

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

BOARD OF REGENTS

Work Session

February 7, 2008

A work session of the Board of Regents was held on Thursday, February 7, 2008 at 1:34 p.m. in the Boardroom, 600 McNamara Alumni Center.

Regents present: Patricia Simmons, presiding; Clyde Allen, Anthony Baraga, Dallas Bohnsack, Maureen Cisneros, Linda Cohen, John Frobenius, Venora Hung, Steven Hunter, Dean Johnson, and David Larson.

Staff present: President Robert Bruininks; Senior Vice President and Provost Thomas Sullivan; Vice President Carol Carrier; and Executive Director Ann Cieslak.

Regent Simmons explained that as part of the Board of Regents continued discussions on the University's strategic positioning efforts, the work session would focus on the strategic area of exceptional students by examining graduate education. Senior Vice President and Provost Sullivan began the presentation by stating that graduate programs are at the core of the University's academic reputation. He reported that the graduate school, which is the fourth largest in the United States, awarded over 800 Ph.D. degrees and over 1800 Masters degrees in 2007.

Gail Dubrow, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, provided information on the organization of the graduate school, degree completion, and career placement of graduates. She made the following observations regarding degree completion of graduate students:

- There is wide disparity among disciplines regarding the length of time to degree completion, with humanities-related disciplines normally taking longer.
- 50 percent of Ph.D. students complete their degrees in 7 years and 59 percent complete their degrees in 10 years.
- Measures to improve degree completion rates include offering multi-year financial support at admission, reforming programs to remove barriers to timely progress, and a new admissions initiative in conjunction with the Office of Equity and Diversity that focuses on matching potential students with the right program.

Jerry Rinehart, Vice Provost for Student Affairs, provided information on graduate student services, specifically profiling health insurance coverage, student housing opportunities, and graduate student finances. Rinehart highlighted the following:

- 50 percent of graduate students have health insurance through University-sponsored plans and approximately 20 to 25 percent are uninsured.
- 95 percent of graduate students live off-campus in private housing.
- 82 percent of graduate students are employed, with 43 percent working more than 30 hours per week.
- Loans account for the highest percentage of financial resources at 36 percent, with work and assistantships accounting for 34 percent.

