



EMORY

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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, the tenth – yes, tenth – that I have delivered. This address comes after the latest self-study and five-year review of the Laney Graduate School. It also comes during a time when the University as a whole is embarking on change, searching for a new president and developing a new strategic plan. I am pleased to have this time with you, to report on the state of the Laney Graduate School and to discuss LGS priorities as we look toward the next five years.

First, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Laney Graduate School Executive Council for another year of extraordinary work. In addition to their responsibility in reviewing and considering the many curricular items that come before it, the Council is a wonderful sounding board and advisory body for the important work we are doing in the Laney Graduate School. So many thanks to this year's Council members: Carol Anderson, Vincent Cornell, Council chair Timothy Dowd, Andra Gillespie, Sarah McPhee, Raman Parimala, Lynne Nygaard, Ann Rogers, and Susanna Widicus Weaver. It has been a great pleasure to work with you this year, and I thank you for your service.

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In addition to ongoing work in the Laney Graduate School, 2015-16 has also been a year of reflection. As we prepared our self-study, many of us were astounded as we paused to consider and document all that has been accomplished in a relatively short amount of time. Institutions are often slow to change – or slow to effect change – but in the case of the Laney Graduate School, progress has been steady with intermittent and somewhat spectacular bursts of growth and innovation. From developing a new budget model with our partners at the onset of my tenure, to the exponential growth in professional development and career planning programming during the last few years, we have made incredible strides in areas that shape and optimize the graduate student experience. Many thanks are owed to the leadership and service of our Directors of Graduate Studies and program administrators and to you, the graduate faculty, for your engagement and your guidance. We attract the best students because they want to work with the best faculty. And reciprocally, we know that

attracting and retaining the best faculty relies on working with the best graduate students. So from all these relational points, thank you for your efforts to make this a graduate school where tomorrow's leaders want to be today – students and faculty, alike.

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This past fall, the Laney Graduate School – with review and endorsement by the Executive Council – drafted and adopted vision and mission statements. These statements guide our planning, operations and programming, and you can find them on our [new website](#).

Our vision statement: The James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies at Emory University is a nationally and internationally recognized leader in advancing academic excellence through innovative scholarship, research, teaching, and programming that prepares a diverse and inclusive student body for success as leaders and in service to the global good.

We reach and embody our vision by fulfilling our mission, a mission that bespeaks the shared higher education goals of research universities.

Our mission statement: The James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies is committed to graduate education that provides students with deep and broad expertise in their chosen fields, creativity to cross discipline boundaries, courage to challenge convention, and confidence to ask unexpected questions and articulate bold new perspectives.

The mission of the Laney Graduate School is to:

- Collaborate with our partners in other schools and units at Emory to provide broadly based, excellent graduate education that supports the research and scholarship of students, faculty, and the University as a whole;
- Foster an environment of inclusion to ensure the range of educational benefits that can only come from diversity across the academic community;
- Complement the world-class education our faculty offer by preparing our graduates for success in competitive national and global economies through contemporary professional development and career planning resources and programming;
- Increase the visibility of graduate education nationally and internationally through advocacy that emphasizes the critical role of graduate education to the mission of the research University, to the competitiveness of the United States, and to the global good.

Reflecting on the past year, I would like to discuss some of the ways that we are accomplishing our mission.

We continue to collaborate with our partners in other schools and units at Emory to provide broadly based, excellent graduate education. This fall, the resumed doctoral program in Economics will welcome a new class. Graduate faculty leadership reimagined the program, resulting in new faculty alignments focused on sharper research foci that build on Emory's strengths in the public health sciences and on long-established relationships with the Federal Reserve Bank in

Atlanta. In addition, as Executive Council chair Tim Dowd told us earlier, the Council will soon review the proposal to resume admissions to the doctoral program in Hispanic Studies, formerly Spanish. Leadership and faculty in that program have made great strides to reframe the program around an interdisciplinary vision that brings together graduate faculty from across the University. We look forward to sharing more news with you about the program in Hispanic Studies as the proposal moves through the faculty review and governance process.

