

Data Sources: Pressing Issues Survey and Carnegie Classification

Pressing Issues

In order for CGS to stay current with changing trends in the lives of its members, we conduct periodic surveys to ask: "What are the three most pressing issues on your desk?" We have just completed the latest survey and this article summarizes the major findings.

Over 120 deans responded to this survey. The responses were coded, and these comments were then grouped into broader categories reflecting general concerns such as research, program development, and graduate school management. Our analysis (See Table 1) revealed that the three most pressing issues confronting deans in 2006 are: funding for graduate students, enrollment management, and graduate school management.

Funding for Graduate Students
Funding for graduate students has been the dominant issue facing graduate deans for the past five years. In 2006, 52% of respondents listed some variant on funding for graduate students

as one of their most pressing issues, including concerns for funding teaching and research assistantships, fellowships, and other forms of support. One typical response stated, "Competitive funding packages to recruit and retain top students, and in particular students from under-represented fields such as the sciences and mathematics." The competitiveness of funding/financial packages was a consistent theme throughout the responses.

Enrollment Management

Enrollment management has also been a consistent pressing issue for graduate deans over the last several years. This year was no different, as half of the respondents (50%) indicated that some variation of enrollment management was a pressing issue for their graduate school. Of particular concern is the complex prediction of future student demand and resulting future planning for growth or decline in certain graduate programs. One respondent wrote, "Predicting and planning enrollments at a master's institution. The majority of our programs focus on education and our enrollment remains highly elastic to labor market dynamics, population shifts, state education mandates, etc."

Interestingly, similar numbers of respondents raised the issue of enrollment declines as enrollment increases.

Graduate School Management

Graduate school management issues rose in relative importance since last year. In 2005, 21% of respondents listed this as an issue, while in 2006 half of respondents (50%) did so. Typical responses focused on managing the transition from a master's-focused to doctoral institution, reviews of graduate standards/policies, and restructuring from centralized to decentralized systems.

Other Major Issues

International student issues remain a pressing concern for many graduate deans, though for fewer than last year. Forty-percent of respondents indicated some concern about international applications, enrollment, or visa processes. This is somewhat lower than last year, when half of respondents listed international issues as pressing. Unlike previous years, however, the issue of international

admissions and the Bologna Process, rather than visa delays and the SEVIS program, seemed to dominate concerns.

Program development is another clear area of interest. Nearly a third (29%) of respondents listed some type of program development (certificates, interdisciplinary programs, online programs) as a pressing issue. This level of response is significantly larger than last year when only 16% included program development

issues. Of particular interest seem to be joint programs and interdisciplinary programs.

The issue of graduate student services and health care appears to be of growing concern to graduate deans. How the graduate school will pay for these benefits, maintaining equity across fields and disciplines, and health care for the dependents of graduate students were all listed as pressing issues.

The NRC Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs, retention and completion issues, and managing information systems were also listed numerous times.

Overall, these results reveal both the consistency of concerns facing graduate deans and the evolution of certain issues. For example, while the international student issue was not listed by as many respondents this year as last, the specific type of concerns has shifted. Awareness of the Bologna Process and treatment of three-year degrees has emerged as an important component of the international student issue.

Further, the responses to this survey help CGS make many critical decisions. They inform decisions regarding the topics and speakers for Annual Meeting plenary and concurrent

	2002 rank	2003 rank	2004 rank	2005 rank	2006 rank
Graduate student stipends, assistantships, fellowships	1	2	2	1	1
Enrollment management	5	3	6	3	2
Graduate school management - planning, fundraising, recruitment	3	4	3	4	2
International students - enrollment, visa issues, SEVIS, funding	9	5	4	2	3
Program development, - certificates, interdisciplinary programs	4	8	8	9	4
Student services - health benefits, career counseling	7	7	7	5	5

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sessions, as well as for the Summer Workshop. The findings also help shape CGS's government relations agenda.

Carnegie Classification

The higher education community has been following the evolution of the Carnegie Classification system. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has recently released a new version of its basic classifications of colleges and universities as well as a Graduate Instructional Program classification. The multi-year process of revision has led to an extensive reorganization of the framework for categorizing institutions. The new version classifies 4,321 colleges and universities, a significant increase from the previous effort in 2000.

For CGS members, the most relevant changes come in the reclassification of doctoral-granting and master's-granting institutions.

In the past, the Carnegie Classification system divided doctoral institutions into "Doctoral Extensive" and "Doctoral Intensive." The new system includes three groups, based on the amount of research activity: "Research Universities (very high research activity)" all previously known as "Doctoral Extensive"; "Research Universities (high research activity)" primarily those classified in the past as "Doctoral Intensive"; and "Doctoral/Research Universities" a combination of those previously classified as either "Doctoral Intensive" or "Master's I."

Master's-granting institutions have been divided into three categories based on the number of master's degrees awarded. They have included institutions that conferred at least 50 master's degrees in 2003-04 yet fewer than 20 doctorates. Larger (>200), Medium (100-199), and Smaller (50-99) are the new master's institution categories.

A new Graduate Instructional Program classification system was also created, which focuses on the programmatic mix at the graduate level. Institutions are divided into those that confer doctorate degrees and those that do not. Within each of those broad categories institutions are divided by the academic field offerings and overall emphasis. For instance, "Arts & Sciences Dominant," "Business Only," and "Comprehensive Humanities, Social Science, STEM, Professional" are three sub-categories within the "Without Doctoral Program" category. "Comprehensive Humanities, Social Science, STEM, Professional with Medical/Veterinary," "Stem Dominant," and "Education Only" are three examples from the "With Doctoral Programs" category.

For more information, go to:
www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications

by Heath Brown, Director of Research and Policy Analysis

CGS Welcomes New Staff

Eleanor Babco joined the staff at CGS in January as a senior consultant to the Professional Master's Initiative. Among her activities at CGS will be an evaluation of current data collection associated with the Professional Science Master's. In this endeavor, she will join Carol Lynch, Paul Tate, and Helen Frasier to foster the growth and acceptance of the PSM as a regular feature of graduate education.

Eleanor was the Executive Director of the Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology (CPST), a nonprofit corporation in Washington, DC, until her retirement at the end of 2005. At the Commission, she was the editor for CPST publications; the principal investigator on two projects supported by the Sloan Foundation: 1) the STEM Workforce Data and 2) a project to revitalize the master's degree in science, with particular attention to the PSM degree; and was the co-PI on a NSF-funded project to study Career Trajectories of Master's Degree Recipients in the Sciences. She will continue to consult for CPST on various grant-supported projects.

Eleanor was educated as a chemist at Immacula College and Catholic University, but has devoted her professional career to the analysis and interpretation of education and employment data about scientists and engineers. She received the WEPAN-sponsored Betty Vetter Award for Research in 2001 and was named an AWIS fellow in 2002.

Nominations Sought for CGS Board of Directors

Nominations are being accepted for membership on the CGS Board of Directors. If you are interested, or if you would like to nominate a colleague, please contact:

Suzanne Ortega
chair of the CGS Nomination Committee
c/o Cheryl Flagg at cflagg@cgs.nche.edu
on or before July 1, 2006.