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

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Welcome to this year's Dean's Address. I stand before you for the eighth time, and I am pleased – as I am every year – to share this time with you and report on the state of the Laney Graduate School and offer some thoughts on where we are going. Let me say, at the very top of our time together, that I remain ever passionate and committed to our joint and shared projects that advance graduate education and research across our great University.

Before turning to the address proper, I want to say a few words of thanks. This summer, Grace Canseco is retiring from the English Language Support Program. Many cohorts of graduate students from around the world have benefited greatly from Grace's wisdom, care and expertise. She has guided the development of a first-rate program that helps non-native speakers develop not just competence but comfort and skill in academic and professional English. I am deeply grateful for Grace's work, and confident that the solid foundation she has created will serve us well in years to come.

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In the most general sense, our overarching goal is to support the mission of the University by providing broadly based and excellent graduate education that supports the research and scholarship ambitions of both our partner schools and units and of the university as a whole. This high level goal is demonstrated through four substantive strategic areas for planning and programmatic development:

- Professionalization
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Internationalization
- Academic Identity

Professionalization

More than ever, we are conscious that our students pursue a great variety of professional pathways. This is presented and discussed as a change, away from a dominance of academic or faculty careers towards a more varied set of options, usually in connection with discussions about the changing nature of academic employment markets. But it is not so clear what kind of change this represents.

Some of you may recall that in 2012, I served as a university leader on the Commission on Pathways Through Graduate School and Into Careers project, sponsored by the Council of Graduate Schools and ETS. In the Dean's Address of 2012, I called attention to two items from the Commission's report, worth briefly mentioning again here:

- Most PhD degree holders enter careers outside the professoriate. Even in the humanities, often considered the most singularly focused on the academic world, 15 years ago, a survey found that 60% of graduates worked as postsecondary faculty.
- PhD graduates bring highly developed and valuable skills and expertise to organizations that hire them, but employers of PhDs also report that they lack some other essential skills such as experience working on teams, presentation skills, and the ability to convey technical and specialized knowledge to individuals who do not have technical and specialized training.

We know that our students need preparation and training for careers beyond the academy, as well as training to help them relay their knowledge to audiences that are not specialists. We are responding with resources and guidance, for both students and faculty, drawing on existing resources as well as new external funding.

LGS professional development programming continues to deepen and expand, from in-house initiatives to extramurally funded programming that legitimize professional development training for students who are interested in pursuing careers beyond the professoriate. Let me mention some highlights from this year.

In collaboration with Development and Alumni Relations, we are reaching out to our alumni through the Pathways Beyond the Professoriate and the Alumni Mentor programs. The Pathways program brings to campus alumni who have chosen non-academic career paths to share their experiences, and has reached more students this year than in its previous two years. Students are keenly interested in events that feature alumni from job sectors such as consulting, industry, media and communications, and academic alternatives to professorial careers such as library or curatorial work. The Alumni Mentor program pairs current students with LGS alumni for mentoring and professional guidance. The program includes some training for both mentors and protégés, designed to encourage productive mentoring relationships. To date, we have established over 130 matches. We are deeply grateful to our alumni for the extraordinary support they have shown both of these programs.

This spring, we offered selected students the opportunity to participate in Potential Matters, a series of workshops that provides practical and proven tools to help graduate students address the most compelling issues and obstacles they face in pursuing careers outside the academy.

Sessions leaders worked with students on career diagnostic activities to gather “data of self” to help them understand the importance of story in the career transition process as well as the psychology of networking. The workshops also addressed areas of communication, providing a practical communications framework to address areas from the transformation of CVs into resumes to the basic protocols for email, social media and direct follow-up.

And this year, we secured external funding for an important NIH supported project: BEST, Broadening Experience for Scientific Training. In collaboration with Georgia Tech and Emory’s Office of Postdoctoral Education, BEST will establish programming alternatives for adapting pre- and postdoctoral training to meet 21st century needs. One unusual feature of the BEST program is that it includes helping faculty learn more about training their graduate students and post-doctoral fellows for a broader range of professional futures. We welcomed the first cohort of BEST trainees in March, 2014. The overall PI for this project is Dr. Nael McCarty, Marcus Professor of Cystic Fibrosis from the Department of Pediatrics. As a PhD researcher and member of the faculty in a clinical department, he serves as a special role model for graduate students as they seek to broaden their experience.

Our emphasis on preparing students for career pathways beyond the academy does not diminish our long-standing commitment to training in contemporary pedagogical practices. In Fall 2012 with the assistance of Dr. Irene Browne and her Sociology Methods graduate class, we surveyed some 466 students about their experiences with the TATTO program.

