



EMORY

GRADUATE  
S C H O O L

## Dean's Address to the Graduate Faculty State of the Graduate School

*Lisa A. Tedesco*  
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Good afternoon and welcome. It is a pleasure to see so many friends and colleagues, and a privilege to come together with you a second time to talk about the state of the Graduate School.

We are at an exciting moment in graduate education at Emory. The extraordinary growth that transformed Emory from a good regional university to an international research university is behind us. In September we launch the public phase of a new comprehensive campaign, guided by an ambitious vision of progress. We are fortunate to be here at a time of inspired leadership and great aspirations.

It is my good fortune to work with an academic leader who understands and values graduate education. I want to thank Provost Earl Lewis for his unstinting support of graduate education throughout this year.

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A long-time member of the Graduate School administration will soon leave us. Rick Rubinson first came to the Graduate School as Associate Dean in the summer of 2001. He was a crucial member of the team that guided the Graduate School through a time of changing leadership, and in 2005-6 he served as Interim Dean.

For the last two years, Rick has guided two very important projects.

Rick managed Emory's response to the NRC assessment of doctoral education in the United States. I wish we could send Rick off with the results at hand, but alas – the latest word from NRC postponed the release of data until October. We all owe Rick a debt of gratitude for his perseverance and clear-headedness as NRC's process has bogged down in complexities.

Rick's other main project will reach some closure as he departs. The Electronic Theses and Dissertations project has completed its pilot phase, and we are preparing for Graduate School wide implementation in the fall. Rick's patient management, and his willingness to answer questions and consider all the differences among dissertations across the Graduate School, have been essential to the progress we have made.

Rick's term as Associate Dean ends this August and he will return full-time to his faculty position in Sociology. Thank you, Rick, for the years of service and leadership you have dedicated to the Graduate School.

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Last year, we welcomed two new associate deans from the faculty, Mark Risjord and Carey Drews-Botsch. They are working on a wide range of projects. Both have been intimately involved with the fellowship selections. Mark is taking the lead in our efforts to review and at times reform a wide range of policies. Carey is taking the lead in program reviews, both those that are collaborations with other University units and those that are principally Graduate School related.

I am very grateful to have Mark and Carey on board. In addition to their specific contributions, the Graduate School has benefited from their perspectives as distinguished members of the faculty and recent and accomplished Directors of Graduate Study. It is easy for administrative units to get cut off from the "on the ground" reality of faculty and student life. One important part of our antidote is the wise council and helpful perspectives Mark and Carey infuse into the work of the Graduate School. This kind of exchange between the faculty and the Graduate School administration keeps us vital and in touch.

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Another group of faculty members who should be thanked is the Executive Council. These nine faculty members meet every month of the school year, each time with a full agenda of important and complex issues to consider. Almost every meeting considers proposals for changes in courses and programs. A number of issues concern the way graduate education at Emory will develop in terms of policies and new programs. Some issues are extraordinarily knotty and difficult, such as grievance appeals.

We are fortunate to have a group of dedicated council members, and we appreciate their thoughtful contributions grounded in deep and broad faculty experience. They constitute an invaluable source of guidance and perspective. Please join me in thanking Professors Tina Brownley, María Carrión, Steve DeWeerth, Ralph DiClemente, Dwight Duffus, Dale Edmondson, Pamela Hall, Karen Hegtvedt, and David Nugent. We also thank Grace Pavlath, who served for part of the year.

Because of leaves and other complications, five of our members will be replaced through an election process that is just about to start. We look forward to the results of the upcoming elections and to working with the new members.

It is gratifying to note that those who serve on the Executive Council tell us that it is among their most meaningful and enlightening University governance service. I hope many of you think of it as

an opportunity to become more involved with some of the most important work of the Graduate School.

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There is one more group I would like to thank: all the faculty members who volunteered to serve on the fellowship review committees that met in recent months. At last count, 41 faculty members from 25 programs helped award Graduate School fellowships.

