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**Dean's Address to the Graduate Faculty
State of the Laney Graduate School**

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Welcome to the 2010 Dean's Address to the graduate faculty – the fourth one I have the privilege of delivering.

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While this is my fourth Dean's Address, it is also a first – the first as Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies. This naming is a great honor for the graduate school, and it is a distinct privilege and inspiration to be carrying President Laney's name. It is a daily reminder of his vision for higher education, for Emory, and for the central role of graduate education in public life.

It is also a positive challenge. President Laney made graduate education the centerpiece of an ambitious transformation at Emory, and carrying his name reminds us to spend the enormous capital, talent, wisdom and energy that make up our university with the clear goal of making the world a better place.

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Last year, I had the unpleasant but necessary task of talking about reductions. I am sure you recall the developments last winter and spring, and you may recall feeling like Emory was an outlier – that our reductions were more severe than others. My own experience since then indicates that we are not an outlier. A great many universities, many of them at least as prominent and strong as Emory, have reduced admissions and funding in comparable ways.

If we do stand out, it is in this way: our reductions were considerably more transparent than most, and they became quite public, sometimes painfully so. It is my hope and my intention to use our experience to build ourselves a graduate school that is stronger and more secure.

I'd like to take a look at where we stand now, a year later.

In the fall of 2009, we welcomed 242 new students to our PhD programs. That was a reduction. In 2008, we started the year with 313 new PhD students. So this year, we started with 23% fewer new PhD students than we did the previous year.

Looking ahead, it is of course too early to know where we will end up this fall. We are still a few days from the final decision date, and there are plenty of outstanding offers. As of yesterday, 235 students have accepted offers of admission to PhD programs. Combining that with the number of outstanding offers, we estimate that we will start fall semester with around 265 new PhD students.

That would put us about 10% above last year's number, which represents a modest recovery. Put another way: this year's entering PhD cohort was 77% of the 2008 cohort, and next year's cohort will likely be 85% or a little higher of the 2008 cohort.

In this address last year, I spoke about the idea of "getting back to 90%" as a goal that was heard at Emory and elsewhere. That goal acknowledged that what we faced then, and face still today, is not a cyclical economic downturn but a lasting economic realignment. It looks like we are well on our way to the 90%.

Of course, as I said last year, the "getting back to 90" may be shorthand for a university wide goal, or at least interim goal, but it does not need to be the goal of each and every unit. It is not my goal for the Laney Graduate School. We have room for growth, but we must be strategic and deliberate about how and where we achieve it. I will be talking about some principles for such deliberation in just a moment.

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In last year's address, I announced the formation of a Graduate School Advisory Committee, "composed of faculty from across the segments of schools and departments that collaborate with the Graduate School in operating doctoral and masters' programs" that would "provide guidance for future directions, especially those that will require meaningful and significant involvement of faculty in planning and policy directions."

I want to publically thank that committee for its outstanding and very helpful contributions. We have asked the members of that committee to dig through a great deal of data and documents. We also asked them to step outside their comfort zone and share perspectives and views that one might hesitate to express around colleagues and the dean. They rose admirably to the challenge. The Laney Graduate School is indebted to them for their willingness to serve and to share their wisdom.

Please know that this is not a final thank you – the work of the committee is ongoing, and we look forward to meeting a few more times.

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One of the central tasks of the advisory committee has been to help us prepare indicators to determine how and where to allocate essential graduate school resources – principally funds for student support. The committee proved enormously helpful as we considered what information to use, how to contextualize that information, and how to respect and value the great variation among programs across divisions and other kinds of distinctions.

I want to share with you some thoughts about the principles behind planning decisions, as well as two examples of planning processes that seek to use these principles.

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Last year's reductions, and this year's modest recovery, has brought home with great urgency the need to make principle-driven strategic decisions about where and how to invest in graduate education, in the form of student support funds. The experience has encouraged us to clearly articulate some of the principles behind decisions and choices. While these are not new, they continue to bear stating in an explicit way.

Graduate education follows and complements faculty research excellence and visibility. On the one hand, graduate education follows faculty excellence and visibility, because without it there is no reason for graduate students to choose Emory. On the other hand, faculty excellence and visibility is sustained by graduate students, because without them prominent and promising faculty are less likely to choose Emory.