The survey report confirmed what we already know: while TATTO is a unique program that provides required, systematic training to all PhD students, there is room for improvement both in the delivery of the summer course and in training at the program level. In her work in LGS on student affairs and professionalization, Dr. Cora MacBeth has begun implementing changes including reducing it from three days to two and reducing the number of sessions in order to decrease redundancy with other LGS professional development programming.

To help us continue to improve TATTO, we are exploring the possibility of implementing a PSI model for TATTO. That is, LGS would appoint a faculty TATTO director, similar in structure to the part-time appointment currently in place for PSI. The TATTO director would implement more opportunities for graduate students to be exposed to current scholarship of teaching and learning through the creation of shorter sessions throughout the academic year. The director would expand support for training to prepare students for teaching in professional schools, community colleges, and institutions that leverage or engage online instruction and pedagogical resources. The director would also draw on university resources where available to capitalize on collaborative opportunities and build training networks. Some of these resources might include the Center for Faculty Development and Excellence and the Emory Center for Digital Scholarship.

I’d like to mention one more dimension of our work on career preparation. We must commit ourselves to learning much more than we currently know about the career pathways of our graduates. It is, of course, a challenging job. Once our students leave, our knowledge of their professional pathways is subject to all the vicissitudes of life – where they go, whether they stay in touch with mentors at Emory, whether they choose to respond to requests for information, and much more. But the more we can learn about their professional engagements, the more we can learn about how doctoral training shaped and influenced our graduates’ careers across many

fields of endeavor, and can learn from them about how to prepare our current students for future success.

As you know, we have been asking for placement data in our last several annual reports, and we will continue do so. We are still learning how best to present this information in the most useful way, for ourselves as well as for prospective students. We are also following with keen interest the efforts of the Council of Graduate School to assess the feasibility of assembling large data sets about placement and careers. We encourage you to respond as precisely as you can to our request for data and to use creative ways to locate and follow up on current placements of our graduates.

Diversity and Inclusion

A second pillar of our ongoing planning work is diversity and inclusion.

It is always helpful to remember why diversity is important to our work. On the most basic level, diversity enhances the academic environment. Diversity among students and faculty increases the perspectives from which we question received wisdom, articulate new intellectual projects, and assess the results of our own and others' efforts. Quite simply, diversity promotes a more vibrant intellectual community.

Second, serving a diverse population is part of our role as stewards of a public good. Graduate education benefits not only the individuals who engage in it, but also the community and society we live in. As custodians of a public good, we need to be conscious of the diversity of a broadly experienced public, and do our part to ensure that graduate education reaches widely in our community. One special responsibility for us involves the training of future faculty. We are training those who will become the educators of future generations of college students, and we need to be cognizant of our charge to train a faculty corps that reflects the students it will teach.

Finally, diversity is important because it is a fact of life. The demographics of the United States continue trending toward a majority group not singularly defined, and these changes are reflected in future generations of college graduates. We must be prepared to attract and train the potential students we will in fact find, and that group is becoming increasingly diverse in many respects.

We know that diversity has been a priority for many programs for some time and that many of you are committed to the goal of enhancing the diversity of the Laney Graduate School. But we also know that, in general, our diversity profile, measured in terms of enrollment, has remained relatively flat. I know we can do better.

The Laney Graduate School is committed to this goal and views it as an issue that spans recruitment, retention and completion. Over the last two years, we have been active on a number of fronts to educate ourselves, increase our outreach and enhance the experience of those we wish to recruit and, ultimately, admit:

- We have supported visits by a number of NIH Pathfinder award winners and other scholars who have contributed to understanding contemporary developments and demographics in areas of diversity. These presentations convene faculty for

conversations that directly address enhancing diversity in recruitment, and through mentoring, and more, to help generate both concrete initiatives and a culture where these issues can be addressed.

- We have secured a grant from NIH, Initiative for Maximizing Student Development (IMSD), which will address pipelines for admission and mentoring students from underrepresented backgrounds in STEM disciplines. With Co-PI leadership of Keith Wilkinson and Pat Marsteller, this program aims to recruit and support more students from underrepresented backgrounds and to build faculty capacity and commitment for sustaining diverse academic environments. The program will involve collaboration with the the School of Medicine, Rollins School of Public Health, and Emory College as well as partners in CFDE and the BEST program, for example.
- LGS is the primary supporter and convener for the annual STEM Research and Career Symposium, which brings undergraduates applying to doctoral programs and graduate students applying to postdoctoral positions from diverse backgrounds to Emory for a two-day session devoted to discussing science research, training opportunities and preparation of competitive application portfolios.
- We have co-sponsored important dialogues around issues of race and diversity. One such series was this year's Emory Libraries Race and Sports in American Culture Series led by Pellom McDaniels in MARBL, which kicked off in September and concluded only a couple of weeks ago.

