

Assessment and Review of Graduate Programs: Doctoral

The Graduate Review &
Improvement Process (GRIP)

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What is GRIP?

- GRIP is a **student-centered** and **action-oriented** program assessment project
- Puts evaluation & program improvement in the hands of **students, faculty and staff**

Where it Began

Graduate Professional and Education Assembly University of Minnesota

Academic Program Evaluation

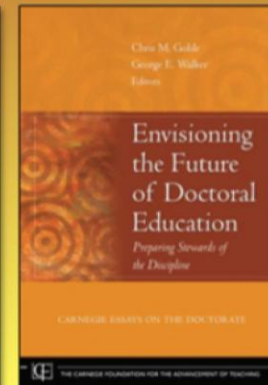
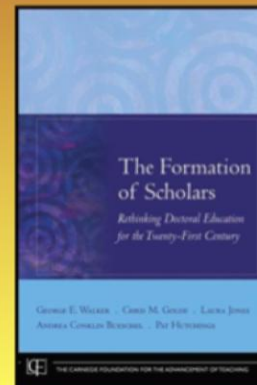
Monday, April 18, 2011

The Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate

Keynote speakers:

Chris Golde
Stanford University

George Walker
Cleveland State University



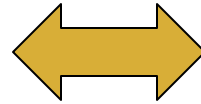
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Why?

External Review: Every 5 to 10 years

Summative

- Experts in the field
- Self-study report
- Exit interview



Internal Ongoing Improvement Process

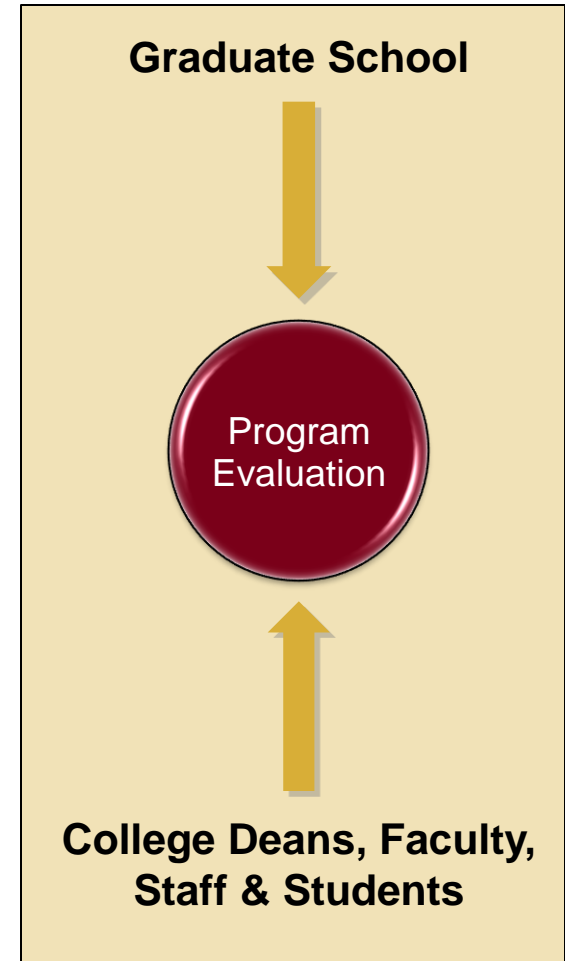
Developmental

- Systematic listening to student and faculty input
- Ongoing adjustment of educational activities to program goals
- Bottom-up approach to quality metrics

Previously administered by
the Graduate School

Measuring from the Bottom-Up

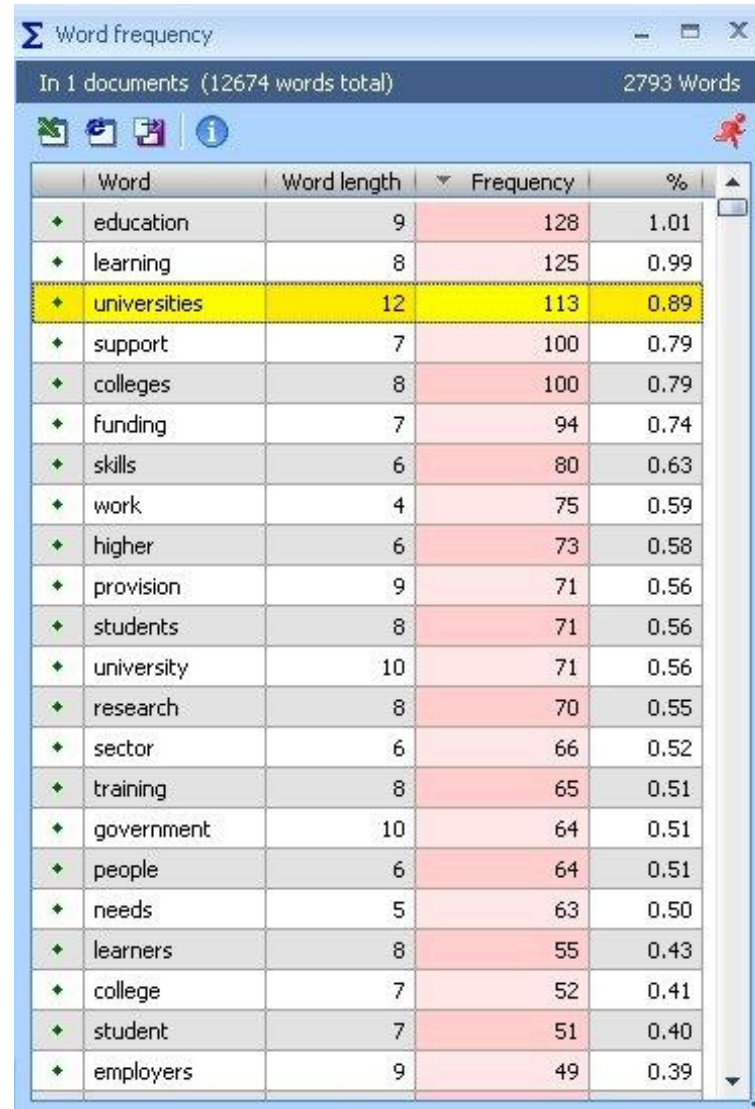
- In FY12/13, Graduate School funding allocations to colleges were based on **discipline-independent, quantitative measures** (time to degree, completion/attrition, placement)
- GRIP allows programs to define **discipline-specific** metrics & outcomes using **qualitative data**



