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## MEMORANDUM

To: Deans, Associate Deans, and Graduate Program Directors

From: George E. Walker, Senior Vice President for Research Development and Graduate Education  
Dean, University Graduate School

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'George E. Walker' is written over the printed name in the 'From:' field.

Date: January 20, 2009

Re: Implementation of Changes to Graduate Admissions Processes

Several proposed changes to graduate admissions policies and procedures were discussed at the January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Dean's Advisory Council (DAC) and approved, following discussion. The approved changes in graduate admission policies/procedures are congruent with University Graduate School (UGS) efforts to improve the service quality received by applicants to FIU's graduate programs. Another potential benefit to academic units from more uniform admissions processes are improvements in the ability of units to engage in strategic planning and resource allocation. Specifically:

1) UGS will shorten the period of time that **incomplete or "unactioned"** (i.e., missing a decision from the appropriate academic unit) graduate applications remain active from three semesters to one semester.

**Rationale:** This shortened time period allows the Graduate Admissions Office (GAO) to purge on an accelerated basis: (a) incomplete applications or (b) applications for which no decision has been made by the responsible officer of the appropriate academic unit. This change will allow more rapid removal of incomplete applications from the Web-based application system. The policy change should motivate academic units to provide timely responses to graduate program applicants, thereby improving customer service. The approved change is similar to current procedures at the University of Central Florida. The purging of incomplete applications would occur following the passage of the published deadline for submitting complete applications for the subsequent semester.

2) If an application is purged due to incomplete status, the applicant will be required to pay an additional processing fee for submission of any future graduate application to FIU. Further, UGS will **require academic units to submit decisions on all complete but "unactioned" graduate applications each semester** prior to the expiration of the published deadline for submission of complete graduate applications. Please note that academic units currently have multiple options for processing graduate applications including: (a) to accept, (b) to reject, (c) to defer or (d) to administratively withdraw the application. The latter two options are appropriate for applications that appear promising, but that the applicant or the academic unit wishes to defer. Options C and D are also alternatives to the rejection of an application, which bars the applicant from reapplying for three

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semesters. Units will be notified in writing by GAO evaluators prior to the end of the admissions cycle regarding any complete applications that remain “unactioned” by authorized personnel in the unit.

**Rationale:** Requiring additional application fees for application resubmission following the purging of incomplete applications is reasonable given the additional staff labor costs incurred by UGS for processing an application a second time. In addition, when “unactioned” graduate applications are “brought forward” to the current semester, they are processed a second time without compensation to UGS for additional staff labor costs. Requiring academic units to respond to applicants in a timely manner is: (a) a way to improve customer service, and (b) a way to reduce the number of times applications are processed. Requiring new application fees for new graduate applications is similar to current procedures used at the University of Central Florida.

3) Non-degree seeking graduate students, **who are not affiliated with a graduate program**, taking courses at FIU will be audited routinely and discontinued after completing 12 semester hours of credits. They will be advised to apply for admission to a specific graduate program. They will not be allowed to register for any additional courses until they are admitted to a specific graduate degree program.

**Rationale:** This change is necessary to enforce published UGS policies related to limits on the number of credits that non-degree students may take prior to admission to a graduate program. This change in procedure will allow UGS to reduce the number of, or eliminate cases of students who have earned the majority of semester credit hours required for a graduate degree without being admitted to the specific graduate program.