

Doctoral Education at KU

Opportunities and Challenges

January 2011



National Challenges in Graduate Education

The Path Forward

The Future of Graduate Education in the United States (<http://www.fgereport.org/>)

ETS/CGS 2010

National Challenges in Graduate Education

Students are less-prepared for college and for graduate programs

math skills

reading skills

writing skills

ETS/CGS 2010

National Challenges in Graduate Education

International students are going elsewhere

Decrease from 25.1% in 2000 to 20.0% in 2006
studying in the U.S.

U.S. institutions are competing for students in
a more global market

ETS/CGS 2010

Who Completes Graduate Degrees?

- Attrition from doctoral programs 40 – 50% in some programs
- Time to degree lengthy
 - under 25% within 5 years
 - 45% within 7 years
 - 30% longer than 7 years

Where do doctoral degree recipients work?

- 50% in academia
- 50% in industry, business, government & non-profit realms

Full time (tenure-track) academic positions decreasing

Where do doctoral degree recipients work?

- Median age of entry into tenure-track positions in humanities:
 - 34 years for those graduating from well-funded programs
- Post-secondary education positions growing, but tenure-track decreasing
- Industry & Government may require specific training

Recommendations for Universities

- Improve completion rates & time to degree
- Provide clear career pathways
- Prepare future faculty
- Prepare future professionals
- Identify talented undergraduates

Recommendations for Government

- COMPETES doctoral training program to fund doctoral education
- Federal support for recommended fields of study
- International collaborative programs & changes to visa programs

Recommendations for Industry

- Business/university partnerships
 - Establish fellowships
 - Promote participation of underrepresented groups
- Better communicate the educational skills needed

KU Doctoral Program Data: Range of Ave. Time To Degree over 10 years

Humanities	7.9 – 9.4	Business	4.6 – 7.6
Social Sciences	6.0 – 7.5	Music	5.2 – 7.5
Natural Sciences	5.8 – 6.4	Arts	7.4 – 14.5
Engineering	5.4 – 8.8	Pharmacy	4.9 – 5.9
Social Welfare	4.2 – 11.9	Education	6.0 – 7.2

Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey Results

Students identified issues in:

- Funding
- Teaching loads
- Inconsistent advising and mentoring
- Curricular “bottle-necks”
- Space

How are graduate students Funded at KU?

KU Funding Model

Funding for doctoral education at KU decentralized

- GTA funding determined by department/school
- GRA funding determined by PI/department
- Fellowship – small amounts and historically spent in non-strategic fashion

