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"Articulating the Value of Humanities Graduate Education in the 21st Century"

The third plenary session of the CGS Annual Meeting in December focused on a topic that is of importance to members for both philosophical and administrative reasons. The plenary title, "Articulating the Value of Humanities Graduate Education in the 21st Century," implies a question that is rarely asked of the sciences or of professional fields such as business, law, or medicine, but it is one that has plagued and stimulated humanists at least since Socrates: What is the value of serious study in the humanities to the society, the nation, and to the individual? Beyond articulating their own diverse and substantial views on this question, speakers in this session also reflected on how the ways in which we collectively articulate (or fail to articulate) the public value of the humanities may shape the very future of the relationship between the public and the research university in the twenty-first century. In today's environment of accelerating technological innovation, pragmatic and immediate problem-solving, and calls for greater returns on investment, it might be tempting to see advanced graduate study in the humanities as a luxury rather than a necessity. But each of the three speakers invited to present in this plenary make the opposite case. Below are the contributions by Richard Wheeler, Dean of the Graduate College at the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign and Brian Adler, Dean of the Graduate School at Valdosta State University, as well as a brief synopsis of the major theme of his speech graciously provided to CGS by the headline speaker for this plenary, renown philosopher and public intellectual Dr. Anthony Appiah, Laurance S. Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy and the University Center for Human Values, Princeton University.

CGS Chair Richard Wheeler opened the session with the following remarks.

Welcome to this plenary session on "Articulating the Value of Humanities Graduate Education in the 21st Century." We can look at study in the humanities as the legacy of great intellectual traditions that reach back to the ancient Greeks, their drama, and particularly their philosophy. Out of these traditions, approached with renewed rigor from generation to generation, have grown many of the concepts central to the ways we live and understand our lives – as individuals, as citizens in a democracy, as participants in the world. A young freshman I recently heard about, however, was puzzled that she was required to take a course on the human-ites. She was skeptical of the worth this course would contribute to her trek toward a bachelor's degree and the world of work beyond it. For her, that sense of the centrality to our lives of study in the humanities did not appear to have much purchase.

This disparity of perspectives puts the humanities, on the one hand, at the very center of our efforts to understand what makes our human worlds work, and what it is that enables us to find places for ourselves in them. On the other hand, it puts the humanities at a periphery so distant from the center of our lives that the very name can seem alien and remote, vaguely invasive even. What do we know about these human-ites? Many versions of this clash of perspectives -- most of them a little less crude, many of them highly politicized, and some of them even productive -- shape conversations both within and about the humanities in American research universities.

As graduate deans, however, the humanities often come to our attention a little differently. In humanities doctoral programs, the time to degree numbers are too high. The completion rates are too low. Their academic job placement is vexed. They are strapped for money to support their students. They don't bring in research funding. Their students want to form unions, and to run them. Their articles are abstruse. They seem eager to criticize everyone else. When they represent themselves to the larger university community, they are often less inclined to explain their virtues than to whine about their perceived lack of status.

In the course of dealing with those things that come to our attention from humanities graduate programs, we often don't get very deep into a conversation about what the humanities are all about, why they matter, what they contribute, what needs they meet -- for the students who enroll in them, or for the larger worlds they struggle to understand and engage.

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"Articulating the Value of the Humanities"

As the contemporary university reinvents itself within a national conversation focused on economic competitiveness, what does graduate study in the humanities bring to the table? What challenges does this situation bring to the conversation within the study of humanities about its fundamental values? What challenges does it bring to the effort of humanists to articulate the value of humanistic study to the evolving university? And to the society in which the university is embedded?

In the Preface to his wonderful collection of essays called *In My Father's House*, Kwame Anthony Appiah writes: "I believe... that we should think carefully about the issues that matter most to us." Reading through any of Professor Appiah's many books or articles is an instructive exercise, not only in discovering just what "thinking carefully" means for this gifted philosopher. It is also vivid clarification of "the issues that matter most to us," and of what kind of thinking can bring them into perspectives shaped by, and responsible to, our experiences as individual selves who grew up under certain circumstances, as members of families and communities that vary greatly from one another, as members of an increasingly shared world in which, to quote Professor Appiah, "we have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by ties of kith and kind, or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship."

