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## Action Project

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**Institution:** Ohio University  
**Submitted:** 2006-12-08  
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### Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: 01-01-2006

Target completion date: 01-01-2009

Actual completion date: --

### A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Selective Enhancement and Prioritization of Graduate Education, Research and Creative Activities at Ohio University

### B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

Ohio University is a comprehensive research university which has been classified as one of the RU/H: Research Universities (high research activity) according to the Carnegie classification. Supporting graduate and research programs at such an institution requires a great deal of resources, especially monetary resources. The institution does not currently have a centralized process to evaluate the accomplishments and potential of its graduate/research programs and selectively enhance these programs to improve the educational benefit to our students and increase the prominence of individual programs and the institution as a whole. The goal of this action project will be to develop a process to accurately and fairly evaluate the potential of graduate and research programs in different disciplines within the institution and make informed institutional decisions to selectively enhance these programs to improve the educational benefit to students and prominence within the discipline.

### C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Primary Category: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

### D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities:

One of the goals of the university as defined in Vision Ohio, the institutional strategic plan, is to increase the national prominence of the institution. Selective enhancement of research and graduate programs within the institution was identified in Vision Ohio as one strategy to help achieve this goal. Ohio University has several graduate and research programs which have received national recognition and rankings and others which have the potential of achieving such a goal. Informed decisions made to selectively enhance these programs will insure development and prominence of these programs in the lean budgetary times the institution is now facing and likely will continue to face in the near future. The recent realignment of the university budget and the future adoption of a Responsibility Centered Budgeting Model for the university will provide the institution with the resources needed for the selective enhancement process.

### E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

Academic Units- The individual colleges and academic departments will be most affected by this action project. Faculty and administrators from the colleges and departments will be involved in the evaluation of the graduate/research programs and selected programs within the academic units of the institution will also benefit from the enhancement process. Vice President for Research/Office of Research and Sponsored Programs- Research offices at the institution will provide the necessary infrastructure and support for facility improvement needed to enhance specific research disciplines within the institution. It is likely that policy changes and

restructuring which affect these offices will also be needed to achieve the long term goal of selective program enhancement. Office of Graduate Studies- Successful completion of this action project will also require policy changes and a restructuring of this office in order to achieve the long term goals of the project.

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:

Graduate Education- The quality of graduate education will improve in the selected (enhanced) disciplines. The quality (and possibly quantity) of students, faculty, educational/research facilities will also increase in these disciplines/research areas. The result of the enhancement process will improve the educational product to the student and allow these programs to better compete with other nationally ranked institutions. Graduate stipends will also improve in the targeted disciplines. Faculty – Enhancement of selected graduate/research programs will attract high quality faculty to the institution in these disciplines and will also improve faculty retention in these areas. Research – Selective enhancement will increase research productivity including publications and external funding in the targeted disciplines.

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):

As part of the university strategic plan, development of a process to selectively enhance graduate/research programs was identified as an institutional priority with a goal to increase the national prominence of the university. A team of faculty/administrators/students was charged with the implementation of the priorities for graduate education and research identified in the strategic plan, including the selective graduate/research program enhancement process. During the 2005-06 academic year, the team organized a Graduate Education and Research Board (GERB) and selected individuals within the institution to serve on the board. This board has been given its charge to develop a procedure to fairly evaluate and recommend selective graduate and research programs for enhancement by the institution. The board is currently meeting to develop this process. It is anticipated that by the end of the 2006-07 academic year, a process will be developed and effectively communicated campus wide. The enhancement process should be implemented by the 2007-08 academic year which will result in identifying the initial priority programs. During the past and current academic years, budget realignment will earmark the necessary institutional funds to invest in these programs. While it is anticipated that it will take through the 2006-07 academic year to develop the program enhancement process, the GERB will meet on a regular basis for the foreseeable future to evaluate the progress of the programs receiving enhancement, make decisions on whether these programs should continue to receive priority and identify additional programs to receive support. This action project will be completed once the program enhancement process has been developed, communicated and operational. However, it may be several years before many of the outcome measures identified in Part I can be used to determine the degree of success in achieving its goals.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

