

# **Review of Graduate Programs: Masters and Doctoral**

## **Council of Graduate Schools Annual Meeting**

Pre-Meeting Workshop

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

2- 4 pm

### **Will Cantrall**

Associate Provost and Dean, Graduate School, Michigan Technological University

### **David Daleke**

Vice Provost, Graduate Education and Health Sciences and  
Dean, Graduate School, Indiana University Bloomington

### **Sarah Larsen**

Vice Provost and Dean, Graduate School, University of Houston

# Overview

- Introductions: Presenters and Institutional Contexts
- Managing the Program Review Process
- Data and Outcomes
- Struggling/Underperforming Programs



# Will Cantrell: About Michigan Tech



- Public
- Rural
- Total enrollment ~ 7300
- Graduate enrollment ~ 1400
- STEM focused (most graduate programs are OPT extension eligible)

- 125+ programs (Master's, PhD, certificates)
- Program reviews are staggered internal and external every 6 years





The background image shows the iconic Indiana University archway in Bloomington. The archway is a light-colored stone structure with two towers on either side. In the foreground, there is a large planter box filled with red and white flowers. To the left, an American flag flies on a tall pole. The scene is set on a paved walkway with lush green trees in the background under a clear blue sky.

# David Daleke



**INDIANA UNIVERSITY**  
BLOOMINGTON

- Flagship, historic campus of IU
- Enrollment
  - 38,093 Undergraduate students
  - 10,331 Graduate students
- 16 Schools and Colleges
- 101 Doctoral and 161 Masters Programs
- Program reviews required every 5-7 years





# Sarah Larsen, University of Houston

## Overview:

- ~49,000 students in Fall 2025 (~8600 graduate and professional students)
- Part of the University of Houston System
- Hispanic-serving institution
- Recently joined Big 12 Conference
- Public, R1
- 109 masters programs
- 52 Doctoral
- 4 Special Professional (OD, PHARMD, JD, MD)
- Texas Mandated Graduate Program Reviews (every 10 years)

# I. Managing the Review Process

- Initially had very loose oversight- compliance varied across campus
- Accredited programs may submit accreditation documents in place of a separate review (JD, MD, OD, PharmD, MSW, Clinical/School/Counseling Psychology, MAT, etc)
- Completely revised our internal program review process to align with state requirements
  - 10-year review schedule for all graduate programs
  - Prepared documentation, such as review timeline, optional/required templates for self-study, external review and institutional response, approval form for external reviewers
  - College completes the review and at the end of the process, after all required documents have been submitted, the Graduate School transfers funds to cover the external reviewer expenses (fixed amount)

# Review Process and Timeline

- One year before review due date, memo is sent to the department chair – this kicks off the review process.
- Department then initiates these steps of the review
  - drafts self-study (optional template)
  - identifies 2 external reviewers and submits external reviewer qualification form to the college and then Graduate School
  - Self-study shared with reviewers in preparation for site visit
- Review report received and institutional response prepared
  - All documentation sent to the Graduate School (final step)

# Continuous/Future Improvements

- Working toward standard dataset to provide to each program for self-study (increase uniformity)
- Updating the current processes per changes in the required state reviews
- Accredited programs- improve documentation for how to convert accreditation documents to graduate program review documents.



# Best Practices- Managing the Process

- Provide clear guidance for program directors/department chairs on the program review process and who is responsible for each component
  - Document processes, standard forms and make them readily available
  - Create checklist and timeline
  - Offer info session(s) (live/recorded versions)
- Incentivize completion of the review process
- Offer flexibility with timeline (if possible) and justified
  - For example, leadership transition in department/program

# **I. Questions for Table Discussion (~10 minutes)**

- a. What graduate program review process is required at your institution, and who oversees it?
- b. How does the Graduate School or Provost's Office motivate and support the review process?
- c. From the perspective of programs, departments, colleges, or the university, what is the primary motivation for conducting reviews?