To read through Professor Appiah's work, to engage with him in the cosmopolitan conversations that his written works generate, is to be made aware of how profoundly important it is to "think carefully about the issues that matter most to us," and how vital humanistic thinking can be to our understanding of those issues. I can think of no one better equipped to address the project of "articulating the value of humanities graduate education in the 21st century."

Kwame Anthony Appiah was born in London (where his Ghanaian father was a law student) but moved as an infant to Ghana, where he grew up. His father, Joseph Emmanuel Appiah, was a lawyer and politician, and, at various times, a Member of Parliament, an ambassador, and a president of the Ghana Bar Association; his mother, the novelist and children's writer, Peggy Appiah, whose family was English, was active in the social, philanthropic and cultural life of Kumasi, where they lived. His three younger sisters Isobel, Adwoa and Abena, were born in Ghana. Kwame Appiah was educated at the University Primary School at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi; at Ullenwood Manor, in Gloucestershire, and Port Regis and Bryanston Schools, in Dorset; and, finally, at Cambridge University, where he took both B.A. and Ph.D. degrees in philosophy.

His Cambridge dissertation exploring the foundations of probabilistic semantics was the basis for his first book, published by Cambridge University Press as *Assertion and Conditionals*. Out of that first monograph grew a second, *For Truth in Semantics*, which dealt with Michael Dummett's defenses of semantic anti-realism. Since Cambridge, he has taught at Yale, Cornell, Duke, and Harvard universities and lectured at many other institutions in the United States, Germany, Ghana and South Africa, and France. Since 2002 he has been at Princeton University, where he is the Laurance S. Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy and the University Center for Human Values.

Professor Appiah has also published widely in African and African-American literary and cultural studies. In 1992, Oxford University Press published *In My Father's House*, which deals, in part, with the role of African and African-American intellectuals in shaping contemporary African cultural life. His current interests range over African and African-American intellectual history and literary studies, ethics, and philosophy of mind and language; he has taught regularly about African traditional religions. His major current work has to do with the philosophical foundations of liberalism and with questions of method in arriving at knowledge about values.

In 1996, he published *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race* with Amy Gutmann; in 1997 the *Dictionary of Global Culture*, co-edited with Henry Louis Gates Jr. Along with Professor Gates he has also edited the Encarta Africana CD-ROM encyclopedia, published by Microsoft, which became the *Perseus Africana* encyclopedia in book form, now available from Oxford University Press. In 2003, he coauthored *Bu Me Bé: Proverbs of the Akan* (of which his mother, the writer Peggy Appiah, was the major author), an annotated edition of proverbs in Twi, the language of Asante. He is also the author of three novels, and he reviews regularly for the New York Review of Books. In 2004, Oxford University Press published his introduction to contemporary philosophy entitled *Thinking It Through*. In 2005, Princeton University Press published *The Ethics of Identity* and in 2006 Norton published *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. Next year, Harvard University Press will publish his *Experiments in Ethics*, based on his 2004 Flexner lectures at Bryn Mawr.

Anthony Appiah kindly submitted the following adaptation from his article, "Humane, All Too Humane," which appeared in *Profession* 2005 (pp. 39-46), as an encapsulation of one of the main themes of his talk.

The sciences do two kinds of work for us: they deliver understanding and they often allow us technological progress. That understanding -- of the laws of our world -- is, like humanistic understanding, a thing of intrinsic value, something that would be worth having even if it did not deliver the technological payoff. You are enriched by understanding the best contemporary scientific picture of the world; but you can be grateful to the scientists even if you don't know that story, because of the great technological yield of modern science. Of course the humanities have utilitarian benefits, too: well-trained English literature majors write better memos and movie scripts than most badly-trained ones; and certainly than those who have not learned to read deeply and well. I am not against pointing out that the undergraduate humanities majors who are trained by the humanities graduates of our graduate schools are of more use to others -- as workers and as citizens -- because

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of that training. But we should also insist that what we give them has an intrinsic value in the making of their own lives. We must speak to non-specialists because we must speak to the untrained young. And, if our faith is warranted, then what we have to offer them is something to take on into their lives beyond college.

