The Whole Student Experience: From Admissions to Student Success

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Why apply?

- Provide visibility for successful initiatives
- Establish credibility with faculty (funding and research)
- Expand campus partnerships through sharing best practices
- Highlight university investment in grad student success
- Bridge to new funding opportunities
Focusing the proposal

- Choose significant milestones in the graduate process (use existing research and local data)
- Focus on data and outcomes (research based)
- Go with what works (short timeframe, bringing partners along)
- Target collaborations on campus (who gets things done)
The Uneven Path to Success
The Uneven Path to Success
Completion from entry to exit (social science)

35% > 5%
Matching projects to problems

Admissions: comparing “input” (student profile) to “output” (completion outcomes)

Expectations/planning: career and professional development planning

Conflicts/choice points: conflict resolution dissemination

Research and writing: writing facilitators
How well do assumptions about student “quality” match completion outcomes? 1998-2005 cohorts

Admissions profiles
- Domestic/international
- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- GRE
- Undergrad institution type
- Undergrad degree
- Undergrad GPA
- Master’s info (like undergrad)
- Research experience
- Professional experience

Completion outcomes
- Attrition year
- Attrition status (left w/master’s/candidacy)
- TTD
- Publications during program
- Placement

*indicators chosen by departments and admissions committees
Career and professional development planning

www.careersuccess.msu.edu
Career Success next phases: portfolio and virtual orientation
Conflict resolution dissemination

Customize for various audiences

Increase dissemination through interactive online versions

Focus on early prevention and use in department orientations and workshops

Work with AGEP alliance institutions to offer broader access
Writing facilitators

Train current ABDs to facilitate writing groups within their department focused on a significant transition milestone:

- 2nd-year paper
- comp exams
- dissertation proposal
- paper for publication

Coordinated with MSU Writing Center
Students paid as “writing fellows” by grant
Writing facilitators

Results:

- All Sociology participants passed 2nd-year paper, most with no revisions required.
- Genetics dissertation proposals passed with no revisions required.
- 4 Neuroscience students published peer-reviewed articles.
- Students and facilitators reported that participants’ “writing and confidence level improved dramatically.”
- Both participants and facilitators felt better connected to department.
Writing facilitators

Some participant comments:

“I feel the end result was a much easier to read and more directed proposal. My committee was very impressed with the proposal and passed me with no conditions. The writing group was very helpful with the structure and arrangement of the proposal.”

“the group helped me to network and meet more people in the department. The group really helped me prepare for the scariest part for me-- faculty feedback--by doing run-throughs and asking good questions. .. it helped me grow as a "colleague" through the discussion and editing process.”

“by the end I was able to synthesize a lot of information into a concise response, and felt more confident about my conclusions.

Faculty comments:

“It has helped the students with their writing and collaboration, benefiting the instructors' mentoring and teaching skills, and helping students value collaboration and appreciate the craft of writing. It has also reduced the work load of faculty who no longer have to do all of the heavy lifting in improving their advisees' writing skills.”

“Our writing groups have definitely shown students the value of constructive criticism for effective communication of a topic to a potentially broad (but knowledgeable) scientific audience.”

CGS Ph.D. Completion Project • NSF I³
Partners

College of Agriculture & Natural Resources
Agricultural, Food & Resource Economics

College of Arts & Letters
English
Rhetoric & Writing

College of Communication Arts & Sciences
Media & Information Systems
Telecommunications

College of Engineering
Computer Science & Engineering

College of Human Medicine
Pharmacology & Toxicology

College of Social Science
Anthropology
Economics
Psychology
Sociology

College of Natural Science
Chemistry
Genetics
Neuroscience

College of Veterinary Medicine
Comparative Medicine & Integrative Biology
# Partners

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Our approach at MSU

- Cultivate networks
- Use data (external and internal) not assumptions
- Be strategic (what works and who works)
- Plan at the outset for how projects will be sustained (partnerships, new funding)