The fellowship review work is heavy and tedious – we all know what it takes to read through large piles of statements of purpose, letters of recommendation, transcripts, and more. It also occurs during an intense time when we are all quite busy with our regular duties. But it is absolutely essential work, intimately involved with how we spend precious resources, student fellowship funds, and with how we shape the incoming cohort of graduate students.

Please accept my thanks on behalf of the whole Graduate School for a job well done.

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A year ago, in my first address to you as a graduate faculty, I outlined four priorities that would guide the Graduate School. In the intervening year, we have indeed moved forward on those priorities. Some of our progress may have gotten lost in the hustle and bustle of the academic year. I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on progress and to indicate some next steps.

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One priority is to enhance students' professionalization.

We seek to prepare our students for a wide range of professional roles – scholars, teachers, researchers, experts... and in all their roles we expect them to serve as intellectual leaders. To ready our students for those roles, we of course need rigorous and well defined curricula along with committed advising and wise mentoring. We also need a set of program structures that define clear paths to degree, and establish appropriate markers of progress along the way.

Much of our work this year addressed issues related to good progress. In fact, we talked so much about one particular milestone that among ourselves we came to call this year “the year of candidacy.”

But professionalization is not just about program structures. We also need the right balance of support and boundaries.

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In this area our second year together certainly started out on a lively note, as we replaced “discretionary” and “summer” funding with the Professional Development Support funds. We believe that this new policy will be a success. We believe this in part because of what we hear from some of you – that it has relieved DGSs of administrative tasks, that it is pushing students to

approach their activities with greater mindfulness and preparation, and that, in fact, it provides generous support where such support is warranted.

Of course, the system is new and surely there are kinks. We are just now completing the review of a large batch of competitive review requests for funds. After that, we will have been through a complete cycle and can step back to take a look at the process and adjust it where that is needed.

The initial success of the new system is due in no small part to the advice we received from the graduate faculty. The draft policy we circulated received much feedback, in DGS meetings, emails, one-on-one meetings, even petitions. That process helped us formulate a much improved policy. Thank you, all of you, for your constructive and engaged conversation around the issue.

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One other initiative in this area started this year – with perhaps less visibility than the PDS funds but with no less importance. In September, Virginia Shadron organized a series of workshops designed to help students write and finish their dissertations. We identified a group of about 20 students who were very late in their graduate careers and whose work had effectively stalled. We invited them to a series of workshops combined with an online community experience, designed by a consulting group that specializes in this kind of work.

Our initial assessment is that this was a good experience. Several students managed to complete their dissertations in a short amount of time, and several others managed to restart their work in a productive fashion. Over the summer, we will consider this program as well as other ways we can support students in their efforts to complete their degrees.

Our goal is to give students who are getting on in their years but who have viable projects both the incentive and the support to complete their degrees. As you know, during this academic year we established a boundary: now, students who are in their 9<sup>th</sup> or later year of advanced standing must pay tuition. Quite intentionally we have affirmed a boundary, but not without providing some support.

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There are new issues on the horizon. We hope to turn next year to ethics – to considering how we help our students engage with and respond to the many ethical, and sometimes legal, issues that surround research of all kinds. With recent significant changes in Emory's research review structures, and with a new Director joining the Ethics Center, we stand at an opportune moment to assess and perhaps augment the training and support we give our students in these crucial areas.

With the end of this year, we also stand at a point of transformation in the way many of our students progress through their programs. This fall, we will enroll our first cohort of funded fifth year students. How will this impact their time to degree in the affected programs?

We saw one effect already this year: fewer applications for many of the advanced student fellowships – the Dean's Teaching Fellowship, the Mellon, and others. As fifth year funding becomes an operative reality, it is time to consider the role these fellowships play. Clearly, they are no longer "fifth year fellowships."

This is an opportune moment to consider how we provide support beyond “regular” funding across our doctoral programs. We recognize that the guaranteed funding packages students receive often do not fund students all the way to completing their degrees. We are committed to supporting students in their efforts to obtain additional funding from external sources, and we are also committed to providing additional funding opportunities to advanced students. It is time to assess the shape of these funding opportunities. And because funding arrangements vary a great deal between areas of the Graduate School, we need to take a broad view of providing funding opportunities that can help carry some students to degree completion.