Graduate education is a significant investment of the faculty's chief resource, intellectual capital. A successful graduate program requires a sufficient base of faculty capacity to sustain an investment in mentoring, teaching, and administrative leadership, without unduly draining the intellectual capital that also supports the pursuit of knowledge and innovation, research excellence and visibility, and other important efforts such as undergraduate teaching.

Graduate education is a reciprocal commitment of resources. Graduate education at Emory has long been fortunate in enjoying an extraordinary level of support from the central University budget. We will continue to enjoy this. But strong, sustainable – and yes, growing – graduate programs require commitment from all the actors who benefit, whether they be schools, research units, grant holders, or others. These reciprocal commitments anchor graduate education in the strategic and budgetary commitments of those who participate.

Graduate education is at its heart both an intellectual and a professional education. We know that graduate education is an intellectual journey, as we sometimes say, from being a consumer of knowledge to a producer of knowledge. We also know that it is a

professional education, generally aimed at training future researchers and academics. It is our responsibility to continually assess how our programs work in this regard: are we training graduates who will be well equipped to take advantage of professional opportunities that are in fact available to them?

These principles are not new, and stated as principles they are not likely to be controversial. But as we also know, the devil is in the details – or in the implementation. I turn to two examples of these principles at work.

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Our Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences is a great success. It is organized in an interdisciplinary way that harnesses the expertise and commitment of faculty in affiliated fields from several schools and units. It provides doctoral education that is always excellent – in some cases, it is as good as one can find anywhere in the world.

It has also enjoyed tremendous growth. In the ten years from 1996 to 2006, the number of PhD students in programs aligned primarily with biological and biomedical sciences just about doubled – and impressive record of growth by any standard.

We also know that there is room for more growth. That is, we know that Emory has research excellence and activity that could sustain more doctoral students than we currently have in those areas, and we know that Emory has faculty capacity to invest in the mentoring, teaching and administrative leadership required by doctoral education.

But the growth of the GDBBS suffered from one problem. My predecessors shaped an approach that was a start-up model, relying on time limited contributions and standing pools of money, rather than on self-generating revenue streams. It worked, as a start-up, but it could not be sustained into the future. The pool essentially was drained dry. Part of my work over the last several years has been to create a budget model that can be sustained into the foreseeable future. We have now arrived at a budget model that supports the current size of the GDBBS moving forward.

To take the next step, to capitalize on the capacity to support more doctoral education in the biological and biomedical sciences, we have created a small working group that will be asked to articulate alternative options for creating sustainable revenue streams to support growth at different rates. The working group is chaired by Dr. Barry Shur, Charles Howard Candler Professor and Chair of Cell Biology.

With support from the Laney Graduate School, Professor Shur and his colleagues are engaging in a three step process:

Modeling the cost of growth: how much will it cost, under different support scenarios and both in direct student support and in administrative costs, to increase the entering cohort of GDBBS students to 100, 110, or 120 students?

Benchmarking our funding structure: how does Emory's funding structure in these fields compare with the funding structures at peer institutions?

Articulating scenarios for growth: how could growth be funded? Which interested parties could contribute, at what rates and in what timeframes?

The resulting report will be presented to GDBBS leadership and faculty, and to other potential participants. The goal will **not** be to simply find the money to admit more students next year or the year after that. The goal **will be** to propose and eventually create structured, reciprocal commitments among the partners, the graduate school, grant funded researchers, the School of Medicine and other Emory units, and any other potential groups – partners, all, with a base of commitments that will allow us to grow sustainably.

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Another committee will consider a different area of graduate education, also in light of the principles articulated earlier. Programs in languages, literatures and culture – often identified by the name of a language or group of languages – are vital components of a strong research university. They are vital for their intrinsic interest and value as well as for their roles in broader university engagements – in the humanities and the social sciences as well as in areas like public health, business, nursing, and more.

Emory has significant strengths in these areas, and the Laney Graduate School is committed to sustaining strong doctoral education to complement core areas of faculty research activity.

But we also find ourselves facing two issues about how these programs are organized. On the one hand, we currently have three doctoral programs – Comparative Literature, French and Spanish – aligned with one College department each. This means they are small programs, and that the faculty's investment in mentoring, teaching and administrative leadership places great strain on their intellectual capital. On the other hand, Emory also has strong departments in affiliated fields: German Studies, Russian and East Asian Languages and Cultures (REALC), Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies (MESAS) and Classics. These departments have scholars who are research active faculty, but who have no direct connection to graduate education.