We continue to focus on efforts to diversify the student body and to foster an environment of inclusion. I can say with confidence – and pride – that LGS is a leading partner for diversity at Emory. Just last week, we hosted this spring’s Conversation with the Dean, titled *Ethics, Responsibility, and Microaggressions: The Role of the Research University*. This event was also cross-listed as a Jones Program in Ethics event, demonstrating the flexibility of that program to emerging issues. Panelists included Provost Claire Sterk, Center for Ethics Director Paul Root Wolpe and Morehouse president emeritus, Candler School of Theology Berta and James T. Laney Professor of Moral Leadership Robert Franklin, Jr. More than 130 students, faculty and staff turned out for this conversation, so we know that our community is eager to have these valuable discussions. Our programming around inclusion continues this fall, when we will welcome back Theater Delta for more interactive discussions about mentoring and diversity. We will also convene the fourth STEM Research and Career Symposium this September. Stay tuned for messages about these events.

In last year’s annual report, we asked programs to tell us about their outreach and recruitment efforts as they relate to diversity. Here are a few things we know:

- Some programs are making use of faculty and alumni to participate in lectures or seminars at undergraduate institutions.
- Some programs are using the GRE Search Service to identify prospects from underrepresented groups.
- Some programs are participating in national conferences or professional meetings that target underrepresented students, such as the Society for Advancing Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science and the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students.
- Several programs are recruiting from pipeline programs such as Mellon Mays or the Bridge to Baccalaureate Program in Nursing, as well as Emory’s own SURE program.
- And more and more of our programs are increasingly calling upon Damon Williams, our Director of Diversity, Community and Recruitment, to discuss diversity planning as well as to directly connect Damon with prospects.

These activities show that our programs are making diversity a priority. But, as is the case with LGS and Emory as a whole, there are opportunities for improvement. We want to institutionalize diversity and inclusion practices and develop tools and best practices that keep us on a forward trajectory. I will speak more about this in just a few minutes when we pivot to opportunities we see on the horizon.

Continuing with our mission, **we are preparing our graduates for success through contemporary professional development and career planning resources and programming.** This year, like last, we offered a full calendar of professional development and career planning events, and I will highlight just a few: we offered programming on preparing for the career search,

creating websites to aid in the job search, practicing for interviews, learning the language of transferrable skills, developing strategies for negotiation, and more. In the area of teaching, we continue to offer *TATTO Extension* sessions, which go beyond standard TATTO programming to include topics such as developing effective assessments in the classroom, supporting student needs, and using social media to promote active classroom learning. This year, we also offered Professional Development and Career Planning Pop-Ins. These monthly open-door opportunities invite students to pop in to various locations to talk about LGS professional development resources or to discuss their career exploration and job search timelines.

Throughout the year we have collected feedback about our programming, and we will work with staff and our Professional Development Student Ambassadors to evaluate what is working, what can be improved and what we should forego next year.

We often hear from faculty that it is difficult to mentor students for careers that are not like your own. We are here to help. Our professional development and career planning resources are directed at providing students with the tools they need to succeed. Please familiarize yourselves with this programming and encourage your students to make good use of these resources.

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Looking forward, we see tremendous opportunity to build on the momentum of this year and, indeed, the past five years. We also see areas where there is opportunity for us to be bold and innovative. I will mention just a few of those here.

We want to create a culture of expectation and action – for both faculty and students – that prioritizes content, training and “ownership” for student professional development and career planning as part of the graduate experience. Our [BEST program](#) is the “proving ground” for modeling professional preparation activities in other areas, both for its emphasis on experiential learning, career exploration, and mentor training as well as for its partnerships with employers and professional associations. We seek to expand, systematically, similar approaches for all graduate students. To this end, we have submitted a proposal for the Next Generation Humanities PhD Planning Grant through the National Endowment for the Humanities. That proposal is currently under review. Our plan is to collaborate with core faculty leaders, graduate students, and alumni to propose wide-ranging changes in humanities doctoral programs that will transform scholarly preparation for a variety of careers.