## **II. Data and Outcomes**

### **Components of a Graduate Program Review**

1. Collection of relevant data
2. Written departmental self-assessment
3. Written assessment by external reviewers from the same intellectual field
4. Response to the external review by the department
5. Actions taken in response to the review by dean or provost

# Graduate Program Review at IU Bloomington

- Policy ([policies.iu.edu/policies/aca-65-procedures-program-review/index.html](http://policies.iu.edu/policies/aca-65-procedures-program-review/index.html))
- Most graduate programs are reviewed as part of a departmental review, which includes faculty and undergraduate programs.
- Professional graduate programs are reviewed through regular disciplinary accreditation reviews.
- The Graduate School is responsible for ensuring that graduate program reviews are completed and reported to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs.
- Reviews are conducted by the school dean's office.
- Graduate School guidelines for academic program review ([graduate.indiana.edu/faculty-staff-resources/curriculum-programs/academic-reviews.html](http://graduate.indiana.edu/faculty-staff-resources/curriculum-programs/academic-reviews.html)).



# Data Elements

- Faculty
  - Teaching load
  - Research and creative activity
  - Grants
  - Awards
- Program
  - Curriculum
  - Rankings
  - Peers/competitors
- Students
  - Applications
  - Enrollments
  - Financial support and resources
  - Mentoring / Career Advising
  - Completion rates
  - Time to degree
  - Placement and outcomes

# Best Practices- Data and Outcomes

- Identify data needs, gaps, and sources early
- Provide sufficient lead time for conducting surveys and data collection processes to support the self study
- Align data with agreed upon metrics for each discipline
- Assess validity, quality and consistency of the data
- Include relevant comparative data from peer programs
- Be prepared to provide the external review committee with additional data during the site visit

## II. Questions for Table Discussion (~10 minutes)

- d/e. What data do you collect for graduate program reviews on your campus and who provides the data (graduate school, department/school, IR office)?
- f. How is the data used to guide the assessment, and the trajectory, of the department/program?
- g. What challenges do you face in data collection for program review? How do you plan to address these challenges?

# III. Struggling Programs

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- How do you know they are struggling?
  - Low/declining enrollment
  - Changes in retention
  - Difficulty recruiting
  - Student issues which come to the Graduate School
  - Change in the funding profile
- What is the role of an external review for a struggling program?
  - Assessment of curriculum (current/up-to-date?)
  - Best practices (recruitment, advising/mentorship, funding...)
  - Broader context
  - An outside perspective



# Struggling Programs

## How an external review can help a struggling program

- Outsiders pointing out the fact that the program is struggling
- Outsiders pointing out why the program is struggling
- A view on the best practices within that discipline/context

## **Corollary: Thriving Programs**

## How can an external review can help a thriving program?

- Outsiders pointing out that the program is thriving (they probably already know...)
- Outsiders pointing out why the program is thriving
- A view on how to continue and amplify success

# How to get what you need from the review?

- Selection of the external reviewers
- Data that is provided to the review team
- The charge given to the review team
- The structure of the review
  - At Tech, review begins with a meeting of review team and Assoc. Provost for graduate education, Assoc. Provost for undergraduate education, Dean of the college)
  - Review concludes with report out to those same people plus department chair
- Template for the external review team report

# Best Practices- Struggling Programs

- At least one external reviewer should have a position of budget authority. This can bring a level of fiscal reality to the recommendations
- Kickoff meeting: review team plus dean(s) but not unit being reviewed
  - Go over their formal charge
  - Tell the review team what you want out of the review (which may not be explicitly in the formal charge)
- Summary meeting: Kickoff meeting plus leader(s) of unit being reviewed
- Template for the external review team report
- Template for the subsequent reports to program, provost, etc...