The fact that the GERB has been formed and charged with the development of the enhancement is an indication that this project is off to a good start. The creation of the program evaluation and enhancement process and the adequate communication of this process campus-wide will be the next indicator of the success of this project. Successful implementation of the process will be the final indicator that this project has achieved its goals. Long term outcome measures as described in Part I will more quantitatively determine the success of the enhancement process developed as part of this action project.

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals:

Development of an institutional process to fairly and accurately evaluate and selectively enhance graduate/research programs within the institution. Successful communication and implementation of the process. Increases in the national ranking of the graduate/research programs targeted for enhancement. Increases in the quality of graduate students accepted into the selected programs, as measured by their undergraduate grade point average, standardized test scores and the quality of their undergraduate institution. Success of the students who graduate from the selected programs as measured by career placement/success. Success of faculty who participate in the selective graduate/research discipline, as measured by number/quality

of publications, discipline specific awards and success at obtaining external grants and contracts.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

K. Project Leader and contact person:

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### Annual Update: 2008-09-12

A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

The goal of this action project was to develop a process to accurately and fairly evaluate the potential of graduate and research programs and selectively enhance the financial support of these programs in order to improve their educational benefit to students and prominence within the discipline. An effective process to accomplish this objective will help the institution meet two of its goals from the Vision OHIO institutional strategic plan: strengthening graduate education and increasing the national prominence of the institution. The Graduate Education and Research Board (GERB) successfully completed its initial round of proposal reviews and awarded a total of \$300,000 in multiyear base funding to strengthen two existing graduate programs at the Ohio University Athens (main) campus. Out of a pool of six proposals that made it to the final selection round, graduate programs in creative writing and nanoscience were selected by the GERB in 2008 to receive enhancement funding. Additional details of the awards can be found in a news release located at the following URL: <http://news.research.ohiou.edu/notebook/index.php?page=142&item=455> In 2008 the GERB also awarded an additional \$250,000 in base funding from its Future Growth Fund to establish three graduate programs located on Ohio University's regional campuses. These programs in organizational communication, strategic leadership and dietetics will be interdisciplinary in nature and will award masters degrees. Additional information can be found by viewing the university press release online at: <http://www.ohio.edu/outlook/07-08/June/613.cfm> The Future Growth Fund, designed to provide start up support for the development of new graduate programs, will continue during the 2008-09 fiscal year. A total of \$250,000 in university funds have been earmarked to support the development of new master's degree programs which serve an educational need at an Ohio University regional campus. <http://news.research.ohiou.edu/notebook/index.php?item=466>

**Review (09-13-08):**

It is apparent that this action project, which ends January, 2009, has been productive for you. You have remained focused upon your two goals, which have been to (1) enhance your graduate education and (2) increase the national prominence of your institution. It is noteworthy that the GERB awarded \$300,000.00 in a multi-year base funding format to strengthen two of your existing graduate programs at your Athens campus. Also, that your creative writing and nanoscience curriculum were selected to receive enhancement funding. Plus, you received funding for your regional campuses amounting to an additional \$250,000.00. Likewise, a total of \$200,00.00 in university funding has been earmarked for the development of new master's degree programs. It is also noteworthy that you have reported this good news on your websites to inform all stakeholders. This has been a job well done. This action project nicely dove tails into another potential action project that focuses upon AQIP Category One (Helping Students Learn) which "identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations, and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This category focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet also addresses how your entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development." Another potential action project is AQIP Category Six (Supporting Institutional Operations) which "addresses the variety of your institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive." A third potential action project is AQIP Category Seven (Measuring Effectiveness) which "examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement." A fourth potential action project is AQIP Category Eight (Planning Continuous Improvement) which "examines

your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans are helping you achieve your mission and vision." Great work!

