities to share key information regarding graduate school success and experience a camaraderie that extends beyond the academic setting. Graduate students, faculty and administrators from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the College of Natural Sciences and the College of Social Sciences play an active role in facilitating this learning community. On average, 27 graduate students, faculty and administrators attended these monthly meetings. Program areas represented were: Electrical and Computer Engineering; Mechanical Engineering; Computer Science and Engineering; Food Science and Human Nutrition; Cell and Molecular Biology; Psychology, Communications, Family and Child Ecology, Economics, Neuroscience, African American and African Studies;
Microbiology and Molecular Genetics; Chemistry; Crop and Soil Sciences; Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics; Sociology; Anthropology; and Advertising. Other program areas represented are: College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Office of Diversity and Pluralism; Associate Dean, College of Social Sciences; Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources The Graduate School Office for Student Affairs; and the Harriett B. Rigas Graduate Engineering Program.

**AGEP Scholar Award:** The AGEP Scholar award is an annual fellowship that supports research and professional travel and provides access to faculty career and professional development programs and activities sponsored by The Graduate School at MSU. This award gave $2,000 in financial support to 15 graduate students across multiple disciplines including: Neuroscience (1); Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics (1); Economics (1); Sociology (1); Chemical Engineering (1); Microbiology and Molecular Genetics (1); Advertising and Public Relations (1); Computer Science (1); Psychology (1); Crop and Soil Sciences (1); Mechanical Engineering (1); and Electrical Engineering (4).

**Michigan AGEP Alliance (MAA) Fall Conference.** The MAA Fall Conference “Pathways to the Professoriate” was held at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center of the MSU campus on November 15, 2007. The program began with a dinner and speaker and continued with breakout sessions that detailed four different paths to the Ph.D. The dinner speaker was Ruben Martinez, Ph.D., the Director of the Julian Samora Research Institute and he spoke on “Raising and Pursuing Personal Educational Goals.” The four breakout sessions, or paths, were title: Path 1: Graduate School Entry (designed for undergraduate students), Path 2: Passing Qualifying Exams and Comprehensives, Path 3: Successful Dissertation Writing, and Path 4: Successful Ph.D. Job Search. There were 98 registered for the conference and 112 in attendance (21 from MSU, 32 from UM, 23 from WSU, and 36 from WMU).

A majority, 88%, of the participant agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “In thinking about your own educational goals, the dinner speaker, Ruben Martinez, Ph.D. was helpful.” Additionally, a majority of participants in each break out session responded positively to statements designed to evaluate the effectiveness and usefulness of the sessions. Participants also offered open ended responses in regards to the different aspects of the conference. From the dinner speaker, many participants expressed satisfaction and comfort with the remarks about graduate studies in general and more specifically, about writing the dissertation. The speakers’ strategy of empowering students to take charge of their research as well as the reassurance about completing the dissertation was received positively. In terms of the conference overall, many participants had general positive comments, and several provided suggestions to have more conferences. There were many ideas for future conferences; however, the most common responses were related to issues with faculty/advisors, funding, the career/job search, and time/stress management and organization.

**AGEP—“Enhance Your Future” (EYF) Alliance.** The emphasis of this Alliance is to support inclusive recruitment and retention of domestic students for master’s and doctoral programs in the disciplines of social and behavioral sciences, economics, science, technology, engineering and mathematics here at MSU, with the goal to prepare graduate students for academic careers. We seek to build relationships between MSU faculty, and faculty who advise
and mentor students at focal colleges and universities. Two strategies guide the relation-building: 1) Annual MSU faculty visits to each campus for a research seminar and a separate recruitment session; and 2) Annual AGEP-EYF supported visit to MSU by faculty and students identified by faculty from each campus of participating institutions. This EYF activity differs from others in that it promotes development of faculty-to-faculty interactions to form educational collaborations between MSU faculty and those at colleges and universities with potential graduate students for MSU. This activity invites faculty to identify potential graduate students at their institutions and to travel to MSU along with the students for a visit to establish and sustain relationships.

