Graduate School leadership transition

For the past three years, John McCarthy has filled two vital administrative positions, working in the Graduate School as Dean and as Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. In discussing the needs we have for more of his remarkable skill in the Provost’s office and his own desire to have some time to devote to his highly regarded research in linguistics, we have come to the conclusion that his administrative work should be concentrated in a single area. Consequently, John will step down as Dean of the Graduate School immediately following Graduate Commencement on May 12th, while retaining his position as Senior Vice Provost.

It is traditional on this campus to hold internal searches for the Dean of the Graduate School, and I intend to uphold that tradition. In the coming days, I will announce the formation of a search committee for this vacancy, distribute a job description, and issue a call for applications and nominations.

On the occasion of this transition, it is appropriate to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments John has achieved in his five years as Graduate Dean. In collaboration with his very talented associate deans and staff, John has transformed the Graduate School into an essential component of the University’s graduate education and research missions. Some of his many accomplishments include:

- The creation of an Office of Professional Development, which offers programming to improve teaching, explore career options, write and communicate better, and secure external funding. Now in full operation,
OPD and its network of partners organize more than 200 events annually for more than 2,600 total participants, and our students have enjoyed unprecedented success in major fellowship competitions.

- Support for Institutional Training Grants, leading to a total of $11 million in new awards in the last two years.

- A new Graduate Student Orientation that includes training in teaching, diversity, time management, and the skills needed to be a successful student.

- New diversity and fellowship programs focused on student success.

- Assumption of responsibility for the professional development of postdocs.

- Transformation of Graduate Commencement into an event that celebrates the accomplishments of our students and the support they receive from their faculty advisors.

By virtue of these and other initiatives he has put in place, Dean McCarthy’s successor will assume the leadership of a robust unit in the Graduate School. I am personally very grateful to him for his remarkable leadership and very glad to be able to rely on even more of it in the Office of the Provost.

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