Graduate Academics

Date of Report
February 2nd, 2018

Theme Group Name
Graduate Academics

Members

Co-Chair 1: On-Campus Faculty: Gary Bigham
Facilitator: Rex Pjesky
Resource: Nick Flynn
Off-Campus Liaison: David Prescott
External Stakeholder: Taylor Sanguinetti
External Stakeholder: Jay O'Brien
External Stakeholder: Claudia Stuart
Faculty: James Arn Womble
Faculty: Trent McEvers

Faculty: Jonathan Shaffer
Faculty: Monica Smith Hart
Faculty: Angela Phillips
Faculty: Amy Von Lintel
Staff: Christina Cox Leisinger
Staff: Michael Reagan
Staff: Faith Hoelscher
Student: Micah Davidson
Grad Student: Emily Gross

Introduction

The mission of the Graduate School of West Texas A&M University is to provide support for the recruitment, admission, matriculation, and graduation of graduate students as it relates to the University's mission of creating a diverse and inclusive student-centered community of learners engaged in academically rigorous educational experiences.

While the focus of new programs will be on serving the Panhandle region, this theme group seeks to provide a framework to facilitate the extension of the graduate school's mission to "from the panhandle to the world." To that end, the graduate school should 1) support the increase of the number of doctoral programs and graduates, 2) support programs that lower the cost and debt of graduate education to students at WT, 3) support students whose aspirations do not match graduate programs at WTAMU gain admissions at TAMU, 4) increase

Graduate Academics

the number of high impact experiences graduate students have during their programs, 5) support opportunities for research that is done at the intersections of disciplines, and 6) support programs that offer students a broader perspective across disciplines.

To achieve these ends, graduate education at WTAMU should help the university transform itself into a regional research university that serves the needs of everyone in the Panhandle of Texas and similar regions in the United States and the world.

Innovation

Innovation in graduate education at WTAMU would encompass changes:

- that advance the institution as a center for "regional research."
- to WT that make graduate school and the academic colleges efficient and responsive to change. Procedures will be transparent and never an obstacle to success.
- to the brick and mortar environment to make it technologically advanced to maximize the quality of teaching and research conducted at WTAMU.
- to ensure that higher education opportunities are not nullified by incurred debt.
- to focus the goals of research and teaching on rural settings in the Texas Panhandle and similar areas in the United States and the world.
- to shift the practice of teaching and research to include in the intersections of many disciplines.

Key Idea (1)

Key Idea (1)
Increase the number of doctoral graduates/programs

Goal 1:
Achieve Carnegie R3 Doctoral Classification Status

Action 1.1:
Focused effort among faculty, staff, administration, and all stakeholders to

identify the areas in which WTAMU can serve regional needs with doctoral programs and commit the resources necessary to design and market quality programs in those areas.

Action 1.2:
Finalize a rubric to help faculty identify new viable graduate programs to seek approval for (see appendix for draft).

Measurable Outcome 1.1.1:
- Grant 20 research/scholarship doctoral degrees each year

Key Idea (2)

Key Idea (2)
Ensure that the opportunities that come from higher education are not choked by indebtedness.

Goal 1:
Student debt should not exceed 60% of anticipated first year salary upon graduation

Action 1.1:
- Make available financial counseling/education for all graduate students.
- Create more opportunities for graduate students to work on campus (assistantships/work study).
- Provide more scholarships specifically for graduate students.

Measurable Outcome 1.1.1:
- Student debt will not exceed 60% of anticipated first year salary for graduates.

Graduate Academics

Key Idea (3)

Key Idea (3)

Baccalaureate/Masters graduates whose goals do not fit with existing programs at WTAMU will have opportunities to continue graduate education elsewhere. As Dr. Wendler mentioned in his 01/29 Reflections post, "Pipelines provide opportunity and cost effectiveness. In addition, they strengthen both institutions and the service those institutions provide to their respective constituencies."

Goal 1:

Create opportunities for WT students to enter doctoral programs at TAMU.

Action 1.1:

Create "pipeline" agreements to all colleges at TAMU.
Create opportunities for students to conduct research at TAMU.

Measurable Outcome 1.1.1:

- Have 20 graduates matriculate to TAMU doctoral programs or participate in research opportunities at TAMU.

Key Idea (4)

Key Idea (4)

Make the graduate experience focus on individualized study

Goal 1:

Increase the number of "high impact" experiences available to graduate students

Action 1.1:

Graduate Academics

Graduate School specifically partners with the academic units to support the following high impact experiences for graduate students:

- Graduate Theses
- Graduate Dissertations
- Graduate Assistantships
- Graduate Research Internal Grant Program
- Research opportunities with other institutions (Agrilife, e.g.)
- Graduate Travel Awards to support research conference presentations
- Comprehensive exams
- Study Aboard
- Internships
- Portfolios
- Practicums
- Fellowships

Measurable Outcome 1.1.1:
- The measurable outcome is the proportion of students that have one, two, three, etc. high impact experiences. Success in this measure will be a general increase in the trend of the measures.

Key Idea (5)

Key Idea (5)
Faculty drive research and must have institutional support to conduct cutting edge research that aligns with the mission of WTAMU.

Goal 1:
Increase research

Action 1.1:
Increase the institutional support for research, especially in areas that fit

Graduate Academics

the regional research mission of the university.

Measurable Outcome 1.1.1:
- Increases in the publication quality and quantity of faculty.

Key Idea (6)

Key Idea (6)
Explore graduate level programs that utilize an interdisciplinary approach

Goal 1:
Identify incentives that can be used to benefit individual Colleges or programs that support an interdisciplinary approach

Action 1.1:
What action(s) must be carried out to attain the goal?
- Examine each graduate program identifying related courses to expand the student's perspective.
- Build cross College credits that award professors and students
- Build cooperative teaching arrangements across colleges

Measurable Outcome 1.1.1:
Percentage of graduate courses taken outside the home academic department for current graduate degree programs.

Goal 2:
Identify degrees that have components that cross College lines or could benefit from a broader approach

Actions 2:
- Examine need for duplicative courses taught in different Colleges
- Consider courses utilizing co teaching with professors in separate Colleges.

Example(s) 2:

- Bring in faculty from two or more programs to develop this type of program

Measurable Outcome 2.2.2:

Degree of utilization of faculty who teach graduate courses outside the home academic department for current graduate degree programs.

Appendices and Additional Facts and Analysis

Draft of rubric to help identify new graduate programs

Graduate Academics

Rubric to identify new graduate programs to pursue

Ratings are on a 1-5 basis; 1- does not meet characteristic; 3- partially meets characteristic; 5- fully meets characteristic

Desirable Program Characteristic	Rating
Lends itself to cohort model of program community development	
Has a champion or can easily attain a champion to promote it **-NOTE: Critical requirement. Program should not be pursued if rating is less than 5.**	
Has potential internal synergies	
Has potential external synergies	
Lends itself to unique teaching methodologies	
Potential to serve the region	
Potential to serve WT	
TOTAL	

Potential programs with a total rating less than 21 should not be considered for adoption

Additional rubric for online programs

Ratings: 1- fully disagree; 3- partially agree; 5- fully agree

Statement regarding program	Rating
There is the potential for synergy with other program candidates	
The degree awarded helps improve the reputation of WT	
The program offers students more content than what is readily available online	
The program will require students to become familiar with related disciplines	
The program will require students to become familiar with unrelated discipline	
TOTAL	

Potential online programs with a total rating less than 15 should not be considered for adoption