

Graduate School Task Force Forum

March 23, 2021

Open Forum Format

- **Goal:** Gather feedback on Task Force recommendations
- Present Overview and Task Force Recommendations
- Registrants move to breakout rooms
- One Facilitator and One Notetaker assigned to each breakout room
- Facilitators gather input on recommendations in breakouts

Graduate School Task Force Timeline

- September 2020 – Task Force reconvenes
- October 2020 – Subcommittees begin work
- November 2020 – Subcommittees host open forums to gather input
- February 1, 2021 -- Subcommittee reports submitted to Executive Committee of Task Force
- March 8, 2021 -- Task Force meeting to discuss subcommittee reports
- March 23, 2021 – Task Force Recommendations presented at Open Forum
- April 7, 2021 -- Final Task Force recommendations submitted to Provost

Subcommittees' Charge

- Three subcommittees: master's, doctoral, first professional doctorate
- Subcommittees' Charge
 - i. Identify issues/barriers and changes needed to address Graduate and Professional education priorities in university strategic plan
 - ii. Gather input from faculty, staff, administrators and students
 - iii. Provide recommendations to address item (i), including role of Graduate and Professional School and other university-level units
- Three Subcommittees – membership and reports including recommendations available on Task Force webpages

Draft Task Force Recommendations

- The subcommittees articulated many recommendations for promoting graduate and professional education at Texas A&M University.
- The Task Force recommends prioritizing the following high-need recommendations that can result in immediate, meaningful transformation.
- Adopting many of these recommendations will not require an influx of new resources. Future growth and innovations, however, may require additional resources

1. Recruitment and Expanded Graduate Student Funding

- a. Establish integrated, university-wide initiatives to recruit and retain graduate students who are from underrepresented, minoritized groups (URM students).
- b. Develop a visible and robust development strategy focused on enhancing fellowships, training grants, and other external funding opportunities.

2. Enhance Professional Development for Faculty, Staff, and Students

- a. Establish organizations for faculty directors of graduate programs and staff graduate advisors, respectively. The aim of each should be to support onboarding, promote professional development, and share best practices
- b. Enhance professional development opportunities for graduate and professional students, including the addition of equity-focused professional development and more systematic efforts in teaching assistant feedback and evaluation

3. Promote Applicability and Make Services Widely Available for Graduate and Professional Students

- a. More attention should be paid to ensuring that Student Services offices have the capacity and explicitly serve the needs of all graduate and professional student levels, including distance students

4. Support Campuses outside Bryan/College Station and the First Professional Programs

- a. Form a Professional School Working Group to serve as advocates and liaisons for professional schools and their students, highlighting needs and concerns
- b. Enhance capacity of and access to Counseling and Psychological Services.
- c. establish a standing committee which meets annually for the support of graduate and professional students, faculty, and staff outside of the Texas A&M Bryan/College Station campus

5. Improve Administrative Processes

- a. Work with colleges and agencies to reduce funding barriers to interdisciplinarity and to improve consistency of graduate assistant policies by adlocing graduate assistants to colleges instead of the agencies.

- b. Streamline processes for 3+2, 4+1, and other combined degree programs to ensure these students receive appropriate academic and financial aid advisement, communications, and related services

6. Improve Marketing and Communications

- a. Articulate to internal and external stakeholders the unique contributions and value of master's programs and students and the variety of our master's program offerings, research or professionally focused, online or face-to-face.

- b. The Graduate and Professional School should focus on positioning itself as a student-centered hub for graduate and professional students.

7. Enhance Mentoring, Advising, and Community Building

- a. The Graduate and Professional School should enhance mentoring and advising activities, and engage in activities designed to foster a sense of community among all Texas A&M University graduate and professional students, irrespective of their degree program or location

Breakout Instructions

- Your feedback is important. We want to hear your perspective and understand your point of view on the recommendations from the task force.
- Please mute unless you are speaking.
- Breakout facilitators are tasked with keeping the ground rules and ensuring everyone has an opportunity to speak. Please try to keep responses brief. We want everyone to express their thoughts in the limited time we have together. We can circle back if time allows.
- The intent of our session is to listen and record input and reactions on the recommendations from the task force.
- Your specific comments will not be attributed to you, your name, your position, etc. We have assigned a note taker to each session so that we can be sure we record the thoughts expressed.
- We welcome your feedback if you think of something later or prefer not to share in your breakout room: <http://ogaps.tamu.edu/About/Graduate-School/Task-Force-Feedback>
- When everyone in your room is done sharing, you may leave the meeting. We will not be bringing you back into the main room. You will have approximately 40 minutes in the breakout room to share your feedback.
- We very much appreciate you taking the time to join us today to share your feedback on the task force recommendations.

Move to Breakout