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Annual Report

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Annual Report, 2019-2020

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Annual Report

Graduate School and International Education

Academic Year 2019-20

Executive Summary

During fall 2019, we were busy with our normal activities, but the spring 2020 semester was dominated by our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In February, we recalled all of our study abroad students and faculty, and in March, the University moved to an online mode of instruction and remote delivery of services. The All-University Commencement ceremony normally held in May was canceled and our graduation processing team learned how to handle all documents in digital format. Testing Services closed its in-person center and offered many tests online. International Students and Scholars offered their programs and services virtually, starting in April. Our student and program support offices learned how to offer their services through a digital format. Our deans and several of our unit leaders participated in a number of COVID-related planning committees and our communication director was kept extraordinarily busy.

Significant Achievements and Changes

Notable achievements and changes

- Kim Needy was the president of the *Conference of Southern Graduate Schools* and presided over the conference held in Birmingham, Alabama in March, 2020. Unfortunately, several members of our staff could not attend the conference because they were involved in returning study-abroad students to the U.S. as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Sarah Malloy became director of the Office of Study Abroad and International Exchange on July 1, 2019.
- Davide Vitali, Professor of Architecture and founding director of the UA Rome Program, retired September 14. Francesco Bedeschi was hired as Director of the UA Rome Center, effective December 1, 2019, after being named interim director September 15.
- In October, Amy Unruh was hired as director of the Office of Registration, Graduation and Commencement, and as the GSIE director of Communications.
- Lynn Mosesso, long-time director of the Office of Graduate and International Recruitment and Admissions retired in March, 2020. She was replaced by Patty Gamboa.
- We hired Kerry Cole as Associate Director of Graduate Fellowships and Program Support, a new position.
- Ruby Bowles was hired as Student Applications Specialist in our Office of Graduate and International Admissions; Rabia Shattuck was promoted to Admissions Operations Manager.
- The Director of Environmental Dynamics, Peter Ungar, was inducted as a fellow of the Arkansas Academy of Computing and was awarded the Hoyt Purvis Faculty Award for his contributions to international education.
- The two other Hoyt Purvis award winners for 2019 were Cecilia Grossberger, UA staff recipient, and Lynn Mosesso, GSIE staff recipient.
- At the Employee Appreciation Banquet held in October 2019, the following GSIE staff members were recognized: JoAnn Kvamme and LeAnn Suggs for Employee of the Quarter and Employee of the Year. Kayla McGrew received a scholarship and Cameron Caja was a recent graduate. Leigh Marshall received a 10-year service award, Julie Burden received a 20-year service award; Curt Rom received a 30-year service award; and Patricia Koski received a 35-year service award.

- We hosted the 11th annual Collis R. Geren awards ceremony virtually this year. Valerie Hunt, Karl Anderson, and Shelly Gahagans, received awards for faculty, GSIE staff, and University staff, respectively. Dr. Geren was also in “virtual” attendance.
- We merged the offices of Sponsored Student Programs, PAPSS, and Custom and Short-Term Programs into the Office of Sponsored Students and Special Programs, with Gloria Flores Passmore as Director.
- Brinck Kerr, Valerie Hunt and two students in the Public Policy program presented to the GSIE Capital Campaign Committee in October 2019.
- Lynn Mosesso, DeDe Long and Leyah Bergman-Lanier visited the Nguyen Tat Thanh University in Vietnam for an MOU signing ceremony in February 2020.
- In November, 2019, the Fulbright Finnish program presented a special gift to the University of Arkansas in recognition of the 70th anniversary of the foundation.
- Dr. Adnan Alrubaye, Associate Director of the interdisciplinary Cell and Molecular Biology program was selected as a fellow in the U of A Teaching Academy and was also selected as the recipient of the John and Lois Imhoff Award for Teaching and Student Mentorship.
- As the Campaign Arkansas moved into its final year, GSIE enjoyed another exceptional year of fundraising in FY20 with \$875,392 in new multi-year gift and grant commitments and \$895,934 in pledge payments and gifts. Julie Olsen deserves a special note of thanks for her tireless efforts on behalf of faculty, students and staff at the U of A.
- Katie Thompson, an Arkansan of generous spirit, gave a portion of her estate to the office of International Students and Scholars. This gift touched the lives of many international students because of the COVID-19 pandemic. A portion of her estate funded the International Student Catastrophic Fund which, along with gifts from alumni and friends of the university, supported dozens of students through the summer of 2020 to help with rent or utilities.
- NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine, accompanied by Congressman Steve Womack and University President, Don Bobbitt, visited the Space Institute labs in November 2019.
- The Office of Testing Services tested over 15,000 students and prospective students in 2019-20.
- Jeannie Whayne, Professor of History, was selected as the University of Arkansas GSIE Outstanding Mentor.
- Our Ph.D. program in Microelectronic-Photonics was reconfigured into a degree in Materials Science Engineering; the master’s degree was split into two – Materials Science and Materials Engineering.
- Our Ph.D. program in Environmental Dynamics added a Master of Science degree.
- The Program in Public Policy added a Social Justice concentration.
- The Arkansas Academy of Microelectronics-Photonics was created in Fall 2019 with the induction of ten charter members – eight alumni plus the program founder and founding director.
- Laura Moix organized and directed our second annual Razorback Institute for Success and Engagement in August 2019. Three students from the first cohort served as peer mentors in the second year.
- The Graduate Recruitment Assistance Fund continued to be an important resource for departments and programs with over \$30,000 being disbursed for recruitment-related travel by 25 units; 16 faculty/staff took advantage of our Best Practices in Graduate Education training sessions.
- We hosted the doctoral fellows’ reception in February 2020, before the University was closed because of the pandemic.
- Several staff members presented at a variety of conferences.

