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# Utilizing Data to Foster Program-level Change

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# Data is only as useful as the *action* it produces

Utilizing CGS data to foster program-level  
changes

Valuable lessons learned through CGS grant

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# **Council of Graduate Schools provided the impetus for our work**

## Phase I

Learning best methods for utilizing data

Common theme of data-driven intervention to improve doctoral completion at the three universities (UGA, UF, & NCSU)

## Phase II

Graduate School's University-wide Initiative

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# Everything we do is derived from our theoretical framework

## *Four Conditions for Optimal Doctoral Completion*

Condition #1: The right people apply for doctoral study.

Condition #2: The right applicants are admitted as doctoral students.

Condition #3: Students and faculty form productive working relationships.

Condition #4: Students experience social support from fellow students.

# Data promotes change among faculty better than administrative mandates

Faculty members:

*Resist* administrative initiatives for program-level change.

*Want* their programs to be as good as or better than comparable programs.

*Are willing* to consider the need for program improvement.

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# Data is an important *driver* in the process for fostering change

A five step process was used

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# 1. Appropriate data needs to be collected to promote more awareness

CGS templates provided the basis for all data-based changes.

Faculty members *were not* as receptive to this format.

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## 2. Distilling data is important for meaningful comparisons

Program Practices from Graduate Coordinators

Two key measures:

Percent Completion

Time to Completion

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### **3. Important for faculty to benchmark their data with similar programs**

Phase I- Benchmarks were available on our website to participants of the three-university collaboration via a password-protected mode.

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<b>UGA Programs (n)</b>	<b>% Complete</b>	<b>Rank</b>
A (34)	72.7	1
B (115)	67.6	2
C (12)	66.7	3
D (58)	65.3	4
E (27)	62.5	5
F (70)	59.4	6
G (27)	55.6	7
H (18)	47.1	8
I (16)	43.8	9
J (18)	37.5	10
K (36)	33.3	11

<b>UGA Programs (n)</b>	<b>TTD</b>	<b>Rank</b>
A (16)	3.33	1
B (70)	4.33	2
C (12)	4.67	3
D (115)	4.67	3
E (18)	4.67	3
F (18)	5.33	6
G (34)	5.33	6
H (27)	5.33	6
I (58)	6	9
J (36)	6	9
K (27)	6	9

## **4. Review data with program leaders, ask them to determine their future direction**

Is this where you want to be with respect to percent completion and time to degree? How so?

What are you currently doing to improve doctoral completion?

What are your future plans to improve doctoral completion?

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## **5. Faculty are encouraged to develop their own plans for program-level change**

Program leaders were asked to submit in writing their plans for improvement.

One year later, programs submitted a written update regarding their progress in the areas.

**Phase II- We will post statistics for all doctoral programs in  
a public domain in collaboration with  
Institutional Research**

**Department: A**

Cohort	Total # of Students	# Graduated	% Graduated	Current Median Time to Degree	10 Year Median Time to Degree	# Currently Enrolled	% Currently Enrolled	# Withdrawn	% Withdrawn	Current Median Time to Withdrawl	10 Year Median Time to Withdrawl
1998-1999	21	18	85.7	4.0		1	4.8	2	9.5	0.7	
1999-2000	22	16	72.7	4.7		0	0.0	6	27.3	2.5	
2000-2001	25	20	80.0	4.8		0	0.0	5	20.0	1.0	
2001-2002	20	14	70.0	4.8		2	10.0	4	20.0	2.0	
2002-2003	26	14	53.8	4.7		8	30.8	4	15.4	2.3	
2003-2004	35	2	5.7	3.7		26	74.3	7	20.0	2.3	
2004-2005	29					25	86.2	4	13.8	2.0	
2005-2006	31					24	77.4	7	22.6	0.7	
2006-2007	22					21	95.5	1	4.5	0.7	

Department Median Time to Degree: 4.7

Department Median Time to Withdrawl: 1.7

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# The Graduate School is implementing a university-wide initiative

Public Awareness Campaign

University-wide Meetings in January 2008

Developing benchmarks for acceptable levels of doctoral completion

Follow-up system implemented each semester

Increase accountability by having each program explain each non-completer

Institute university-wide follow-up surveys for all completers and non-completers

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# Project Website

[www.grad.uga.edu/cgs](http://www.grad.uga.edu/cgs)

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