EXCELLENCE IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

Council of Graduate Schools
Annual Meeting
December 2, 2009

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University of Maryland
OUTLINE

I. Background

II. Program/College Reports

III. Graduate School Reports

IV. Outcomes

V. Discussion
I. BACKGROUND
UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Transforming Maryland: Higher Expectations

- Create doctoral program of **true excellence**
  - Raise standards for new students
  - Provide more competitive financial support packages
  - Enhance mentoring, advising, professional development
  - Enable and require a high level of student accomplishment
  - Increase completion rate / decrease TTD
  - Improve quality of placements in all sectors

- Identify **appropriate enrollment** for doctoral program
  - Shift to leaner and more efficient doctoral program
  - Implement enrollment reduction over 3-5 years
PRESIDENT’S RETREAT
Strategic Priorities in Year One

PLAN
Gather data on doctoral programs:
- Objectives
- Recruitment
- Benchmarks
- Placements

PLAN
Determine appropriate enrollment of doctoral programs

PARAMETERS
- Academic Excellence
- Adequate Resources

GOALS
Ensure Quality
Manage Enrollment
PROGRAM REVIEW

Excellence in Graduate Education, Parts I and II

REVIEW IN TWO PARTS:
- Academic Excellence
- Adequate Resources

PART I
- Programs and colleges collect and submit data on quality indicators
- GS analyzes data and reports to campus, colleges, programs

PART II
- Programs and colleges provide plans for funding and proposals for enrollment
- GS reviews plans and proposals and recommends target enrollment
II. PROGRAM/COLLEGE REPORTS
GUIDELINES – PART I REPORTS

Programs asked to report on quality indicators and fellowships:

• scholarly content and goals of program
• quality of program, faculty, and students
• recruitment strategies and fellowship funding
• benchmarks for satisfactory progress to degree
• expectations for faculty mentoring and program support
• expectations for student accomplishment
• record of student placements in multiple sectors
SOLICITING DATA—PART I

- Programs receive guidelines with “data books,” templates, and questions inviting discursive responses
- Programs offered great latitude in shaping their data and in choosing report “languages”
- Deans asked to provide college-level executive summary and assessment of program reports
- Dean and Assistant Dean of Graduate School visit each college and meet with Chairs and Directors of Graduate Studies
GUIDELINES– PART II REPORTS

Programs asked to assess capacity and propose enrollment targets:

Assess capacity to

• recruit students of outstanding achievement and promise
• award competitive financial support to all students making satisfactory progress toward degree
• provide students with excellent courses, mentoring, advising, professional development, and financial support
• place students in appropriate positions with high impact

Propose targets for

• total program enrollment
• annual enrollment of new students
SOLICITING PROPOSALS – PART II

• Programs receive guidelines with two instructions:
  
  • describe program’s current student financial support packages, and propose plan for financial support responsive to program benchmarks and to normative time to degree in discipline
  
  • propose optimal program size based on existing budget, existing levels of fellowships and assistantships, and any expected changes in external funding

• Programs again offered latitude in shaping data and choosing “language”

• Deans asked to evaluate program proposals and to provide their proposals for enrollment

• Dean and Associate Dean of Graduate School make second visits to colleges
DATA AND PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

Part I
- 83 Programs and 13 Colleges submit data on quality indicators and fellowships
- Data totals 1,383 pages
- Data is both quantitative and qualitative

Part II
- 83 Programs and 13 Colleges provide funding plans and enrollment proposals
- Plans and proposals total 369 pages
- Data is both quantitative and qualitative
CHALLENGES

PART I

• Disciplinary differences complicate internal comparisons
• Lack of external data complicate external comparisons

PART II

• Multiple financial variables including teaching obligations
• Economic and budgetary changes after initiation of project

BOTH

• Self-reported and hybrid data
III. GRADUATE SCHOOL REPORTS
GRADUATE SCHOOL – PART I REPORTS

Contents of Reports

1. RECRUITMENT
2. FELLOWSHIPS
3. BENCHMARKS
4. PLACEMENT
5. INFERENCES

Levels of Reports

- Campus report (50+ slides)
- Campus report broken out by colleges (100+ slides)
- College reports broken out by programs (650+ slides)
CONCLUSIONS – PART I

- Combination of Vigorous Recruitment Strategies and Competitive Support Packages
- Rigorous Enforcement of Benchmarks
- Professional Development and Placement Programs Beginning Early in Student’s Career
- Close Mentoring of Students Throughout Program

Formula for Student Success
GRADUATE SCHOOL – PART II REPORTS

- Setting Enrollment Targets
  - Program Worksheet
  - College Summary

- Communicating Enrollment Targets
  - Memo to Programs
SETTING ENROLLMENT TARGETS

- GS analyzes program/college proposals and determines preliminary recommended targets
- GS Dean and College Deans consult on program/college proposed targets and GS recommended targets and arrive at consensus
- Targets set and communicated to programs/colleges
- Programs/colleges report at end of 2011 recruitment cycle
COMMUNICATING ENROLLMENT TARGETS

MEMO: Target Enrollment Figures for Doctoral Programs

1. Background to Exercise
2. Process of Setting Enrollment Targets
3. Targets for Program XXXX with Explanation
4. Five Year Campus Enrollment Projection
IV. OUTCOMES
DELIVERABLES – PART I

- Slide shows presented to several campus constituencies
- Slide shows distributed at three levels of detail
- Best practices identified, mapped, and disseminated
DELIVERABLES – PART II

• Target total program enrollment at three levels

• Target annual new enrollment to reach totals

PROGRAM NUMBERS
COLLEGE NUMBERS
CAMPUS NUMBERS
OUTCOMES

• Extensive self-assessments throughout university
• Measures for assessing program and student success
• Catalog of best practices in recruitment, mentoring, placement
• Bases for deciding appropriate program enrollment
• Discovery and identification of important policy issues
• Comprehensive picture of graduate education
• Template for ongoing graduate program review
• Possible model for graduate program review at other institutions
V. DISCUSSION