Nuts & Bolts of Graduate Administration

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East Carolina University

• Large, regional serving institution
• Total enrollment: 28,000
• Graduate student enrollment: 4,700.
  – 78 Master’s programs
  – 16 Doctoral programs
• 8 academic colleges plus a medical school and dental school
Graduate School - Staff

• 15 full time employees with 6 direct reports
  – Associate Deans (2)
  – Director of Graduate Admissions
  – Budget officer
  – Executive assistant
  – Tech support / analyst
Graduate Council (GC)

- Large body with 36 faculty representatives
  - Chair and officers elected by and from the GC, dean is ex-officio
  - Executive committee sets agenda, chaired by Dean
- Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC)
  - Reports to Graduate Council (and Dean)
  - Dean is ex-officio member
- GCC is integrated into robust procedures for development of new programs through provost’s office
Challenges

• Declining graduate enrollment in 4 of the past 5 years
  – Teacher preparation program in significant decline
  – ECU was an early adopter of online delivery
    • increased competition

• Changing the campus culture
  – More effective utilization of students funded from instructional funds
  – Greater reliance on grant support for students

• Disposition of low enrollment graduate programs
Dean’s Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

- Strategic planning & enrollment management
- Central marketing, recruiting and graduate admissions
- Oversight of academic quality
  - Academic program review – 7 year cycle
  - Graduate faculty appointments
  - Thesis and dissertation review
  - Registrar office does degree certification
  - Data driven assessment,
    - student demand, selectivity, retention, degree completion, time to degree, student satisfaction, scholarship
- Professional and career development workshops for students
- Resource allocation – assistantships and tuition scholarship
How do we accomplish all of this?

• Establish effective working relationships with large numbers of stakeholders
• Relationships must be based on trust and mutual respect
  – Establish yourself as an effective listener
  – Be transparency in conduct of ALL processes
  – Demonstrate flexibility of mind
  – But do not compromise academic rigor and quality
  – Establish yourself as a strong advocate for graduate education
Partnerships!

- Academic deans: a collegial group that meets regularly with the provost
  - Deans also meet informally once a month for lunch (without the provost)
- Associate deans
- Graduate program directors
  - Constant turn over
  - Meet one-on-one with new, introduce them to staff
  - Conduct training workshops
- Campus marketing & communications office
- Institutional research and planning
- Student affairs & career services
- Office of Faculty Excellence
- Office of Financial Aid
- Cashier's Office
Frist 90 days

• Visit with each dean & their associate dean(s)
  – Learn about their college and graduate programs
    • Listen to their accounts of strengths, weaknesses, challenges
    • Listen to their suggestions where the Graduate School can improve its service to the college

• Follow up with group meetings of college chairs & graduate program directors

• Develop a short term plan & roll it out for comment by all stakeholders