To: Dr. Rob Roy McGregor, Chair  
The Graduate Council  

CC: Members of the Graduate Council  

From: Dr. Tom Reynolds, Dean  The Graduate School  

Date: October 2, 2012  

As you know the Graduate Program Director plays a critical role in the leadership and administration of graduate education at UNC Charlotte. The Program Director’s responsibilities may include academic advising of graduate students, student recruitment, admissions recommendations, allocation of assistantships, tuition awards, and fellowships, and the appointment of graduate faculty to student committees. The Graduate Program Director also serves as the liaison to the Graduate School to communicate policies and other relevant information to the department or program faculty, students and staff and also communicate programmatic information, decisions, and recommendations to the Graduate School.

The position of graduate program director (GPD) is central to the success of that graduate program; however, most Graduate Program Directors are full-time faculty engaged in teaching, scholarship and service. Many do not have the time or resources necessary to do their jobs as Program Directors adequately. Directing interdisciplinary degrees can be especially challenging. As with the Department Chair there should be some consistency of the appointment process, term of appointment, duties and responsibilities, compensation, access to resources, training, professional development, and performance review.

In order to attract and retain capable faculty who will pursue the responsibilities of the GPD enthusiastically, I am asking the Graduate Council to examine the role of the Graduate Program Director in the organization and administration of graduate programming at UNC Charlotte.

Proposal to the Graduate Council

1. Prepare a basic “job description” for UNC Charlotte Graduate Program Directors. This document should include appointment and review policies, duties and responsibilities, and resources required for the position.
2. To enhance the University’s efforts to serve students and society, strengthen the position of Graduate Program Director as a leadership pipeline by identifying and making recommendations for opportunities for Program Directors to obtain the skills, knowledge, and perspective to be effective leaders.

3. With the realization that communication is a two-way street, propose standards for the effective communication between the Program Directors, their faculty, students, college administrators, and the Graduate School. Make recommendations on what should and can be done to improve communication activities.

4. Promote, support, and provide oversight for the adoption of these recommendations by the University Graduate Programs. This should involve multiple strategies including the establishment of an “Advisory Board” that will support the Graduate Council to ensure that its recommendations and objectives remain a priority.

In anticipation that the Council will agree to take on this initiative, I have prepared a draft description of the basic responsibilities we should expect for all Graduate Program Directors and the minimum resources required to fulfill these responsibilities. I hope this document will provide a starting point for the discussion and move us toward developing a competitive model for the support of our Graduate Program Directors.