

Chapter 3

Content of PFF Programs

Systematic attention to program flexibility and individualized student attention can have positive results. We have found that a “cookie-cutter” approach to a PFF program does not always address PFF student concerns or needs.

—Graduate Student in Psychology, University of Georgia

Common PFF program elements include courses for credit, certificate programs, seminars, workshops and informal student activities, experiences at partner institutions, professional activities, and attention to diversity. While PFF programs do not necessarily include all these elements, examples are presented below that illustrate the various ways these elements have been used and assembled in PFF programs.

Courses for Credit

Courses are the primary means by which education programs are organized, and this is true for PFF, as the following examples illustrate.

The program in English at the University of South Florida offers a course entitled “Professional Identities in Rhetoric and Composition.” The course features guest speakers who address various professional opportunities, such as positions teaching at vocational and community colleges and teaching English as a Second Language, as well as positions in writing center administration, writing programs, and adult literacy programs.

At the University of Illinois at Chicago, Dick Simpson created two new sequential PFF courses that are the building blocks of the PFF program in political science: “Introduction to the Political Science Profession” and “Teaching Political Science.” The first course is required of all new Ph.D. students, and the second is required for teaching assistants and strongly encouraged for those interested in an academic career.

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Howard University PFF students in communication take an on-line teaching course using pre-packaged software to expand their understanding of technology in the classroom. The course also enhances their ability to conduct a technology-augmented class. Arizona State University’s PFF program in history, in collaboration with the College of Extended Education, developed a one-semester associateship for teaching and managing an online introductory freshman course for the department.

The department of history at Florida State University offers a course entitled “Teaching in the Discipline,” in which students practice the skills they will use in the classroom. This course is taught by a graduate faculty member and includes presentations by partner faculty about their teaching goals and experiences at their own institutions. This course has become an effective venue for raising awareness of the challenges of being a faculty member at different types of institutions.

The goal of PFF is to integrate courses and activities into the academic program and sequence of degree requirements. Recognizing that students need



to know what to expect so that they can be prepared for the opportunities that may become available during their graduate program, Arizona State University (ASU) includes PFF information in the orientation program for new doctoral students. PFF courses are not intended simply as additions to already crowded doctoral requirements. According to Noel Stowe, director of ASU's history PFF program, PFF courses and activities can be offered over an extended period of a student's program, rather than telescoped into a particular semester or year of doctoral work.

The experience of a student in the University of Illinois at Chicago English PFF program illustrates how PFF can further research interests. The student's dissertation dealing with the conditions of faculty at local community colleges evolved from a PFF course entitled "Pedagogy and the Profession." The thesis is credited with helping the student secure a tenure-track position at Elmhurst College.

Certificate Programs

Many PFF programs in social sciences and humanities have developed certificate programs as a means of recognizing student achievements. Certificate programs provide the opportunity to earn a formal credential that is part of the student's permanent academic record.

Indiana University's department of communication and culture offers a Certificate of Pedagogy. The culminating pedagogy course, according to PFF director Patricia Andrews, addresses such pragmatic concerns as finishing the dissertation, publishing, creating a teaching portfolio, entering the academic job market, preparing for an interview, preparing a job talk, and navigating the road to tenure. The course also includes controversial issues, such as challenges to liberal learning in the 21st century, assessment, com-

munication across the curriculum, service learning and civic engagement, distance education, and diversity in higher education. To earn the certificate, students are required to complete three courses and pass a one-hour doctoral qualifying examination focused on pedagogy. Students also create teaching portfolios, prepare a résumé, participate in a mock job interview, design a course that blends their teaching and research interests, and give a job talk.

The department of sociology at Indiana University also offers a distinct certificate program. A teaching certificate is awarded upon completion of the following three-course sequence: “The Teaching of Undergraduate Sociology,” “Sociological Issues in College Pedagogy,” and “Research Seminar on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.”

Through the Council for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) at the University of Illinois, Chicago, PFF director Dick Simpson offers a series of workshops on teaching techniques in conjunction with the course, “Teaching Political Science.” CETL provides students with a certificate in teaching for those who take the PFF course, attend three CETL workshops, and create their own teaching portfolios.

Seminars, Workshops, and Informal Student Activities

Less formal seminars, workshops, and student activities also offer exposure to career issues and teaching and learning concepts. Typically, the graduate school is the sponsor of PFF seminars and workshops. At these events, former PFF students discuss their PFF experiences and how best to prepare for a faculty position at their type of institution. Informal brown bag luncheons are another venue for providing doctoral students with information about



faculty careers. In other cases, graduate schools invite students to attend seminars led by nationally recognized leaders in the graduate community.

In the department of sociology at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, students participate in a workshop on classroom research and evaluation strategies that draws from the work of Cross and Steadman (1996) and Angelo and Cross (1993). According to PFF director Helen Moore, students create a project on the scholarship of teaching and learning. Students then prepare a proposal, complete with a statement of pedagogical goals, lesson plans, and institutional review board approvals for evaluation strategies, after examining a range of classroom evaluation techniques.

Melbourne Cummings, director of the PFF program in communication at Howard University, reports that the program requires students to attend workshops that address a variety of issues such as diversity in the classroom and at the university, classroom management, grant writing and its importance for conducting research, university and departmental politics, faculty governance, and departmental leadership. Faculty and administrators from the department of communication and culture—as well as from other university departments—lead these discussions. The list of speakers has included a member of the board of trustees, the president, and the provost.

Jeanne Toungara, Howard University's PFF director in history, also conducts an extensive group of PFF student workshops. Sample titles include “The Teaching Portfolio,” “The Institutional Review Board,” and “The First Year of Teaching.”

