WSU GRADUATE SCHOOL

2013 MASTER'S-ONLY PROGRAM REVIEW SUMMARY REPORT

October 10, 2013

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Introduction

Systematic program review is essential for the development, growth, and sustainability of excellence in graduate degree programs. According to guidelines established by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), "a critical strength of reviewing graduate programs alone is the opportunity for a thorough, focused, in-depth review. With the narrower focus on graduate programs only, both the department in its self-study and the review committee in its report can give more attention to quality indicators unique to graduate education." (CGS Assessment and Review of Graduate Programs, 2011, p.6) The review process offers a comprehensive look at the program in which faculty and academic leadership: (1) clearly state and then evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the program, (2) assess, share, and improve departmental practices, and (3) develop strategies for program growth and development.

Background

In 2005, President V. Lane Rawlins and Provost and Executive Vice President Robert C. Bates commissioned the first university-wide Graduate Education Commission (GEC). The GEC was charged to "articulate a new identity for graduate education at WSU and to propose the means to achieve this identity." (GEC Report, 2006, p. 4) The GEC provided 13 recommendations related to the enhancement of doctoral education including the recommendation to "develop and implement a performance-driven model for routinely assessing and evaluating the quality of graduate programs." (GEC Report, 2006, p. 3) This recommendation encouraged a focus on student-centered factors such as student quality, mentoring, time to degree, and percent of PhD students completing their degree.

In 2008, the Graduate School hired a Director of Graduate Planning and Assessment to update and revitalize the process of graduate program review and assessment. A schedule was set for graduate programs to develop self-studies and assessment plans, and technical support was provided to build the capacity of faculty and program staff. The review process was updated, again, in 2011 to provide more timely and relevant information to graduate chairs and directors regarding program quality, faculty involvement, student learning outcomes, and climate and to support the university's regional accreditation requirements, especially in the area of educational assessment.

In Fall 2011/Spring 2012, doctoral programs participated in the updated review process—an objective process that involved a review of data provided by each program, a review of data provided by Institutional Research, and an evaluation of the program's policies and practices that support graduate students. The goals of the review process were to (1) improve the training and education of graduate students; (2) ensure that graduate students are optimally prepared for careers in their field; and (3) assist in efforts to support the mission of the university.

Program Review Process

In Spring 2013, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School invited all master's-only programs to participate in the review process. In preparation for program review, each graduate chair and/or program director was asked to submit the following information:

1. *Student Handbook* — or similar documents describing the program structure, curriculum, policies, and practices

2. *Assessment Plan* — including program objectives, student learning outcomes, data sources, assessment tools, and recent assessment or self-study reports

3. *Student Annual Reviews* — for all master's-only students in the previous academic year

4. *List of All Current Students* — with indication of financial support (assistantships, fellowships, etc.)

5. *List of Recent Graduates* — with information describing each student's employment history since graduation from WSU

While this information was collected, the Associate Dean and the Assessment Specialist for the Graduate School, with assistance from Institutional Research, assembled and analyzed the following data:

1. *Programs of Study* — A sample of 10 programs of study for students in the program was reviewed for consistency, adherence to policy, use of conjoint and cooperative courses, and faculty committee composition. These documents were taken from the Graduate School's Imaging System.

2. *Catalog Courses* — Courses listed in the catalog were reviewed; conjoint and cooperative courses were noted for discussion during the review meeting.

3. *Program Profiles* — The Program Profile, compiled by Institutional Research, shows new enrollment and total enrollment from 2007 through 2012; degrees conferred over that time; average time to degree for full-time, part-time and overall; cohort performance (retention); graduate assistantships by student and department; and faculty involvement (chairing committees).

4. *Fact Sheet* — Fact sheets are maintained by the program in the Graduate School's Fact Sheet database. Each fact sheet has a degree description, along with other information about admission and program requirements. On the back is a list of program faculty, along with their teaching and research interests. The database also contains additional information about faculty eligibility to participate on student committees.

