Telling Our Story

by Dr. Susan Carvalho

UK’s identity as a land-grant university isn’t just our story of origin; it continues to lie at the heart of our distinctive mission statewide and nationally. From that identity grows our distinctive interdisciplinarity, and also the strengths of our research agenda. We have always told this story well in terms of the undergraduate students we educate, and we are ever more strategic about how we tell the research story to our state. Graduate education is the third leg of this stool, and that story also needs to be told effectively.

As a unifying message, we need to talk about how top-quality graduate students drive our research, attract and retain our outstanding faculty, support undergraduate instruction, and help to address the needs of our state across the sciences, humanities, arts, and social sciences. Our Graduate Student Congress has picked up on the need to tell this story locally; on February 27th they will sponsor a GSC Hill Day, “UK Graduate Student Day at the Capitol,” where they will set up a poster session to drive home the message that graduate students are discovers of new knowledge, in ways that directly benefit our state.

The Graduate School hopes to help weave together this story from across our 100+ graduate and professional programs. We can do this effectively in two ways: comprehensively and anecdotally.

Comprehensively, we need to highlight UK’s version of the national job market story. As we continue to read about the perils of the graduate student market, many of our faculty and students say “But that isn’t our experience.” The Graduate School plans to ask you for comprehensive data, and will help you to gather that data, so that we can tell our own story well, rather than let those of the national media hold sway.

Anecdotal stories also carry great power, and will put faces on that comprehensive data. While we want to tell a great variety of stories, we will particularly focus on two types: a) stories of Kentuckians whose graduate degrees carried them on to national and global successes; and b) stories of graduate and professional degree-holders who have become opinion leaders and change-makers across the Commonwealth.

We hope to set up effective partnerships with your college Communications staff and with you, to gather, write, and disseminate these stories. We have enlisted two student interns, who will use a specific protocol to chase and craft stories that might have escaped our reach, and to harness what you have already done, to this purpose. This will be a wonderful way to recognize the past and present of UK graduate education, to highlight our “stars” for prospective students, and to pave a secure road toward our future. We look forward to the stories you will bring, and to collaborating to tell our collective story.

Counseling Center Services for Graduate Students

by Dr. Federico “Felito” Aldarondo

Transitioning to graduate school can be a difficult and stressful time. Graduate students have unique needs and often feel that many of the services at the university are geared toward undergraduates. The majority of graduate students come from elsewhere and don’t have a previously established support system here at UK. For those who are from UK, many of their peers have moved on after graduation. A good number of the get-to-know-you activities in the beginning of the fall are focused on undergraduates, specifically the first-year college students. Although there are activities promoted for graduate students to connect socially, these are communicated differently depending on the department. Some graduate programs have large cohorts with considerable opportunities for social interaction with fellow peers. Other departments only have a few
graduate students and the individual may be the only or one of a few students working in a small lab. It can be very isolating.

There are many stressors outside of the rigors of coursework, exams and research that impact graduate students and their performance as well as their life satisfaction during this period. Graduate students often have longer-term relationships, which can be negatively affected by the stress and demands of graduate study as well as the accompanying limits regarding financial resources. It seems especially hard for some who have left professional jobs with a good salary only to find themselves under evaluation (again!) and financially strained. Plus, many people who have not been through graduate school really don’t understand the nature of graduate study. Students share stories about family members who question how they spend their time and the significance of what they are studying, asking unhelpful questions about how many classes one is taking (and are puzzled when it is only 3 or 4) and when “that paper” will finally be completed (referring to the thesis or dissertation). Departments vary widely on how well they communicate expectations and instructions with regard to programs of study, curricula, and processes such as qualifying and comprehensive exams; thesis and dissertation proposals; scheduling defenses; applying for graduation; and creating and changing committees. One recommendation is for each department to have a graduate student handbook that clearly spells out many of these processes, timelines and expectations. Graduate students become keenly aware of political issues within departments and can be negatively impacted by them, especially when they influence committee selection and funding. Most faculty are hired because of their research record and potential, not because of their social skills or teaching ability. Advisors are often wonderful grant writers and article publishers but not necessarily great at conversation or giving balanced, helpful feedback. Graduate students frequently struggle with strained or lacking communication with their individual advisors. Some of the top struggles for graduate students are issues within themselves, which can be magnified by the stressors listed above. These more internal problems include procrastination, low motivation, doubts of competence, lack of organizational skills, fear of negative evaluation, and uncertainty about career path. If graduate students have struggled prior to graduate school with psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, past traumas, eating disorders or alcohol/other substance abuse, it is not surprising that the demands and stresses of graduate school can spark a re-emergence of the past problems.

