

**Driving Discovery and Innovation Work Group**  
**Malott Room, Kansas Union**  
**Saturday, January 22, 2011, 8:30-11:30 a.m.**

**Members Present**

Steve Warren and Kristin Bowman-James, co-chairs; Kevin Boatright, staff; Shrikant Anant, Bethany Christiansen, John Colombo, Rob Fiorentino, Steve Goddard, Susan Harris, Hartmut Jaeschke, Stacy Leeds, Greg Loving, Deb Ludwig, Steven Maynard-Moody, Berl Oakley, Robert Rohrschneider, Christian Schöneich, Kevin Song, Paul Terranova, and Lorie Vanchena. Guest: Sara Rosen.

**Agenda**

1. Presentation: "Doctoral Education at KU: Opportunities and Challenges" (Sara Rosen)
2. Breakout Groups: Doctoral Education Strategic Initiatives
3. Review and Discussion: DDI Strategic Initiatives Prioritization Exercise

**Presentation on "Doctoral Education at KU: Opportunities and Challenges"**

Given the interconnectedness of research and graduate education, the work group extended an invitation to Sara Rosen, dean of graduate studies, to lead a discussion of this topic at the meeting. Rosen is chair of the newly formed Elevating Doctoral Education Work Group.

She made a PowerPoint presentation and responded to questions and comments. A discussion ensued. She also distributed a rough draft of her work group's goals and outcomes document. The PowerPoint presentation and draft document are available at the DDI Blackboard site, along with an audio recording of Rosen's talk.

One member commented on time-to-degree bottlenecks and how her department is experimenting with turning the comprehensive exam into a pedagogical exercise, e.g., creating a syllabus. It's still a problem. There's a "culture of fear," where "students feel like they have to keep reading and keep reading" to be successful.

While KU's average time-to-degree is around the national average, that may not be useful information. Perhaps we identify a couple of peer institutions and emulate them? Due in part to funding, KU doesn't get the most-prepared students. That can extend time-to-degree. It was noted that the use of Academic Analytics will allow a department to select peers and make comparisons. You can choose your own group.

The undergraduate mission drives at least some GTA appointments. The KU capital campaign is an opportunity to address this issue and others. The Distinguished Professors have worked on this for years. KU Endowment says fellowships are not sexy. We could do more to promote donations toward graduate fellowships. This is marketing, i.e., how to talk about it.

It was noted that the sciences provide nearly universal funding for doctoral students. It would be helpful to see a department-by-department breakdown of doctoral student support.

One member asked how many graduate students are needed at KU, when postdocs can do the same kind of research work and are readily available. Plus doctoral graduates are having difficulty finding jobs

and there's a glut of postdocs. The number of graduate students per program is a poor measure of "quality," with negative impacts. Look at smaller, better graduate programs that make economic sense and which improve undergraduate teaching. Another member commented that the best measure of doctoral program success is employment outcomes, though that is difficult to determine in most cases.

### **Breakout Groups: Doctoral Education Strategic Initiatives**

Two breakout groups were formed. They were each asked to come back with three suggestions for strategic actions for the Elevating Doctoral Education Work Group to consider. Members were encouraged to think boldly and focus on outcomes.

#### Group One: Stacy Leeds

The future of doctoral education cannot be that we are excellent in all things. The group felt there may be too many doctoral programs at KU, and that they are too departmental in nature. Doctoral programs need to be more market driven. Given the time spent in residence, is a doctoral degree program a "job" that should have five-year rolling contracts? Could there be thematic doctoral programs rather than departmental ones? How would that be implemented?

The breakout group's underlying focus was on raising quality. Its three recommendations were:

1. Reduce the number of students coming into KU
2. Reduce the number of doctoral programs by a certain percentage, either through elimination or merger
3. Recognize that the "Devil is in the details" re: accomplishing 1 and 2, so:
  - a. Gather data on placement and then scale programs to placement;
  - b. Decrease the timeframe for graduation/probationary period ;
  - c. Set higher standards for qualification to sit on dissertation committee;
  - d. Stop misplaced rewards on large programs/departments ;
  - e. Create a lab-type environment for non-lab- type disciplines (a library role);
  - f. Consider a culture shift on the concept of who should pay for doctoral education; and
  - g. Restructure the master's to doctorate model (functional credentials in each step). Do we need a master's thesis? "Look at the Ph.D. as the beginning and not the end. "

#### Group Two: Berl Oakley

1. Fundraise for graduate education
  - a. Have a development officer in KU Endowment specifically for fundraising for graduate education.
  - b. Fundraise for named fellowships and named programs. Target specific areas and specific people. Wealthy alumni may have interests outside of the areas in which they received their degrees.
  - c. Use current graduate students in fundraising and for public relations in general.

2. Focus on quality of graduate students rather than quantity
  - a. Evaluate the number of students that are really needed for a program. Where appropriate, hire non-students to fulfill specific teaching needs rather than GTAs.
  - b. Explore intersections of disciplines with new media. Prepare students for the future rather than the past.
3. Enhance accountability (e.g., mandate periodic reviews of student progress)

### **Review and Discussion: DDI Strategic Initiatives Prioritization Exercise**

Warren distributed the results of the “voting” by members on their prioritization of the 11 proposed DDI strategic initiatives. Some members voted at the January 18 meeting, while others voted electronically prior to July 21.

There was a good response, i.e., 24 members participated. The data are interesting. There was a clear differentiation, with #3-4-5-6 not eliminated but not as highly ranked. The strongest support was for #8-9-10-11, with #7 an interesting mixture of positive and negative votes. #11 will go on to the Elevating Doctoral Education Work Group as an endorsement of the importance of this general topic.

The next step is to develop a plan. A group is meeting on Monday (January 24) to work on a format that will help turn statements into actions. There will be some clarity in the next few weeks about what the plan will look like. The co-chairs will develop a rough draft that includes timelines and metrics for the strategic initiatives, and will circulate that document to the group as the prelude to a meeting where we finalize the submission. The draft document will be based on what the work group has provided, but will comply with formatting requirements and include timelines and metrics. The hard part is to come.

It was noted that the Strategic Planning Steering Committee met January 20 to discuss infrastructure as an overarching enabler. Some of what they did paralleled our voting, e.g., “Mandate One KU” is the same principle as our #9.

The upcoming request from the Provost for strategic initiative nominations was discussed. The deadline will be February 28, and deans will play a large role in the process. The more proposals the better.

### **Next Meeting**

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

The group will not meet on Saturday, January 29, as originally planned. No further meetings of the group are scheduled at this time, but it is anticipated that one additional meeting will be needed in order to refine the timelines and metrics and finalize the submission from the group.

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