5. *Graduate Student Survey Data* — In Spring 2011, the WSU Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC) conducted a comprehensive, university-wide survey of all graduate students regarding their perceptions of their program and faculty, mentoring, assistantships, and climate, both at the program and university level. Programs were given aggregate data for their program and average responses for the entire surveyed master's student population.

The review materials were summarized in a discussion guide used at the program review meeting. The discussion guide and review documents were posted on the Graduate School's Program Review and Assessment SharePoint site so participants could access all of the materials prior to the review meeting.

2013 Master's-Only Program Review Meetings

Review meetings were scheduled for the Graduate School dean, associate deans, and assessment specialist to meet with the department chair and/or program director, as well as interested program faculty, for each master's-only program. College and branch campus administrators were also invited to attend the meetings. See Appendix B: Spring/Summer 2013 Graduate Program Review Schedule for a list of the review meetings.

The reviews created an opportunity for program faculty and administrators to focus on key issues impacting graduate students and their experience in master's only programs. The review process stimulated discussions about questions such as: What are the unique features of our master's-only programs, and how are they meeting student needs? Is the program teaching and training students effectively? Does the program meet institutional goals? Are faculty involved in creating and implementing the program's vision? In addition, the program reviews pointed out program strengths and weaknesses and helped faculty to identify strategies for program improvement and enhancement, particularly in assessment practices.

The majority of faculty who participated in the reviews expressed appreciation of the perspectives offered by the Graduate School team, although a few individuals questioned and/or raised concerns regarding the critiques, suggestions, and/or data provided to them. Several programs had made substantive changes to their curricula and/or graduate programs while other programs were restructuring or experiencing changes in key leadership and/or faculty positions. The review meetings followed the discussion guide prepared by the Graduate School including the following topics:

1. Recruitment and retention
   a. Discussed low program enrollments, student admissions, and recruitment strategies
   b. Discussed part-time vs. full-time program enrollments and possible retention and time-to-degree issues; recommended that programs consider using annual reviews and exit interviews to collect information from students who do not complete the program
   c. Discussed TOEFL requirements and exceptions to policy for international students who apply to graduate programs

2. Program quality and student outcomes
   a. Examined programs of study, course loads, and/or possible issues with conjoint courses

b. Discussed thesis and non-thesis options, degree concentrations, and availability of courses in master's-only programs
c. Reviewed student internships and preceptor processes and areas to improve student experience and learning throughout the curriculum
d. Discussed annual review process for students in fast-tracked master's programs; recommended that programs collect information from students with exit interviews, post-graduation surveys, and alumni/employer surveys; shared good practices and recommended improvements to student annual review process for two year programs
e. Shared 2011 Graduate Student Survey results with programs including: academic quality, availability of courses, writing and preparation to work collaboratively, professional development, mentoring and advising, and climate issues related to the program and the university

3. Policies and procedures
a. Offered advice to graduate chairs and directors on writing program bylaws and submitting them to Faculty Senate for approval
b. Advised programs on changes to the Graduate School's grading policy (S/U) for all research credits (700/702/800); recommended that programs inform faculty and update their student handbooks and/or websites accordingly
c. Discussed exceptions to policy and ways to reduce departmental and Graduate School workloads
d. Reviewed program materials for students; recommended that programs develop and maintain comprehensive resources for master's students including: student handbooks, departmental websites, degree requirements, and student annual review forms
e. Recommended that programs without student handbooks either develop them or provide similar information on their website; information should be updated annually
f. Requested that programs inform students and provide links to the Graduate School's Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities policy and the WSU Executive Policy on Consensual Relationships
g. Recommended that programs keep their fact sheets up-to-date including: program descriptions, degree requirements, faculty research interests, and lists of faculty associated with the program

4. Interdisciplinary, multi-campus, and cooperative programs
a. Reviewed core course requirements and discussed the transfer of credits and transcripts for students in cooperative programs with other higher education institutions
b. Discussed online teaching and learning and classroom management practices
c. Discussed the transition from masters to doctoral programs in multi-campus environments
d. Discussed program administration in multi-campus environments and ways to improve student experience in the program
e. Discussed need for academic rigor and consistency across campuses and programs