The UK Counseling Center is one resource on campus that has services specifically tailored for graduate and professional students and several other services that can also be quite helpful. Our current statistics show that graduate student clients are working on the dissertation or thesis. People seek the groups out during stressful times such as qualifying exams, comprehensive exams, and dissertation or thesis proposals or defenses. The group is useful in terms of hearing from others how they have surpassed similar obstacles and struggles, simply for support, to learn about various processes in graduate school, and for accountability. Regarding the latter, individuals will sometimes set goals with the group to bring in a certain amount of typed pages, a section or a chapter to show the group at the next meeting.
Many graduate students have a good sense of what they are good at and interested in but when they begin graduate school it can become clearer for some that being a faculty member or studying in their chosen field is not what they expected. Career exploration is part of what the UKCC offers. While individual therapy is often on the minds of graduate students seeking services from the UKCC, learning about the array of group options often broadens their idea of how the UKCC may be helpful to them. The group setting fosters a sense of universality. Knowing that others have similar fears, struggles and problems even though they are in different fields or departments can be very healing.

Keep in mind the Graduate Student Support Groups and the other services at the UKCC for graduate students who are struggling and seek your assistance. The services can help departments with retention and completion rates, and can boost personal satisfaction and life balance for the students. You can also think of the UKCC for outreach. We are happy to present to faculty, staff and/or graduate students on a variety of topics, including suicide prevention, identifying students in need and referring to the UKCC, and stress management.

Let us know how we can be helpful to you. We are all interested in seeing our graduate students achieve and become healthy, successful people both here during their studies and once they leave UK.
On Friday, December 19, 2014, the University of Kentucky held its December 2014 Commencement ceremonies at Memorial Coliseum. August 2014 and December 2014 Master’s, Doctoral, and Professional graduates were recognized at the ceremony which began at 1:30pm.

Approximately 125 graduate and professional students registered and participated in the commencement ceremony. Forty-nine graduates (doctoral and professional) were hooded by UK faculty while 76 masters graduates were also acknowledged during the ceremony. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Graduate School held a reception for all graduates, families and friends at the Singletary Center Lobby from 3-5pm.

Upcoming:

The May (Spring) 2015 Commencement Ceremony will be held at Rupp Arena on Saturday, May 9, 2015.

The Graduate and Professional Ceremony will conducted at 9am followed by undergraduate ceremonies throughout the day.

For more information, please visit the University of Kentucky commencement website at: http://www.uky.edu/Commencement/

Office of Admissions, Recruitment, and Diversity

The tempo of our work picks up during the Spring semester with many of our graduate programs starting the admission selection during the early part of the year. At the same time, we continue to work on recruitment and diversity initiatives throughout the entire academic year.

Admissions

Most academic programs are knee-deep in the admissions process and all the actions associated with reviewing and evaluating the applicant pool. Our admissions officers have recently been engaged with a team of consultants from Hobsons, refining their skills with A/Y and learning the intricacies of another Hobsons system, APP REVIEW. A pilot team of directors of graduate studies and program associates have partnered with their designated officer for joint training in the application review system. Once the admissions officers are fully familiar with the APP REVIEW system, they will assist in setting up the system for any program interested in utilizing the review system. At the same time, the Admissions Office team is working to make optimal use of the CONNECT system to improve communications with our prospects, applicants, and admitted students. Enrollment Management Reporting is a recently developed initiative launched to provide up-to-date admissions data for the colleges. The Graduate School has set up a weekly reporting program to record the graduate applications, pending files, and admission and rejection actions. The reports will be made available from the Provost’s Office to the deans of each college, who will in turn determine the best means of informing the chairs and the directors of graduate studies of their respective academic units. This information will provide documentation of the patterns of admissions decisions and notifications to the students and will be quite helpful in planning the administration of support needed to conduct our work in a timely and efficient manner. The admissions officers will review the report each week prior to its submission to the Provost’s Office and will be better able to identify the focus of their work on a weekly basis. The goal of the Graduate Admissions team is to release the official decisions to the students as soon as possible after a decision has been made by the academic programs. Early decisions and notifications will enhance our prospective students’ decision to accept our offer of admission. Notifications of rejections are also important to make in a timely manner to our applicants who are also assessing their future academic options.