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Another priority we discussed last year is to promote scholarly engagement with complex problems.

Today, every research university talks about interdisciplinarity. The term is used so much it is at risk of losing its meaning. Still, I believe deeply that at Emory we have a distinctive opportunity for *authentic interdisciplinarity* – conversations and collaborations among scholars driven by the realization that shared problems can be more completely understood and addressed from a multiplicity of perspectives. At Emory, those multiple perspectives are quite literally next door to each other, a five minute walk across the quad or across Clifton Road. We must not lose sight of the fact that Emory is the right size to make intellectual work that crosses established boundaries an everyday reality.

We also have, at Emory, a tradition of innovative and publically engaged scholarship. We recognize that problems of importance to our society and our world do not arrive packaged by discipline or department and are not always amenable to conventional methods of analysis and investigation.

The Graduate School bridges all the schools at Emory and we are the natural point at which different perspectives can join together in the production of a new generation of intellectual leaders able to cross established boundaries.

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This year we took three steps towards enhancing the opportunities to reach across boundaries in creative and innovative ways.

We established the New Thinkers/New Leaders program, a Graduate School matching fund designed to promote interdisciplinary innovation, intellectual enrichment, creative explorations in pedagogy and career pathways, and improvement to the climate and quality of graduate education.

We established two Graduate School course numbers, to encourage creative teaching and learning that transcends current program divisions or envisions new domains of scholarship around which disciplinary boundaries have yet to be drawn.

We created a policy for graduate certificates that establishes a framework for the creation and review of certificate programs. This framework envisions the possibility of certificates that are not tied to one program, department or school: the policy opens the door for groups of faculty to transcend administrative and institutional boundaries to coalesce around constellations of intellectual concerns and projects.

These steps are “enablers:” they provide structures of possibility intended to make it easier for faculty and students to pursue innovative intellectual engagements. The content of these structures awaits your creativity and initiative!

Several projects are already under way, some fueled by faculty passion and others motivated by strategic plan initiatives.

- One example, initiated by faculty independently of the Graduate School, is the Vulnerabilities project. It brings together faculty from Law, the College, Theology and Public Health around alternative ways to identify commonalities which will allow us to reformulate communities independent of traditional identity-based categories.
- Another example, sponsored in part by the Graduate School, is the Workshop in Colonial and Post-Colonial Studies. Students and faculty from a range of disciplines come together for presentations of work in progress, exposing graduate students to work by accomplished scholars that is still being shaped, helping them see the process of scholarly creation at work.
- Yet another example is the discussion around predictive health – training for a new generation of health and wellness researchers with truly multidisciplinary reach. Imagine a researcher who can move with confidence within and between the areas of genetics, epidemiology, community health and prevention-based behavioral sciences, and a doctoral program that trains such bold, integrative thinkers.

These projects are part of what sophisticated, engaged and motivated scholars do – they are part of what you do with your remarkable talents and striking creativity.

The enabling structures we provide are a way to help you ‘discover’ our signature projects; to help you reach across administrative units to pursue intellectual projects where *they* take you. And we seek to constantly explore how these and other projects align with and contribute to the vitality of graduate education.

In the years to come we will be looking to create more and larger opportunities for these kinds of initiatives. This is an area where we at Emory have the constellation of resources, expertise and a tradition to make a distinct contribution to graduate education and intellectual life more broadly.

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A third priority is to strengthen the funding of graduate education.

I knew – from ‘day one’ as the current parlance goes – that this was and is a touchstone priority. Real progress is being made. We have developed and proposed a set of reformulations that will sustain doctoral education at Emory and serve as the foundation for future growth.

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At Emory, doctoral education enjoys a level of support from central university funds that is truly extraordinary, if not peerless. It is a clear demonstration that Emory’s leadership values graduate

education. It places us in a position of considerable strength. It also calls on us to exercise wise stewardship of this substantial university investment.

The growth of doctoral education at Emory during the 1990s was supported by endowment funds. Already by 2000, it was clear that although central university funding would continue to provide a robust base and will continue to grow incrementally, we cannot limit our growth to what the university endowment can sustain. Our common aspirations require us to develop a funding model that aligns more closely with practices at peer institutions.

