

Faculty Senate Resolution on Doctoral Programs

Whereas, doctoral students act as pillars of high quality undergraduate education in their role as skilled laboratory, research and teaching assistants under faculty supervision, and complement the faculty in providing individualized tutoring and enhanced learning opportunities outside the classroom, and

Whereas, the national ranking of SMU (for instance, as measured by the US News and World Report) is strongly influenced by the reputation, placement and research output of SMU doctorates that shape the subjective evaluation of SMU by peers in other universities, and

Whereas, our ability to attract and retain top quality researchers and scholars in academic positions (such as the chaired professorships endowed through the Centennial campaign) often depends on the availability of doctoral students who can act as research assistants, form the base for bringing in research grants, and make it possible for the faculty members to enhance their professional standing by supervising high quality doctorates and placing them in reputable positions, and

Whereas, doctoral students play a crucial role in engaging and interfacing with undergraduate students in faculty research projects that in turn helps us recruit high quality undergraduates and raise the academic quality of the incoming class (as measured for instance by their average SAT score), and

Whereas, doctoral students are the future leaders of research, innovation and scientific progress, of creative enterprise and arts, and of great scholarship, all of which are some of the longest lasting contributions and legacies that SMU can make to the local economy and community, and

Whereas, SMU doctorates are increasingly placed in prestigious academic and non-academic research institutions, and

Whereas, the impressive progress in national ranking and reputation of our doctoral programs indicates high returns on investment in these programs and strong potential for future growth,

Resolved, that the Faculty Senate of Southern Methodist University, on December 4, 2013, strongly urges the SMU Administration to undertake measures including fundraising in order to

1. Create funds for improvement of the quality of undergraduate education through increased employment of doctoral students as skilled laboratory, research and teaching assistants,
2. Increase the resources available for providing competitive stipends to adequate numbers of doctoral students, and
3. Create university-wide fellowships to attract top quality doctoral students.