



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

TO: University Community
FROM: Barbara R. Snyder *Barbara*
Executive Vice President and Provost
DATE: June 22, 2006
SUBJECT: Report of the Committee on Graduate Education
Part II: Assessing Quality of PhD Programs

Graduate education at Ohio State has been the subject of extensive examination for the past two years. Central to that examination was the appointment in June 2004 of a Committee on Graduate Education, chaired by Richard Freeman, Dean of the College of Mathematical and Physical Sciences. The committee was charged with:

- assessing the alignment of doctoral education with the Academic Plan;
- recommending a sustainable funding model for graduate education so as to align state subsidy with quality;
- suggesting how resources might be redistributed or reinvested to support outstanding doctoral programs; and
- devising metrics that might be used for a cyclical review of the quality of doctoral programs.

In September, 2005, the Freeman Committee released Part I of its report (available on the Office of Academic Affairs website at http://oaa.osu.edu/pdf/grad_report.pdf). Focused on financial and internal processes, it included the following key findings:

1. Ohio State lags behind its peers in the production of Ph.D. and Masters graduates.
2. Doctoral programs vary substantially in quality and should be assessed on a regular cycle.
3. The quality of applicants and admitted students also varies widely across the university's doctoral programs.
4. Our fiscal model for distributing doctoral subsidy does not support doctoral program quality.

The Freeman Committee, with the concurrence of the University Senate Fiscal Committee, recommended that Ohio State replace its current fiscal model for supporting doctoral education and, instead, use a funding formula based to a greater extent on quality rather than credit hours.

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Part II of the Freeman Committee's report is now available for review. This final portion of the report focuses on assessing the quality of PhD programs. In this further study, the committee has recommended that we:

1. separate PhD students from tagged or terminal Master's program students in all data systems;
2. require all PhD programs to submit documentation of the placement of their doctoral graduates; and
3. require all programs to complete surveys in order to institute data exchange, program by program, with AAU universities as soon as possible.

The committee also underscored the importance of attracting a highly qualified scholar and manager to be appointed dean of the Graduate School. A nationwide search for the next dean was launched in February and is energetically underway.

Meanwhile, with this memorandum, we will start to implement recommendations made by the Freeman Committee, a process to be finalized under the leadership of the new Graduate School dean.

The overarching goal of our Academic Plan, to become the premier land-grant research university in the country, will not be realized without concerted attention to our graduate programs. The work of the Freeman Committee, along with that of the Beck Committee to Review the Graduate School (report available at http://oaa.osu.edu/pdf/gsrc_final.pdf), will do much to help us achieve that goal. I am deeply grateful to Dean Freeman and the members of the committee for their efforts.