



# Professional Science Master's: Feasibility Planning

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# Determining Feasibility: Key Considerations

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- Establishment of broad-based faculty support
- Professional development component
- Workforce relevance





# Approaches to PSM Program Development

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- Creation of entirely new program
  - gaining approvals more complex and takes more time
  
- “Professionalizing” existing program
  - adding professional development component
  - adding a professional track or
  - developing a program that builds on an existing related program





# Foci of Initial Planning Activities

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- Employment projections
- The expertise, interests, background, commitment, and availability of qualified faculty members
- Departmental, collegiate, university, and/or system-level support
- University priorities and culture
- Advisory board prospects





# Foci of Initial Planning Activities, Cont'd.

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- Qualifications and requirements sought in new employees
- Prospective applicant pools
- Student demand
- Adequacy of available program resources (internal and external) and sources of student funding
- Sustainability





# Garnering Support

- Various groups—faculty, college & university administrators, and system-wide or state-level support.
- Garnering support includes conferences, meetings, and/or workshops aimed at building buy-in for the program.





# Garnering Support, Cont'd.

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- Faculty buy-in is essential—“top down” approaches and administrative buy-in alone are insufficient.
- PSM faculty member champion





# Garnering Support *Faculty Members*

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## Allaying concerns:

- Impact on research productivity
- External engagement
- Pedagogy
- Impact on doctoral programs
- Rigor







# Garnering Support

## *College and University Administrators*

- A dean or department head may be able to facilitate internal review process and secure provost/presidential support.
  - Likely to have external contacts at levels less accessible to faculty members.
  - Might be especially helpful in obtaining consensus support & backing of fellow deans or heads of participating colleges and departments.
- Graduate dean





# Garnering Support *System or State Level Support*

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- Connect to established priorities and strategic directions.
- Demonstrate role of PSM in workforce development.
- System leaders in excellent position to engage state legislators in recognizing economic development value of PSM as an outcome of partnership between higher education and employment sectors.

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# Developing a Financial Plan

- Costs vary among institutions & programs and include both start-up costs and recurring costs.
  
- Possible costs of feasibility planning
  - conference and meetings
  - workforce needs assessment
  - student demand assessment
  - external advisory board development
  - formal PSM affiliation
  - marketing and advertising





# Financial Plan, Cont'd.

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- Recurring costs
  - Personnel
  - Student support
- Potential sources of funding
  - internal university allocations
  - industry and business support
  - external grant funds
  - state legislative support
  - contributions from advisory board members
  - tuition and fee revenue





# Creating an External Advisory Board

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- Actively involved with program faculty
  - clarifying program objectives
  - identifying expected learning and professional skills
  - developing learning outcomes
  - ensuring regional workforce needs will be met
  
- Regular meetings to provide ongoing advice.





# Identification of Advisory Board Members

- About 8-12 representatives from the employment and community sectors
- One or two students





# Advisory Board Roles

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- Advocate for PSM at local, state, and national levels
- Assist in development of internship sites
- Identify site-based student projects
- Provide financial support
- Hire graduates
- Send current employees to PSM programs and cover their tuition

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# Advisory Board Roles, Cont'd.

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- Role will evolve over planning, implementation, and operational phases of program development.
- When program is operational, the advisory board will assume important role in ongoing evaluation and “fine-tuning” to maintain its currency and attractiveness to students and employers.







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