Table of Contents

Introduction.................................................................................................................. 3
Process .......................................................................................................................... 4
Task Force Ratings ..................................................................................................... 9
Explanations and Observations .................................................................................. 12
Limitations ................................................................................................................... 14
Summary and Conclusion ......................................................................................... 16
Appendices.................................................................................................................. 17
Appendix A.................................................................................................................. 18
Appendix B.................................................................................................................. 19
Appendix C.................................................................................................................. 24
Appendix D.................................................................................................................. 44
Appendix E.................................................................................................................. 52
Appendix F.................................................................................................................. 57
Appendix G.................................................................................................................. 59
Appendix H.................................................................................................................. 62
Appendix I.................................................................................................................. 66
Appendix J.................................................................................................................. 70
Appendix K.................................................................................................................. 74
Appendix L.................................................................................................................. 78
Appendix M.................................................................................................................. 83
Introduction

During the Summer of 2007, Chancellor Eric Fingerhut announced the intent to begin forming a more coordinated system of higher education in Ohio through the formal establishment of the University System of Ohio (USO). As part of the development of a strategic plan for the USO, universities were encouraged to identify their unique missions within the system and to identify established “Centers of Excellence.” For example, the strategic plan, which was completed in March of 2008, states as one of its key strategies that “(e)ach of Ohio’s 13 public university main campuses will have distinctive missions, which include a comprehensive, high-quality education, as well as the establishment of nationally-recognized Centers of Excellence.” The strategic plan also comments more specifically about graduate and professional programs:

It does Ohio no good to have 13 universities competing for resources, students and faculty . . . . In a competitive global market for talent, the only way for the system as a whole to raise its quality is for each institution to develop distinctive missions and centers of excellence that are recognized by students, faculty and business leaders . . . .

An important component of each university’s response to the development of Centers of Excellence will be the potential of those Centers of Excellence to include graduate programs with a sufficient national and international reputation to attract top students and faculty. 1

Given the increasingly difficult funding environment for higher education and the expensive nature of graduate education, Deans at Ohio University had already been engaging in conversations about the need to be more focused in graduate and professional education. As a result, the Chancellor’s invitation presented an opportunity to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of graduate and professional programs at Ohio University with two purposes in mind. First, a comprehensive evaluation would help to identify excellent programs that may be featured prominently within Ohio University’s Centers of Excellence. Second, a comprehensive evaluation would provide important data for future strategic planning that would allow the university community to engage in conversations about the potential narrowing and focusing of graduate and professional programs.

1 In a speech at Ohio University on September 26, 2007, Chancellor Fingerhut acknowledged the university’s decision to begin a review of its graduate programs as part of its selection of Centers of Excellence: “I know you are urgently having these conversations at OU—that you are engaging in the process of identifying your Centers of Excellence by setting up a graduate and professional program review process, and that you’re reviewing your mission. It’s very important that all colleges and universities across Ohio spend time this fall to review their missions in the context of the emerging University System of Ohio. You are right on track.”
As a result, the deans determined to form a Task Force that would develop a process for and conduct a comprehensive evaluation of all graduate and professional programs at Ohio University. In early Fall of 2007, deans and the leadership of Faculty Senate agreed upon a structure for the Task Force which consisted of an executive oversight committee of three members, the dean of Arts and Sciences, the chair of the Graduate Council, and the chair of the University Curriculum Council Program Review Committee. These three individuals were non-voting members of the Task Force who worked together to lead the Task Force through the process of evaluating graduate and professional programs. In addition, eight voting faculty Task Force members were nominated by their respective deans. Finally, the president of Graduate Student Senate served as the ninth voting member of the Task Force. In addition, ex officio members from Institutional Research and the Graduate College served on the Task Force to provide information, data, and support. Members who participated are listed in the table below.

