

# PROGRAM REVIEW AND QUALITY ASSESSMENT

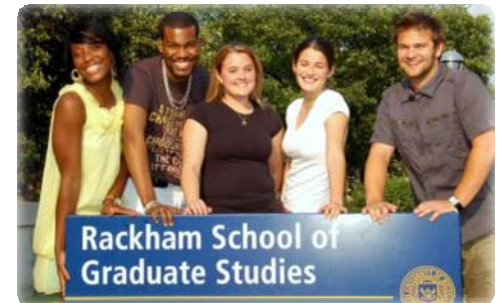
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# University of Michigan

- ▶ Large public research-intensive University
- ▶ Graduate School responsible for 105 Ph.D. programs, 100 master's programs in 17 schools and colleges
- ▶ ~15,000 graduate and professional students on campus. Most students (nearly all Ph.D. students) are full time.



# Why Should a Graduate Dean Measure Quality of Graduate Programs?

- ▶ To help to improve quality
  - Address poor quality in a systematic way
  - Encourage improvement by faculty
- ▶ To assess the validity of student concerns
- ▶ To ensure that campus priorities are taken seriously
- ▶ To respond to external raters and rankers
- ▶ To assure University leaders about quality



# Measuring Quality is Harder than it Appears

- ▶ Graduate education is multidimensional
- ▶ Differences among degrees
- ▶ Differences among disciplines and fields of study
- ▶ Indicators are subject to distortion
- ▶ Only some factors are under the control of the institution or the faculty leaders of graduate programs



# Possible Measures of Quality

- ▶ Admissions
  - Selectivity / Yield
  - GRE scores, GPA
  - National fellowships/traineeships
- ▶ Faculty capacity and quality
- ▶ Comparisons to peers
  - Competing for new students
  - National rankings
- ▶ Career Success of Students
  - Short run
  - Long run
- ▶ Quality of program
  - Mentoring practices
  - Student community
  - Diversity
  - Competitive for external funding
  - Honors and awards
  - Completion rate
  - Time to degree
  - Publications
  - Conference presentations
  - Professional development

# University of Michigan Program Review Process



- ▶ Four year review cycle of every degree program
- ▶ Process is iterative and interactive
- ▶ Faculty engagement is key
- ▶ Reviews are data-driven, with multiple levels of comparison
- ▶ Students provide input in surveys focused on behavior, opportunity, and academic progress
- ▶ Primary goal is program improvement; secondary goal is resource allocation
- ▶ Graduate School leads the process; other deans are full participants

# Ask Faculty How They Think About Quality

- ▶ You learn what is important in their program
- ▶ You give legitimacy to the process of quality measurement
- ▶ You avoid holding programs to inappropriate standards



# Quality as Defined by Faculty in Biological Chemistry

- ▶ Scientific productivity of students
- ▶ Success of faculty as mentors and instructors
- ▶ Receipt of fellowship and training grant support
- ▶ Progress of students through the program
- ▶ Participation of students in departmental scientific activities
- ▶ Long term career outcomes





# Quality as Defined by Faculty in Urban & Regional Planning

- ▶ Placement in high-level research and government positions (outside academia)
- ▶ Securing grants and fellowships from outside sources
- ▶ Reputation of peer institutions with which we regularly compete for graduate students
- ▶ Research productivity while in doctoral studies, including publications and conference papers
- ▶ Completion rate
- ▶ Timely completion of requirements



# Quality as Defined by Faculty in Comparative Literature

- ▶ Reputation among peer institutions
- ▶ Diversity of race/ethnicity and gender in graduate students
- ▶ Quality of the intellectual engagement between faculty and students
- ▶ Honors and awards to students
- ▶ Proportion of graduates in academic / scholarly positions



# Measuring Quality in the Context of Program Review

- ▶ If goal of program review is program improvement, then measures need to be customized to the program
- ▶ If goal of program review is resource allocation or program closure, then measures need to be standardized across programs



# Institutional Choices we Considered in Designing Program Review

- ▶ How centralized should this process be?
- ▶ Role of school/college deans
- ▶ Importance of institutional research capacity
- ▶ Role of external reviewers
- ▶ Connection between undergraduate and graduate education
- ▶ Frequency of review
- ▶ Visibility of the results



# Potential Products of Program Review

- ▶ Report
- ▶ Conversation
- ▶ Action Plan
- ▶ Resource Allocation
- ▶ Communication to the constituent groups that care about quality



# Strategies that Help Us Gain Acceptance for Recommendations

- ▶ Focus on quality measures endorsed by faculty
- ▶ Hold conversations about why the data look as they do, to give faculty a chance to explain patterns
- ▶ Invite school/college deans to participate in the conversation
- ▶ Include the voices of students

# Program Review can Make You a Better Graduate Dean

- ▶ You learn about your graduate programs
- ▶ You have a context to interpret external ratings and rankings
- ▶ You can make better decisions about policies and services to the programs
- ▶ Working with other University leaders, you can allocate resources toward the greatest needs and the greatest opportunities to serve graduate education