GTA/GRA headcount comparisons

FY2008

- GRA: 10% of KU graduate students
- GTA: 16.2% of KU graduate students

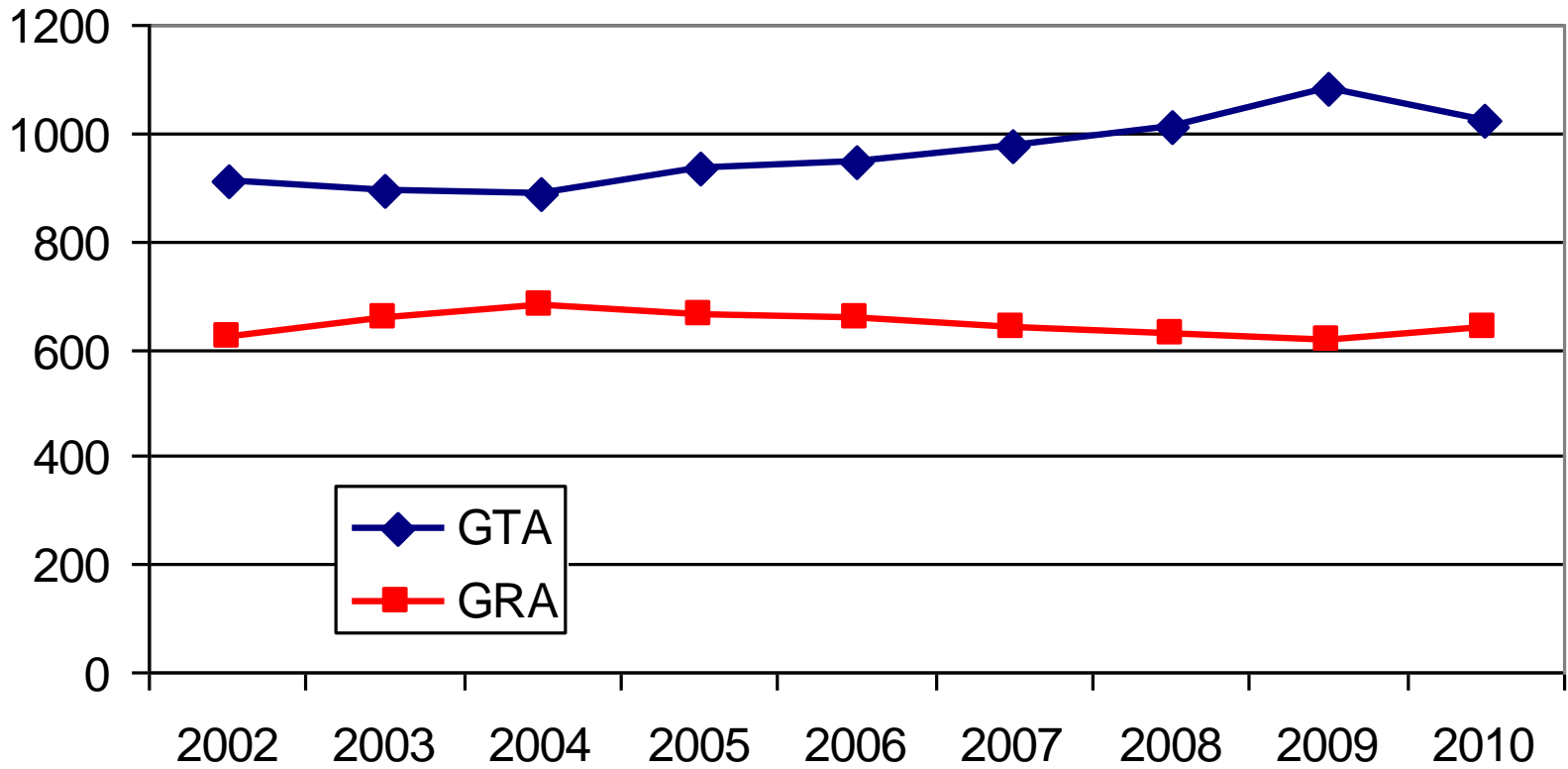
Puts KU at the bottom of “AAU-16” in
GTA/GRA funding

GRA positions over time

As research portfolio rises, number of GRA positions remains flat

Fig. 16

Graduate Assistant Head Count



Problems with KU Funding Model

- Burdened/overrun by needs unrelated to doctoral training (e.g., staffing undergraduate courses)
- Students recruited for purposes other than doctoral training
- GTA workloads heavy and detrimental to completion

Problems with KU Funding Model

- New flexibility in GTA/GRA funding model just beginning at the department level
- Departments need support to offer comprehensive funding packages to recruit students, including
 - First year/dissertation year fellowships
 - GTA / GRA offers
 - Encourage students to apply for outside fellowship support when possible

Problems with KU Funding Model

- Peer institutions are providing 5-6 year funding packages for doctoral students
- Competition hampers our recruitment efforts

Challenges in Curricula and Mentoring

Departments must choose appropriate size of doctoral programs

...based upon what is best for doctoral training rather than other departmental pressures

Challenges in Curricula and Mentoring

Departments should make good use of their administrative structure

Define the roles of

- Director of Graduate Studies
- Admissions Committee
- Graduate advising Committee
- Graduate Student Organization

Challenges in Curricula and Mentoring

Departments must choose and agree on the scope of graduate programs

...based on fields/subfields of research specialty

Challenges in Curricula and Mentoring

Departments must be active in doctoral student recruitment

- targeting prospects through first contact to application, admission and matriculation
- and focusing on agreed-upon areas of specialization

Challenges in Curricula and Mentoring

Departments must be active in doctoral student advising

- actively mentoring students through the course-work, comprehensive examination and dissertation stages
- annual evaluation of students

Pilot Projects

University Graduate Fellowship (UGF) Program

- focusing on recruitment and time to degree

Pilot Projects

Graduate Studies Dissertation Fellowship Program

- focusing on completion and curricular reform

Recommendations

Measuring success of programs

- Admissions data
- Progress to Degree data
- Satisfaction Surveys
- Completion Surveys

Use of data at department level

Recommendations

- Active *recruitment* critical
- All programs need clear *goals* and *missions* for doctoral education – the best programs agree on the training goals

Recommendations

- Recognizing the curricular “*bottle-necks*” to completion
- Best practices in active *mentoring*

Recommendations

- Re-think funding for graduate education
- Reduce GTA workload
- Set appropriate size of doctoral programs
- Set completion and outcomes expectations

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