A new advisory committee, the Languages and Literatures Advisory Committee, will consider a basic question: how do we organize graduate education to capitalize on all our research excellence in a way that does not overburden faculty?

We are asking this committee to take a broad and creative view. We ask it to consider the full range of the relationships of these disciplines and scholars with broader university engagements, from language instruction and expertise to literary and cultural scholarship to internationalization and the arts. Its task is to examine ways of organizing doctoral education in these fields, and to recommend alternative organizations which provide access for doctoral students to research active faculty in a broad array of related fields and disciplines, and which encourage creative researchers and scholars to develop strong connections to others with intellectual affinities.

Dr. Rick Rambuss, Professor of English and Chair of the English Department, has agreed to lead this committee. We are in the process of inviting colleagues from all the related departments, and hope that the committee will have its first meeting soon.

This, too, is an effort related to strengthening and sustaining graduate education. Here, the issue is not primarily funding, though of course that will be relevant. Instead, the issue is how we organize ourselves as doctoral programs in relation to the tenure homes of faculty members in affiliated disciplines. The model of one department, one program may not be the best – and it certainly is not the only one. We look forward to supporting the work of the committee, and to ensuring the continued vitality of doctoral education in the related fields of languages, literatures and cultures fields at Emory.

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This second committee brings us to one more aspect of these principles that I want to highlight today. This fall, as we were making decisions about how many admissions to authorize in each program, we talked about much data and information – about faculty research productivity, about student progress, program leadership, and more. Most of what we talked about concerned the process of intellectual education. Most of what we consider to be elements of successful graduate programs are geared to that process: coursework, comprehensive exams, lab rotations, research papers, dissertations, and more.

We must also consider the other aspect of the education we provide: the professional training. Are we preparing students to succeed as professionals, in the market they face now and are likely to face in coming years? Of course, the quality of the intellectual training matters to the professional training as well: prospects are always better for graduates of excellent and recognized programs. But we must take seriously indications that the future prospects for our doctoral graduates are changing, fairly quickly and in profound ways.

I am sure some of you have read several of the many recent articles on employment and professional prospects. Lately, quite a few of them have concerned the humanities, and have detailed the diminishing number of tenure track faculty positions available, the plight of adjunct and other tenure-ineligible faculty, the long time to degree in humanities disciplines. These and other reports paint a dreary picture of our graduates' prospects.

Here is a constellation of claims that caught my eye a week ago. An article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* cited a 2004 report from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences showing that between the late 1960s and 2004, the humanities' share of bachelor's degrees was cut roughly in half, from 17.8% to 8%.¹ Soon after, I read a fact sheet from the National Endowment for the Humanities, pointing out that among AAU member universities, 62% of doctorates are in humanities fields.² Together, the reports beg the question: who will these new PhDs teach?

This is not just a humanities issue. It hasn't been as prominent in higher education publications lately, but we do hear analogous things in the sciences – longer time in post-doc positions, more time in lecturer or other non-permanent positions.

I realize that these particular numbers can be viewed as apples and oranges, and are just, at one level, items that caught my attention. But they are part of a larger constellation of facts which I believe shows this: we are not training another generation of “us” – meaning, “tenure track members of university faculties.” Circumstances are changing, and it appears there will be far fewer of “us” than there will be PhD graduates.

What are we doing to respond? How do these changes affect the professional training we provide? On the very simple ends are two contrasting responses. On the one hand: drastically reduce admissions because the professional prospects are so poor. On the other hand: increase quality because the best graduates always find good positions.

Surely, we need more nuance than those simple responses, and surely what is needed differs a great deal among fields, disciplines and programs. And perhaps the changes in professional prospects of our graduates need to reach the intellectual training we provide as well. How much of what we do is in effect tied to training new professors?

We are all at different points in this evolution. Some of you have been thinking about and responding to these issues more than others among us, and we hope to learn from where you are in your examination of the professional landscape.