Recruitment

Recruitment funds have been allocated to all academic programs seeking funds to supplement the colleges’ recruitment efforts. We have also supported two academic programs that have written grants for diversity recruitment initiatives. Meanwhile, the Graduate School...
staff members continue to host campus visits for student groups from regional schools, engage with UK undergraduate students and advisors, and participate in select national recruitment events. Some academic programs include a visit to the Gillis Building for a “meet and greet” when bringing prospective students to campus for interviews and visits.

Our admissions team is always poised to welcome students, help with questions about campus resources, and extend a sincere Kentucky reception. At the same time, we are exploring new strategies and examining best practices for domestic and international recruitment. Our plans include developing a recruitment toolkit for identifying how an effective partnership between the academic programs and our unit can help reverse the trend of declining applications and enrollment of African American and underrepresented minority students. As we work to develop a comprehensive plan, we have made two immediate measures to change this troubling trend:

National Name Exchange: The Graduate School is currently preparing an application for membership in the NNE, a consortium of nationally known universities which annually collects and exchange the names of talented underrepresented ethnic minority students in their sophomore, junior, and senior year of their undergraduate studies. This engagement will help to identify a pool of students to be recruited by our graduate programs. Likewise, the exchange will expand opportunities for recruitment of our own undergraduate students.

On-campus minority recruitment workshop: The Graduate School is sponsoring a graduate recruitment workshop conducted by a nationally recognized expert on the methods of creating effective diversity strategies. Dr. Sonel Strobshire, President of the Academic Network, will present a workshop on diversity recruitment strategies for graduate school staff, directors of graduate studies and college diversity officers. Mark your calendars for February 6. Expect to receive an invitation and details from the Graduate School Dean’s Office. This is the start of an important conversation for all of us.

Diversity

One of the top priorities of the Graduate School is to identify how effective partnerships between the academic programs and our unit can help reverse the trend of declining applications and enrollment of African American and underrepresented minority students. As we work to develop a comprehensive plan, we have made two immediate measures to change this troubling trend:

On-campus minority recruitment workshop: The Graduate School is sponsoring a graduate recruitment workshop conducted by a nationally recognized expert on the methods of creating effective diversity strategies. Dr. Sonel Strobshire, President of the Academic Network, will present a workshop on diversity recruitment strategies for graduate school staff, directors of graduate studies and college diversity officers. Mark your calendars for February 6. Expect to receive an invitation and details from the Graduate School Dean’s Office. This is the start of an important conversation for all of us.

Note to Post-doctoral Fellow and Scholars

A group of post-docs are forming a Society of Postdoctoral Scholars here at UK. Membership is open to all UK post-doctoral students in all fields of specialization.

Website: http://sops.as.uky.edu
Email: uk.sops@gmail.com
Spring Events for Your Graduate Students
by Dr. Morris Grubbs

In addition to the ongoing courses and workshops in Preparing Future Faculty and Preparing Future Professionals, the Graduate School is working closely with the Graduate Student Congress on several initiatives. Among the Congress’s spring events are a workshop on communicating science to the public and the media, Hill Day at the Kentucky State Capitol featuring UK graduate student research, Graduate Student Appreciation Week, and a panel discussion on preparing for faculty positions. To receive details and updates on all of the professional development events, please sign up for the Graduate Student Listserv. The link to join is on the Graduate School’s homepage.

The UK Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) is offering the following workshops throughout the remainder of the spring semester. These are open to the university community but attendees are asked to pre-register.

