DATE: June 3, 2011

TO: Cliff Fedler, Associate Dean, Graduate School

FROM: Steve Fraze, Department Chair and Garrison Professor

SUBJECT: Graduate Program Evaluation Response

Let me begin by thanking you, Marlene, and the review committee in helping us complete the review of our graduate program. As with past evaluations, the process allows us to celebrate our success, examine our shortcomings, and position our Department for the future. In addition, the feedback from the review committee and the review meeting conducted by the Provost has given us the guidance to improve our program. To conclude this review process, this letter is to illustrate our one- and five-year plan to prepare us for that future.

One-Year Plan:

During the 2011-12 academic year, our Department’s graduate program and faculty will focus on the following goals and activities:

*Goal 1. Increase the overall quality of our admitted students.*

Activity A. Target recruitment of high quality undergraduate and master’s students as measured by their performance in their respective programs (quality factors will include but not be limited to GPA, awards, recognitions, work examples).

Activity B. More critically utilize GRE scores as a quality indicator with the focus on increasing the average cumulative general GRE score of admitted students by 50 points.

*Goal 2. Create and disseminate a graduate student handbook for the Department*

Activity A. Create a draft version of the handbook by December 2011.

Activity B. Have current graduate students review draft version of the handbook providing feedback to the faculty by February 2012.

Activity C. Finalize handbook and disseminate to students in print and electronic forms by June 2012.
Goal 3. Secure additional assistantship positions, especially at the doctoral level
Activity A. Have each faculty submitting proposals over $50,000 for external funding consider including a doctoral-level assistantship position as part of the funding request.
Activity B. Have each faculty submitting proposals over $20,000 for external funding consider including a master’s-level assistantship position as part of the funding request.
Activity C. Explore developmental support funding sources (e.g. Departmental alumni) on the possibility of endowments for graduate assistantship positions.

Goal 4. Begin transition of resident Ed.D. program to the newly approved Ph.D. program.
Activity A. Assuming the proposal is approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in July 2012, the Department will begin activities to transition the resident doctoral program and its students to the new program. This will include revisions to recruitment, application, and advising materials as well as amendments to students’ program of study forms on file with the Graduate School.

Goal 5. Implement recruitment of underrepresented population plans
Activity A. The faculty included plans in the proposed Ph.D. degree program to increase enrollment of underrepresented populations in the graduate program. We will begin to implement the following components of the plan in Year 1:
   i. Add recruitment efforts at the National FFA Convention and the Agricultural Media Summit to our current efforts.
   ii. Improve our relationship with the staff that recruit for Texas Tech University in urban centers around the Texas (Houston, Dallas, San Antonio) in order to increase communications about the opportunities for undergraduate and graduate study in the Department.
   iii. Create activities with feeder programs to communicate the advantages of graduate study.
   iv. Communicate assistantship openings nationally and internationally on related professional organization web site and listserv.

Five-Year Plan:

While continuing our expansion/improvement of our Year 1 efforts, our Department’s graduate program and faculty will focus on the following goals during the next five years with specific activities being developed and completed over that time span.

  Goal 1. Increase faculty FTE by 1.0.
  Goal 2. Increase staff FTE by 1.0.
  Goal 3. Develop certificate programs for agricultural communications and agricultural leadership areas of study.

In closing, thank you again for your leadership in this review process and your assistance in helping us make our graduate program one of the best in the nation.