### Task Force Membership:

**Executive Oversight Committee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>College</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ben Ogles</td>
<td>Arts and Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Juedes</td>
<td>Graduate Council</td>
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<td>Jeff Connor</td>
<td>UCC Program Review Committee</td>
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**Voting Members**

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<tr>
<td>Bob Lazuka</td>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
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<td>George Johanson</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dawn Deeter-Schmelz</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Coschigano</td>
<td>Osteopathic Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claudia Hale (replaced Daniel Riffe)</td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brooke Hallowell</td>
<td>Health and Human Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Judd (replaced Frank van Graas)</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Loucks</td>
<td>Arts and Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pete Wickman (replaced Dominic Barbato)</td>
<td>Graduate Student Senate</td>
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**Ex Officio Members**

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<tr>
<td>Mike Williford</td>
<td>Institutional Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Hines (replaced Katie Tadlock)</td>
<td>Graduate College (Graduate Studies)</td>
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### Process

During the Fall and Winter Quarters of the 07-08 academic year, the Task Force met regularly to develop guidelines for the submission of self-studies, procedures and timelines for submission and evaluation of self-studies, and criteria for evaluating programs. The Task Force used Robert Dickeson's (1999) book, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources*.

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2 The Graduate College was formed in the Fall of 2008. Prior to the creation of the Graduate College, the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies served as an ex-officio member of the Task Force.
to Achieve Strategic Balance, as a primary source for establishing categories for the self-studies, but also viewed other sources of information.³

Creating the Self-Study Template and Criteria for Evaluating Self-Studies

In the end, the Task Force created a template for self-studies that included seven sections and two appendices:

I. History, Mission, Excellence

II. Faculty
  - Graduate faculty
  - Evidence of scholarly or creative activity (SCA).
  - Evidence of discipline appropriate external funding (past five years).
  - External recognition of faculty scholarly or creative activity (past five years).
  - Internal recognition of faculty scholarly or creative activity (past five years).

III. Students
  - Selectivity of students
  - Quality of incoming students
  - Productivity of matriculating students
  - Graduation and placement rates
  - Quality of placements and post graduation accomplishments

IV. Interdependence
  - Interdependence
  - Synergy with undergraduate programs
  - Provision of services that are essential to or add value to the community

V. Facilities and Support

VI. Other Factors

VII. Synthesis and Excellence

VIII. Appendices
  - Data regarding current faculty
  - Undergraduate credits taught past five years

The self-study template required a mix of narrative description of the program, its accomplishments, and other factors along with data regarding both faculty and students.

In addition to creating the self-study guidelines and template, the Task Force created criteria for evaluating completed self studies. Final versions of the self-study guidelines and rating criteria are reproduced in Appendix A and Appendix B. A complete description of the lengthy Task Force discussions involved in the creation of the self-study guidelines and rating criteria is not included in the report. It is sufficient to note that the final versions were approved by consensus within the Task Force.

The draft guidelines for self-studies and a rating scale for evaluating programs were submitted to
the campus community for feedback during the Spring Quarter of 07-08. Feedback was submitted
through an on-line survey system that provided opportunities for respondents to comment about
each section of the self-study or rating criteria. The Task Force then considered and acted upon
every response submitted through the review process (see Appendix C). A final version of the
self-study guidelines and evaluation criteria were then sent to the colleges, schools, departments,
and programs that administer graduate or professional programs with directions to complete the
online self-study submission process by mid Fall quarter of 2008. The final self-study submission
process was completed through an on-line entry system created by the Office of Information
Technology at Ohio University, https://www.facilities.ohiou.edu/GraduateEvaluation/. Completed
self-studies can be viewed in PDF files on the Graduate Studies web site,
http://www.ohio.edu/graduate/Faculty-Staff/excellence/index.cfm.

While programs were busily preparing self-studies, the Task Force continued its work by
developing the procedures for evaluating the self-study submissions using the criteria that had
already been established.

