

**Office of Graduate Studies
Information Technology Vision Plan
2006-2007**

Summary of Requests

For 2006-07, we are requesting funds for the following student-based initiatives:

Continued development of on-line resources to help students secure grants and other funds for research and scholarship, including tutorials, webpages and interactive tools.	\$ 20,000
Total ITAC Request	\$ 20,000

Overview of Current IT Programs and Infrastructure

Vision/Mission/Goals of Unit

The Office of Graduate Studies operates under the direction of the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean and is charged with providing the services and support needed to not only sustain the Graduate School, but also to ensure its progress and increase its value to the University community. Pride is taken in providing valuable services, not found in individual academic departments, to more than 10,000+ graduate students. The office awards more than 700 doctoral degrees and more than 2,500 master's degrees each year. The office's fellowship program makes annual awards totaling approximately 5 million dollars.

The Office of Graduate Studies provides a wide range of services to the University community, including graduate students, members of graduate studies committees, graduate advisers, and graduate coordinators. The office is organized by the following areas of responsibility:

- Graduate Recruitment and Outreach
- Graduate and International Admissions
- Student Services
- Fellowships
- Professional Development and Community Engagement
- Graduate Assembly and Legislation
- Portfolios
- Technology and Web Administration
- Faculty Development
- Awards
- Administrative Services

Programs

The Office of Graduate Studies does not receive recurring ITAC funds at this time. A one-time project allocation of \$10,000 was provided for the 2005-06 academic year to enhance the academic information technology activities of Graduate Studies.

Infrastructure

The Office of Graduate Studies has 27 Apple computers and 2 Dell PCs. The office has one file server that is secured with firewall and antivirus software and backed up nightly by Student Information Services, which provides LAN support to our department. We have one in house Systems Administrator responsible for setting up computers, upgrading the software and virus protections, and providing technical support to users. Software and operating systems are kept up-to-date.

The Office of Graduate Studies supports one position in the Student Information Services Unit, under the direction of Shelby Stanfield, to assist with information technology needs and maintain automated systems. SIS is currently helping to develop a Graduate Coordinator toolkit to consolidate graduate student information, from application for admission to graduation.

Current and proposed funding sources for IT programs and infrastructure

The Office of Graduate Studies primarily uses fee income (Option III and Certification Fee) and institutional allowance funds from the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program to fund IT programs and infrastructure. ITAC funds are being used for the automation of professional development resources, which are applicable to all disciplines.

Best Practices that have significantly improved IT programs.

Since the last Vision Plan report, the Office of Graduate Studies eliminated a vacant Degree Plan Evaluator II position. This planned reduction was made possible because of the success of the automated degree candidacy form, graduation, and cross-training of current personnel.

Use of Previous Academic Year Allocations

One-Time Projects

The Office of Graduate Studies received a one-time ITAC project allocation of \$10,000 during the 2005-06 academic year with the stated purpose of enhancing the academic information technology activities of Graduate Studies, specifically academic program objectives.

ITAC funds are being used to create on-line resources to support the professional development of UT graduate students. The on-line resources are being designed to stand alone and complement Professional Development for credit classes and other offerings of the Professional Development and Community Engagement program within the Graduate School.

The first project, started during 2005-06, is the creation of an on-line Grant Pathfinder. This system will guide students through the process of identifying and successfully applying for grants, a process known to be confusing and intimidating. It will help students navigate the various processes and procedures required by granting agencies. The first Pathfinder will help students find grants to support travel and research. These are two of the most pervasive needs our students have. Included in the system will be a database of potential funders. The Pathfinder will be developed by UT faculty and students for UT students. Work on this system involves the Office of Graduate Studies, the Information School, the Faculty Innovation Center in the College of Engineering and the Hogg Foundation Library. Dr. Lynn Westbrook of the Information School is working with the Hogg Foundation Library to create the content. This part of the project should be complete in early spring. The Faculty Innovation Center in the College of Engineering will then create the on-line interface. In addition to being a useful tool for students, this pathfinder will be used as a pilot for subsequent pathfinders that might involve dissertation writing and publishing, career strategies, ethics, teaching methods, consulting and multi-cultural communication.

Information School Graduate Student performing needs analysis, research, and creation of content for the Pathfinder: \$5000

Faculty Innovation Center (College of Engineering) design and development of on-line interface: \$2500

Instructional Design Graduate Student to perform usability research of final on-line version of Pathfinder: \$1500

Peripheral Costs (focus groups for needs analysis/usability, materials, etc.): \$1000

Needs and Proposed Use of Funds – One-time Projects

The Office of Graduate Studies is requesting additional ITAC funds for the 2006-07 academic year to continue efforts to provide on-line professional development tools for graduate students. The on-line resources will increase the breath and impact of the program across campus.

The initial Grants Pathfinder will become operational during the 2005-06 academic year. Eventually a number of pathfinders will be created to cover different types of research and scholarship performed. For example, we envision pathfinders for the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as some of the larger foundations that support research. As the project grows, it will include needs analysis and usability research to ensure the creation of the most effective resources possible.

The Pathfinder model will be useful creating on-line resources for students in other areas such as dissertation writing and publishing, and career strategies. Other topics under consideration include ethics, teaching methods, consulting, and multi-cultural communication. Funding will provide templates, tools, and interactive sites, utilizing expertise in on-line learning, graphic design, and web usability. Future projects may include creating resources to support learning communities where graduate students can share ideas and resources in areas of common intellectual and community interest.

All on-line resources will be created in consultation with graduate students, graduate advisors and coordinators, and graduate faculty.

Funding Request

The funds requested for graduate student on-line resources are as follows:

Description	Quantity	Total Cost	ITAC Request
Continued development of on-line resources to help students secure grants and other funds for research and scholarship, including tutorials, webpages and interactive tools.	1	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Total		\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000