This fall, we will also launch the [CIRTL](#) project, which you might have read about in a news release several weeks ago. CIRTL is the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning. It was established in 2003 with support from National Science Foundation (NSF) to improve teaching skills and increase the diversity of future University faculty in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. Emory is among 25 new members joining CIRTL during a recent expansion that more than doubles the network’s membership. At Emory, CIRTL will be a collaboration between LGS and the Center for Faculty Development and Excellence. Our first year of CIRTL activities will focus on introducing the program to the Emory community through graduated programming and engagement. By the end of this first year, we will have identified a faculty leader or co-leaders for the CIRTL project, and we plan to offer a full suite of programming by the 2017-18 academic year.

We want to design and implement a broader survey environment to understand career pathways. Knowing where our students go once they complete their degrees helps us refine our career planning and professional development programming. We must also know if we are preparing our students with the skills they need to succeed in a range of professional pathways. The next step in this process is building a survey environment that captures our students' experiences – and possibly their employers'. We can then use selected data gathered from these sources in our annual planning meetings process to enhance student progress, transitions, experiences, and career opportunities. Our aim here, as well, is to contribute to graduate faculty efforts to stay in touch with their graduates and benefit from feedback on doctoral preparation in their programs.

We want to develop a rubric for global skills. There is more pronounced and growing interest among students, faculty, administrators, policymakers, and the general public to see higher education as transformative in addressing complex problems. We believe that current academic training leaves some students unevenly-prepared to appreciate the central role of culture and belief in shaping everyday understandings and decision-making processes of people across the globe. Though universities are increasingly seeking to develop understanding and impart skills needed to participate effectively in today's globalized world, how we are organized as departments and disciplines can present barriers.

We expect that there will be many new ways to address new interdisciplinarity. And we are fortunate to have the opportunity to pilot one new approach over the next year or two. LGS will pilot an innovation in the field of global education in the form of interdisciplinary “communities of practice” that consist of teams of students, faculty, and development practitioners who work in international settings. The pilot *community of practice*, or COP, will operate for two academic years and will involve field work to address practical problems in the Global South. Team members will go to the field and will implement the project they plan during the academic year in collaboration with a partner organization. During the second academic year, and with guidance from participating faculty, the student team will engage in post-field analysis of every stage of the project, from planning to implementation, and will develop recommendations for improvement. At the conclusion of the second summer, the team will produce a final assessment of their efforts across the two years, which will inform the work of subsequent COPs.

The novel activities of the COPs will make it possible to identify important new understandings that are necessary to transform graduate education, so that it is in tune with the needs of the present era. From this work, we plan to develop a rubric that will allow us to assess our efforts to help scholars at all stages of their careers develop skills and understandings that are informed by a global perspective. Because these skills and understandings will emerge out of the activities of the COPs, we expect the rubric for global skills to evolve, through experience.

I am pleased to announce that we have received a grant from the Luce Foundation's Higher Education Program to pilot this project, and we hope to get underway this fall. David Nugent and Carla Roncoli, director and co-director of the Master's in Development Practice program, will help lead our efforts. This is a very exciting project, and I look forward to sharing what we learn as we progress through the pilot. A news release is forthcoming in the next week or two.

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Finally, I would like to spend the rest of our time together discussing three areas that are, and will continue to be, mission-critical for the Laney Graduate School: interdisciplinarity, diversity and development.

As described above, our initial communities of practice project will focus on global skills as a particular area of important need. But this project is also an idea that is rooted in a long-standing LGS commitment: **promoting contemporary interdisciplinary graduate education that breaks down barriers and produces scholars and researchers with the capacity to engage the difficult problems of our age, in the full range of their complexities.**

We all know that just about any problem we face in the modern world cannot be understood only from within the confines of a single, or even a few, of the traditional academic disciplines. That is true across the board, from the science of curing cancer, to the public health of preventing and treating epidemic diseases and engaging in community based wellness, to grappling with social and cultural conflicts expressed as clashes of national or religious identities.

