

Provost's Charge

Ad hoc Committee of the Senate Fiscal Committee Funding model for doctoral education based upon quality

To achieve our goal to become the nation's top public research and teaching university, it is essential that we offer doctoral programs with unparalleled quality. The Freeman and the Beck Committee reports provide the perspectives to create the environment that nourishes and supports the highest quality doctoral programs. While the Dean of the Graduate School, with appropriate consultation, will need to resolve the metrics that are used to determine doctoral program quality and the processes of decision-making linked to metrics, it is clear that our fiscal resources must be directed to enhance the quality of doctoral programs. Recognizing this fact, the Freeman Committee recommended the creation of a "...a (doctoral) funding model based upon quality and graduation success-rather than credit hours" of instruction"...that uses the "BoR doctoral subsidy for doctoral education only." This is not only the right thing to do but it is the necessary thing to do to enhance our stature as the State of Ohio's lead University.

In consideration of the Freeman report in particular, the University Senate Fiscal Committee supported the Freeman Committee's number one recommendation, that doctoral program funding should be based upon quality. However, relative to the budget model it stated, "Any proposals for changes in funding should be as consistent as possible with the existing budget process." In addition, it advises that to avoid unintended consequences of shifting doctoral funding based upon quality, "...it would not be institutionally sound to propose changes in funding for doctoral programs without full awareness of how these changes would impact those units focusing on master's-level education." The Senate Fiscal Committee further advises that graduate fee authorizations originally distributed in the base budgets of the colleges should remain in those base budgets, but the colleges should be responsible for the use of those fee authorizations to support high quality doctoral education and master's degree education for terminal masters degree programs. The assessment of the Beck Committee report by the Senate Fiscal Committee clearly implicates important decisions that must be made by the Dean of the Graduate School using that budget to support high quality doctoral and master's degree programs. These perspectives and others in the respective reports are important as we devise our strategies to redirect our resources to secure the very best doctoral programs.

The implementation of a plan to direct doctoral funding to high quality doctoral programs will take a number of years. The Board of Regents Innovation Incentive funds, including an institutional

match, provide an opportunity to direct funds to high quality doctoral programs in the STEM disciplines across a planned 10 years beginning in FY-2006. At the same time central funding of Targeted Investments in Excellence Plans was determined, STEM discipline-related doctoral programs were identified by the Interim Dean of the Graduate School to receive the FY-07 allocation of the Innovation Incentive funds. Allocation of the Innovation Incentive funds that are available in future years should be distributed consistent with guidelines, likely to continue to be the STEM-related doctoral programs, in manner that continues to be in alignment with funding the very best doctoral programs.

University funds other than those associated with the Innovation Incentive funds should be distributed according to principles and perspectives developed by this ad hoc committee. It is clear that implementation of a plan to direct funds to high quality doctoral programs will take a number of years. I anticipate that this committee will present several possible models for distributing funding to high quality doctoral programs, that takes into consideration the opportunities to “seed” doctoral programs that with increased stature, will contribute to enhancing the reputation of this university. Inevitably, this focusing of our resources will mean dis-investment in weak, non-core, graduate programs that do not enhance the reputation of the university. I am hopeful that the committee might complete its work by the end of February, 2007. This will provide the opportunity to consider any recommendations that might impact aspects of the budget process for FY-2008.