

Proposal for Strategic Re-Staffing

January 20, 2021

Background

Prior to 2015, UTC had a Dean of The Graduate School and an Assistant Provost for Research. Recognizing the need to bolster support for research and graduate studies, in 2015 UTC's executive leadership created the dual position of Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of The Graduate school as a new cabinet-level position to offer greater visibility, support, and attention to these critical functions. The position of graduate dean was a long standing one, but the prior Dean, Jerald Ainsworth, had accepted the Provost position, leaving a vacancy. Due to budget constraints, the decision was made to combine the existing Dean and new VCR positions. While that may have been the most expedient option at the time due to the aforementioned budget constraints, it is now time to reconsider the unique needs of these two positions.

Rationale

There are certainly synergies between the institution's research enterprise and graduate education (mainly in relation to graduate student research). However, conflating these two critical functions is no longer in UTC's best interest. The two positions require very different skill sets, address different audiences, and function within the University organization in completely different ways.

- ***Strategic Staffing & Leadership:*** The VCR is often in the position of attending meetings where the same information is covered for different audiences and has the opportunity to vote or give input multiple times. An example of this is that the current VCR/Dean is able to have input on the budget at both the Deans level and then again at the Executive level. In addition to redundancy and overlap, the combined position also means that neither research nor graduate education has the benefit of full-time leadership. The delineation of prioritized goals and needs for each area is often blurred or lost through representation by a single individual. Rather than being able to analyze the unique needs and opportunities of each division, the VCR/Dean is inevitably pulled in different directions, making it difficult to be proactive and strategic.
- ***Research Division Expansion:*** Since the establishment of the VCR/Dean of the Graduate School position, the research infrastructure at UTC has grown significantly. Once comprising only the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs and the Office of Research Integrity, the division additionally now includes three core centers (SimCenter, the Center for Urban Informatics & Progress, and the IGT/Visualization Lab) and a new Office of Undergraduate Research, long-recognized as a critical need for UTC. It has also added a commercialization officer to increase the Intellectual property/Tech transfer opportunities for faculty.
- ***Graduate School Expansion:*** A graduate school dean provides leadership to graduate school staff and assists in marketing, admissions, student conduct, exemptions, graduate theses and dissertation review, and graduation of graduate students. The Graduate school has expanded to include a full-time recruiter to increase recruitment and enrollment. Due to specific system goals (see below), they have had to work hard to increase enrollment to meet expectations. In addition, there is a demand to diversify the educational portfolio. Workforce development is changing and as individuals move through the workforce, skill-based certificates are becoming an important part. The graduate school is working with community partners and university programs to develop and promote graduate educational opportunities, including new programs, certificates, and potential

novel credentialing. The Dean must work with programs, the community and ensure compliance with THEC to develop these. This is an area of high importance if UTC is to maintain an active and viable graduate program.

- **Research Enterprise Growth:** Since the establishment of the VCR/Dean of the Graduate School position, the research portfolio at UTC has increased considerably. This growth is indicated by award dollars; in FY2015 UTC had received \$7.9 million in sponsored awards; in FY2021 (end of Q1 & Q2) UTC has already realized \$10.2 million year-to-date (excluding CARES & CRRSA funds). While more difficult to quantify, this increase in dollars also reflects a significant increase in the complexity – and potential risks – of research activity. In this time period, UTC has expanded its funding base to include significant funds from the Department of Energy and the Department of Defense. We have grown industry-supported research, and we have significantly increased research collaborations across the region and country.
- **Graduate School Activities:** Activities in the graduate school and the responsibilities of the leadership have no or very limited overlap with VCR responsibilities. The Dean reports to Academic Affairs/Provost and is part of the Deans' council, whereas the VCR reports to the Chancellor and is a part of the Executive Leadership team. The Graduate School is an academic unit. In addition to the awkward reporting structures generated by combining the VCR and Graduate Dean, the Graduate Dean is responsible for convening and supporting shared governance structures including the Graduate Council and Best Practices committee. The position oversees curriculum changes and supports development of new programs. The graduate school has been working to develop more efficient protocols and creating a more intuitive process for recruiting and enrolling students. The graduate school is working directly with colleges and programs to develop potential new graduate programs to be considered by the graduate council faculty. The Graduate Dean is involved in reviewing and adjudicating dismissals and appeals and for ensuring compliance among all programs, faculty, students and staff with graduate policies set by the University. The Graduate Dean also provides high-level quality assurance for graduate output, reviewing and editing every thesis or dissertation. The Graduate dean is responsible for the strategic disbursement of funds for graduate assistantships and graduate travel funds.
- **Achieving UT System Strategic Goals:** Another compelling reason to separate the positions is the separate goals of the UT System strategic plan for research and graduate enrollment. In this plan, the institution is expected to double its research expenditures over the next 5 years, to measurably increase the quality of the faculty and their research output; to increase undergraduate research activities and to support core facilities.

The graduate school is expected to increase graduate enrollment substantially, ideally doubling the numbers over five years, which requires attention to recruitment and graduate offerings. In order to meet these goals, full-time leadership is needed in both areas.

BUDGET

There will be some slight changes in the budget resulting from this change. The only immediate changes would be to discontinue the Associate Dean's position in favor of a full-time Dean. The salary chosen is the absolute bottom of the Dean's salaries. This would require a realistic Dean's salary. In

addition, I am budgeting an administrative assistant for the Dean. Currently, Amy Campbell serves the role for both the VCR & the Dean.

ITEM	Amount	Current	Difference	Additional Fringe	
Dean salary*	160000	132300	27700	5800	
Admin Asst.	38000	n/a	38000	7980	
					Salary + fringe
Total			65700	13780	79500

*Lowball salary. Range should be \$160 - \$190K