

Chapter 6

Challenges for the Future: Changing the Culture of Faculty Preparation

I think it's important to change the paradigm when we think about faculty positions and change the pedagogy when we think about teaching...

—Graduate Student in Sociology, Texas A&M University

This chapter takes a forward look at sustaining PFF programs and envisioning their future within the context of many other initiatives with similar objectives.

It is important to recall the context in which the Preparing Future Faculty initiative was launched: a confluence of studies and testimony from students and faculty suggesting changes in doctoral education that would be beneficial to graduates and employers. Specifically, there was strong support for the notion that new faculty should be prepared for the many roles and expectations of faculty across the spectrum of hiring institutions. A sizeable majority of Ph.D. graduates who pursue a faculty career will do so at an institution that is different in many ways from their doctoral university. These hiring institutions see a broader preparation of faculty as an essential strategy for improving the education of undergraduate students. This was an important factor in the decision of The Atlantic Philanthropies to support PFF programs in the humanities and social sciences as well as of the NSF to support science and mathematics PFF programs.

Integrating PFF into Doctoral Education

Higher education has a long history of educational innovations that emerge, gain widespread attention, and then disappear from the landscape, especially if they are dependent on external funding. A major challenge for PFF is to sustain the significant number of departmental and university-wide programs that currently exist across the disciplines. Although the humanities and social science disciplines have provided a receptive environment, they also face special challenges. These disciplines are related intellectually in ways that augur well for synergy. Larger numbers of programs will be required, however, to effect systemic change in the culture of graduate education in these disciplines. This fourth phase of PFF included six disciplinary societies, each of which created four or five experimental PFF programs that have operated for only two years. These departments represent less than 10 percent of doctoral departments in any of these disciplines, and these departmental programs have operated for less than one-half of the average time required to complete a Ph.D. degree (Hoffer, *et al.* 2002). Much more time will be needed to produce Ph.D. graduates who demonstrate by their successful faculty careers the benefit of PFF to students and to departments. In the humanities and social sciences alone, many more departmental programs with similarly well-documented results will be needed to change the “culture of preparation” of faculty. Effecting change throughout such a large, complex, and decentralized enterprise as doctoral education is a far greater and longer-term undertaking.

Three strategic actions will be required to integrate PFF into doctoral “education:

- ▲ Establish collective responsibility for doctoral education;
- ▲ Clearly articulate the collective benefits of PFF; and
- ▲ Secure administrative support for PFF.

Each of these actions is expanded upon below.

Establishing collective responsibility for graduate education

In theory, doctoral education is conceived to be the collective responsibility of graduate faculty in the department or program offering the degree. In practice, the responsibility is often assumed by the research mentor, and the dyadic relationship between doctoral student and research mentor is the primary aspect of the student's graduate experience. One of the goals of PFF is to move graduate education toward a more collective endeavor of members of a department or program faculty and others (such as faculty at partner institutions) who can be effective mentors for preparing students for the total array of expectations of faculty members. The disciplinary societies that represent faculty professional interests are seen as key players in building this broader consensus among faculty for changing doctoral education.

The leaders of the social science and humanities disciplinary societies that created programs in this fourth phase of PFF plan to continue their support for the program. They believe that the disciplines have a responsibility to improve the preparation of new faculty members for an academic career, and that this issue requires the societies' prominent and sustained attention. The societies can leverage their influence by partnering with educational associations and departments willing to experiment with innovative practices.

Articulating the benefits of PFF

The graduates of PFF programs who are now in faculty positions are especially articulate spokespersons for the student benefits of PFF and ardent promoters of PFF concepts. As PFF programs take firmer hold in departments and the number of programs grows, there will be increasing numbers of alumni who

will be in various stages of their own academic careers and will be in a position to identify the additional benefits of PFF to the department and to the institution. They will become a growing force in forging broader faculty and institutional support for better faculty preparation programs.

The social science and humanities disciplines have provided numerous venues for disseminating information about the benefits of PFF to their disciplines and to individual doctoral programs within the disciplines. They have included sessions at society meetings highlighting this fourth phase of PFF, and all of the societies have included sessions at future meetings and planned articles for future issues of society journals and newsletters. These societies understand that real change in the culture of preparation of future faculty requires a continued and sustained effort to promote the goals of PFF programs. Furthermore, the societies are committed to these goals and to the long-term efforts and activities that are necessary to achieve them. The connections among humanities and social science disciplines should encourage additional societies to mirror these efforts, resulting in broader support across the disciplines.

The PFF sponsoring associations, CGS and AAC&U, both will continue to promote the goals of PFF among leaders of graduate and undergraduate education and hiring institutions. These two organizations can convene gatherings and disseminate information to members and thereby help to maintain the interactive connections among PFF programs and between programs and disciplinary societies. Several other educational associations also have embraced many of the goals of PFF. These associations will help solidify and broaden support for PFF programs among other stakeholders of doctoral education, especially academic administrators.



Securing broader support for PFF

Faculty and administrative support are necessary for the success of future faculty preparation programs because all faculty work occurs within an environment that is determined by the mission and, increasingly, the strategic plan of the institution. Administrative officials endorse faculty aspirations for graduate programs as institutional priorities. The support of academic and institutional administrators is necessary to institutionalize PFF as an integral part of the academic culture. Educational associations can help build collective support for these programs not only among faculty, but also among presidents, provosts, and other leaders who influence higher educational policies.