Qualitative Measures & Methods

- Measuring intangibles in graduate education & research
 - How can we measure **originality and innovation**?
 - How do we quantify **intellectual risk-taking**?
 - How will we gauge **opportunities to “fail or explore dead ends”**?
 - How should we evaluate the **crossing of disciplinary boundaries**?
- Methodology
 - Focus groups, interviews, town hall meetings, etc.
 - **Content analysis** of results (e.g. MAXQDA, qualitative data analysis)

- **Content Analysis Tool**
 - Allows for content analysis of focus groups and interviews
 - Word counts; recurring themes; demographic analysis



Word frequency

In 1 documents (12674 words total) 2793 Words

Word	Word length	Frequency	%
education	9	128	1.01
learning	8	125	0.99
universities	12	113	0.89
support	7	100	0.79
colleges	8	100	0.79
funding	7	94	0.74
skills	6	80	0.63
work	4	75	0.59
higher	6	73	0.58
provision	9	71	0.56
students	8	71	0.56
university	10	71	0.56
research	8	70	0.55
sector	6	66	0.52
training	8	65	0.51
government	10	64	0.51
people	6	64	0.51
needs	5	63	0.50
learners	8	55	0.43
college	7	52	0.41
student	7	51	0.40
employers	9	49	0.39

What Do We Hope to Learn?

- What is the ***purpose*** of the program?
 - What are the desired outcomes?
- What is the ***rationale and educational purpose*** of each element of the program?
 - Which elements of the program should be retained and affirmed?
 - Which elements could usefully be changed or eliminated?
- How do you ***know***?
 - What *evidence* aids in answering those questions?
 - What evidence can be collected to determine whether changes serve the desired outcomes?

Source: “**The Challenges of Doctoral Program Assessment: Lessons from the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate,**”
Chris M. Golde, Laura Jones, Andrea Conklin Bueschel, George E. Walker

What Are the Benefits?

- **For participating programs:** Gain evaluation skills and experiences appropriate to their discipline and organizational context
- **For faculty:** Develop strategies for clearly and effectively articulating program goals, standards, and achievements to diverse audiences
- **For students:** Gain evaluation expertise that will give them a voice in shaping the future direction of the discipline and allow them to develop skills applicable to their future careers, both academic and non-academic. Use for dissertations. Students benefit from the review while they are still in the program

Sampling of Findings

- Only **one out of almost 50 students** who participated in focus groups in one department expressed an aspiration to be a faculty member at an R1 institution
- Focus group participants described **two "castes" of students**, with the line falling between those who have graduate assistantships and those who do not
- Students questioned the **number of courses required** for a Ph.D. degree, which they claimed was over 30% more than comparable programs and allowed little time for academic research
- All **students who are in a cohort expressed satisfaction** with their program, and all who are not in a cohort wished they were

Implementing GRIP

- **Eight programs volunteered** for GRIP, from the following colleges:
 - Carlson School of Management
 - College of Education & Human Development
 - College of Food, Agricultural & Natural Resource Sciences
 - College of Pharmacy
 - College of Science & Engineering
 - College of Veterinary Medicine
 - Humphrey School of Public Affairs
 - School of Dentistry

Challenges

- **Decentralized model** of graduate education
- **Reluctance to invest** in program review
- Combination with **undergraduate education** program review
- **2015 accreditation** of the U of MN Twin Cities campus

GRIP Investment

- Graduate School contributed a **one-time investment of \$80,000** to fund:
 - Graduate assistants serving as consultants to the eight participating pilot programs
 - Publication/presentation costs
 - Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute (MESI)
- Plus **student, faculty & staff time** from participating programs
- We are implementing the program with **resources that we already have on campus** (e.g., College of Education & Human Development; graduate assistants)

GRIP Pilot Project Includes:

- **Workshops** on program evaluation
- Graduate **evaluation colloquium** for student leaders
- **Resources**/toolkit (survey instruments, focus group protocols)
- **Consulting assistance** from University experts in higher education and program evaluation, including the Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute (MESI)



Thank you.

Questions?



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