5. Program growth and development
a. Discussed changes in department chair/program director position
b. Discussed changes in faculty positions
c. Discussed opportunities for program growth
d. Discussed development of new degrees, online degrees, and/or degree concentrations

6. Assessment planning, program practices, and use of assessment data for improvement:
a. Recommended changes to assessment plan to reflect current assessment practices and use of assessment data by faculty

b. Recommended changes to student learning outcomes, shared Bloom's Taxonomy, and discussed methods for writing student learning outcomes so they are more discrete and easier to measure
c. Recommended that separate student learning outcomes and/or assessment plans be developed for master's-only and doctoral programs
d. Recommended that student learning outcomes be published in graduate student handbooks and/or be provided to students on the department's website to meet NWCCU accreditation requirements
e. Discussed assessment practices and student learning outcomes in studio and performing arts programs
f. Discussed use of data collection matrix to align student learning outcomes with data sources and review of assessment evidence
g. Discussed state review and professional accreditation requirements for selected programs
h. Discussed assessment requirements for online programs; recommended that programs collect, disaggregate, and review assessment evidence with faculty on a regular basis as these programs develop
i. Discussed assessment reporting requirements and deadlines for graduate programs; explained relationship to NWCCU accreditation

7. Commendations
a. Clinical policies and procedures manual: Speech and Hearing Sciences - Spokane
b. Program coordination: Accounting, MN/DNP – Spokane, Computer Science – Vancouver, Mechanical Engineering - Vancouver
c. Curriculum development: Criminal Justice, Professional Science Master's in Molecular Biosciences, Master's in Nursing/Doctor of Nursing Practice – Spokane
d. Online Programming: Agriculture, Engineering Technology Management
e. Non-traditional students: Engineering and Technology Management, Professional Science Master's in Molecular Biosciences, Public Affairs – Vancouver
f. Student advising and mentorship: Fine Arts, Music
g. Student annual review process: Health Policy and Administration, Computer Science – Vancouver, Mechanical Engineering - Vancouver
h. Assessment planning: Criminal Justice, Teaching and Learning, Coordinated Program in Dietetics, Nutrition, and Exercise Physiology – Spokane, Speech and Hearing Sciences - Spokane
i. Alumni survey: Fine Arts

2013 Graduate Assessment Update Reports

As part of the review process, all master's-only, doctoral, and professional degree programs were asked to submit a graduate assessment update report for AY 2012-2013, in which faculty could report recent assessment activities. Information requested included topics such as: changes to assessment plans, data collection and analysis by faculty, use of assessment evidence for program improvement, and faculty and staff training needs. An electronic form was developed by the Graduate School to assist faculty and facilitate the data collection process. Graduate chairs and program directors were asked to submit their graduate assessment updates to the Graduate School by June 1-September 1, 2013. Results from the assessment updates will be analyzed and shared with graduate programs, collegiate deans, branch campuses, and academic leadership in Fall 2013.

Next Steps/Future Plans

The program reviews have facilitated new discussions and perspectives on graduate education and the quality of master's degree programs at WSU. Building on this experience, the Graduate School is considering the following next steps in the program review and assessment process:

1. Create a five-year schedule for graduate program review and assessment that is aligned with the academic year and NWCCU accreditation requirements; see proposed schedule below

	Graduate Program Reviews	Program Profiles	Graduate Student Survey	Graduate Assessment Review Reports (narrative)	Graduate Assessment Update Reports (PDF form)	Graduate Advisory Committee Meetings	NWCCU Accreditation Schedule (7 year cycle)
Spring 2013	X					X	Year 3
Fall 2013	R	X			X,R	X	
Spring 2014	X		X	X		X	
Fall 2014	R	X	R	R		X	
Spring 2015	X				X	X	Year 5
Fall 2015	R	X			R	X	
Spring 2016	X			X		X	
Fall 2016	R	X		R		X	
Spring 2017	X				X	X	Year 7
Fall 2017	R	X			R	X	

X = program review or assessment activity; R = Graduate School report

2. Conduct follow-up review meetings with graduate and professional programs that need assistance with their assessment process and/or preparing their 2014 Graduate Assessment Review Report