- The *Attracting Intelligent Minds* (AIM) conference was held in September 2019. AIM is a diversity recruitment initiative that is sponsored by the Black Graduate Students' Association (BGSA) and the Graduate School and International Education (GSIE), with support from select faculty, staff and administrators. Sixteen outstanding students from the following HBCUs were selected to participate: Jackson State University, Southern University A&M, Claflin University, Florida A&M University, and Morehouse
- The Office of Sponsored Students Programs held the annual Welcome Reception with the Chancellor in September for new and continuing SSP students along with their faculty advisors and international educators; and also hosted the SSP Recognition Program for graduates and visiting students in fall 2019 and (virtually) in spring 2020.
- Andrew Van Lew received the 2019 NAFSA Region III Rising Star award for leadership.
- Because of the efforts of Julie Olsen and Vicky Hartwell, one student received a PEO Scholar Award and one student received the International Peace Scholarship for the 2020-21 academic year.
- Amy Unruh, Director of GSIE Communications, completed or coordinated more than 30 media interviews providing important coverage about Study Abroad cancellations, the Rome Center closure, and new programming after the university travel policies changed. Interviews included numerous local and regional television stations, the Arkansas Alumni Magazine, the Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette, USA Today, the Washington Post, U.S. News & World Report magazine, and the national Associated Press office.

Graduate School

- Fall 2019 graduate enrollment was 4,170, a 3.6% increase from the year before. As a percentage of the total University enrollment, graduate student enrollment increased from 14.5% in Fall 2018 to 15.1% in Fall 2019.
- Graduate enrollment of under-represented minorities was 20.9% of total domestic graduate enrollment in Fall 2019 compared to 19.8% in Fall 2018; enrollment of under-represented minorities in doctoral programs decreased from 174 (17.4% of doctoral students) in Fall 2018 to 164 (17.1% of doctoral students) in Fall 2019.
- In the most recent graduation year (2018-19), we awarded master's degrees to 1,102 students (12 fewer than the year before) and doctoral degrees to 209 students (five more than in the previous graduation year). Graduate School staff completed more than 1,571 thesis/dissertation pre-checks and processed 414 submissions.
- Laura Moix continued to offer several graduate student support initiatives including: "Let's Talk" with Counseling and Psychological Services; Career Advising; TIPS for TA's; Research Days; Destress for Success Week; Graduate Student Appreciation Week; "Less Stress, More Stretch"; Free Coffee Fridays; a mini food pantry and lending library in the Graduate Student Lounge; and a weekly email to graduate students on "5 Things You Need to Know." Many of these options became virtual during spring 2020.
- In Fall 2019, there were 110 Distinguished Doctoral Fellows, 210 Doctoral Academy Fellows, 49 Benjamin Franklin Lever Tuition Fellows, 55 Master of Fine Arts Graduate Fellows and eight Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Doctoral Scholars.

International Education

- The academic year 2019-20 will be known for its disruption of our international education landscape. Study Abroad brought its students home during the spring 2020 term and cancelled May and summer session programs; International Students and Scholars pivoted to offering all programs and services through remote delivery except for document pickup and drop off; many international students were stranded either in their home country or in the U.S. with no money for basic living expenses and no chance of finding a job; and many of

our staff spent considerable time coping with the pandemic. Many U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide were closed limiting the ability of international students to acquire F1 or J1 visas to come to the University.

- In Fall 2019, international students comprised 5.1% of the University's on-schedule enrollment; international graduate students accounted for 17.9% of the total on-schedule graduate population. The enrollment of international graduate students increased from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019 by 28 students, from 717 in Fall 2018 to 745 in Fall 2019. The population of international undergraduate students decreased by 52 students between Fall 2018 and Fall 2019, 662 in Fall 2019 and 714 in Fall 2018, continuing a downward trend.
- Adnan Alrubaye, the Associate Director of the Cell and Molecular Biology program, partnered with Spring International Language Center to obtain a grant establishing an English language training center in Southern Iraq.
- The cultural immersion this year featured a Nigerian Youth Service Corp and was luckily presented before the University was no longer able to allow in-person activities.
- The study abroad participation of graduating seniors in FY19 was 17.9%, an increase over FY18's 16.7%.
- A total of 83 students/scholars/spouses actively participated in the International Culture Team (ICT) presenting their culture in at least two events. An additional 161 students/scholars/spouses presented at least in one event totaling 244 presenters for the year. These students represented 56 different countries.
- 108 international students and scholars were matched to 78 Friendship Families and individuals from the NW Arkansas region in the Friendship Family Program.
- We hosted a total of 99 sponsored students from Panama in the fall semester 2019; this was down from 112 in fall 2018. There were a total of 153 sponsored students from all organizations in fall 2019, down from 181 in Fall 201; and a total of 60 Fulbright Scholars on campus in 2019-20.

