Special Education Response

We appreciate the time and effort the Task Force on Graduate Education expended reviewing our program. We would like to clarify two aspects of their report.

First, the Task Force noted that 4 graduate students are enrolled in our Ph.D. program. Due to the loss of faculty (4 over the last 6 years), a conscious decision was made to not actively recruit doctoral students. Over the last two years, however, we have hired three new faculty members and are now reasserting our recruitment efforts, with four new students slated to begin their Ph.D. studies in fall 2010.

Second, the Task Force inquired about collaboration efforts between REACH and other campus entities. It should be noted that REACH is only in its second year of operation. In this short time period, much collaboration has occurred between REACH and others entities on campus. For example, faculty and students from numerous departments (e.g., therapeutic recreation-integrative physiology, rehabilitation counseling, and nursing) are working with REACH. Activities include participating in the admission process, tutoring, providing counseling and serving as life skills coaches and mentors. Additionally, the University Counseling Services’ staff and their interns are working with REACH by acting as counselors, and by leading group sessions in the residence halls, including during weekends. Staff members at Wendall Johnson are also involved. They provide pragmatic training in classrooms and natural settings to REACH students. Opportunities for facilitating inter/transdisciplinary research are also being pursued. REACH, in fact, is currently working with IRB to create a research data repository, which, to our knowledge, would be the first repository of its kind. The point is that REACH is proving to be a pivotal spot for widespread collaboration.