This is, perhaps, an old-fashioned way of thinking of what we are doing. But the hope of the humanist is, in my view, essentially, that there is so much from the past to pass on: our aim is to provide each new generation the frameworks of understanding that will allow them to interpret a significant portion of our human heritage. That portion is, as a moment's reflection reminds us, a diminishing proportion of what there is to explicate. When I was an undergraduate, a teacher gave me a chromolithograph of one of Carpaccio's great murals of St. Jerome. Years later, looking at the original painting for the first time in Venice, it struck me that the shelf of books behind the saint -- his library -- contained most of the books that he would have thought worth reading, and that he would almost certainly have read all of them. When the scriptorium was replaced by the printing press, one of the limiting steps in the proliferation of writing was almost removed; when the internet became available the barriers came down completely. Now, each week in Philadelphia, thousands of times the number of pages that St. Jerome could have read in his lifetime are published on paper; millions of times that number on the web. Once, to have heard the range of music that I can scan in a few minutes on my car radio, I would have had to have traveled thousands of miles and been lucky to arrive for the right performances. The DVDs in my own house contain more hours of human acting than Pepys or Aubrey -- devoted theater-goers both -- ever saw in their entire lives. We are, in short, drowning in the particulars we humanists study. Surely, now, in such a time, it is more urgent than ever to speak for what is finest in this great flood of artifacts, so that those whom we can persuade to care for the magnificent particulars will spend the little time each of us has to attend to them well. In this time, more than in any earlier time, the civilization we live in needs the work of the humanist.

The following captures the response of Brian Adler, Dean of the Graduate School at Valdosta State University. Dean Adler has been a graduate dean for the last three years. With his primary research focus on 20th century America, he has published on Jewish-American literature, war literature, and environmental literature.

Ladies and gentlemen, we might paraphrase the trope of "Ubi Sunt": where are the humanists of yesteryear? Indeed, we might say the humanities are in trouble. If we look through the document recently produced by the National Science Foundation, *U. S. Doctorates in the 20th Century*, we find that the production of Ph.D.'s in science and engineering fields has more than tripled from 1960 through 1999, from 40,000 in 1960-64, to 130,000 in 1995-99. In the social sciences and in education, the production rate has been similar, going from 20,000 in the early 60's to nearly 80,000 at the end of the century. A graph of the production of humanities doctorates shows two peaks, one during 1970-74, the other coming in the late 80's, when roughly 26,000 humanities doctorates were produced. Since that time, however, the number of humanities doctorates has declined, until about 2004, when we have seen a slight uptick in humanities Ph.D. production. Nevertheless, it is not overstating the case to say that the humanities are a hard sell.

Federal support is another indicator of the difficulties the humanities face. A recent policy statement produced by the Council of Graduate Schools states that "In proposals targeted at enhancing US competitiveness in the 21st century global economy, the contributions of the humanities…have been ignored." Another example: the Jacob Javits Fellowship Program has never received the federal funding it was promised and is now currently being funded at only one-third of its stated appropriation. The financial health of the National Endowment for the Humanities tells a similar tale. The 2006 fiscal year appropriation was $136 million, a third of what it was in 1979. The NEH faces a new fiscal year with its budget reduced by another $1.3 million.