2008 AGEP EYF Conference: The 2008 EYF program took place on October 8-10, 2008 at the MSU Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center. The program hosted 26 students and faculty from 6 Historically Black Colleges and Universities. These institutions were invited to join and participate in similar activities and interactions to build and sustain educational partnerships that support and transition students from these institutions into graduate studies at MSU. Students and faculty in STEM and SBE disciplines from Bennett College for Women (1 faculty, 2 students), Jackson State University (3 faculty, 2 students), Florida A & M University (5 faculty, 6 students), Hampton University (1 faculty, 2 students), Spelman College (1 faculty, 1 student), and Clark Atlanta University (1 faculty, 1 student) attended the two-day conference. Two of the attendees from Bennett College, 4 from Jackson State University, 4 from FAMU, and 3 from Hampton University represented the Biological Sciences. One attendee from Bennett College, 1 from Jackson State University and 2 from Clark Atlanta University represented Chemistry. The 2 attendees from Spelman College represented Computer Science. Of the remaining 7 attendees from FAMU, 6 were Psychology and 1 was Environmental Science.

The conference generated excitement and interest among faculty and students at MSU. At the opening program on October 9, the guests were greeted by CNS, CANR, College of Social Sciences and MSU administrators. Multiple faculty and graduate students across multiple program areas participated in two roundtable discussions. These roundtable discussions and question-and-answer sessions were designed to bring out any concerns on the visitors behalf about the MSU graduate application process and also discuss challenges related to building a successful and sustainable partnership with the visiting universities. The natural science visitors spent the afternoon at the Kellogg Biological Station viewing the facilities and exploring research opportunities. The Psychology visitors went to a departmental visit. The visitors also had an opportunity to interact socially with MSU faculty and graduate students at a networking reception held on the same evening. On the morning of October 10th, a program recruitment and networking event was hosted by the College of Natural Science.

Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC)

The Graduate School continues to be the principal link for MSU to the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC). The CIC is a consortium of 12 research universities, including the 11 members of the Big Ten Conference and the University of Chicago. With campuses in 8 states, CIC universities enroll more than 300,000 undergraduates and 76,000 graduate students, and employ some 33,000 full-time faculty and 139,000 full-time staff. The CIC is guided by the Provosts of the member universities. The mission of the CIC is to advance academic excellence
by sharing resources and promoting and coordinating collaborative activities across the member universities. CIC work focuses on three areas of dynamic, evolving collaboration: (1) national leadership for higher education; (2) combining, leveraging and expanding resources of member universities; and (3) expanding learning opportunities by sharing unique courses and programs. While all of the activities of the CIC continues to enhance collaborative and educational opportunities for MSU students and faculty, the CIC continues special commitments to promoting inclusion of historically excluded U.S. minorities in career paths toward academic careers. An example of this is support for the Summer Research Opportunity Program (SPRO).

**Summer Research Opportunity Program (SPRO)**

The Graduate School continued to provide substantial support for the McNair/SPRO Scholars Program at MSU. The SPRO program involves undergraduate students who have an interest and potential for pursuit of an academic career. The goal of the program is to increase the number of underrepresented students who pursue academic careers. SPRO helps prepare undergraduate students for graduate study through intensive research experiences with faculty mentors and enrichment activities. The SPRO was initiated in 1986 by the CIC Graduate Deans to encourage talented undergraduate students to pursue graduate study and subsequently academic careers. That first year 99 students participated; 529 students majoring in over one hundred fields of study are participating this year. Since this program began, some 7,000 students have participated. The major activity of the SROP is an in-depth research experience with students working one-on-one with faculty mentors. SROP students are required to write a paper and an abstract describing their projects and to present the results of their work at a campus symposium.