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In 2003, my predecessor Bryan Noe took steps toward instituting change. The Graduate School reached out to the Dean of the College and President Wagner and gained support for the Arts & Sciences funding plan. Under the plan, participating programs reduced enrollment in exchange for higher stipends, five years of support, and a phase-in of student health insurance coverage.

But the Arts & Sciences plan was, and is, a stop-gap measure, based on funding streams that either did or will expire. In fact, it is only because of creative management and the commitment of Graduate School reserves that the plan has taken us through the current year. And next year, we bear the full impact of one of our Arts & Sciences commitments: the first funded fifth-year cohort.

And yet, we must not only meet existing commitments but must reach higher. We must be prepared to increase our funding of graduate students: to compete with our best rivals we must offer competitive funding packages of stipends, health insurance, resources, and more. We must be prepared to increase the number of graduate students: our faculty is growing, and more faculty members mean more demand for graduate students.

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We have proposed two funding reforms that will address one fundamental structural problem: they will anchor the support of graduate students in the schools that collaborate with the Graduate School in graduate programs.

Starting in fall 2008, Emory College and Candler School of Theology will join the schools of Business, Medicine, Nursing, and Public Health in supporting graduate student stipends. The bulk of student stipend support will still come from the Graduate School. Next year we project that out of a total of \$20.2 million institutional support for graduate student stipends and health insurance, the Graduate School will pay \$16.6 million, or 82% and other schools will pay the remaining 18%. (In addition to the institutional support, about \$8.6 million of PI funds will be spent on graduate student stipends and health insurance.)

The crucial point is that each school that collaborates in doctoral programs will contribute to the funding of graduate student stipends. This will connect the demand for graduate students with support of graduate students, and will integrate funding for doctoral education into the fabric of strategic decision making and budgeting among all the parties that participate in doctoral education.

Along with competitive stipends, Emory must offer graduate students appropriate health insurance. Paying for this essential but ever more expensive student support is one of the thorniest problems

the Graduate School has faced since 2000. My predecessors did what they needed to do: they made the commitment to provide insurance. Now we must implement a solid plan to pay for it.

Beginning in fall 2008, the Graduate School will collect an enrollment fee for each student enrolled in a Graduate School degree program, and will use the proceeds of that fee to pay student health insurance premiums.

This enrollment fee will not be paid by the students. In every case, the fee will be paid by the student's sponsor. That sponsor may be the Graduate School, another school, an institutional training grant, or an individual investigator's grant, and many students will change sponsors over the course of their graduate careers. The fee will be phased in over the next three academic years. Next year, it will be \$420 per semester and when fully phased in it will be \$1,250 per semester.

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It is gratifying to report that all levels of Emory's leadership – including all my dean colleagues, President Wagner, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Lewis, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration Mandl, and Executive Vice President for Health Affairs Sanfilippo – share a strong commitment to our doctoral programs and support this change in funding structure.

It is also gratifying to acknowledge all that the deans so generously contribute to graduate education in the form of space, administrative support and faculty resources. We deeply value all that our partners contribute towards creating the opportunity for the graduate faculty and the graduate students to accomplish their goals.

These two measures – the enrollment fee and modest cost-sharing of student stipends – will not address every financial issue facing the Graduate School. But they will fundamentally reform the structure of the funding of graduate education at Emory, and they will position us to sustain current commitments and begin to meet the demands of our faculty to grow and enhance excellent doctoral programs.

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Growth itself is our fourth priority.

We know that Emory wants and needs growth in graduate education: that some programs have the capacity to enroll more graduate students, and that the creativity and initiative of the faculty leads to ideas and proposals for new programs.

But we do not want growth for the sake of growth: we want growth with excellence. We want growth that can be sustained – that can attract excellent students and that can provide a full range of teachers and mentors for those students across a complete set of cohorts. We want growth that leverages existing Emory resources and opportunities – that engages with the experience and expertise that is present, and that builds on areas of strength and accomplishment.