Certainly there are efforts on many of our campuses to demonstrate and promulgate the vibrancy of the humanities. Humanities research centers and interdisciplinary activity that involve the humanities receive support and promotion. One could argue that the humanities are alive, well, and prosperous. However, as deans and other administrators, which most of us are in this room today, we are used to being asked to assess our efforts in somewhat quantifiable terms. Output of humanities doctorates alone does not tell the full story of the health of the humanities. Focusing for a moment on one discipline from the humanities, English, what we will note is that the production of Ph.D.'s each year still far exceeds the number of new academic jobs available and advertised in the Modern Language Association Job Lists. Although this disjuncture between production and market forces has been recognized as a problem since the mid 1970's, it is now to the point that of the jobs the MLA currently lists, roughly half of them are non-tenure track positions. The huge rise of adjunct faculty, especially in the humanities, is part of a larger market force that tends to devalue the currency of a humanities degree. While market forces can never be the sole determinant of the value of a degree, it can be argued that when supply continually outstrips demand, value goes down.

But there are far greater issues at stake here than marketability, and we recognize this. The loss of the public intellectual, the diminution of contemplative thought, and the ubiquity of instant analysis and soundbite punditry speak to the vacuum created by the weakening of the presence of the humanities in our society. I will close my response by quoting President Kennedy, whose remarks at the funeral of Robert Frost in January 1963 speak to the role of the humanist and of the humanities in general: "Frost knew the midnight as well as the high noon,…he understood the ordeal as well as the triumph of the human spirit, he gave his age strength with

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Data Sources: Trends in New Ph.D.s Entering Academe, 1970 to 2005

Doctoral education has experienced enormous growth over the past three decades, especially in the fields of science and engineering. Since 1970, the total number of research doctoral degrees conferred by American universities has grown 47%, and since 1983 the number of awards in science and engineering has risen 51% (Hill, 1993; Hill, 2006; National Science Board, 2006). However, this growth has not led to an increase in the number of new doctoral recipients entering faculty positions. In fact, recent trends suggest that the share of new research doctoral recipients taking faculty jobs fell sharply over the past 30 years, and this decline may have adversely affected students' educational experiences.

The annual Survey of Earned Doctorates recently reported that American universities conferred 43,354 research doctorates in 2005, an all-time high (NORC, 2006; Smallwood, 2006a). In addition, data from the National Science Foundation (NSF) reveal that the number of new doctorates in science and engineering jumped 6.5% between 2004 and 2005 and reached a record high of 27,974 in 2005 (Hill, 2006; Smallwood, 2006a).

However, the number of new Ph.D.s grew at the same time as colleges and universities faced slower growth in student enrollments and lower inflation-adjusted growth in state and federal appropriations (Thurgood, Golladay, and Hill, 2006). As a result, there were fewer opportunities for new doctorates to enter the academy, and a greater share of the faculty jobs that were available were for either part-time or non-tenure-track positions (Ehrenberg, 2005). At the same time, private industry, especially in the science and engineering fields, had increased needs for research scientists and other highly skilled workers to develop new products and services. Thus, the share of new doctorates who achieved jobs in academe fell sharply while the proportion in private industry gained. Table 1 illustrates the pace of these trends.

Between the time period of 1970 to 1974, about two-thirds of new Ph.D.s who received job offers had gained jobs in academe. In the 1995 to 1999 periods, the share of new doctoral degree recipients who received jobs from colleges and universities dropped to less than one half. Conversely, during the same two time spans, the share of new doctorate holders employed by industry or self employed more than doubled. The trends for new science and engineering doctoral degree holders were particularly noteworthy. During the two time spans, the proportion of these doctorates who gained academic employment fell from about 58% to just 36% while the percentage in private industry or self employment grew from only 22% to 44%. More surprising is the finding that the share of non-science and engineering doctorates who were employed in industry also rose sharply while the share in academe fell from roughly 76% to 63%.

Table 1. Employment Sectors of New PhDs With Postgraduation Work Commitments, 1970 to 1974 and 1995 to 1999

Years	Academe	Industry and Self Employment	Government	Other
All Fields				
1970 to 1974	66.7%	12.2%	10.3%	10.7%
1995 to 1999	49.4%	26.6%	7.8%	16.2%
Science and Engineering Fields				
1970 to 1974	57.6%	22.1%	14.4%	5.8%
1995 to 1999	36.5%	44.4%	10.9%	8.2%
Non-Science and Engineering Fields				
1970 to 1974	76.1%	2.0%	6.1%	15.8%
1995 to 1999	62.8%	8.2%	4.5%	24.5%

Source: Thurgood, Golladay, & Hi ll, 2006.