**Workshops and Career Development Activities**

The activities listed here are just a few of the many career development and support activities conducted and sponsored by The Graduate School. Though all activities benefit and are important to historically excluded and underrepresented domestic students and faculty, only a sampling appears here to illustrate programs with particularly high impact or potentially high impact on retention and career preparation.

**Setting Expectations and Resolving Conflicts.** An increasing national recognition of the serious nature of interpersonal conflicts between graduate students and faculty led to a pioneering development of workshops to address this problem. This program is one activity to assist graduate students and faculty members to set and meet explicit expectations and resolve conflicts, thus, eventually reducing attrition rates while also improving the graduate experience. This Graduate School workshop has several versions and is in such high demand that the GS staff cannot schedule enough to meet the requests. This high demand stimulated development of a series of workshops to Train The Trainers (TTT) as a way to expand the opportunities to reach more people. The on-campus TTT activity developed new trainers who have since conducted workshops both on and off the MSU campus. This conflict resolution activity is aimed, inclusively, at all graduate students and at any other target audience, e.g. faculty. This is a prime example of inclusiveness in the design of training activities that may improve retention among
all students in all programs. This workshop remains available for faculty in general, specific faculty groups, and graduate students.

**Planning, Resilience, Engagement, and Professionalism (PREP).** PREP focuses on four professional skills that are key to career and professional development: (1) Planning throughout the graduate career to identify and successfully achieve career goals; (2) developing Resilience and tenacity to thrive through personal and professional stages; (3) practicing active Engagement in making important life decisions and in acquiring the skills necessary to attain career goals; and (4) attaining high standards of Professionalism in research and teaching.

This is what may be described as a complete training system or a comprehensive systems approach to training graduate students. The PREP system opens up a large variety of support and training activities and provides a guide for graduate students in all stages of career planning and development. This system is especially of use to provide the exposure of diverse populations of graduate students to key strategies for career development and planning. One might even describe this as a mentoring system that continues to prove invaluable to those aware of its existence. The Graduate School mounted a new website for access to this extraordinary resource for all of the people (http://www.grad.msu.edu/prep/).

**FAST Fellows.** The Graduate School at Michigan State University (MSU) and the MSU Center for the Integration of Research Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) Steering Committee sponsor a training opportunity for graduate students interested in academic careers—the FAST Fellowship Program (*Future Academic Scholars in Teaching*). The primary goals of the FAST Fellowship Program are to provide opportunities for a diverse group of graduate students to have mentored teaching experiences and to gain familiarity with materials on teaching and assessment techniques. The FAST program is for doctoral students with interests in teaching, learning, and assessment in higher education who are enrolled in programs associated with the Colleges of Natural Science, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Engineering, and Veterinary Medicine and whose college or department has an approved Certification in College Teaching Program. This program was developed in response to the national need to prepare future faculty for the changing needs and expectations in higher education. FAST also complements the efforts of the CIRTL project (an NSF funded project initiated by MSU, the Univ. of Wisconsin, and The Pennsylvania State Univ.; now including the Univ. of Colorado-Boulder, Texas A & M Univ., Howard Univ., and Vanderbilt Univ.). Participation is open to all graduate students and the appeal to diverse students has begun to increase. The involvement of FAST Fellows in the AGEP learning community promises to make FAST much more diverse and inclusive because the information spreads more rapidly than previously.

**External Fellowships Promoting Diversity**

The Graduate School continues to support providing the information and promoting application by graduate students to compete for fellowships that promote diversity and inclusion in graduate education. Examples include Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowships and the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans.
Summary Data

We continue to pull data together to gather and analyze demographic information to see who utilizes the professional development and support systems provided by the Graduate School. We are building baseline data that will enable assessment of various strategies for recruitment, retention, and graduation of master’s and doctoral degree recipients. Though these data presented are incomplete, we will continue analyses to provide useful information that can guide our planning. Our goal is to have all of our students fully participate in opportunities that support their graduate study and prepare them for future career success.

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