Interdisciplinary Studies

- Fall 2019 enrollment in interdisciplinary graduate programs was 267, a decrease of two students compared to Fall 2018.
- In the 2018-19 graduation year, the Graduate School awarded 20 interdisciplinary master's degrees and 24 interdisciplinary doctoral degrees; accounting for 1.8% of the University's master's degrees and 11.5% of the University's doctoral degrees.
- The Ph.D. program in Cell and Molecular Biology was the second largest doctoral program on campus in Fall 2019 enrollments, with 80 students.
- Dr. Daniel Kenefick, a faculty member in Physics and Space and Planetary Sciences saw his book selected as one of the Top Ten Books of the Year by *Nature* magazine.
- The director and associate director of Cell and Molecular Biology, Doug Rhoads and Adnan Alrubaye, visited embassy staff in Washington DC, Oman, Kuwait and Jordan.
- Environmental Dynamics and the Resiliency Center hosted the National Council for Science and Environment Summer meeting in Fayetteville in 2019
- Environmental Dynamics co-organized, for the second time, the National Association of Black Geoscientists annual meeting on our campus in September 2019; this event brought over 100 students and professionals to Northwest Arkansas.
- ENDY also became a partner in the American Geophysical Union – Bridge Program (one of only 14 universities in the U.S.) which has the goal of advancing the representation of underserved populations in earth sciences.
- A student in Environmental Dynamics received a Sturgis fellowship for 2019-20 and conducted her research in Italy during the summer and fall of 2019.

- A faculty member associated with Environmental Dynamics was awarded the 2019 OMNI Keeling/Hansen Climate Sciences Award.
- During the 2019-20 year, Environmental Dynamics students were awarded \$156,581 in funding from sources external to the University.
- Students in Environmental Dynamics published five papers in peer-reviewed journals and gave 18 oral presentations and six poster presentations.
- Space and Planetary Sciences student, Ellen Czaplinski, was awarded the Amelia Earhart Fellowship, in addition to a NASA Earth and Space Sciences Fellowship which she was previously awarded. A fellow student, Caitlin Ahrens was awarded the 2019 West Virginia University Rising Star Alumni Award. To round out the honors for students in Space and Planetary Sciences, alumnus Edgard Rivera-Valentin was named a NASA Early Career Fellow at the Lunar and Planetary Institute.
- Space and Planetary Sciences affiliated faculty submitted 15 research proposals; faculty and students had 11 journal articles published (one published in *Nature Astronomy*) and had twelve conference papers accepted for presentation.
- Cell and Molecular Biology students and faculty generated nearly \$14.6 million in grant support; prepared 38 peer-reviewed publications, and gave 91 invited lectures/presentations/seminars and received one patent.
- The Public Policy program remained the most diverse doctoral program on campus in Fall 2019 enrollments, with 33.6% racial/ethnic diversity (out of total enrollment) or 34.1% out of domestic enrollment. All other degree programs above 30% racial/ethnic diversity were master's programs.
- The Associate Director of Public Policy, Valerie Hunt, was awarded tenure beginning in FY 2021.
- In 2019-20, students in Public Policy published or had accepted for publication 23 peer-reviewed journals and one book, and presented 38 conference papers.
- Dr. Vincent Chevrier was appointed as a Research Associate Professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry.
- Microelectronics-photonics students authored/co-authored 28 papers and 34 presentations and had two provisional patents filed in the 2019-20 academic year. About \$10.5 million in grants supported student research in this program.
- A Ph.D. student in Microelectronics-Photonics received the 2019 Optics and Photonics Education Scholarship by SPIE, the international society for optics and photonics; another MEPH Ph.D. student won 2nd place for his poster at the Arkansas Biosciences Institute Fall Research Symposium; and a third was named the Science Mathematics and Research for Transformation Scholar by the U.S. Department of Defense.
- 72 faculty from 20 departments participated in the Statistics and Analytics program.
- Students affiliated with the Statistics and Analytics program presented six conference papers and published 15 peer-reviewed journal articles.
- The STAN Quantitative Social Sciences concentration presented two well-attended and well-received workshops: "Applied Machine Learning for the Social Sciences" (with Public Policy Research Group) and "Big Data, Social Science Research, and R" (with Public Policy Research Group).
- A.J. Myers, a student in Statistics and Analytics, received the Outstanding Ph.D. Student Award 2020 in Educational Statistics and Research Methods from the College of Education and Health Professions.