

Funding Models for Doctoral Education Based Upon Quality: Proposed Implementation Plan for Srinivasan Committee Report

Patrick S. Osmer

May 2, 2007, Updated July 5, 2007

At the March meeting of the Council of Deans, agreement was reached on the basic approach and principles for following through on the recommendations of the Srinivasan committee report. In this report I present an implementation plan for doing so.

The charge from the Provost is to identify high-quality doctoral programs that will enhance the reputation of the university and provide them with increased support. We must also identify, “weak, non-core graduate programs that do not enhance the reputation of the university” and develop a mechanism for disinvesting in them.

Vice Provost Michael Sherman notes that “the Senate Fiscal Committee recommended and the Deans concurred that processes in place should be used if possible,” and he also points out that we will have completed the biennial dialogue process for all colleges by December 31, 2007. These dialogues provide an important basis for the more detailed process for assessing on a college-by-college basis all our doctoral programs, as described below.

The goal is to develop a process that is

- Fair
- Recognizes the differences among our 92 doctoral programs
- Rigorous
- Effective in selecting our highest quality programs, and
- Defensible

To begin the dialogue process with each college, the Graduate School proposes to use the following indicators, where applicable, to identify the strongest programs as candidates for enhanced support:

- a) Graduate Record Examination scores and percentiles
- b) Placement of doctoral graduates
- c) Overall program quality and centrality
- d) Time to candidacy and time to completion of degree
- e) Ratio of number of students enrolled to number of students completing Ph.D. work
- f) Student diversity

The Graduate School recognizes that that not all indicators are applicable to all programs and will entertain other criteria for particular programs if a convincing case can be made. Furthermore, the Graduate School does not intend to take a formulaic approach.

However, the Graduate School does expect that suitable quality indicators can be agreed for each program. Finally, the Graduate School recognizes that we will have to begin with heterogeneous national program quality indicators because the NRC review is currently under way, U. S. News and World Report does not cover all subjects, and so on. Nonetheless, most programs will have some basis of estimating how they compare with their counterparts in other universities.

For the next step in selecting programs for enhancement, the Graduate School proposes, as described in the Srinivasan report, that the colleges consider the following criteria:

- a) New or emerging opportunities in a field where Ohio State can excel
- b) Ways that a program can gain a distinctive edge relative to competing institutions
- c) Improvement of diversity
- d) New approaches to recruiting high-quality graduate students
- e) Commitment of department and college to strengthening the doctoral program

Outline of Steps for Carrying out Assessment Process

On this basis, then, the Graduate School proposes the steps below as a process for our internal assessment of doctoral programs at Ohio State.

A. Initial Assessment Process for Each College¹

Step 1. Graduate School Dean meets privately with College Dean to:

- Present information compiled by Graduate School and its initial observations of programs in the college
- Describe process proposed for assessment of graduate programs in the college
- Engage in initial dialogue with Dean about programs in the college, discuss any questions raised by the Dean, and map out next steps for the college assessment

Step 2. Graduate School Dean and College Dean meet with department and graduate program chairs in college to discuss the initial data, describe the process, and address any questions or comments that arise.

Step 3. College Dean carries out internal process for assessing programs and selecting candidates for enhanced support as well as any candidates for disinvestment.

Step 4. Graduate Dean and College Dean meet privately to discuss the recommendations of the College Dean for programs to enhance and programs to disinvest in.

¹ A similar process will be developed for interdisciplinary programs that involve multiple colleges.

B. Compilation of all college dialogues, recommendation to Provost

Step 1. The graduate school compiles and assesses the results of the 17 dialogues, making use of the graduate school advisory process.

Step 2. The graduate school Dean presents preliminary findings to the Provost for discussion.

Step 3. Following interactions with the Provost, the Dean of the Graduate School presents its recommendations to the Provost.

Step 4. The Provost, Dean of the Graduate School and College Deans meet as needed to discuss the recommendations.

C. Decision by Provost

The Provost makes the final decision about programs for enhancement and programs for disinvestment and announces the results.

D. Timeline

The entire review process will take a significant effort. It will also be important to have the process not drag on too long because of the need both to begin enhancing our best programs and to act expeditiously on the findings for each college once the internal recommendations have been made. Therefore we should begin the process during the summer of 2007. The data for Step A, Initial Assessment for Each College, will be available by September 1. The college recommendations should be completed by December 31, 2007. Then Steps B and C will be carried out during Winter Quarter, 2008.