This summer, we are taking one more step by hiring a Director of Recruitment, Diversity and Community. This redefined position represents a shift in focus and duties made possible in part by our increased use of technological resources for admission and recruitment. This Director will help us evaluate and understand emerging demographic data from colleges and help us to answer questions about our environment as well as some possibly difficult questions about how we reach out to potential students and present ourselves.

For example, we need to know more about the potential students we want to reach. We heard from NIH Pathfinder presenters last year about the experiences of college students in traditionally underrepresented groups, and about how their pathways through college and beyond may look quite different from the students we have been used to recruiting. How do we reach students from more varied pathways? How do we better prepare ourselves and better highlight what we have to offer?

In graduate education, we live, as I sometimes hear it said, at the end of the pipeline. By the time a young person is contemplating graduate school – or not – they have already gone through 16 or so years of education. We know that for students from underrepresented groups, these 16 years may have contained many challenges, from experience with implicit bias to outright discrimination. There are sometimes cultural expectations and first-generation expectations, for higher education, that may emphasize remaining closer to home and preparing to earn a living as a member of a profession, rather than attending faraway universities for long educational paths that sometimes offer uncertain financial rewards. From our place in this system, there is little we can do about the earliest experiences of the pipeline. What we can do is try to learn about talent and desire for graduate education that may exist in places where we are not now systematically looking, and that may be best reached by messages that we are not used to presenting. I look

forward to working on this challenge with all of you, and with our new Director of Recruitment, Diversity and Community.

Let me finally mention one aspect of this issue that is not under the direct influence of the Laney Graduate School, but which is vital to our ability to attract a more diverse graduate student body. I am speaking of the composition of our graduate faculty. To attract graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds, we need to show that they can come here and find communities and faculty colleagues that appreciate their backgrounds and experiences and guide them as they develop professional identities. To accomplish this, we need to strive for a faculty that reflects the diversity we want to – and need to – attract among our students. Many of you participate in and influence searches for new faculty members, and I ask you to continue to move forward with commitments that show the value and priority we place on diversity.

Internationalization

It is often said that we live in a globally connected age, and higher education is at the forefront of these connections. We need to navigate them with purpose and intentional programming, and this will require equivalently purposeful planning.

One component concerns recruitment and the presence of international students here in the Laney Graduate School. In many ways, we do well in this regard, though we are perhaps less purposeful about it than we could be.

At the program level in LGS, we continue to review application data on international application numbers, along with selectivity and yield. In most cases these applications do not represent an intentional dimension of the applicant pool. Rather they represent a passive accumulation of applications based, in part, on Emory's reputation and visibility in those parts of the world. International student numbers remain concentrated, as it has for some time, in the STEM disciplines.

As with diversity, we need to ask ourselves to understand how the presence of international students is important to us. To assist our efforts, we have engaged faculty member Dr. Roy Sutliff. Roy is an Associate Professor in the Molecular and Systems Pharmacology program in the Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences. In his capacity at LGS, Roy serves as an active liaison with the Office of International Affairs. He is also engaged with colleagues in the Institute for Developing Nations in their work with The Carter Center. We also welcome and thank Dr. Philip Wainwright during his first year of leadership in OIA for his recognition of and commitment to graduate education.

In addition to nurturing an international presence here at LGS, Roy is also charged with exploring potential partnerships and programming in places of strategic importance to Emory such as Brazil, Korea, China and the Middle East. He has traveled abroad to represent us, and we are confident that the work he is doing will increase our visibility internationally and position us as a “go-to” institution for international students and scholars.

There is a second component to internationalization. As we explore international partnerships and ways to nurture diversity and the international presence in LGS, we are also working to define what exactly we mean by “global skills” that we want our graduates to have an

opportunity to acquire. We recognize the educational benefit of an internationally diverse student body and internationally diverse research experiences, but how does this recognition translate into skill sets that ensure our students are competitive globally? And how do global skills shape global citizens?

We have one very strong program like this, and I am pleased to report that we are graduating the first student enrolled through LGS and Georgia Tech in the joint Emory-Georgia Tech Biomedical Engineering program with Peking University. This program was the product of a new paradigm that truly imagines graduate education on a global scale. For those of you unaware of the program, the joint Emory-Georgia Tech-Peking University Biomedical Engineering program is a means for U.S. and Chinese students to participate in an exchange experience that allows them to learn and work at both their home campuses and those of the partner institutions. A single dissertation satisfies the thesis requirements of all three universities. It is a truly unique experience, and a wonderful example of ways to internationalize graduate education.

Where else is there room for this kind of exchange and global collaboration? How can we help some of our students to connect to global academic communities? The answer will differ by field and discipline. In many ways, we look to you, the faculty and our programs, to come forward with ideas and plans – ideas that necessarily build on the connections you as scholars and researchers have with colleagues and institutions around the world, and on which it may be possible to build something that helps the LGS and some of our doctoral students to participate in a wider intellectual community.

