



Strengthening and Advancing Graduate Education at Emory

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Thank you for that generous introduction, Kathryn, and good afternoon to all of you.

I am very pleased to be here with you today to talk about my passion, graduate education at Emory, and to acknowledge the important work that you do to advance science through your support of our graduate scholars.

It is also my great pleasure, my delight, to be with you here in person to thank you for your vision and your active generosity. Over a number of years, ARCS support has amounted to more than \$1 million for ARCS Scholars at Emory. This support is making a tremendous difference in the graduate and research experience of our students. We are mindful of your gifts and understand the importance and value of good stewardship. I thank you for your trust in the work that we are doing and your ongoing commitment to the exceptional students we attract and train at Emory.

Broadly speaking, my remarks today will touch upon three areas:

1. The importance of graduate education to research at Emory;
2. Our strategic goals and areas of priority that guide planning and program development;
3. And finally, challenges and opportunities.

Let me begin by giving you a snapshot of the Laney Graduate School. We are a graduate school of more than 1,900 students, the second highest enrollment among all of Emory's schools. We offer more than 40 degree programs, and 85 percent of our graduate population is doctoral. Nearly 1,000 scholars and researchers make up the graduate faculty, from almost every school at Emory as well as partner institutions in Atlanta and beyond. We are *truly* a school of the University.

As you all know, graduate education and research are inseparable partners and together are -- *sine qua non*—indispensable and essential for pre-eminence in research and distinction. In the most general sense, our overarching goal is to support the mission of the University by providing broadly based and excellent graduate education that supports the research and scholarship ambitions of both our partner schools and units at Emory, and of the university as a whole. Collaboratively, we work to fulfill Emory's vision to be a transformative university, contributing to innovation, development and social well-being, regionally, nationally and globally.

The Laney Graduate School contributes to Emory's transformative mission by attracting and supporting excellent students who will be trained and mentored by a university-wide comprehensive graduate faculty of distinction. Our strategic goals and priorities align perfectly with Emory leadership's ambition to enhance the University's place among our peers as a globally engaged research university. Our students positively contribute to faculty research productivity, adding to the research profile and standing of the University. Our programs prepare students to address the complex problems of our time. We shape our graduates to provide vitally needed leadership for future generations of researchers and other professionals in the academy, private sector and government.

As universities need to think strategically to guide their decision-making, anticipate challenges, and maximize opportunities (*Provost's Office website, 1-14-15*), so too, does the Laney Graduate School endeavor to build these skills and dispositions in our graduate students. To accomplish this "at home," the Laney Graduate School has strengthened partnerships with units and schools across Emory. We seek to align our resources and programming in fiscally responsible ways that enhance quality and achieve sustainable growth in areas of priority. We are guided by four substantive strategic areas for planning and programmatic development that I will briefly discuss.

First, Academic Identity.

One of Emory's signature strengths is our strong tradition of authentic interdisciplinarity, which our partners – institutionally and philanthropically - continue to recognize and reward. Recent programming includes these examples:

- The Burroughs-Wellcome Foundation's Molecules to Mankind Program, which is not a doctoral program, but a pathway designed to educate graduate students in both laboratory and population sciences;
- There is the MacArthur Foundation's Master's in Development Practice program, which combines experiential learning and field-based practica with rigorous academic training to meet the challenge of sustainable development;
- And the Council of Graduate Schools support that helped launch our Program in Scholarly Integrity, now called the Jones Program in Ethics (named for Robert T. Jones, Atlanta's preeminent global citizen), which provides students with a foundational, cross-disciplinary foundation to the questions of ethics for their research, training and professional commitments throughout their careers.

We also continue to define with faculty how graduate programs are constructed and who constitutes LGS faculty. Positive momentum continues to maximize how faculty join together across departmental lines to constitute a *graduate program faculty*. We have wonderful examples of this in our Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, public health sciences, and in the Graduate Division of Religion and our Islamic Civilizations Studies program.

A second area of strategic priority is Professionalization.

Our graduates face career paths that differ from those of previous generations. In 2012, I served as a university leader on the *Commission on Pathways through Graduate School and Into Careers* project, sponsored by the Council of Graduate Schools and the Educational Testing Service or ETS. Two points from the Commission's report are worth mentioning here:

1. First, most PhD degree holders enter careers outside the professoriate. Even in the humanities, often considered the most singularly focused on the academic world, 15 years ago, a survey found that 60% of graduates worked in places outside the academy, beyond the professoriate.
2. Second, PhD graduates bring highly developed and valuable skills and expertise to organizations that hire them, but employers of PhDs also report that they lack some other essential skills such as

experience working on teams, presentation skills, and the ability to convey technical and specialized knowledge to individuals who do not have technical and specialized training.