February
• How Do I Handle This? Challenging Situations In and Out of the Classroom
• Active Learning with Google Apps
• Introduction to Digital Pedagogy
• Beyond PowerPoint: Prezi and other Tools
• Introduction to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)
• Aligning Outcomes, Assessments and Activities
• Student Roundtable: Multiple Perspectives Panel
• Teaching to the Four Humors

March
• Formative Assessment & Collaborative Learning
• Flipping the Classroom: Key Design Considerations
• Documenting Your Teaching Activities: Assembling a Teaching Portfolio
• CELT Presents Richard E. Mayer on the Intersection of Cognition, Instruction, and Technology
• Mobile App Playground: mLearning & Cellphones in the Classroom
• Teaching Millennials: Advice from a Boomer

April
• Intermediate Game-Based Learning
• 7 Principles of Multimedia Learning
• The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Course and Teacher Evaluations
• Rethinking Presentation Slides Using Assertion-Evidence Structure
• Self-Regulated Learners

GSAS for Assistantships
by Erin Shoot

Thank you for working with us to move forward with the new GSAS web-based form. We understand that there is still some functionality that needs to be incorporated and we are working with EAG to achieve this; thanks for your patience and suggestions.

It was great to meet those of you who came out to in-person trainings and we look forward to meeting more of you at upcoming trainings to be held in February.

Please note that downloadable training materials are available at the GSAS website: (http://www.research.uky.edu/gs/FacultyandStaff/for_GSAS.html)

Feel free to contact us at gsas@uky.edu with any questions or suggestions about the GSAS contract.
Graduate Certificate Listing

The University of Kentucky is currently offering Graduate Certificates in the following areas:

- Anatomical Sciences
- Applied Statistics
- Assistive and Rehabilitation Technology
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Bioactive Interfaces and Devices
- Clinical and Translational Science
- Clinical Research Skills
- Cognitive Science
- College Teaching and Learning
- Computational Fluid Dynamics
- Developmental Disabilities
- Distance Education for EDC
- Distance Education for EDS
- Gender and Women’s Studies
- Gerontology
- Global Health
- Health Coaching
- Health Communication
- Human-Technology Interaction
- Informatics
- Instructional Communication
- International Education
- Latin Studies
- Lean Systems
- Maternal and Child Health
- Middle and Secondary School Reading
- Music Theory Pedagogy
- Orff Schulwerk
- Physiology Teaching
- Public Health Management
- Rehabilitation Counseling
- Reproductive Laboratory Science
- Risk Sciences
- School Social Work
- School Technology Leadership
- Social Theory
- Stream & Watershed Science
- Teaching English as a Second Language
- For more information about the certificates and contact information for the Directors, please visit the Graduate School website at: (www.research.uky.edu/gs/CurrentStudents/grad_cert.html)

Graduate Program Proposal Form and Graduate Certificate Proposal Form

The Graduate School, with the approval of the Graduate Council, finalized two new forms which will assist you as you develop and create new programs and new graduate certificates in your colleges. The forms are currently located on UK’s Institutional Effectiveness website and, once the final approval is provided, the forms will appear on the University Senate’s website as well as the Graduate School website.

Currently, the forms can be found at: (http://www.uky.edu/ie/content/graduate-program-approval-process)
DGS-Nominated Competitive Fellowships 2015-16

Multi-Year Fellowship
Nomination Deadline: Tuesday, February 3, 2015
Review committee will meet the week of February 9, 2015
Decisions will be released by February 19, 2015

Graduate Fellowship for Selected Areas
Nomination Deadline: Tuesday, February 10, 2015
Review committee will meet the week of February 16, 2015
Decisions will be released by February 26, 2015

Cralle Foundation/Joan Cralle Day Fellowship
Nomination Deadline: Tuesday, February 10, 2015
Review committee will meet the week of February 16, 2015
Decisions will be released by February 26, 2015

Daniel R. Reedy Quality Achievement Fellowship Award
Nomination Deadline: Tuesday, February 24, 2015
Review committee will meet the week of March 2, 2015
Decisions will be released by March 12, 2015

Northern Ky/Greater Cincinnati UK Alumni Club Fellowship
Nomination Deadline: Tuesday, March 3, 2015
Review committee will meet the week of March 9, 2015
Decisions will be released by March 19, 2015

McNair Fellowship
Nomination Deadline: Tuesday, April 14, 2015
Review committee will meet the week of April 20, 2015
Decisions will be released by April 30, 2015

Self-Nominating Competitive Fellowships

Matthews/Singletary/Wethington Fellowship
Nomination Deadline: Tuesday, February 3, 2015
Review committee meets the week of February 9, 2015
Decisions will be released by February 19, 2015

Did You Know?

Programs are required to notify continuing students on assistantships by March 1 each year if they are to be employed again (or not) for the next school year. See A.R. 5:2 for more information.