Academic Identity

Finally, I would like to take a few moments to talk about the perennial question of how our academic identity is constituted and constructed.

In some ways, this is a nuts and bolts conversation about how we organize ourselves to transcend department and school organization here at Emory. We have built graduate divisions and programs that bring together faculty and resources from across the University to enrich the educational and training experiences of our students and that provide faculty with opportunities to move beyond the silos of the traditional department. For example, the Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, the Graduate Division of Religion, and our newest doctoral program, Islamic Civilizations Studies, all function as LGS units that draw faculty from several departments and schools. If we look beyond degree programs, we see more of these intellectual communities – the certificate in Mind, Brain and Culture is one thriving example, and so is the doctoral pathway “Molecules to Mankind.”

It is important to continually ask ourselves whether there are more areas within the University that sponsor research that could support or include an engagement with graduate education. How might they become part of LGS academic community?

In a similar fashion, we are continually assessing the degrees we offer, often in the context of requests to develop new degree programs. Over the last few years, we have added a significant number of joint degree programs involving LGS master’s degrees. More recently, we have added some new master’s degrees, including several 4+1 degree programs that provide Emory

undergraduates the option of earning a master's degree with only one additional year of enrollment.

We grapple with these issues at a moment of significant restructuring and uncertainty in higher education. The restructuring of academic employment and the job market more broadly demand that we evaluate new programming – and assess current programming – against the realities that our students face once they leave Emory. Additionally, funding changes in the national environment, as well as those we face locally here at Emory, shape discussions on how best to leverage our resources to support sustainable growth in areas of strategic importance while also expanding funding support for all LGS students.

To these ends, I want to close with two important projects that are about setting the stage for our tomorrow.

First: data. We have been turning to data for planning purposes for several years now, and many of you have been closely involved in those conversations. This is also a moment of accountability. We are stewards of significant resources and we are asking students to trust us with an important period of their lives. What can we say about what happens to our students? How long do they take? What professional pathways do they take?

This fall, we will begin to make these data much more publically available by posting important student data on our website. Two of our models are the graduate schools at Northwestern and Cornell, which both post extensive data about their students and programs on their websites. We will start with fairly simple postings this fall, but we expect to quickly match the sophistication we see from some of our peers.

Second: long-term funding stability. As you know, the Laney Graduate School continues to grow in both familiar and new directions. We support and pursue a remarkably broad front of initiatives, and we do so with a lean organization. On behalf the LGS staff, I take considerable pride in what we accomplish, from managing a complex set of everyday processes to developing and implementing innovative programs in both traditional and new areas.

Over my time as dean, graduate education at Emory, and in particular the funding of graduate education at Emory, has faced two important sets of challenges:

- Graduate student funding rests on central funds and partnerships with the schools, units and individual PIs that engage in graduate education. One of the first strategic goals I found before me was to restructure several of the financial partnerships to prevent and relieve stress on central funds. Relieving the stress and capturing additional resources are ongoing and continual processes. As our partner units across Emory face budget challenges, we must continually remind them of the collaborative nature of graduate education and research and the financial commitments required to sustain the excellence in doctoral education and research that benefit us all.
- The funding of graduate education is intimately connected with broader social and economic processes, and in many cases those place our financial support under increasing stress. The recession of 2008 had an immediate and substantial impact on graduate admissions, but we are also under pressure from slower moving but no less

significant developments – decreasing federal funding for research and education and structural shifts in the employment markets in higher education are perhaps the two most prominent.

In both cases, LGS needs to respond to pressures from partners or external circumstances. And in both cases, we are constrained by the fact that we cannot offset the impact of changes in our environment through independent strategic management of a resource base, alone, that is dedicated to funding graduate education.

In other words, the long-term health and stability of graduate education at Emory would be helped, most of all, by a campaign that includes a commitment to establishing a significant and secure endowment for the LGS. In my work with senior University leadership, I continue to discuss and promote this as a central priority that would be of great benefit to graduate education and research across Emory.

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As we move toward the conclusion of another academic year, I am pleased to report that the state of the Laney Graduate School is strong. Even as circumstances beyond our control have curtailed our resources, they have not curtailed our ambitions. I remain unsatisfied, in the most positive ways – aspiring for the best for our students, so that they have access to the best faculty, who engage best practices, and are prepared for all success and excellence in their scholarship, research and contributions to the global good.

The strategic areas of planning I have outlined are situated firmly within Emory’s vision to enhance its place among the elite research universities in the U.S. and, indeed, the world. Beyond their importance in moving Emory forward, however, they also pose provocative questions that ask us to engage new realities and new ways of thinking about ourselves. That is the challenge for all of us, and we will look to you for your guidance, your feedback and your ideas.

Thank you for listening and for all your contributions to the important and valuable work of graduate education at Emory.