It is well known that student learning is not limited to formal courses, seminars, and other formal credit-bearing activities. Informal activities play a role as well. Victor Benassi, director of the University of New Hampshire's PFF psychology program, reports that students in his program participate in a uni-

versity-wide PFF breakfast series, an informal activity at which issues related to faculty careers are discussed with partner faculty. According to Robin Fleming, director of the history PFF program at Boston College, graduate students in the department eagerly sign up for PFF activities that have some practical application, such as those that deal with technology, hands-on-teaching, or job-market preparation. Leaders in the graduate student government organization like to be involved in planning PFF events and willingly participate in programs that they help organize.

Experiences at Partner Institutions

The landscape of doctoral education is dotted with partnerships between colleges and doctoral universities to strengthen the education of aspiring faculty. Although PFF is a strong proponent of partnering, it can still be a challenge to identify partners and create ways to collaborate. It is important to be flexible in the ways PFF students become involved on partner campuses so that their involvement includes a broad range of faculty responsibilities.

Cecilia Shore, PFF director at Miami University of Ohio explains that PFF students in the department of psychology have served as reviewers of undergraduate research submissions to a regional conference, provided statistical consulting for a survey of student satisfaction on a partner campus, and shadowed partner faculty as they attended campus governance meetings.

When PFF began in 1994, guidelines stated that partner institutions should be within easy commuting distance of the anchor university. The activities cited below, however, show that partnerships need not be limited by distance.

According to Patricia Andrews, PFF director at Indiana University's department of communication and culture, when students in that program traveled to



Arizona State University-West, they shadowed faculty, offered colloquia, talked with students, dined with the dean, and attended a faculty meeting. Similar activities were involved in a trip to a different type of partner institution, Texas A&M-Kingsville. They learned that Indiana University differs from both partner institutions in student diversity and faculty roles.

Teaching internships at partner institutions are common elements of PFF programs. Noel Stowe writes that the history PFF program he directs at ASU has developed an internship program with one of the ASU branch campuses, so that a student nearing completion of the doctorate can have an independent teaching opportunity with undergraduate students whose interests and degree programs differ from those that characterize the main campus. The English PFF program at the University of South Florida has created fellowships so its students can teach as interns at a partner institution. In the PFF program in sociology at Indiana University, students serve in semester-long placements at other campuses in the state system and, with extensive supervision, teach their own courses that match the needs of the partner institution and undergraduate students.

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Professional Activities

Experiences of PFF students are enriched through participation in professional activities in regional and national settings. Each of the participating humanities and social science disciplinary societies has featured graduate students at major conferences. In joint presentations with their mentors, students acquaint audi-

ences with the advantages of having PFF programs on university campuses and talk about their own research and how their scholarly interests influenced their pedagogy. There are also international venues for professional development. PFF students in the communication department at Howard University gave papers at international conferences in Hong Kong, West Indies, Japan, and Canada.

In addition to attending conferences devoted to their disciplines, one PFF student from each cluster in every discipline was invited to attend the 2002 annual meeting of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. The twelve students who participated said attendance enhanced their understanding of such issues as changing faculty roles, hiring practices, and support for new faculty. They also were able to network with peer PFF students from different schools and disciplines, observe their future colleagues addressing national issues in higher education, and interact with academic officers at different kinds of institutions. The American Political Science Association reports that in a survey of political science PFF students, peer networks were important to a greater percentage of respondents than was faculty assistance.

Attention to Diversity

Diversity is a critically important element of any PFF program. Diversity issues are incorporated in several ways in humanities and social sciences PFF programs. Examples include learning to teach for inclusiveness and experiencing racially and ethnically diverse institutions.

The campus-wide ASU PFF program—which includes students in the social sciences and humanities—incorporates activities that focus on teaching for inclusiveness. Promoting inclusiveness draws attention to a range of non-



traditional students such as persons with disabilities and parents who are working while attending college, as well as racial and ethnic minorities. Because diversity is the overarching concept that ties the program's modules together, all panelists in the ASU seminar series—from within and outside the university—are asked to address the topic. Such consistent and repeated emphasis is a good strategy for producing understanding of diversity issues. One seminar is devoted exclusively to teaching and learning in the inclusive classroom. It includes the following topics: being a member of an underrepresented group in the discipline, speaking from a position of privilege in the classroom, addressing sensitive topics, connecting with students with disabilities, and the burden of trying to represent all members of an ethnic group.

Several clusters include institutions with large numbers of racial and ethnic minority students, and their presence helps PFF students understand a variety of institutional missions, curricular issues, and approaches to teaching and learning. Little Priest Tribal College, which enrolls American Indian students, partners with the PFF sociology program at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. The Michigan Technological University and Washington State University English programs both cluster with tribal colleges. Communication, political science, and history PFF students at Howard University, most of whom are from underrepresented racial or ethnic groups, have opportunities to experience predominantly white universities. The Catholic University of America and Marymount University

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were early members of the Howard cluster, and other institutions with predominantly white enrollments later joined the cluster. They include Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, the University of New Hampshire, and Hope College.

A disciplinary society can provide leadership in addressing the discipline's underrepresentation of students of color. One example is the American Sociological Association's Minority Opportunities through School Transformation (MOST) program. MOST is designed to achieve excellence and inclusiveness in colleges and universities by fostering intentional and systemic change at the department level. Operating in eleven institutions, MOST has increased the number of courses dealing with diversity, the number of graduating minority students who major in sociology, and the number of minority faculty members. Two PFF departments—at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and at Texas A&M University—operate MOST programs.

Although the content of PFF programs varies from one institution to the next, the components identified in this chapter are typical. PFF leaders report that they make adjustments throughout the course of their programs to try to meet the needs of all constituencies. The goal to have PFF programs become integral components of doctoral education could not be realized in the two years of this project, but all PFF program designs should include plans for sustainability.

