

NRC Assessment of Doctoral Programs

What's New

- Funding is very likely.
 - Funding in hand from Sloan and Mellon
 - Proposals for 2005 funding are being considered by NIH, NSF, USDA, DOE, DOD, and NEH
 - Universities will be asked to help finance the study.
- The study will not contain a reputational measure.

Basic Plan 2005

- Fall/Winter 2005
 - NRC appointed committees will
 - Review and finalize questionnaires
 - Obtain NRC IRB approval of finalized questionnaires
 - Finalize the taxonomy
 - Universities will be informed that study is imminent. NRC will request appointment of institutional coordinators.

Digression—NRC Committees

- Appointed by the President of the National Research Council (Ralph Cicerone) after wide consultation
- For this study
 - The Committee on the Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs (15 members representing varying fields, types of institutional control, institutional size, geographic location, particular expertise)
 - Panel on Questionnaires (10 members: institutional researchers and graduate deans)
 - 6 Expert Panels to make recommendations on ranking criteria for each broad field

Basic Plan-2006

- April
 - Institutional questionnaires sent out online with one month return date
 - Will ask for list of programs institution wishes to include as well as institutional data
- July
 - Program questionnaire sent out online with one month return date
 - Will ask for list of graduate faculty as well as program data

Basic Plan 2006 (2)

- Late September
 - Faculty questionnaires distributed online with one month deadline
 - Student questionnaires in 5 fields distributed online with one month deadline
- Late October
 - Reminders sent to non-respondents
 - Deans informed of initial response rates
- Rest of year
 - Continued work on non-response

Basic Plan 2007

- January-March
 - Quality control database constructed. Grant, award and productivity data appended
- April
 - Quality control database shared with graduate deans and institutional coordinators
- May-September
 - Full database constructed
- October
 - Full database released

NRC Activities during 2006/2007

- Answer institution queries
- Obtain productivity, awards and grants data
- Organize competition for commissioned analytic papers (committee will choose)
- Committee will write a summary report which will undergo NRC review in 2008.

Basic Plan 2008

- Report released
- Conference on Assessing Doctoral Programs (September, 2008)
 - Will include both commissioned papers and submitted papers
- Online entry of “basic data” for 2007/2008 (fall)

Special issues

- Taxonomy
 - NRC will broaden range of sub-fields and emerging fields
 - Review of taxonomy in Fall, 2005
 - Criteria for new fields
 - Research intensive fields
 - Size criteria
 - » Nationally: 500 PhDs in previous 5 years
 - » Program: At least 5 PhDs in previous 5 years
 - Reconsideration of biological science field taxonomy

Special Issues (2)

- Ranking Possibilities (non-exclusive)
 - Weighted averages of quantitative measures using earlier reputation study
 - Dimensions of doctoral programs
 - Scholarly productivity
 - Educational Practices (student support, teaching supervision, etc.)
 - Educational outcomes (completion, attrition)
 - Diversity
 - Unfiltered data with analysis software available to users

Special Issues (3)

- Interdisciplinarity
 - 3 Approaches
 - Centers available for graduate student research
 - Faculty involvement in other programs as teachers or dissertation supervisors
 - Keyword analysis of dissertations
- Outcomes
 - Whether data are collected
 - If so, whether data are publicized
 - NSF data on post-PhD plans
 - 5 Year out data for biological sciences

Questions, Comments

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