As might be expected given the recent trends, the share of new doctorates whose primary job function is teaching declined as the share employed in colleges and universities fell. According to NSF's recent study, *U.S. Doctorates in the 20th Century* (Thurgood, Golladay, and Hill, 2006), in the 1970 to 1974 period, 56% of all new Ph.D.s who had post-graduation employment commitments had received jobs whose primary function was teaching. During the 2000 to 2005 period, only 39% of the new doctorates were in teaching-related jobs (see Table 2). By contrast, the percentage of new degree holders whose primary job was research and development -- jobs primarily with private industry -- jumped from 23% to 39%, and the share in "professional services" increased from about 8% to 12%.

Table 2. Primary Work Activities of Ph.D.s With Postgraduation Work Commitments: 1970 to 1974, 1995 to 1999, and 2000 to 2005

Years	Administration	Professional Services	Research and Development	Teaching	Other
1970 to 1974	11.1%	7.8%	23.1%	56.2%	1.8%
1995 to 1999	13.5%	14.3%	30.9%	38.1%	3.3%
2000 to 2005	14.4%	12.5%	31.5%	38.8%	2.8%

Source: Thurgood, Golladay, & Hi ll, 2006.

Two important factors (in addition to the enrollment and revenue declines cited earlier) account for the decline in new Ph.D.s entering teaching-related positions. One is that faculty salaries have been declining in inflation-adjusted terms for the past several years. The American Association of University Professors has found that average faculty salaries fell by nearly 1% in real value between academic years 2003-2004 and 2005-2006, and have averaged a gain of only 0.2% over the past decade (Smallwood, 2006b).
The salary trends may have contributed to the lower faculty retention rates among new Ph.D.s who did gain academic jobs. This appears to have been especially true at public colleges and universities, which faced worsening fiscal constraints during the 1980s and 1990s (Ehrenberg, 2005). The overall retention rates of new associate professors at public colleges and universities declined from about 93% in 1996-1997 to 90% in 2001-2002 (Nagowski, 2004). Faculty retention rates among new science and engineering degree holders have been even lower. The share of new faculty in these fields who were still employed at colleges and universities within seven years after their initial hiring date fell from 89% in 1973 to 65% twenty years later (National Science Board, 2006).

The second factor is the lower number of retirements among current faculty, which may have limited the number of openings available for new doctoral degree recipients. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974, which prohibits colleges and universities from forcing faculty members to retire at any age, appears to have encouraged older faculty members to remain employed longer. The percentage of faculty at research universities age 60 to 64 rose from 5% in 1973 to about 12% in 2003, and the share of those age 65 and over increased from 2% to 5%. Non-research universities had similar increases in older faculty (National Science Board, 2006).
These trends, if they were to continue, may have negative effects on the quality of students' college experiences. Ehrenberg (2005) suggests that

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the decline in new Ph.D.s entering the teaching jobs has led to larger student/faculty ratios, which in turn could lower graduation rates for all students. Students may also find it more difficult to get adequate training in some fields, particularly in science and engineering, for which the demand for doctoral students has been very strong.

But more recent trends suggest that improvements may be forthcoming. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that employment opportunities for postsecondary faculty will grow faster than the national average through 2014 (BLS, 2006). Job opportunities likely will vary somewhat by field, as openings for all types of faculty result from retirements of current instructional staff and continued increases in student enrollments. At the same time, business and industry needs for highly trained workers will very likely continue to remain strong. Colleges and universities that want to increase faculty hires will be in increased competition for top talent with private industry and other sectors. New Ph.D.s may thus have greater chances for both faculty and non-faculty positions during the years ahead.