We know that our students need preparation and training for careers beyond the academy, as well as training to help them relay their knowledge to audiences that are not specialists. Leveraging existing resources with external funding, we have responded with programming and guidance for students and faculty to meet contemporary challenges and to take advantage of new professional opportunities. I will mention a couple here:

- In collaboration with Development and Alumni Relations, we are reaching out to our alumni through the *Pathways Beyond the Professoriate* program. The Pathways program brings to campus alumni who have chosen non-academic career paths to share their experiences. Students are keenly interested in events that feature alumni from job sectors such as consulting, industry, media and communications, and government.
- We are also implementing an important NIH supported project: BEST or Broadening Experience for Scientific Training. In collaboration with Georgia Tech and Emory's Office of Postdoctoral Education, BEST establishes programming alternatives for adapting pre- and postdoctoral training to meet 21st century needs. One unusual feature of the BEST program is that it includes helping faculty learn more about training their graduate students and post-doctoral fellows for a broader range of professional futures. The BEST program illustrates how LGS brings together faculty from across the university and, in this case, Georgia Tech to create innovative programming.

To understand the professional preparation and career resource needs of our students, we must better understand their professional pathways once they leave us, and we are committed to tracking that information across years and placements. Likewise, it is also important that we transition current extramurally funded professionalization programs to stable base support that establishes an Office of Career Planning and Development.

A third area of strategic priority is Diversity and Inclusion.

It is always helpful to remember why diversity is important to our work. On the most basic level, diversity makes the academic environment rich. Diversity among students and faculty increases the perspectives from which we question received wisdom, articulate new intellectual projects, and assess the results of our own and others' efforts. Quite simply, diversity promotes a more vibrant intellectual community and without it, learning is impoverished.

Second, whether public or private, universities are vital contributors and stewards of the public, global good, and progress on this dimension requires a diverse student body and faculty. One special responsibility for us involves the training of future faculty. We are training those who will become the educators of future generations of college students, and we need to take up the responsibility of our charge to train a faculty corps that reflects the students it will teach.

The demographics of the United States have moved toward a majority group not singularly defined, and these changes are reflected in future generations of college graduates who are today toddlers.

Several of our programs demonstrate LGS efforts to address diversity and inclusion. I will briefly touch on three here:

1. First, we have supported visits by a number of NIH Pathfinder Award winners and other scholars who have contributed to understanding contemporary developments and demographics in areas of diversity. These presentations convene faculty for conversations that directly address enhancing diversity in recruitment, and through mentoring, and more, to help generate both concrete

initiatives and a culture where these issues can be addressed. One topic of special emphasis has been unconscious bias and the influence this has on admissions and recruitment and mentoring.

2. Second, we have secured a grant from the NIH to implement the Initiative for Maximizing Student Development or IMSD, which will address pipelines for admission and mentoring students from underrepresented backgrounds in STEM disciplines. This program aims to recruit and support more students from underrepresented groups and to build faculty capacity and commitment for sustaining diverse and inclusive academic research environments. The program involves collaboration with the School of Medicine, Rollins School of Public Health, and Emory College as well as partners in the BEST program, for example.
3. And third, LGS is also the primary supporter and convener for the annual STEM Research and Career Symposium. The STEM Symposium brings undergraduates applying to doctoral programs and graduate students applying to postdoctoral positions from diverse backgrounds to Emory for a two-day session devoted to discussing science research, training opportunities and preparation of competitive application portfolios. It is an Emory-wide event with participation of several schools as well as numerous departments, programs and labs.

The fourth pillar of our ongoing planning and work is Internationalization.

As global citizens, our students must be prepared with training and skills that are viable across the global landscape. We are committed to exploring potential partnerships and programming in places such as Brazil, China, and the Middle East as identified in preliminary conversations across the University. We must also continue to define what we mean by “global skills” and be intentional in programming to support student development.

We recognize the educational benefit of an internationally diverse student body and internationally diverse research experiences, but how does this recognition translate into skill sets that ensure our students are competitive globally? And how do global skills shape global citizens?

We have one very strong program that I would like to highlight: the joint Emory-Georgia Tech Biomedical Engineering program with Peking University. This program was the product of a new paradigm that truly imagines graduate education on a global scale. The joint Emory-Georgia Tech-Peking University Biomedical Engineering program is a means for U.S. and Chinese students to participate in an exchange experience that allows them to learn and work at both their home campuses and those of the partner institutions. A single dissertation satisfies the thesis requirements of all three universities. It is a truly unique experience, and a wonderful example of ways to internationalize graduate education. We graduated our first student from the program last May.