With a new University strategic plan on the horizon, it is a good time to reassert the role and academic expectation of graduate schools in general as *keepers of interdisciplinarity*, and for the Laney Graduate School at Emory. We are rededicating ourselves to exploring how we can push graduate education beyond the boundaries of a scheme of “departments” and “disciplines” that was enacted 100 or more years ago. LGS is well poised to respond to this challenge. We have experience with creating units that span across old divisions, and with creating vibrant communities of inquiry that engage multiple fields and perspectives. The community of practice is one example, one approach and one step towards creating units of intellectual focus and growth that reach across disparate parts of Emory, seeking to transform the capacities and orientations of the intellectual leaders who graduate.

So as we move into a period of shared reflection and planning, let’s be bold. Let’s build on and push education, training, and intellectual leadership in new directions. I challenge you, as the graduate faculty, to envision new approaches to interdisciplinary education and training. Share your ideas with us – help lead us to new frontiers.

We believe that [innovation and excellence](#) come from the broadest definitions of diversity and inclusion. Ideas, experiences, and identities working together are forces for innovation and excellence. We have been working with programs to develop processes and strategies for assembling diverse and inclusive cohorts and mentoring for success. As I mentioned earlier, we know from programs’ annual reports that we are making improvements.

The next step in this process is to institutionalize diversity and inclusions practices. To do this, we have to know where the opportunities for development are. For example, some programs lack diversity recruitment plans, resulting in little engagement or follow-up with students from under-represented groups until the application deadline is near. For other programs, there is a lack of intentionality. That is, the programs have recruitment and outreach goals, but no concrete plans in place to move from outreach, to engagement and, finally, to admission and enrollment. Still, other programs are not taking advantage of tools that LGS has put into place to help them diversify their applicant pools.

Since 2014, LGS has actively sought diversity-focused affiliations with organizations to help us identify and connect with prospects from underrepresented groups. These organizations include the National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Science; the National Name Exchange; Graduate Horizons; the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; the United Negro College Fund; the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund; the Mellon Mays Scholars Program; and the McNair Scholars Program. Additionally, we are actively enhancing our admissions systems and processes to promote diversity recruiting. This past fall, we launched a new prospect tracking system actually called Prospect. Prospect is a customer relationship management system that analyzes student information data through the application lifecycle. The tool is designed to improve connections with potential applicants through prompted follow-up and delivery of program recruitment content, such as information about courses of study, resources and more.

LGS has already conducted a number of trainings on the Prospect system, and we are eager to offer more. I encourage you to connect with us. Connect with Damon Williams to learn about the resources we already have in place. Please also connect with Damon to discuss areas where we might do more.

For LGS planning purposes, to move us toward *systematically* institutionalizing diversity practices, we will do several things: (1) we will work with graduate programs to develop program diversity plans; (2) we will design an LGS Strategic Plan for Diversity with incorporation of graduate program diversity plans; (3) we will convene a Diversity Advisory Committee of faculty, graduate students, program leadership and program administrators to participate in a series of purposeful and provocative discussions on continued enhancement of practices at LGS; (4) we will continue working with programs to embed and use the analytics and application tools specifically designed for recruiting and outreach for diverse student prospects; (5) we will vet and develop a toolkit of recruitment best practices and resources to be posted on our website; (6) and we will offer training for faculty and staff on unconscious bias, implicit association, and whole-file review as they relate to admissions committees.

We also ask that you, the graduate faculty, position diversity and inclusion as a priority as it relates to faculty searches. Unless students see and experience Emory as an inclusive community of scholars and leaders, they will choose to study elsewhere. LGS will continue to raise this issue among our partners, leadership and graduate faculty who participate in faculty searches. We are eager to explore and participate in approaches that would bring timely results for increased faculty diversity, and I welcome your feedback for how we can support you and work with you to make this happen.

