The Role and Status of the Master’s Degree in STEM

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About Purdue

• Public land-grant institution, founded in 1869
• 5 campuses, one graduate school
• Main campus in West Lafayette
Purdue University PhD Completion Data 10+ yrs

National PhD completion rate 57% (CGS PhD Completion Project, 2008)

- < 4 yrs: 2.52%
- 4-6 yrs: 41.61%
- 7-9 yrs: 15.38%
- >10 yrs: 2.05%
- Total: 61.6%

Classes 96-2006 - 99-2009
Purdue 10yr + PhD Completion Data
96-99 Cohorts

- MS Admit Completion
- BS Admit Completion
BS vs. MS Enrollee Completion for CGS Broad Categories by Gender

- BS Admits
- MS Admits

Female
Male
BS vs. MS Enrollee Completion for CGS Broad Categories by Citizenship/Residency

BS Admits

MS Admits

domestic
international
BS vs. MS Enrollee Completion for CGS Broad Categories by Race/Ethnicity

- African American
- Asian American
- Hispanic American
- White

- BS vs. MS Admits
- BS Admits
- MS Admits

- ~50 ea
- ~800
BS vs. MS Enrollee Completion by Broad Discipline

- **Engr**
- **Life Sci**
- **Math**
- **Phys Sci**
- **Soc Sci**
- **Humanities**

Bar chart showing the percentage of BS Admits and MS Admits in each discipline.
PhD Students leaving the College of Engineering by Year

- PhD Earned
- Left w/MS
- Left w/o Degree

Computed by current year instead of by cohort.
Influential Factors

- Major Professors/Mentors
- Qualifying/Preliminary Exams
- Defined Research Project
- Academic Environment
- Personal/Family Related Stresses
- Financial Stresses
- Social Stresses

• Truth/accuracy in declaration for BS admits
• MS admits—aptitude correlation
• Software limitations in tracking
• Department culture variations
Conclusions