I turn now to some of our challenges and opportunities.

The Laney Graduate School continues to grow in both familiar and new directions. We support and pursue a remarkably broad front of initiatives, and we do so with a lean organization. I take considerable pride in what we accomplish, from managing a complex set of everyday processes to developing and implementing innovative programs in both traditional and new areas. I am grateful and deeply appreciative of every member of the Laney team and what they contribute in the true Emory spirit of heart and mind -- it is a privilege to work with them.

As I mentioned earlier in my remarks, we are truly a school of the University. Through funding for scholarships, stipends, health insurance, as well as academic, professional and support programs, the LGS budget contributes to the research and teaching missions of our partner schools and units.

If we are to maintain student quality, however, we must offer support packages that match or exceed those of our peers. To continue building upon our momentum of the last three decades, we must identify

new revenue streams or risk jeopardizing the substantial investment already made, and lessening the university's impact as a global research university.

And, of course, the funding of graduate education is intimately connected with broader social and economic processes, and in many cases those place our financial support under increasing stress. The recession of 2008 had an immediate and substantial impact on graduate admissions, but we are also under pressure from slower moving, but no less significant developments that include decreasing federal funding for research and education, and structural shifts in the employment markets in higher education.

These are real and significant challenges. A new Congress and an upcoming Presidential election will most certainly affect attention to national appropriations to research and higher education. But we must respond by continuing to leverage the resources we have and by seeking new support from national agencies, yes, but also from philanthropic partners.

The solutions to complex problems almost never reveal themselves overnight. Treatment breakthroughs on headline-grabbing issues such as the Ebola virus do not emerge in a vacuum. The dedicated work of scientists and researchers – many of whom graduate from programs that ARCS supports, such as Chemistry, Epidemiology and our own Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences – requires significant investment over time. And we need more of these scholars to keep up with the global demand for cures, technological innovation, scientific discovery, community-based interventions and more.

There is more to this than money, however. There is the issue of “making the case” for graduate education.

In December, I travelled with several LGS colleagues to Washington, D.C. for the Council of Graduate Schools annual meeting. The opening plenary session was given by Janet Napolitano, former Governor of Arizona, former Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and current President of the University of California system. In her remarks – and I think it applies to all of us here – she noted that everyone in the room was a member of what might be called the “coalition of the willing.” That is, we all support graduate education, but we tend to speak only to other people in the coalition of the willing. It can become an echo chamber where our own arguments play on an endless loop to an audience that already accepts and agrees with them.

To make the case for graduate education – at Emory and nationally – we must grow the coalition, and we must reframe our arguments. For example, a member of Congress might not see the immediacy of funding higher education, but if he or she knows that by 2020, the number of jobs in the U.S. that will require a graduate degree will have grown by 2.6 million, that might change the conversation. We can speak to the importance of graduate education to society by using phrases such as *creating new knowledge*, but we can also drill down to concrete examples where academic research has revealed new treatment options for various cancers, or has yielded technological breakthroughs that make computing faster or smarter.

Everyone in this room knows the importance of doctoral students. ARCS has an extended and extraordinary history of supporting scholars that have gone on to leadership in all sectors of society. ARCS scholars are registering patents, publishing in leading journals, and are at the helm of new science-related start-ups. ARCS not only recognizes the importance of building scientific capacity at home, but also links it to the global stage where the U.S. must remain competitive.

The challenge, then, is to expand the coalition. We all believe in this work. In her remarks, UC President Napolitano said that, “making the case for graduate education is like running for office. It's a campaign without end – but the victories, when they come, and they will come, bring benefits not just to us, but to society, and for that matter, the world at large.”

I began these remarks by thanking you for your generous support to scholars in the Laney Graduate School and by telling you that I am passionately driven by the graduate mission. Emory, by reputation alone, attracts the best students at home and abroad. We have an esteemed faculty whose work and research are, to borrow from ARCS, *advancing science in America*. But we can do more.

In closing, I ask, appreciatively and graciously, not only for your continued support, but for even *greater* support. Our ARCS Scholars are the best of the best, and we want more of them. You know, first hand, the investment you make in our students is demonstrated in the benefits we collectively share as these scholars go on to careers that advance research, science, innovation and the global good.

It is also in partnership that we *grow the coalition*. You are supporters and advocates, and I welcome and value the opportunity to work more closely with you to make the case for graduate education.

Thank you. Your trust is important to us, and I have enjoyed speaking with you today.

Warmest best wishes to all of you in this new year.