**Implementation of the Self-Study Evaluation Process**

The final procedure for evaluating self-studies proceeded in the following fashion:

1. As a group, all 9 voting members worked through the rating of two programs to get
   exposure to and experience with rating the self-studies. After independently rating the
   programs, the group met together to discuss the ratings and to calibrate perceptions of the
   rating items. These two programs were replaced in the pool of self-studies and were
   rated again as part of the regular process described below.

2. Task Force members were then randomly assigned to and rated an approximately equal
   number of programs after excluding programs from their home college (or other
   interdisciplinary programs with which they were affiliated). The Task Force felt it was
   important to avoid any action that might allow for real or even perceived bias toward
   specific programs. Members then rated their section (either section II, III, or IV) such
   that each program had two different raters for Section II, two different raters for Section
   III, and two different raters for Section IV. All ratings occurred independently.
   Although raters were assigned to rate only one section, they were instructed to review
   carefully all narrative sections of the document to provide them with context for their
   ratings.

3. Once all independent ratings were completed, the Executive Committee reviewed the
   paired ratings and averaged the four items for Section II and the five items for Section III
to compare the differences between the two raters for each section. If two raters were

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4 The graduate student senate representative was assigned to rate Section III (student
data), the faculty members on the Task Force were randomly assigned (4 each) to Section
II (faculty data) or Section III (student data). The Executive Committee rated Section IV
(interdependence).
different by more than 1.0 on the average of the items (on a scale of 1 to 4), a third rater for that section and program was solicited. For Section II, two additional raters were needed. For Section III, seven additional raters were needed. For Section IV, the Executive Committee members discussed and modified ratings in four instances. Once the additional ratings were available for the nine programs with three raters, the two closest ratings were selected and averaged to create the final ratings in each of the 12 items. These ratings then helped frame the discussions for each program.

4. One Task Force member conducted an extensive analysis of the inter-rater reliability and determined that the ratings reached an acceptable level of consistency (see Appendix D).

5. The Executive Committee prepared printouts with the rank order of programs on each of the individual nine faculty and student categories along with a rank ordering of the programs using the average of the nine faculty and student items. The 3 items in the university and community contributions section were not used for the initial rank ordering of programs. Data for the average ratings for all 12 items are displayed in Appendix E. The Task Force then met in a day-long meeting and reviewed and discussed each of the 88 programs one-by-one. The Task Force first reviewed approximately a dozen programs to get a sense for the issues that were most relevant, but without casting any votes. When a consensus of the Task Force felt ready to begin classifying the programs, they began working through the list of programs while proceeding with a vote concerning the final categorization of each program following its review.

Task Force members (including the non-voting Executive Committee and Ex Officio members) left the room (and did not vote) when programs from their home department/school (or any interdisciplinary programs with which they were affiliated) were discussed. Although the Task Force used the initial average ratings to guide their discussions, the entire Task Force engaged in extensive discussion and individual review of each program self-study and data to determine the final category for each program. As such, the initial average ratings were not the sole source of data or information for final category assignment and each item on the rating scale was treated differently depending on the program’s mission. Adjustments to individual item ratings were also discussed in the context of the final category assignment, but the Task Force did not change individual ratings in the table.

6. Each of the 88 programs was assigned to a final category: excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, limited, or new/developing. To be classified as Excellent or Limited, 2/3 of the voting members had to endorse the categorization. To be classified as Good or Satisfactory, a majority of voting members needed to endorse the categorization. New or developing programs were identified and selected by consensus after a review of the list of Ohio University graduate programs that have been approved at the Ohio Board of Regents since 2000.

The evolution of the “very good” and “satisfactory with concerns” categories deserves a brief mention. As the Task Force discussed each program and voted regarding the

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5 http://regents.ohio.gov/rgp/pdfs/Approved%20Degree%20Programs.pdf
appropriate category, some programs had a wider spread of ratings and were viewed with
greater disagreement than others. For example, some programs had several Task Force
members voting “limited” with others voting “satisfactory”. Since 2/3 vote was
necessary for a final category rating of limited, some programs with a majority or a
significant minority (4 votes) were placed in the satisfactory category. In addition, some
programs were viewed by members as having some features that were limited and others
that were satisfactory.