By Kenneth E. Redd, Director, Research and Policy Analysis

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McNair Memos: The Courage to Care: Intergroup Differences in Test Avoidance and Degree Selection

Introduction

Researching, writing, and commenting about intergroup differences in academic performances are not for the faint of heart. The careers of well-known public figures in politics, sports, business, and most recently higher education have had their reputations and their careers charred by the fallout from observations they have made about perceived differences in performance by race, gender, and ethnicity. Perhaps the greatest suspicion over the possible motives for making such impolite and impolitic observations about intergroup differences is reserved for educators.

Yet as graduate deans, or members of the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) -TRIO community, or those of us who subscribe to high stakes testing, we know all too well that there do exist intergroup differences in both test performance and in the fields of study selected for graduate degrees. I am confident that students, undergraduate as well as graduate students, are also aware of these intergroup differences. There is anecdotal evidence that the choices that students make about selection of graduate degrees may be impacted by their awareness of intergroup differences in test performance. At the risk of some charring to our own professional reputations and careers, we in the graduate community must have the courage to care about the students' perceptions and the choices they make regarding whether to pursue degrees at our institutions.

This article highlights observations of a few intergroup differences that I have observed that impact graduate education and describes one project that has been embraced by the Minority Graduate Education (MGE) Committee of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Board and the Joint Committee of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and the COE.

Fear, Testing and Degree Selection

African Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Other Hispanics, and American Indians are underrepresented in the number of doctoral degrees awarded by graduate schools in the United States. In contrast to their under representation in the overall number of doctorates received, these same groups tend to be over represented in select fields of study when they are awarded degrees. Table 1 shows the percent of United States citizens by race and field

TABLE 1
Percent U.S. Recipients by Race and Field of Study - 2004

	US Tot*	White	Black	Asian	Oth His	Mex Am	P Rican	Am Ind
N =	26,431	20,745	1,869	1,449	490	429	258	129
% of Total	100	78	7	5	2	2	1	>1
Field of Study %								
Phy Sci	11.4	11.8	4.1	13.9	8	7.7	10.5	8.5
Engineer	7.3	7	4.5	15.8	6.5	5.1	7.4	3.9
Life Sci	21.6	21.8	13.8	31.5	19.2	16.1	27.1	16.3
Soc Sci	18.5	18.5	18	15.9	26.7	21.2	14	16.3
Human	15.5	16.3	9.1	10.3	18	17	14.3	11.6
Educ	20.1	19.1	41.3	7.8	16.3	29.1	21.7	35.7
Ot/Prof	5.6	5.4	9.2	4.8	5.3	3.7	5	7.8

**** includes 1,062 unknown/other races who are not factored in % of Total***
Source: Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities: Summary Report 2004 NSF/NIH/USED/NEH/USDA/ NASA, Survey of Earned Doctorates
adapted from appendix Table A -4. Pgs.112 - 113

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The Courage to Care

of study who were awarded doctoral degrees in 2004.

Table 1 reveals that while only 7% of doctorates awarded to American citizens in 2004 were earned by African Americans, 41% of those degrees were in one discipline, namely education. Although the number and percent of degrees awarded to Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians are small, making generalizations problematic, they nonetheless show a somewhat similar pattern of degree selection as African Americans and have a relatively high enrollment in the field of education as doctoral degree recipients.

On the other hand, the percent of the total number of doctorates awarded to all US citizens in education was 20%, or less than half of the percent of doctorates in education awarded to African Americans. For Asian Americans, education represented the field of study with the smallest percentage (i.e., 7%) of degree recipients. Overall, Table 1 illustrates a more even distribution in the fields of study among whites and among the total number of US doctoral degree recipients.

