Expected Outcome 1. Professional Competence as Teachers

Doctoral students will have training experiences and accomplishments that demonstrate the development of professional competence as teachers.

Assessment Method 1: Objective Evaluations

Assessment Method Description

The progress of doctoral students in HDFS is monitored, in part, through an annual evaluation process in which students describe in writing their teaching activities and accomplishments. In addition, undergraduate course evaluations are collected and graduate instructors’ scores on overall teaching effectiveness (rated on a 6-point scale from very poor to excellent) are recorded.

Our prior assessments revealed very favorable teaching evaluations by graduate instructors themselves (e.g., developed appropriate course materials, implemented academic honesty policies, treated students fairly and ethically, taught effectively) and their undergraduate students. These results suggested that our graduate instructors would benefit from standardized faculty evaluations and feedback that better identifies specific strengths and areas for improvement. Thus, in Spring 2014 we began assigning a faculty member to observe the teaching of each graduate instructor of record. Faculty observers attend at least one class, rate instructors on nine dimensions of teaching effectiveness, and write comments and recommendations.

Findings

Our analysis of undergraduate course evaluations includes 9 graduate instructors who submitted evaluations of courses instructed between
Summer 2013 and Spring 2014. The average undergraduate evaluation of overall teaching effectiveness was between very good and excellent (M = 5.22 out of 6.0, SD = .78, range = 3.50 - 5.90).

Our analysis of faculty observations is based on 7 graduate instructors who taught undergraduate courses in Spring 2014 or Summer 2014 (first mini-semester). For the most part, faculty observations corroborated undergraduates’ positive evaluations of graduate instructors’ teaching effectiveness. Graduate instructors were consistently rated by faculty as strong to outstanding in terms of presenting clear and appropriate objectives to the class, organizing content logically with smooth transitions and concrete examples, and employing multiple methods to deliver content (e.g., lecture, questions, class discussion, graphs, videos, group activities). Faculty also identified some areas in need of improvement across several graduate instructors. For example, some graduate instructors received relatively low ratings on the extent to which their questions and class activities promote higher levels of thinking and integrate relevant course material. Another common area in need of improvement involved closing class with a summary that ties concepts together and sets the stage for the subsequent class meeting, for which most graduate instructors were rated as weak or average.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

Faculty observers met individually with graduate instructors to review and discuss their constructive comments and recommendations. For example, regarding questions and class activities that promote higher levels of thinking, faculty encouraged graduate instructors to provide opportunities for students to reflect independently on topics prior to group discussions, to allow more time for class discussions to unfold, and to challenge students to consider research methods to inform their interpretation of information.

One limitation of our current assessment of teaching is that it is based on a small sample. Continued faculty observations of graduate instructors in subsequent semesters will improve our understanding of common strengths and weaknesses and allow us to generate more constructive feedback for our doctoral students. We will share summaries of faculty observations of graduate instructors from 2014 and future semesters with the HDFS faculty and integrate findings about strengths and weaknesses in our graduate-level special topics course on teaching at the college level.

**Additional Comments**
Expected Outcome 2. Professional Competence as Researchers

Doctoral students will have training experiences and accomplishments that demonstrate the development of professional competence as researchers.

Assessment Method 1: Objective Evaluations

Assessment Method Description

The progress of doctoral students in HDFS is monitored, in part, through an annual evaluation process in which students describe in writing their research activities and accomplishments and submit their curriculum vitae (CV), which lists peer-reviewed publications, manuscripts under review or under development for publication, and conference presentations at regional, national, or international conferences. Our prior assessments revealed that all of our doctoral students are involved in conceptualizing research questions, analyzing data, and interpreting results. Thus, rather than focusing on involvement in research, our current assessment focuses on excellence in performance of research, as reflected objectively in peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations.

Findings

Our analysis includes 20 active students in the PhD program during the 2013-2014 academic year. It excludes 2 doctoral students who did not provide annual evaluation data. On average, students included in the analysis were in the second to third year of the doctoral program (M = 2.85, SD = 1.46, range = 1-5). According to CVs, doctoral students reported an average of 1.55 publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals (SD = 1.64, range = 0-4), 0.75 empirical manuscripts under review for publication (SD = .85, range = 0-3), and 1.80 empirical manuscripts under development for publication (SD = 1.85, range 0-7). Students reported an average of 8.75 professional presentations at regional, national, or international conferences (SD = 5.27, range = 1-22). 30% of students reported no publications in peer-reviewed journals or empirical manuscripts under review in peer-reviewed journals.

How did you use findings for improvement?

Results of the research assessment indicate that our doctoral students are gaining fundamental research training experiences and, on average,
developing high-quality scholarly products that are published or presented in peer-reviewed contexts. There is considerable variability in the number of manuscripts and presentations produced by students, as may be expected from a graduate program that supports various professional goals and an analysis that included early-stage and advanced students. Nonetheless, a small number of students with research interests are not developing scholarly products at a rate that demonstrates research competence and maximizes job prospects. We anticipate continued improvements in the development of scholarly products due to recent changes in qualifying exam procedures (which involves the development of a publication-quality paper) and enhanced research methods training in recent years. When major professors meet with their individual students as part of the annual evaluation process in Spring semesters, students will be encouraged to become proactively involved in departmental research programs earlier in their graduate career to support their capacity and opportunities for publication and presentation.

Additional Comments

**Expected Outcome 3. Competence in Professional Service and Outreach**

Doctoral students will have training experiences and accomplishments that demonstrate the development of **competence in professional service and outreach**.

**Assessment Method 1:** Student Reports

**Assessment Method Description**

The progress of doctoral students in HDFS is monitored, in part, through an annual evaluation process in which students describe their outreach and professional service activities and accomplishments during the previous calendar year. Specifically, students were prompted to consider their outreach activities and indicate (yes/no) whether they synthesized research into written educational formats targeting lay audiences, presented research-based information to lay audiences, and developed or presented training materials for professionals in the field. Regarding other professional activities, students were asked to indicate whether they established membership in a relevant professional organization, attended state or national conferences, and reviewed manuscripts for refereed journals.
Findings

Our analysis includes 20 active students in the PhD program during the 2013-2014 academic year. It excludes 2 doctoral students who did not provide annual evaluation data. On average, students included in the analysis were in the second to third year of the doctoral program (M = 2.85, SD = 1.46, range = 1-5). In the past year, 60% of our doctoral students synthesized research into written educational formats targeting lay audiences, 50% presented research-based information to lay audiences, and 40% developed or presented training materials for professionals in the field. 95% of students established membership in a relevant professional organization, 100% attended state or national conferences, and 25% reviewed manuscripts for refereed journals.

How did you use findings for improvement?

Results of the service assessment indicate that our doctoral students are generally involved in outreach and professional service. These results reflect our well-rounded training program and graduate students. Nonetheless, we aim to increase the percentage of students involved in outreach and professional service. Specifically, considering the various career aims of our doctoral students (e.g., primarily research, primarily teaching, or primarily applied service, or some combination), we aim for at least 50% of our doctoral students to be involved in each of the outreach and professional service activities listed above.

We will continue to provide opportunities for students to apply their research and to connect with lay audiences, and we will aim to provide more opportunities for students to review manuscripts for refereed journals, as this is an important professional service that also supports the development of research skills. In addition, to continue to promote doctoral students’ participation in national/international conferences, the department will provide financial support (up to $500/student) to students who will attend a national or international conference to present research.

Additional Comments