#### B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

The creation of the GERB was the recommendation of one of the Vision OHIO strategic plan implementation teams. These implementation teams consisted of representation from all campus constituencies and academic units. The provost appointed the GERB using input from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Academic Leadership Team which consists of all of the academic deans. The GERB is an 11 member team consisting of 5 faculty members, 4 academic deans, the Vice President for Research and the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies. Reviews of the GERB proposals which made the finalist pool were also vetted by experts in the disciplines from outside Ohio University. The fact that the creation of GERB was a priority recommendation of an institutional strategic plan implementation team, that the University earmarked base funding for the projects during difficult budgetary times, and that the project was selected as an AQIP action project, signaled this project as a top institutional priority and kept people motivated to secure its success.

##### **Review (09-13-08):**

It was a very important part of this action project to bring representation into this process from all campus constituencies and academic units. It is noteworthy that you utilized a group of deans, faculty members, a vice president, etc. Also, it was very good that you used outside experts in this process. The importance of this project and the amount of support and resources that your institution utilized for this project, shows that it was indeed very important and meaningful for you to have successfully completed this. It is obvious that your AQIP personnel have had a good handle on this action project.

#### C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

The GERB has now become a part of the fabric of the university infrastructure and will continue to evaluate graduate and research programs for future enhancement as well as monitoring the programs' progress to ensure that the goals and metrics required for selective enhancement are being met. In addition, the Future Growth Fund and the Graduate Program Enhancement Fund will continue to provide smaller awards to promote the development of new graduate programs and enhance existing post-baccalaureate programs at the institution. <http://www.ohio.edu/graduate/gerb.cfm> The GERB will also continue to evaluate and modify its procedures and processes to maintain accurate and fair assessments of graduate and research programs supported by the institution. With the successful implementation of the GERB, it is likely that this action project will be identified as completed during the upcoming year.

##### **Review (09-13-08):**

It is very nice that you have incorporated GERB into the daily fabric of your institution and that you will use GERB to enhance and monitor the goals and metrics required for future selective enhancement. Also, that GERB will be used as the mechanism to provide awards that promote the development of your new graduate programs and that enhance your existing post-baccalaureate programs.

#### D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

The creation of a fair and equitable process to evaluate and provide enhancement funding for new and existing graduate programs has been a major achievement of this action project. The formation of GERB is also an initial success story for the implementation of the Vision OHIO institutional strategic plan. The funding enhancement process monitored by the GERB represents a successful method by which an institution can make targeted financial investments in specific academic programs to effectively position them for success and future growth and development.

##### **Review (09-13-08):**

The effective practices that you have created, such as a fair and equitable process to evaluate and provide enhancement funding for your new and existing graduate programs, and the usage of GERB to target financial investments into specific academic programs in order to position them for success and growth, has been very important and impressive. It is recommended that you share this with your fellow institutions at the Annual Higher Learning Commission Conference held each spring in Chicago.

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

The GERB will be under significant pressure to make sound, fair and accurate judgments in deciding which graduate and research programs will receive enhancement funding. It will be important that the board continue to rely on broad representation, accurate data and expertise from many academic disciplines in order to make sound and fair decisions. The university must remain committed to reallocating significant monetary resources to the targeted programs if it is to realize its goals of enhancing graduate education and institutional national prominence. This will be a challenge and will prove difficult in the uncertain budgetary times that the institution is currently facing and will likely continue to face in the foreseeable future.

**Review (09-13-08):**

It is important that you are recognizing that since GERB has become main streamed into your institution, that there will be considerable pressures on this process to make sound, fair, and accurate judgments. Also, that you recognize the budgetary issues affecting your institution's operations. It is impressive that your AQIP personnel (and this project) have developed a clear understanding about your future challenges.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

**Review (09-13-08):**

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