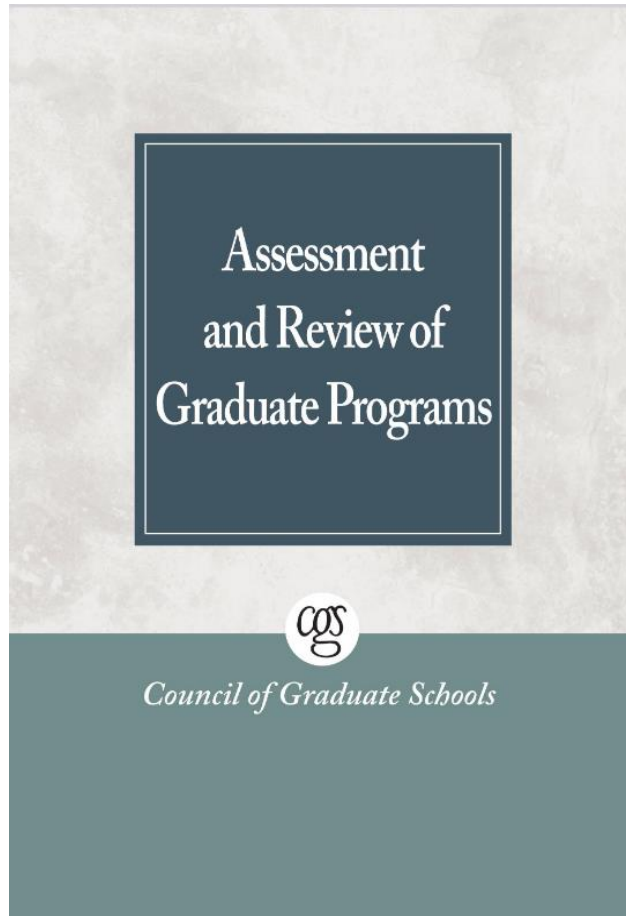
### **III. Questions for Table Discussion (~10 minutes)**

- h. What recommendations do you want from an external review?  
(Or not want?)
- i. What recommendations do you want for a program that is struggling?
- j. Where does the external review report go? Provost? President? Board? Is there followup?

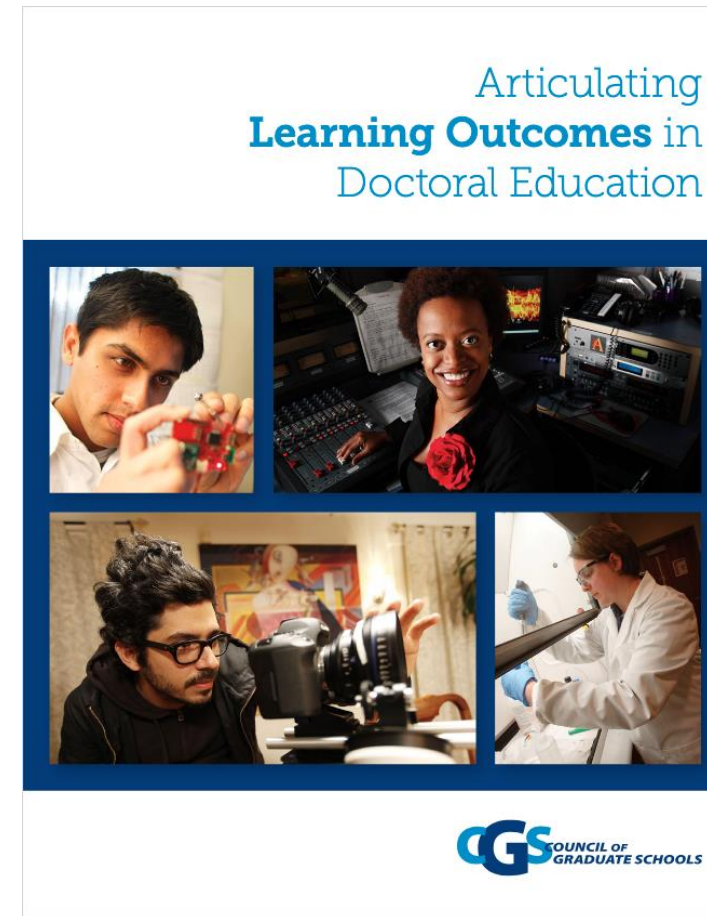


# **Final Questions and Wrap up**

# CGS Resources



[cgsnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/assessment\\_and\\_review\\_2011-2.pdf](https://cgsnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/assessment_and_review_2011-2.pdf)



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