The Graduate School

Annual Report and Summary of Programs/Initiatives to Support MSU Research and Educational Success

(October 01, 2009 – September 30, 2010)

The Graduate School continued activities and began new initiatives to encourage graduate programs in all colleges to focus on the inclusive recruitment of graduate students and on career success for all graduate students and postdocs. 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, completion and career success. The Graduate School continued to provide and contribute to fellowships and awards that support recruiting, retaining, and graduating a diversity of graduate students and has continued to acquire and focus resources upon the development of domestic talent pools to meet challenges to maximize competitiveness of the U.S. workforce.

Specific examples highlight the continued efforts of The Graduate School to promote inclusion and graduate student and postdoc career success as an important part of mainstream MSU’s educational efforts.

I. 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. [http://grad.msu.edu/universityfellowships/](http://grad.msu.edu/universityfellowships/)

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. [http://grad.msu.edu/aaga/](http://grad.msu.edu/aaga/)

**King-Chávez-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. [http://grad.msu.edu/news/news.aspx?id=14](http://grad.msu.edu/news/news.aspx?id=14)

**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. [http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/emergency.aspx](http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/emergency.aspx)

**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. Each College selects its own recipients. [http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/dissertation.aspx](http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/dissertation.aspx)

**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. [http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/travel.aspx](http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/travel.aspx)

**Research Enhancement Fellowships.** Funds are available to support activities that enhance graduate students’ research projects. These resources are open to all graduate students and are being accessed by students of increasing diversity. [http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/research.aspx](http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/research.aspx)

**Education Opportunity Fellowships.** The purpose of EOF fellowships is to provide financial assistance to MSU graduate and graduate-professional students who meet certain eligibility requirements that include financial status with respect to student loan indebtedness. [http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/eof.aspx](http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/eof.aspx)
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.

II. 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. http://www.michagep.org/

AGEP at MSU. AGEP 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. http://grad.msu.edu/agep/

MSU AGEP Learning Community. Through AGEP, MSU fosters a multidisciplinary learning community of graduate students and faculty members. Monthly meetings allow AGEP participants to create dialogues across disciplines through informal oral presentations about current research (CrossTalks). 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. The Graduate School supports a further inclusion of students from the College of Education and the College of Arts and Letters to add to the intellectual diversity. On average, approximately 50 graduate students, faculty and administrators attended these monthly meetings. The
AGEP Learning Community is developing into a model learning community that has an intellectual focus, stimulates academic interests, promotes professional development, and provides opportunities to engage in wide-ranging discussions that inform and lead to evolution of thought. This has become a safe place for a community of scholars, where friendships and professional networks form, where individuals find encouragement and support to sustain their study and complete the graduate school segment of their journey.

**AGEP Scholar Award.** The AGEP Scholar award is an annual fellowship ($2,000) that supports research, scholarship and travel for research and professional development of graduate students in STEM and SBE disciplines and to graduate students from other disciplines who fully participate in activities of the AGEP Learning Community. Activities of the AGEP Learning Community include monthly meetings; CrossTalk presentations of disciplinary research in a way to promote understanding across disciplines; annual joint, Fall conference of the Michigan AGEP Alliance and KCP-Future Faculty Fellows; annual Spring Writing Workshop of the Michigan AGEP Alliance; participation in the set of career and professional development workshops and programs that fall under the MSU CAFFE (Center for Academic & Future Faculty Excellence). In 2009-10, this award gave $2,000 in fellowship support to 39 graduate students across multiple disciplines. The award amount is funded from a combination of three NSF grant awards and funds from the Graduate School.

**AGEP Mini-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 activity 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 Mini-EYF Conference.** The 2008 Mini-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.

**III. Michigan AGEP Alliance (MAA) and King-Chavez-Parks Future Faculty Fellows Conference (2009).**

**Introduction.** The Michigan AGEP Alliance collaborated with the State of Michigan King Chavez Parks Initiative to provide the Michigan AGEP Alliance/KCP Future Faculty Fellowship 2009 Fall Conference. The conference focus was on preparing students and post-doctoral fellows for an academic career. The sessions were designed to deliver academic stage specific programs as well as to provide common opportunities for networking and collaboration. 161 participants in total attended this event held at the Radisson Hotel in Lansing, Michigan November 6-7, 2009. There were 104 Michigan AGEP Alliance participants and 57 Future Faculty Fellowship participants (including 11 institutional representatives).
IV. Advance To Adventure (ATA). (Contact Associate Dean Jackson for more information)

The Graduate School continues its commitment to support well-established and successful methods applied to recruit an inclusive, diverse pool of domestic students into graduate programs at MSU. The Graduate School also encourages trials of new approaches that may lead to successful recruiting. The ATA activity aims to continue to reward success and encourage experiments to do better at recruitment, enrollment, and graduation of domestic students at the master’s and doctoral level to enrich the inclusive diversity of the U.S. post-baccalaureate workforce. Components of ATA include cost-sharing for: i.) ATA Prospective Student Visits to MSU; and ii.) ATA Faculty Travel.

