

**Annual Report of the
Recruitment, Admissions, and Financial Aid Committee (RAFA)
2004-2005**

Chair: Suzanne Eckes

Members: Donald Cunningham, Stephanie Carter, Gretchen Butera, SuBude, Sandy Strain, Curt Bonk, Peg Sutton, Larry Mikulecky, Martha Nyikos, Enrique Galindo

Ex-Officio: Mary Howard-Hamilton

Ex-Officio: Ghangis Carter

Recorder, Ex-officio: Rachelle Winkle Wagner

The committee focused on the following areas during the 2004-2005 academic year: the lack of graduate student funding; the distribution of Beechler funds; privately funded fellowships; and the recruitment of underrepresented students. In addressing the lack of graduate student support, the committee implemented a new competition to dispense Beechler funds to support graduate research and created a plan to address student financial support issues with department chairs. The committee also addressed issues relating to the recruitment of underrepresented students to the School of Education. Specifically, the committee began discussions with the Teach For America program to try to recruit program participants to the School of Education.

Graduate Student Funding

Due to the lack of financial support for student research, the committee decided to distribute the Beechler funds in a new way. In January the committee designed and posted a call for proposals for students seeking both masters' thesis support and pre-proposal support. After the committee received twenty-eight proposals, a subcommittee met to review and evaluate the proposals. The subcommittee distributed five \$1000 fellowships to support student research. After the process was completed, the committee decided that this new initiative should be continued next year and examined ways to improve the process.

We also discussed other alternative ways to support graduate student research. In February, Bradley Levinson approached the committee about a few innovative ways to rethink graduate student support. One idea concerned the difficulty students who live at a distance have in securing an assistantship. As such, Bradley proposed the "limited service fellowship" for incoming students. Under this plan, students would be appointed as quarter-time research or graduate assistants paid a stipend of \$8,000 for the year, given 18 hours of tuition remission, and health insurance. Although Bradley's helpful ideas are still being discussed, the committee has decided to approach department chairs with some of his suggestions.

The committee continued the discussion on ways to improve underrepresented graduate student funding. In so doing, the committee stressed the need for Ghangis Carter, Director of Recruitment and Retention, to receive a recruitment budget. Next year, the committee plans to continue to seek outlets for additional support.

Privately Funded Fellowships

Last year the committee met with Sarah Baumgart, Director of External Relations in the School of Education, to explore ways to increase funding and to increase the effectiveness of using the funds already available. In an effort to support departments in using the privately

funded fellowships most effectively, the committee, Sarah Baumgart, and the Office of Graduate Studies under Associate Dean Howard-Hamilton created guidelines for awarding privately funded graduate fellowships. This year the guidelines were implemented to ensure that fellowships were awarded in a timely manner. Specifically, the new guidelines were designed to help departments make awards by March 1st and to make awards of at least \$1,000 for fellowships with sufficient funds. The committee continued to examine ways to reorganize the School of Education's timelines for the distribution of funding (fellowships and assistantships) in order to better facilitate the recruitment and financial support of top applicants to the School's graduate programs. Suzanne Eckes and Associate Dean Howard-Hamilton continued to consult with Sarah Baumgart about these timelines and worked with Department Chairs to distribute funds by the deadline.

Recruitment

In order to attract more underrepresented students to the School of Education, the committee began discussions with the Teach For America (TFA) program. The TFA program attracts a large percentage of people of color who have strong academic backgrounds. Harvard University, Yale University, SPEA, and the University of Michigan, among other universities, have already created such partnerships with TFA to recruit its alums. Ghangis Carter has compiled information from the IU faculty and the IU graduate students who are alums of the TFA program. He also spoke with Joe DuPont from TFA to learn about the different partnerships TFA has created with other institutions. Based on these conversations, the committee learned that other institutions have implemented application waivers, fellowships, two-year deferrals, and credit hour reduction to attract alums to their graduate programs. These recruitment tools will be presented the Policy Council in the fall.