Quite simply, diversity and inclusion across the Emory community are imperative to fulfilling the aspirations of this great University. I am proud of the work that LGS is doing to lead in these areas, and I am eager to partner with those that want us to reach our goals sooner.

Last, I would like to turn our attention to investment, development and philanthropy. I suspect that those are not three words that immediately come to mind when we think of graduate education and training. **But for the Laney Graduate School to reach its goals and optimize the student experience, investment, development and philanthropy are essential.** In addition to continuing to refine and expand our professional development, career planning and diversity programming, we want – and must – enhance funding to ensure competitive fellowship and stipend support for doctoral students. But how do we get there? We currently see several pathways.

First, it is time for new investment for the longer term in graduate education at Emory. As a central graduate school, committed to advancing Emory's maturity within and beyond the AAU, LGS has a unique appreciation for the complementarities represented in the multiple missions of research, undergraduate, graduate and professional education, and the public, global good. We seek an institutional commitment to establish a significant and secure endowment for LGS. We believe that we can make a strong case to partner units, the central administration, and external donors that investment in doctoral education under the stewardship of the Laney Graduate School redounds to the excellence and eminence of the entire University. We recognize that LGS will be asking for more resources from University friends and partners who face their own compelling needs to attract faculty, sustain and enhance physical and support infrastructure, and address undergraduate and professional students' financial aid requirements. Thus, we are intent on working with other units of the University to coordinate and complement our fundraising efforts in the next campaign.

Second, we are looking inward. Several years ago, during the Dean's Address that followed the economic crisis, I asked you to consider what we *can't* do. We faced tough choices due to diminishing resources, which compelled us to be more intentional about when and where we invested. Today, we are asking ourselves that question again. We must get all programs to 12-month stipend support, and we must raise stipend levels to remain competitive. But we cannot get there in a responsible and sustainable way without additional revenue and without diminished investments in areas that are not mission-focused. To this end, LGS is currently in the process of reviewing and evaluating our own resource flow to see where we can be more efficient and intentional.

And finally, we are increasing our efforts to enhance external support. In this area, we will work with donors and prospects to engage them as "investors" in graduate education. Gifts to the Laney Graduate School are transformative. Graduate students of today are future change-makers. They will solve complex problems and drive economic growth in our communities, regions, states and beyond. They will be at the helm of breakthroughs and spur the discovery and innovations that will improve lives across the globe. That is what graduate education does. That is what you, as graduate faculty, do. We are helping to shape the future. We are investors in tomorrow.

Our focus will be on telling graduate student stories, connecting their work and accomplishments with impact, innovations and transformation. When we ask donors to be investors, we are asking them to trust us – to trust that our students are doing transformative work because of transformative giving. To gain their trust, it is important to know the complex problem they are eager and passionate about, so that we can help connect them to the students working on these same problems.

Our students are remarkably adept at telling general audiences about their work. This month alone, we have taken [ARCS Scholars](#) with us to meet with ARCS donors. These students succinctly discussed their research to a room of donors who walked away with greater assurance about their investment. Nearly three weeks ago, ten finalists competed in the annual oral 3MT competition, which asks students to explain their research to a non-specialist audience in three minutes or less. Every year, the panel of judges for this competition is blown away by the quality and importance of our students' research. This is how we increase donor support – we connect the donors to their investment. We need student stories, and we need your help to connect us to them.

I want to close by doing something a little different this year. I would like to show you the winning presentation for this year's 3MT competition (*click on image below*). In less than three minutes, you will hear one of our student's stories, told in an accessible way that demonstrates both impact and care.

When you leave today, I ask that you please give some thought about student stories in your programs and then share them with us.



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I am pleased, once again, to report that the state of the Laney Graduate School is strong. Thank you for listening. And thank you for all that you do to make this an outstanding, forward-looking and rising graduate school. Best wishes to all of you as we approach the end of another academic year. See you at commencement!