Undoubtedly, a number of factors contribute to the differential intergroup pattern of doctoral degrees found in Table 1. For example, data from the Survey of Earned Doctorates reveals that at 45 and 38 years of age, American Indians and African Americans respectively, tend to be older than the US median age (i.e., 34 years) for degree recipients. At 31 years of age, Asians tend to be younger than the median age of doctoral recipients who are US citizens. Similarly, while only a third of the US total doctoral recipients pay for their degrees from their "own resources," 49% of American Indians and 45% of African Americans paid for their degrees from their own resources. By way of contrast, only 19% of Asian Americans paid for their doctorates from their own resources. The older age at the time the degree is awarded and the reliance on one's own resources to pay for the degree is consistent with the concentration of African Americans and American Indians in education as a field of study. Graduate programs in education, in particular weekend executive doctoral programs, are often designed to accommodate the work schedules of older students. One of the factors often discussed among graduate deans to explain degree selection by underrepresented minorities is the criteria for admission to a graduate school and/or to a particular degree program; specifically, whether the admission criteria include GRE (or other standard test) scores. Whether the admission criteria includes the GRE varies according to the field of study. Doctoral programs in the life sciences and physical sciences, in particular, are likely to require the GRE as part of the admission criteria. Even doctoral programs in the social sciences and in the humanities are more likely to require the GRE than education which may not require a standard test score or may accept other types of test scores, a portfolio of work, and/or an interview in lieu of a test score.

In any case, test avoidance, testing phobia, and the resulting program forum shopping are also factors in intergroup degree selection patterns. Table 2 shows the number and percent of persons by race and sex in the US who took the GRE between 2003 and 2004.

TABLE 2

United States GRE General Test Examinees by Ethnic Group and Gender 2003 -2004

Group	Examinees Number	Percent
American	1,820	1
Men	647	<1
Women	1,173	
Asian/Pac	15,200	5
Men	5,968	2
Women	9,232	3
Blk/Africa	26,924	9
Men	6,967	2
Women	19,957	7
Mexican	7,236	2
Men	2,552	<1
Women	4,684	2
P Rican	3,010	1
Men	1,070	<1
Women	1,940	<1
Oth Hisp	7,283	2
Men	2,470	<1
Women	4,813	<2
White	222,928	75
Men	80,383	27
Women	142,545	48
Other	11,178	4
Men	4,613	2
Women	6,565	2
Total*	295,579	100
Men	104,670	35
Women	190,909	65

***Note:** A total of 298,735 U.S. Citizens took the GRE General Test in 2003-2004

Source: Graduate Record Examinations

"Factors That Can Influence Performance On The GRE General Test 2003-2004"

Educational Testing Servi ce. Princeton, NJ (2005)

Adapted from Appendix C -2 Pg. 23 of 185

http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/GRE/pdf/03_-04_factors.pdf

Table 2 reveals that of the total 295,579 GRE test examinees that year, about two thirds (i.e., 65%) were women and 75% were white. In comparison to their overall percentage of the US population (as reported in the US Census Bureau's Current Population Reports) with African Americans at 13%, and Mexican Americans at 7% in the population, these were grossly underrepresented among GRE examinees. At 69% of the US population, whites were over represented among GRE examinees. Asian and Pacific Islanders comprise 4% of the US population with Chinese Americans, at 1%, representing the largest number of that group. Thus, Asian and Pacific Islanders were slightly overrepresented among GRE test examinees.

MGE and CGS/COE Focus Groups

The consensus of the MGE Committee of the GRE Board is that the pending release of the revised GRE internet based test (iBT) in the fall of 2007 provides a unique opportunity to be proactive in helping minority students and women become more successful with the new test. The MGE proposed a series of focus groups to explore the testing phobias among likely minority group and female examinees. At their September 2006 meeting in New York, the Joint CGS/COE Committee endorsed the focus group concept and recommended that the McNair community serve as a natural population sample from which the focus groups could be drawn. In brief, the MGE and CGS/COE proposed:

1. a series of focus groups among likely African American, Native American, Hispanic, and female GRE examinees to explore their fears and concerns in preparing for and/or taking the GRE;
2. a series of focus groups with likely African American, Native American, Hispanic, and female instructors/educators to examine the information and tools they use to assist minority students and women prepare for the GRE; and,
3. the compilation of the information from the focus groups into a document that could help the GRE, MGE, COE and CGS devise a unique consistent message aimed at minority and female students regarding their fear of testing and the consequences of test avoidance on degree selection.

