Growth of Graduate Programs
Part II - Recommendations

The adoption of the teacher-scholar model signals an important cultural shift for the Health Professions Division at Nova Southeastern University. The challenge facing the Health Professions Division is how to create a scholarly ecosystem in which varied forms of excellence can thrive. One of the first steps in this evolution is the establishment and growth of academic graduate education.

Graduate education is a critical driver for academic research, a crucial initial stage in the development of technologies and processes that, once commercialized, can help spur economic development, create the industries and jobs of the future, and improve national defense and homeland security (Cohen, 2005). But outstanding research requires outstanding graduate students. That’s because graduate students form the university’s and the nation’s research workforce, helping faculty in the lab turn their ideas into useful discoveries and inventions while pursuing their own studies. As any research faculty member will tell you, one excellent student in the lab is worth far more than two mediocre ones (Cohen, 2005).

Student and faculty-conducted research is expensive and does require more lab facilities, as well as grants to fund projects. Training future faculty and generating significant academic research are, however, impossible without graduate programs that attract the best students in the nation and the world. How do universities draw such students?

Simply put, we must pay them, using graduate assistantships that enable students to work as apprentice teachers and researchers in areas related to their programs of study. The better funded these positions are in terms of stipends, tuition fellowships, and health insurance, the more likely they are to attract the type of students who can make the difference between success and failure in the lab. Moreover, the speed with which we can produce future faculty is accelerated when students are paid as graduate assistants. Decreasing the time to degree helps make graduate study an affordable and desirable option for our brightest students (Association of American Universities, 1998).

In closing, while graduate education makes important contributions to the education and research missions of universities, its overriding purpose must be towards the adoption of the teacher-scholar model. Apprenticeship teaching and research activities that, under faculty mentorship, provide progressively increasing levels of responsibility are effective ways to teach graduate students and conduct independent research.

REFERENCES


in multi-cultural populations like Southern Florida. Mixed research methods (quantitative/qualitative) are my modus operandi for facilitating community-based participatory research. One of my main focuses is on developing educational interventions aimed at improving health communication and enhancing chronic disease health literacy (knowledge of disease and disease causation, awareness of evidence-based prevention and treatment, and experience and facility with negotiating healthcare delivery systems). This is particularly germane to vulnerable populations who tend to have limited literacy skills.

What is your educational background and how long have you been conducting research?

I graduated high school in Brooklyn, received a BS in Biology from the University at Albany, NY and an MD from Harvard Medical School. I then trained in family medicine at the State University of New York’s Brooklyn Health Sciences Center and later in neurology at New York University before taking a full time research faculty position at the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles. Charles Drew was a sister school to UCLA and all of my research has been in collaboration with UCLA faculty. As a faculty member I completed a graduate fellowship at the John Hopkins School of Public Health and Hygiene and a fellowship with the Health Services Research Institute of the Association of American Medical Colleges, Washington, DC.

Why did you choose to conduct research at NSU?

From a professional perspective I was drawn by the challenge of building a research infrastructure at the College of Pharmacy and the HPD. Here I would have a rare opportunity to test the efficacy of outcomes from multi-cultural community-focused health services research conducted in Southern California in another multi-cultural population that is Southern Florida. To my knowledge there is no established research collaborative between institutions in Southern California and Southern Florida that address health disparities. With intramural support from the NSU, HPD we are in a good position to make this happen. In this regard I was motivated by Dean Malave’s vision to develop a research infrastructure that would conduct nationally and internationally recognized research and that would disseminate results at the community level as well as within the health professions. To accomplish this he has recruited four new faculty and a director of professional operations this year. Last but not least I’m here because I have a son and daughter in college in Florida and a daughter who graduated from the U. Miami who with the help of a wonderful son-in-law has made me a grandfather three times! This plus the above mentioned reasons made the decision to come to NSU a no-brainer!