

Notes from GADE 2020 Virtual New Directors Meeting, PhD Breakout Session July 21, 2020

Facilitator: Denise Burnette, Virginia Commonwealth University

In the breakout session we discussed the following areas:

- Recruitment and admissions
- Curriculum planning/management
- Exams
- Dissertation
- Preparing students for the job market
- Enabling student productivity
- Resources for doctoral programs

See slides for more on the topic areas.

Council of Graduate Studies has an excellent website that provides a lot of information and support related to graduate students. If it isn't already, we should be sure that the GADE website links to this page. The "Best Practices" link includes information on admissions and recruitment, student mental health and wellbeing, international students, diversity and inclusion, professional development, careers in and outside of academia, and more.

<https://cgsnet.org/best-practices>

Exams. There was some discussion about the types of learning assessment used in different programs, e.g., comprehensive exams and qualifying exams. The programs differ and new directors were referred to the 2019 GADE report of the [Survey on Comprehensive Exams](#).

International Students. We had an interesting conversation about the recruitment and retention of international students. Schools vary in the extent to which their students come from outside the US. For many schools, the international component is a critical piece of the program. International students bring important diversity and enrich the culture and programming of the school. Recognition that international students face challenges on multiple fronts that programs need to anticipate and prepare for. For example, int'l students do not qualify for some scholarships and employment opportunities, need support with visa issues (especially in current climate), and they may have lack of familiarity with a range of issues related to living in the US. There was an interest in holding a subsequent Zoom discussion session on supporting international students and fostering collaborations across schools related to their international work. Perhaps GADE can sponsor this in the Fall.

Comprehensive program review. Denise recommends doing a comprehensive program review every 7 years. Includes both external and internal review; takes time and resources; can be used to advocate for needed program resources and to give you as the director the credibility to make changes. For example, if you want to diversify faculty representation in doctoral teaching, a review that recommends such a change can help give you the ammunition

necessary to make that change. Several people on the call offered to share materials on how to do a comprehensive review; this could get linked to GADE website. At the bottom of these notes, Denise Burnette has shared the table of contents of the 2020 review done by VCU.

Job Market. Recognition that job market would be challenging this year. There are three upcoming job market sessions. One on July 28th 2:00 to 3:30 ET for program directors (<https://uchicago.zoom.us/j/9261562783?pwd=SWVvU0k4SWJUbEM3RUlmMkpTWIZOUT09> password: Henly) and 2 for students (July 30 3-4:30ET and Aug 20 1-2:30ET) the registration links for these are: go.umd.edu/webinar1 and go.umd.edu/webinar2

Compensation and Supports for role as doctoral program director. Varies a lot by school. (See recent GADE survey on this topic.) Some program directors have a part time or full time assistant; some directors get summer salary and/or an administrative supplement; some get course relief and research assistant. There is great variation.

VCU PhD Program Review (2020)

Table of Contents

Introduction and Overview

- A. Brief History, Description and Context of the PhD Program
- B. Approach to the Self Study

Section 1. Key Elements of Program Review

- A. Mission, Goals and Objectives
- B. Curriculum
- C. Faculty
- D. Students (current and past, i.e. alums)

Section 2. Organizational Practices and Issues

- A. Leadership
- B. Administrative support
- C. Facilities
- D. Intra- and inter-institutional relationships
- E. Availability and allocation of resources

Section 3. Program Outcomes

- A. Course evaluations
- B. Student retention
- C. Time-to-degree
- D. Student scholarly productivity
- E. Career placement
- F. Recognition of students, faculty and graduates

Section 4. Current / emergent Issues and trends relevant to the PhD program

- A. Professional
- B. University
- C. Main spheres of influence

Section 5. Summary, Conclusion and future directions