NRC: A Data Based Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs

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What is the NRC Assessment?

- A study to assess the quality <u>and characteristics</u> of research doctorate programs at institutions in the US
  - The last NRC rankings were provided in 1995
  - Methodology used in this study is quite different and more robust
- 212 institutions participating
  - Data for 4,838 PhD programs in 62 fields

UNC-CH Participation

- UNC-Chapel Hill has **53 programs** participating in the NRC study
  - Programs fairly evenly split among the disciplines
    - arts and humanities, life sciences, physical sciences, mathematics and engineering, and the social and behavioral sciences

- Base year for analysis/reporting was AY 2005-06
  - The ratings and data will be 'dated'

Timeline

- Methodology guide released in July 2009

- OIRA reviewed the guide as well as our campus data to generate basic analyses
  - Early July each participating doctoral program received a report with their data and some AAU peer comparison data

Timeline

- Target release of ratings data and results

  – Monday, September 20 – embargoed release

  – Tuesday, September 28 – final report, spreadsheets, analytic tables, and methodology guide released; national briefing and teleconference

Results

- The NRC results will provide for each program two overall ranges of rankings, as well as ranges of rankings for sub-categories for the areas of Research Activity of Program Faculty, Student Support and Outcomes, and Diversity of the Academic Environment.

- Programs will identify variables that make the largest contribution to the overall rating or dimension and compare their data to that of similar programs

Results – Ranges of Rankings

Two Approaches

- Asked a sample of faculty in each field how they would rate a sample of programs. Related those ratings to 20 program characteristics through a regression (R-weights).

- Asked faculty what they thought was important to the quality of a doctoral program and developed weights (S-weights).

A Sample Comparison

Institution Name	R5	R95	S5	S95
R and S-based Rankings for 5 Programs in a Field				
Institution A	4	17	10	29
Institution B	4	27	3	10
Institution C	13	37	8	23
Institution D	31	79	31	86
Institution E	52	102	91	150

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Dimensional Rankings for the Same Programs

Institution Name	RA5	RA95	SS5	SS95	D5	D95
Institution A	7	29	9	66	81	131
Institution B	3	12	31	110	97	147
Institution C	9	39	6	42	101	151
Institution D	21	85	21	93	42	97
Institution E	53	124	53	133	77	128

The Twenty Key Variables used in the Rankings

- Publications per allocated faculty
- Citations (exc. Humanities) per publication
- Percent faculty with grants
- Awards per faculty
- Percent 1st Yr. Full Support
- Percent Completing in 6 yrs. or less (8 yrs. for humanities)
- Median Time to degree
- Students with Academic Plans
- Collects Outcomes data

- Percent Faculty Minority
- Percent Faculty Female
- Percent Students Minority
- Percent Students Female
- Percent Students International
- *Percent Interdisciplinary*
- *Average GRE-Q*
- *Number of PhDs 2002-2006*
- *Student Workspace*
- *Student Health Insurance*
- *Student Activities*

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Outcomes

1. The data will help to determine where improvement is needed and which variables to focus on.

2. Identify variables rated most important by faculty in the field. These variables had the greatest effect on the range of ratings for each program.

3. Compare your program with those at other institutions on variables of interest. These values will be available in an online database.

Communications and Help

- The Graduate School, Institutional Research, and University Relations are working closely on talking points.

- The campus NRC listserv will be used to communicate in the coming months.

- The campus NRC website will be updated frequently:

    gradschool.unc.edu/policies/nrc/