Securing university and external support for PFF programs will require that departments:

- ▲ Learn new strategies for “marketing” PFF programs that demonstrate demand from students and employers as well as benefits to students, the institution, and various constituents;
- ▲ Increase the visibility of departmental PFF programs, both internally and among external groups such as hiring institutions, state agencies, and alumni;
- ▲ Relate PFF programs to institutional and departmental strategic plans;
- ▲ Advocate policies that reward faculty for PFF participation, including mentoring in areas other than research; and
- ▲ Document the resources needed to support faculty preparation programs.

A Confluence of Forces for Change

A confluence of forces has developed in recent years for improving the preparation of future faculty. These forces are the result of the efforts of the disciplinary societies and departmental clusters that participated in this fourth phase of PFF, several initiatives in graduate and undergraduate education, and societal factors. To envision the future of faculty preparation programs, the experience of the PFF program must be considered along with these forces and the initiatives that share many overlapping and intersecting goals, strategies, and even players. It is quite likely that future faculty preparation programs will result from successfully linking PFF to other change initiatives and incorporating new information and ways of thinking about both undergraduate and graduate education.

Initiatives in doctoral education

Several recent studies of doctoral education have reflected a consensus among educational, business, and government leaders. These studies affirm research as the core requirement for the Ph.D. degree, but they suggest that additional requirements, including skills development, experiential learning, and career preparation are also important (Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy 1995). The recommendations do not constitute a major restructuring of doctoral education, but they do represent a programmatic or cultural change that graduate faculty must embrace in order to change the academic culture. Several national initiatives have been launched to respond to the perceived need to effect changes in doctoral education (see Sidebar).

All of these efforts are compatible with the vision of PFF, and many have been stimulated to some extent by PFF. They reinforce each other and

Initiatives to Improve Doctoral Education

The Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate, of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, is studying changes in doctoral programs at selected departments in six fields of study and will disseminate its findings in order to foster the development of “stewards of the discipline.” www.carnegiefoundation.org/CID/docs/CID_Overview.pdf

The Compact for Faculty Diversity is a collaboration of three regional higher education compacts and states and graduate institutions in each region to promote the preparation of minority students for faculty positions. www.aypf.org/rmaa/pdfs/Compact.pdf

The Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards of the American Association for Higher Education compiles information on the changing roles of faculty, broadening definitions of scholarship, academic careers, and transitions. www.boerner.net/conferences/conf_AAHE-FFRR.html

Preparing Future Professionals programs prepare graduate students for non-academic positions. Like PFF, PFP allows students to explore opportunities in organizations where they might work. www.utexas.edu/ogs/outreach/rc/communicator.html

Re-envisioning the Ph.D. is a University of Washington project that gathers information on perceptions, critiques, initiatives on graduate education, employer expectations, and other issues. A major national conference resulted in recommendations for various key constituents to improve the degree. www.grad.washington.edu/envision/

The Responsive PhD project of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation explores ways for the degree to be more responsive to social and academic change. These include new paradigms (e.g., interdisciplinarity), new practices (e.g., preparation for teaching), and new people (e.g., more diverse populations). www.woodrow.org/responsivephd/initiative.html

collectively point toward a change in the “culture of preparation” of future faculty.

Based on a growing body of research, these several initiatives hold promise to develop more welcoming, more informative, and more supportive pathways for graduate students to become faculty members, pathways that would incorporate many of the concepts and values of PFF.

Initiatives in undergraduate education

Undergraduate education is changing in research universities that anchor the clusters as well as in their PFF partner institutions. The PFF students who have been involved at partner institutions in revising general education requirements, infusing diversity into the curriculum, and establishing writing programs across the curriculum, for example, have learned a great deal about both education and faculty politics. These are new elements in doctoral education, and integrating them into Ph.D. programs will require program planners and administrators to learn about them as well. Several organizations that currently sponsor initiatives in undergraduate education can supply information that will be useful both to directors of future faculty preparation programs and to students preparing for faculty careers (see Sidebar).

Regional accrediting bodies now require colleges and universities to assess student learning and to demonstrate educational effectiveness as a condition of accreditation. To maintain accreditation, institutions must establish clear learning goals, design curricula to help students achieve those goals, and demonstrate that goals are met. The regional and specialized accreditation agencies represent additional useful resources to help faculty, students, and institutions learn about and meet the new standards.



Undergraduate education initiatives sponsored by various organizations

Assessment: Assessment Forum of the American Association for Higher Education; www.aahe.org/assessment

Diversity: Association of American Colleges and Universities
See *Diversity Digest* newsletter, www.diversityweb.org

Freshman and senior year programs: National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, University of South Carolina; www.fye.sc.edu/fye

Interdisciplinary studies: Association for Integrative Studies; www.muc.muohio.edu/~ais/index.htmlx

Learning communities: Washington Center for Improving Undergraduate Education, Evergreen State University; www.washcntr@evergreen.edu

Writing across the curriculum: Council of Writing Program Administrators; www.english.ilstu.edu/Hesse/wpawelcome.htm

An overview of these initiatives and trends can be obtained from two Washington, DC educational associations that can serve as resources for faculty preparation programs:

- ▲ **The American Association for Higher Education**, www.aahe.org; AAHE is an individual membership organization that sponsors publications, an annual national conference, topical conferences, funded projects, and an academy for academic change.
- ▲ **The Association of American Colleges and Universities**, www.aacu.org; AAC&U is an institutional membership organization that sponsors publications, an annual meeting, a series of working conferences, and demonstration projects on important developments in undergraduate education.