Shaping a Research Agenda for Master’s Education

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Overview of Session

• Strengths and weaknesses of research available as a resource to master’s or primarily master’s institutions
• Overview of Texas State University and East Tennessee State University
• Examples of data driven and assessed initiatives at Texas State and ETSU
• Open discussion of research needs for master’s institutions.
  • How do we define success?
  • What do we wish we knew?
  • If CGS were to consider a study, what would be helpful to us?
Overview of Texas State University

• Doctoral University: Higher Research Activity
• Total Enrollment: over 38,000 total (5th largest institution in Texas)
• Hispanic Serving Institution: 36% of students are Hispanic, 52% are racial or ethnic minorities
• Graduate Enrollment: over 4,000 students (approx. 88% master’s, 12% doctoral)
• The Graduate College: 13 Doctoral Programs, 91 Master’s Programs
• 42% of graduate students part-time, 66% female, 8% international
Overview of East Tennessee State University

• Comprehensive, Regional State University with Division of Academic Affairs and Division of Health Affairs; Doctoral Research University

• 11 Colleges and Schools: Education, Arts and Sciences, Business and Technology, Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences, Nursing, Public Health, Pharmacy, Honors, Medicine, Continuing Studies, Graduate Studies

• Total Enrollment: approximately 15,000 (550 in COM and COP)

• School of Graduate Studies: 12 Doctoral Programs, 42 Master’s Programs, 30 Graduate Certificate Programs

• 5-year Graduate Program Trend Data: 53% increase applications, 18% increase enrollment; 28% increase in graduation

• Current Enrollment: just under 2500 graduate students, approx. 70% masters and 25% doctoral.

• 30% budget from state (graduate metric is degrees awarded), 70% from tuition and fees
Examples of Data Driven Initiatives at ETSU

• Graduate Education Success at ETSU: strong programs, enrollment, graduates, quality experience as reflected on exit surveys.

• Program Design/Redesign – know your audience and target market
  • Full time versus part-time; accessible to working professionals
  • Residential or available from distance
  • Enrollment capacity
  • Certificates articulating into degree programs
  • Program staffing – traditional, entrepreneurial, staffing culminating experience

• Culminating experience appropriate for major and goals

• Role of School of Graduate Studies (SGS)
  • Program approval process (quality, demand/need); graduate faculty status
  • Tracking inquiries, applications, admission, enrollment
ETSU Recruitment and Enrollment Initiatives

• Recruiter
• International Recruiter (50% effort)
• Online Graduate Student Liaison
• Yield (track applications submitted by contacts; admission)
• Web and Social Media (analytics)
• Commercial services and assessment of efficacy (landing page)
• Tours (80% apply, 70% accepted)
• University-wide initiatives
  • Non-registered students
  • Students who have not yet paid
ETSU Professional Development

- **Formal Courses for Students** — translational skills: Teaching Pedagogy for GA (500), Responsible Conduct Research (58); developed in response to exit surveys: Art of Self Marketing (15), Career Planning (19), Interpersonal Interactions (new spr ‘18), Leadership for Professionals (22)

- **Formal Courses for Faculty** — Technology Leadership (2 semesters; 183), Grant Writing (2 semesters; 67), Mentoring student Research (54), Teaching for Learning in Higher Ed (21; undergoing redesign)

- **Research**
  - Grants for Thesis/Dissertation Students (8-10 per year, competitive)
  - Illuminated magazine
  - Appalachian Research Forum (30% increase in participants last 3 years)

- **Awards** — Thesis/Dissertation/Capstone, Teaching, Service for Public Good, Mentor

- **Workshops** — Thesis/Dissertation, Meet the Deans, GRE Preparation
ETSU Retention and Graduation

• New Student Orientation (on ground, online, streamed; track participation; wish we could get data on if students who attend have smoother experience)

• **Graduate Student Success Specialists** – nearly 300 students served in last 5 years; 80% retention

• **Online Graduate Student Liaison** – number of student service requests decreased by half and correlates with adding new content to online orientation

• Fellowships – Add-On (recruit or retain “best and brightest”)

• Scholarships – Thesis/Dissertation (96% graduation), Fee Scholarship for GAs in Humanities (new), Buc$ for Books (new), two other new ones being set up

• **Boot Camp** (thesis/dissertation/capstone) – nearly 300 registrations; many graduations (all so far that could, others in progress); 2-5 students from other schools attend each semester.

• **Bucky’s Pantry** (5 years) and **Bucky’s Closet** (new)
Data Sources at Texas State

• **Strong Institutional Research Office**
  • Custom data set for graduate programs
  • Application, registration, enrollment reports
  • Retention, time to degree
  • Available for custom queries

• **Graduate College Research on Grad Ed**
  • Graduate Student Perceptions about Experience on Campus (lead: Associate Dean Dr. Eric Paulson)
  • G.P. A = Graduate Program Awareness (Associate Dean Dr. Eric Paulson)
  • Communicating with Graduate Students (lead: Assistant Dean Dr. Sandy Rao)
  • Data from admissions system, Vireo, Degree Works
Recruitment and Enrollment Initiatives at TXST

• Graduate Education a Key Goal in University’s Strategic Plan
• Declining Enrollment Initiative
• Involvement in Academic Program Review
• Sharing of Best Practices & Recruitment Funding
• Funding of International Recruiter (reports to International Office)
• Planned adoption of new admissions software
• Hire of Publication Writer
Professional Development at TXST

- **Shop Talks** / Workshops for Students & Certificate of Completion
  - Offered face-to-face, live-streamed, recorded, webinar
  - Topics identified through research, student & faculty input
- Workshops for Graduate Support Staff
- Partnership with Faculty Development
- **Restructuring of Graduate Council Meetings**
- Networking Opportunities for Graduate Advisors (new in Spring)
Retention and Graduation at TXST

• Hire of External Funding Coordinator
  • Workshops
  • Database of funding opportunities tailored to degree
  • One-on-one application support
• Thesis / Dissertation Research Support Fellowships
• Grad Bulletin: News you can use
• Active Social Media
• Running with the Graduate Deans
• Monitoring of time to degree
Questions to Spark Discussion

• How do our institutions currently define success? How would we like to define success? (performance indicators) and What data do we need to determine that success?

• Do program performance reviews happen often enough to be able to facilitate change/improvement? Would it be helpful or harmful to group programs for program review?

• What is the profile of your master’s students and how do they differ from Ph.D. students?

• Have you identified specific needs of master’s students on your campus

• If CGS were to consider a study on master’s education, what would be helpful to us?

• Graduate School/College Best Practices; Institutional Best Practices for Graduate Education (latter usually focused on undergraduate)