March 21, 2014

To: Deans
    Ken Dean
    Hank Foley
    Tracy Kitchel
    Max Philbrook
    Craig Roberts
    Leona Rubin
    Jake Wright

From: R. Bowen Loftin, Ph.D., Chancellor

Subject: Allocation of Functions of the Graduate School

I announced on March 14, 2014 that the functions of the Graduate School would be allocated between the academic colleges and schools and the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies within the Division of Research and Graduate/Professional Studies. I ask that Interim Provost Ken Dean convene those to whom this memorandum is addressed (or their designees) for the purpose of developing a task force to recommend to me the specific reallocation of functions. This task force should consist of the Interim Provost (or his designated representative) as chair, as well as representative deans (3), directors of graduate studies (3), members of the graduate faculty senate (2), and the GPC/GSA Presidents (or their delegates). Of course, the members of the task force may reach outside of their membership to seek any necessary information, and all must serve as a conduit to inform the stakeholders that they represent of their progress.

It is essential this task force be formed as soon as possible and begin its work without delay. As I stated previously, curricular functions (including certifying students for graduation) should reside with the academic units (colleges and schools) while “collective” functions such as distribution of funds for graduate student support and thesis/dissertation processing should be carried out by the Office of Graduate/Professional Studies. Beyond this broad statement, we must inventory all functions of the Graduate School, determine where each should be assigned, and determine where the resources (both human and fiscal) should be assigned.
In the interest of graduate students within the interdisciplinary degree programs scheduled to graduate this spring and that normally receive their degree from the Graduate School, the "School" will remain as an entity until September 1, 2014. This designation also will allow the registrar to process spring and summer diplomas according to their signature policy. The task force must also recommend alterations of our processes for future commencements. The task force should give particular attention to the various interdisciplinary programs currently administered by the Graduate School.

Given that the faculty bylaws specifically provide for a graduate faculty organization, I also ask that this group consider the future role of the Graduate Faculty Senate within the new structure.

Although I know spring is an extremely busy time on campus, it is my hope that the work of the group can be completed by June 15, 2014 so that I can take action on their recommendations by July 1, 2014.