The primary goals of the focus group initiative would essentially be twofold: (1) to identify the specific concerns of minority and women students (and their mentors/instructors) about the GRE; and, (2) to develop a "kit" of information and tools that directly address those concerns. For example, one outcome of the focus groups may be a "Frequently Asked Questions" document. The focus group initiative could also find

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"Articulating the Value of the Humanities"

which to overcome despair...Frost coupled poetry and power, for he saw poetry as the means of saving power from itself... When power corrupts, poetry cleanses..." Kennedy goes on to say, "I see little of more importance to the future of our country and our civilization than full recognition of the place of the artist...I look forward to an America which will reward achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business or statescraft." (Lieberson 417).

Ladies and gentlemen, as deans of graduate schools, we have an obligation to make sure the humanities are sitting at the table, healthy and fully valued. Too much has been lost already. Thank you.

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The Courage to Care

that more specialized information and test preparation materials may need developing.

The GRE measures reasoning and writing skills that are important to success in graduate school. The students that we admit to our graduate degree programs must either already possess these skills before they are admitted or acquire such skills after they are enrolled. In any case, we know that avoiding the GRE in an effort to escape a test of these skills does not absolve students of the need to master logic, analysis, reasoning and writing in order to be successful in graduate school or in their chosen profession.

In conclusion, as graduate deans and as members of the larger graduate community, it is not enough for us to whisper among ourselves about the negative impact of test avoidance and forum shopping on degree selection among underrepresented minorities. We must possess the courage to care about the students who avoid selecting degrees in our graduate schools because our admission criteria may include the GRE or other standard tests. Our challenge, sometimes at the risk of charring our reputations, is to care enough to confront the fear of testing and to advise students not to allow their future to be selected on the basis of a test that they avoided taking. The proposed MGE-CGS/COE focus group initiative represents but one effort to address that challenge.

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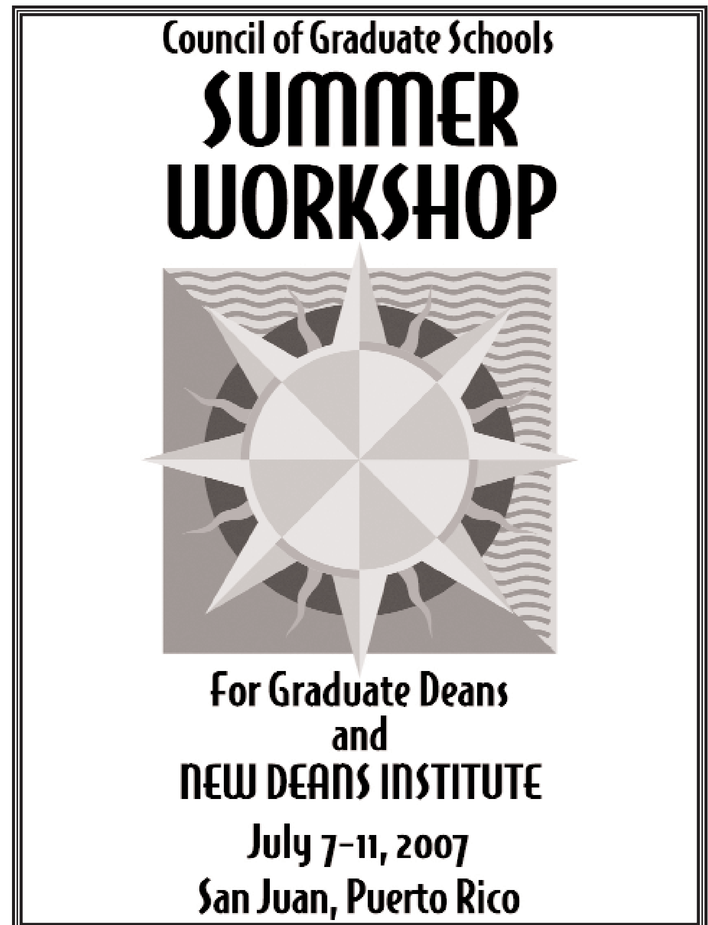

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