ATA Prospective Student Visits. The goal of ATA Prospective Student Visits is to provide an opportunity for an inclusive group of domestic applicants to visit MSU and be sold on committing to graduate study at MSU. The Graduate School invites proposals to co-fund multi-program and College-wide recruiting activities that aim to enroll inclusive cohorts of domestic students who will contribute substantially to the intellectual, geographical, and population diversity of graduate students at MSU.

ATA Faculty Travel. The goal of ATA Faculty Travel is to establish and sustain faculty-to-faculty relationships aimed to create a flow of new domestic students into MSU graduate programs. The Graduate School invites proposals at the College level or graduate program level to support MSU faculty travel to colleges and universities with substantial numbers of domestic undergraduate students who are historically underrepresented in graduate programs at MSU. A few high-impact “recruitment” conferences may be positively considered for faculty travel co-funding, but disciplinary conferences will not.

V. Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) http://grad.msu.edu/cic/

The Graduate School is linked 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 Opportunities Program (SROP).

VI. 2010 MSU Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) http://grad.msu.edu/srop/

The Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) is a gateway to graduate education at Michigan State University (MSU). The goal of the program is to increase the number of underrepresented domestic undergraduate students who pursue graduate study and careers in teaching and
research at colleges and universities. MSU SROP helps prepare undergraduate students for graduate study through intensive research experiences with faculty mentors and academic enrichment activities. In addition to the research experience, the Graduate School provided academic, career and professional development activities that prepare undergraduates for success in graduate school.

The 2010 MSU Summer Research Opportunities Program commenced from May 22, 2010 to July 30, 2010. Twenty-two students participated in the second year of the program under management by the Graduate School. Many MSU faculty serve as mentors in SROP. Thank you!

Home institutions for the SROP participants included:
- Florida A&M University; Florida International University; Grand Valley State University; Hampton University; Jackson State University; Louisiana State University; Miami University (Ohio); North Carolina A&T State University; Prairie View A&M University; Pennsylvania State University; University of Puerto Rico, Piedras; University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez; University of Puget Sound; Michigan State University; Xavier University of Louisiana; Universidad del Este; University of Puerto Rico, Cayey; University of Puerto Rico, Arecibo

VII. 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.

Planning, Resilience, Engagement, and Professionalism (PREP). PREP is aimed at individual graduate students and focuses to build 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. [http://grad.msu.edu/prep/](http://grad.msu.edu/prep/)

This is 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 way for students to acquire mentoring outside of the disciplinary training for the graduate degree. The Graduate School is evolving a new website for access to this resource by all graduate students.

Ph.D. Career Services. Linked to the PREP activities, the Ph.D. Career Services office is set up to provide both topic-specific workshops (e.g., CVs vs. resumes, letters of application, interviewing skills) and individual appointments for graduate students and postdocs related to careers in academia, business/industry, government and NGOs. [http://grad.msu.edu/careerservices/](http://grad.msu.edu/careerservices/)
The Teaching Assistant Program. Since the 1990s, the TA Program has been assisting graduate students with developing their teaching skills, understanding of pedagogy, teaching philosophy statements, and other professional skills. The TA program also partners with PREP leadership team to offer the Certification in College Teaching Program.

Conflict Resolution Workshops. 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. (Activity planned every other year.)

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 the potential to increase. The involvement of FAST Fellows in the AGEP learning community has the potential to make FAST much more diverse and inclusive because the information spreads more rapidly than previously.

Responsible Conduct of Research. This series of seminars is in its 13th year. Organized to help graduate students understand their responsibilities as researchers and scholars, the program expanded to include postdocs in 2007. The program covers the topical areas that the federal Office of Research Integrity defines as important for this area of professional development.

Graduate Student Wellness Initiative. This program is designed to provide opportunities to network, workshops on a variety of topics (e.g., financial wellness, emotional and physical wellness), and activities to help maintain a balanced life to support success. The Council of Graduate Students is an active partner.
VIII. The Center for Academic and Future Faculty Excellence. This NSF-funded initiative is designed to connect the many MSU offices that support career and professional development. One objective is to connect the resources in an effective and efficient manner to broaden the audiences served across a wide variety of programs and workshops. The overarching goal is to encourage “parallel mentoring” of graduate students and postdocs; that is, to provide faculty with the resources needed to mentor students and postdocs towards career success in the same way that those students and postdocs are mentored for success in research and scholarly activities. http://grad.msu.edu/caffe/

IX. Summary Data

We continue to pull data together to 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.