3. Develop assessment resources for graduate and professional programs including the following:
   a. An assessment handbook for graduate and professional programs
   b. "How To" guides to build faculty and staff capacity in key assessment areas such as: planning for program assessment, writing student learning outcomes, choosing a method to collect assessment data, creating and using rubrics, and reporting and using assessment results
   c. Graduate School Program Review and Assessment website and SharePoint site

4. Provide guidance to assist faculty and staff in their assessment of online, multi-campus, and interdisciplinary degree programs

5. Analyze and disseminate results from the 2013 Graduate Assessment Update Reports to faculty, staff, and academic leadership
   a. Compile assessment updates submitted by graduate and professional programs
   b. Write summary report with college, branch campus, and university-level analysis
   c. Distribute and provide access to graduate assessment update results on the Graduate School's SharePoint site and WSU website

6. Offer professional development workshops for faculty and staff on using assessment evidence for program improvement and topics identified in the 2013 Graduate Assessment Update Reports

7. Coordinate university-wide program review and assessment activities with collegiate deans and branch campus leadership through the Graduate Advisory Committee and other outreach

Appendix A: Graduate Program Review Discussion Guide

Summary of Program
•
Questions/Recommendations
•

Handbook
•
Questions/Recommendations
•

Student Evaluations
•
Questions/Recommendations
•

Employment Data		
Students Reviewed (number of students = ##)	**#**	**%**
Number working in Faculty Positions		
Number working as Adjunct Faculty		
Number working in Industry		
Other		
Unemployed		
Unknown		
Questions/Recommendations		
•		

Current Student Funding		
Type of Funding (number of students = ##)	**#**	**%**
RA		
State funded RA		
TA		
Fellowships		
No funding/own support		
Questions/Recommendations		
•		

Assessment Plan
•
Questions/Recommendations
•

Student Survey (number of students = ##)
Areas of Strength
•
Areas of Consideration
•
Questions/Recommendations
•

Appendix B: Spring/Summer 2013 Graduate Program Review Schedule

College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences
- MS in Agriculture - March 7, 2013
- MA in Apparel, Merchandising, and Textiles - March 11, 2013
- MS in Applied Economics - July 2, 2013

College of Arts and Sciences
- MA in Criminal Justice - April 15, 2013
- MS in Environmental Science - May 21, 2013
- Master's in Fine Arts (MFA) - May 20, 2013
- MA in Foreign Languages and Cultures (Spanish Program) - March 22, 2013
- MA in Music - April 17, 2013
- Master's in Public Affairs (Vancouver) - April 26, 2013
- MS in Statistics - May 9, 2013

College of Business
- Master's in Accounting (MAcc) - May 23, 2013
- Master's in Business Administration (MBA) – Postponed
- Master's in Business Administration (Executive MBA) - Postponed

School of Design and Construction
- Master's in Architecture (March) - May 7, 2013
- MA in Interior Design - May 7, 2013
- MS in Landscape Architecture - May 7, 2013

College of Education
- EdM, MA in Literacy, Language, Curriculum and Instruction, and Special Education programs - May 15, 2013
- MIT in Elementary and Secondary Education programs - May 15, 2013
- EdM/MA in Educational Leadership - May 30, 2013
- EdM/MA in Sport Management - May 30, 2013

College of Engineering
- MS in Computer Science (Vancouver) - April 26, 2013
- Master's in Engineering and Technology Management (METM) - April 23, 2013
- MS in Environmental Engineering - Postponed
- MS in Mechanical Engineering (Vancouver) - April 26, 2013

College of Nursing
- Master of Nursing (MN) - April 1, 2013
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) - April 1, 2013

College of Pharmacy
- MS in Coordinated Program in Dietetics, Nutrition, and Exercise Physiology - April 1, 2013

College of Veterinary Medicine
- Professional Science Master in Molecular Biosciences (PSM-MB) - April 5, 2013

Division of Health Sciences
- Master's in Health Policy and Administration (MHPA) - May 14, 2013
- MA in Speech and Hearing Sciences - April 1, 2013