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We see interest in growth in the form of interest in creating master's programs. A master's program in Psychoanalytic Studies is being assessed by an external review committee. A master's program in bioethics is in advanced stages of planning. And there are more.

We have a recent and successful example of such growth: the new MS in Computer Science. This program was created as a tuition revenue generating complement to a new PhD in Computer Science and Informatics. After a full year of operation, the program looks to be very successful.

This is one model. It is not *the* model: different fields and disciplines face different opportunities and constraints, and the number of possible successful models is probably large. We have discussed with the Executive Council and the DGSs a set of principles to guide the proposal and assessment of new master's programs. We hope the principles will promote both creative thinking and thorough examination.

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We also see interest in interdisciplinary doctoral education. Earlier I mentioned predictive health; I know there are ongoing discussions about a doctoral program in African-American Studies, and new discussions about one in Islamic Civilizations.

If we are to grow, we must grow with excellence. Let's also grow with creativity. Let's ask ourselves what an interdisciplinary graduate education can be. The structure and location of the Graduate School within Emory is an invitation to think creatively. Most graduate programs are primarily aligned with *a* department in *a* school. But since there are examples of different alignments, we know this is not the only way. We also have entities based on substantive areas that cut across schools. We have a Center for the Study of Public Scholarship, an Institute for Developing Nations, a Global Health Institute – and many, many more. What might be their role in doctoral education?

Can we draw on the fantastic resources and opportunities that make up Emory to open up established structures and strike out in new directions, bold directions?

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These are challenging ideas. They expose established structures and both promise and threaten to take us in new and different directions. They open up perceived divisions and tacit distinctions between old Emory and new Emory, between tried and true arrangements and still-to-be-negotiated relationships.

This is not the first such challenge in recent Emory history. Under the visionary leadership of President Laney, Emory embarked on an extraordinary transformation, guided by the ambitious goals articulated by President Laney in his "Emory 2000" address, delivered in 1987. This transformation was not just a transformation in terms in size and standing. It was – and President Laney saw this clearly – a transformation of the very identity of Emory University: "Until now," he said,

we at Emory have tended to measure ourselves against ourselves in the past... But it is time to move into the fast currents of higher education and measure ourselves

against our peers, or against those we want to be seen as our peers. (*A Legacy of Emory*, page 163)

Along with many of the specific goals that President Laney set for graduate education at Emory, this transformation of Emory's identity has been accomplished.

We are now, under the leadership of President Jim Wagner, embarking on another profound transformation. Guided by a vision articulated by faculty from all units of the University as a bold strategic plan, Emory is about to launch the public phase of its first campaign since the time of President Laney, a campaign which is designed to again move Emory into new territory. Our strategic plan and our campaign envision Emory as a leader, as one among an elite group of universities that articulate new directions for higher education and for the creation of new knowledge.

Leadership asks for courageous action. Let us use that courage to explore new ways of organizing the pursuit of new knowledge and the training of those who will be the intellectual leaders of the next generation. Without challenge to the tried and true we risk being left with unmet aspirations and un-lived values.

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In the midst of this change and challenge, let us also remember that Emory is made up of people – people who came to Emory and who established their idea of what Emory is at different points in this extraordinary journey. As a relative newcomer to Emory, I am struck by the loyalty and affection that Emory inspires among us who work here – and by the sometimes stark differences among the Emorys we are attached to.

For some among us, embracing change may seem to require a leap of faith, similar to fixing something that isn't broken. Changing something you know and love for something untested and different is almost like challenging one's identity. What we do day after day and year after year becomes habit, held together by a coherent set of values, beliefs, and attitudes. Those colleagues among us who are new, and their number is increasing, bring ways of thinking and doing that are different from established Emory ways. It is my fervent hope that we accord full respect to both history and the future, to both tradition and creativity. Let us offer our visions of Emory as it is and as it can be as preludes to vibrant and vital, discussion, discourse, and debate that undergirds positive change and meaningful innovation.

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I thank you all for taking the time to join me this afternoon. I hope you will stay for some snacks, libations, and collegial conversations.