We will also be a part of and benefit from a national conversation around these issues. This year, I am beginning service on two national bodies – on the Executive Committee of the Association of Graduate Schools, a constituent group of the AAU, and on the Board of Directors of the Council of Graduate Schools. I will bring to these bodies the perspective of Emory's distinctive commitments and goals, and will bring back from them a clear sense of how our experiences are part of larger national and international developments. We as a

¹ The Chronicle Review, April 4, 2010; We Need to Acknowledge the Realities of Employment in the Humanities by Peter Conn; http://chronicle.com/article/We-Need-to-Acknowledge-the/64885/?sid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

² See “NEH-Humanities Alliance FY11 Budget Request” at http://www.aau.edu/policy/national_endowment_humanities.aspx?id=7348

graduate school stand to benefit a great deal from integrating our experiences into a broader picture.

During the coming year, we will ask all of you to examine the professional prospects of your graduates, and to ask whether you are providing your students with professional preparation that helps them succeed in the kind of employment market they do and will in fact face.

One component is to help our graduates conceive of and prepare for professional lives that are considerably broader than the academy. We will take on a beginning project next year by inviting alumni who have taken unusual career paths to visit with us, with our students, and simply tell their stories. We hope their visits will help all of us – faculty, graduate students, and administrators – to broaden our professional imaginations.

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Before closing, let me take a moment to focus on some new developments you may not be aware of – and which exemplify several of the strategic planning principles I spoke about earlier.

Two new degrees: Master's in Development Practice and MA in Bioethics. Both are collaborative efforts that cut across schools and units, both seek to provide academic expertise and skill to working professionals, and both have business plans that envision revenues to sustain programs into the future. The MDP is funded by a grant from the MacArthur Foundation and is directed by Professor David Nugent from Anthropology. The Director of Graduate Studies for the MA in Bioethics is Kathy Kinlaw from the Center for Ethics. The Bioethics program admitted its first cohort last summer, and the MDP is recruiting its first cohort as we speak.

Two new certificates: Mind, Brain and Culture and Translational Science.³ Both certificate programs provide interdisciplinary expertise that seeks to enhance students' intellectual and professional prospects.

The certificate in Mind, Brain and Culture offers students knowledge of and experience with concepts, theories, and methods pertaining to the study of mind, brain, and culture from fields outside the focus of their parent discipline. The faculty group behind this certificate is seeking a training grant to further enhance their participation in doctoral education. The certificate director is Professor Laura Namy. We congratulate both Professor Namy and Professor Robert McCauley, director of the Center for Mind, Brain and Culture for the leadership they bring to this work.

The certificate in Translational Science offers a multidisciplinary program that gives PhD students in the biomedical and public health sciences the expertise and experience to

³ See http://cmbc.emory.edu/graduate/certificate_program.html and <http://www.gs.emory.edu/translational/>

translate fundamental biomedical scientific discoveries into treatments, practices and community interventions that will benefit human health and well-being. The certificate is part of the Atlanta Clinical and Translational Science Institute, a partnership between Emory University, Morehouse School of Medicine, and the Georgia Institute of Technology. The certificate program's initial funding comes from a grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. The certificate director is Professor Henry Blumberg from the School of Medicine.

On the drawing board: PhD Programs in Islamic Civilizations and in Environmental and Health Science. We are in discussions with groups of faculty and are looking at research excellence, at capacity to sustain mentoring, teaching and leadership, at sustainable commitments and support, including grant funding, and at professional prospects for potential future graduates.

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Just the other day, I was reminded again of how central we – the Laney Graduate School and doctoral education – are to the mission and identity of Emory University. If it should happen that it rains on commencement day, the ceremony is moved inside, into Glenn Memorial. There, of course, the ceremony will need to be pared down to its essentials. If that needs to happen, the only degrees that will be awarded in the ceremony are the degrees we confer: the doctoral degrees.

The preparations for this contingency are routine, but this year they brought me to a pause. They told me, in a clear and unambiguous way, that we are in many ways the yardstick of the institution's identity and achievements, and of the value of an Emory degree. To be the stewards of the doctoral degree is a great responsibility and a continual challenge. Let's take it up. Let's continue to ensure that a PhD from Emory is a distinguished and excellent credential, and let's continue to ask the University, in return, to support our growth in quality and quantity. I look forward to working with all of you to make our case at Emory and beyond.