

# WVU creates new initiative: Assistant VP for graduate education

SUBMITTED BY THE 2010 IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Provost Gerald Lang is pleased to announce a significant initiative in graduate education. In response to the recommendations of the Provost's Task Force on Graduate Education and the Graduate Student Experience, a new position, assistant vice president for graduate education, will be created.

Parallel to President David C. Hardesty's initiatives to draw the attention of the campus community to the importance of undergraduate students and change University systems to fulfill the student-centered vision, WVU must recognize the importance of strengthening graduate education to advance the institution's academic reputation for teaching and research as well as its outreach mission, Lang said.

Graduate students play a critical role in advancing scholarship and research in the University's efforts to serve the state and in the undergraduate classroom. Their work is essential to achieving the strategic goals of WVU's 2010 Plan, Building the Foundation for Academic Excellence.

"The University's 2010 Plan virtually mandates an increased focus on enhancing the role of graduate education," said Robert Stitzel, director of graduate studies. "I support the efforts and conclusions of the Provost's Task Force on Graduate Education and the Graduate Student Experience in recommending a 'more holistic approach to achieving effective connections, enhancing quality, and sustaining growth' for the future of graduate education at West Virginia University."

For this reason, a task force on graduate education was initiated last year. Chief among the recommendations was the creation of a full-time position coordinating graduate studies throughout the University.

## A brief look at the history of graduate education at WVU



Stitzel

Graduate education has been an important part of WVU's history and academic culture since the first decades after its founding. As early as 1898, President Jerome Hall Raymond began hiring graduate students to teach undergraduate classes.

In 1929, Stephen P. Burke began organizing a Graduate Council, and in 1930, the WVU Graduate School was established. Six fellowships were created for the 1930-31 academic year with support from individuals and corporations.

Within two years, the school had attracted more than 1,200 students and was organized into four subject area divisions to better educate students and serve the needs of the state.

In 1984, graduate education became decentralized when the Graduate School was officially dissolved. At that time, leadership was provided by the associate vice president for research and graduate studies. Colleges began to manage most day-to-day responsibilities, while the Graduate Council oversaw program evaluations,

regulated membership of the graduate faculty and coordinated activities between programs.

Since the inception of the Office of Graduate Education in 1991, Robert Stitzel has served as its director, except for a brief period from 1994-97.

Stitzel's involvement with graduate education started with his arrival at WVU in 1965. Prior to his appointment as director of graduate education, he also served as a member of the Graduate School Executive Committee, an original member of the University Graduate Council and special assistant to the provost for projects related to graduate education and the Graduate Council.

When Stitzel began to serve as director of graduate education in 1991, WVU graduated slightly more than 100 doctoral students a year, just meeting the minimum of 100 doctoral graduates required to maintain Carnegie designation as a research-extensive university. With his assistance, graduate education has grown in volume and diversity. In recent years, WVU has awarded nearly 160 doctoral degrees annually.

Stitzel's dedication to graduate education during the past four decades is greatly appreciated by the students, faculty and administration of WVU.

Task force co-chairs Fred King, associate dean in the Department of Chemistry, and Lawrence Hornak, professor in the Lane Department of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering, have endorsed this leadership initiative for graduate education, stating: "Creating a vice president position is consistent with task force recommendations to position the graduate education enterprise in order to assist WVU in attaining its strategic objectives. Establishing a leadership position devoted to graduate education at the vice presidential level reflects the growing importance of graduate studies at research universities such as WVU. This organizational change will strengthen the linkages between student recruitment, research and scholarship productivity, and faculty recruitment and retention — ultimately building a stronger

research university."

The new assistant vice president will be responsible for the oversight of graduate education initiatives and for coordinating the efforts of the colleges, research office and supporting units to improve the recruitment, retention and productivity of graduate students, as recommended by the Graduate Education and the Graduate Student Experience Task Force. Stronger central representation will provide opportunities for graduate students to engage as junior colleagues and to participate in cutting-edge, interdisciplinary research projects.

Among the duties of this position will be coordinating marketing and recruitment efforts for graduate programs; creating a graduate teaching assistant institute to develop graduate students' skills as members of the professorate; overseeing program review; and hosting the minority doctoral program in conjunction with the Office of Social Justice.

"Our minority doctoral studies program has grown tremendously to nearly 100 students since we began in 2002," said Executive Officer for Social Justice Jennifer McIntosh, who initiated the program. "From the beginning, there has been a strong partnership between the offices of the provost and social justice. I look for-

ward to even greater success in the coming years through this enhanced leadership."

The search to fill the assistant vice president for graduate education position will begin this semester.

The 2010 Plan implementation team invites employees to learn more about the WVU 2010 Plan and Task Force on Graduate Education and the Graduate Student Experience at: <http://www.wvu.edu/~2010plan/>

**The Council on Internal Communications is seeking your opinion. Where do you get your WVU news? E-News, the Intranet, Mountaineer Spirit newsletter — or maybe you prefer the mainstream media? Look for a survey in an upcoming issue of the Spirit and also online at: <http://intranet.wvu.edu/>**



**Editor:** Janey Cink  
**News Service Director:** Becky Lofstead  
**Staff Writers:** Jim Bissett, Janey Cink, Natalie Eddy, Andrew Lohmann, Bill Nevin, Ted Webb  
**Student Staff:** Jordan Alkire, Christina Friend, Michelle Goodliff, Jennifer Kennedy, Elizabeth Miller

**Advisory Council:** Chelle Adams; Bonnie Anderson; Parviz Famouri; Rachel Fender; Mark Kemp-Rye; Steve Kite; Kristin Margolin; Chris Martin; Cathy Orndorff; Becky Lofstead, chairwoman; and Janey Cink. The Mountaineer Spirit is published for the faculty and staff of West Virginia University at Morgantown, WV 26506-6688. Signed letters to the editor and story suggestions should be sent to 200 Clark Hall, P.O. Box 6688; fax, 293-7159; e-mail Spirit@mail.wvu.edu. The Mountaineer Spirit is a publication of News and Information Services; phone 293-6997; Subscription rates \$26.50 per year via mail (bi-weekly except holidays).