At the beginning of the 2017-18 academic year, the provost created a Task Force on Graduate School Organizational Models (the “Task Force”). The Task Force is Chaired by Michael Kaufman, Dean of the School of Law, and consists of representatives from the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences, Scott Hendrickson, S.J. (Modern Languages and Literatures), John Frendreis (Political Science), and Timothy O’Brien (Statistics); faculty from the School of Education, Markeda Newell; faculty from the School of Social Work, Terri Kilbane; faculty from the School of Nursing, Kathleen Bobay; faculty from the Stritch School of Medicine, Leanne Cribs; representatives from the Staff, Emmanuelle Escandar, D.S.D.; and representatives from the graduate students, Lauren Albee and Siobhan O’Donoghue. The Task Force also has had the benefit of the ongoing participation of Sue Penckofer, Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

The Task Force has been charged by the provost with examining administrative options for graduate education at Loyola. The essential question to be addressed by the Task Force is, what is the best way to support and advance graduate education at Loyola? In particular, the Task Force was charged to study and evaluate alternative models for graduate program organization and to provide recommendations to the president and provost.

The Task Force has met, and will continue to meet, throughout the fall of 2017, in a series of engaging, respectful, inclusive, and deliberative sessions. The work of the Task Force has included analyzing carefully current practices at Loyola, current practices throughout higher education, best practices in higher education, and the insights and experiences of organizations that advance graduate education such as the Council of Graduate Schools.

The Task Force has considered a wealth of background information about the graduate programs at Loyola, including enrollment and financial data. In its analysis of alternative administrative structures for Loyola’s graduate programs, the Task Force also has solicited and received the perspectives of every stakeholder involved in those programs. In addition to meeting with Pat Mooney-Melvin, former Interim Dean of the Graduate School, and Dean Don Heider, Chair of the Financial Planning Working Group for Academic Affairs, the Task Force will meet with Father James Prehn, S.J. regarding the mission of graduate education at Loyola. The Task Force also is receiving input from graduate students, including Graduate Student Organization leaders, as well as from representatives from the office of financial affairs and the provost’s office.

As part of its benchmarking process, the Task Force has obtained information about the administrative structure of the graduate programs at Loyola University Chicago’s peer and aspirational schools. Finally, the Task Force is carefully reviewing a wealth of research and analysis about the optimal administrative structure for graduate programs.

The Task Force plans to complete its work and issue factual findings and recommendations to the president and provost by the end of the 2017 fall semester.