In response to these outcomes, Task Force members began to talk about programs as
being technically satisfactory, but having some significant concerns that were worth
noting. As a result, a category on the cusp was created dynamically as part of the process
of the Task Force. Similarly, when discussing categories with many excellent features,
but with insufficient votes to make the “excellent” category, Task Force members began
to describe programs as “good” with some excellent features or “very good.” These
programs were thought to be qualitatively different from both the good programs and
excellent programs. As a result, a second category was created to help better describe the
consensus of the Task Force regarding distinctions among programs.

7. The list of programs and initial category ratings were then submitted to the deans and
Executive Vice President and Provost for review. They reviewed each of the programs
for consistency with their perceptions about the categorization of programs within their
colleges. The deans’ group then submitted 14 recommended changes to the initial
categorizations.

8. The Task Force reviewed and discussed the recommendations of the deans’ group one
program at a time. For a program to change categories, the Task Force determined that
60% (6 of 9 or 5 of 8) of the voting members should agree with the recommended
category change (as with the previous votes, Task Force members left the room when
considering programs to which they were affiliated). Two of the 14 recommended
changes were accepted. In several instances, the Task Force felt that the deans’
recommendations might have some merit, but the Task Force preferred not to make a
change without seeing a formal appeal including additional data that were either missing
or unclear in the original self-study.

9. A final list of programs by category was prepared as part of the final report which was
submitted to the campus community and provost.

10. An appeals process was established and is included in Appendix F. A total of 25
programs submitted appeals. The Task Force members reviewed the appeals and then
met to consider each appeal. In the Task Force meeting, each appeal was viewed and
discussed along with reviewing the original self-study and final category assignment.
The Task Force then voted whether to accept or deny the appeal. A vote of 60%
affirmative votes was necessary to accept the appeal. Five of the 25 appeals were
accepted. (Executive Committee, ex officio, or voting members left the room and did not
vote when programs they were affiliated with were discussed). For those accepted, the
Task Force then voted on a revised category assignment (by majority vote). Final revised category assignments are reflected in the lists below.

11. As explained in the appeals process, the 20 programs whose appeals were denied were given the option of submitting a brief dissenting opinion regarding their final program rating. Programs were given the option of submitting a 500 word explanation for their disagreement with the Task Force rating. Not all programs submitted dissenting opinions. For those that elected to include an explanation, their program is noted with a reference to Appendix M in which their dissenting opinion is reproduced.

**Task Force Ratings**

Eighty-seven programs submitted self-studies during the Fall Quarter of 2008. One additional program is included in the list, but did not complete a self-study because it was only recently approved by the Board of Regents and has not yet admitted any students (PhD in Civil Engineering).

Of the 88 programs that were evaluated, there were 28 doctoral-level programs and 60 masters-level programs. Of the 28 doctoral-level programs, 24 were Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree programs, one was a Doctor of Education (Ed. D) program, and three were professional doctoral degrees (Doctor of Physical Therapy, Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine, and Doctor of Audiology). Of the 28 doctoral-level programs that were evaluated, six included data for associated master's level programs that were not evaluated separately. Of the 60 masters-level programs that were evaluated, there were 19 Master of Science degree programs, 18 Master of Arts degree programs, nine Master of Education degree programs (M. Ed), three Master of Music degree programs, two Master of Business Administration degree programs, and nine other variously named masters-level programs (MPA, MFE, MSS, MSW, etc.).

Of the 28 doctoral-level programs, four were rated as excellent, nine were rated as very good, seven were rated as good, six were rated as satisfactory, one was rated as limited, and one was listed as new and developing. Of the 60 masters-level programs, two were rated as excellent, six were rated as very good, 15 were rated as good, 20 were rated as satisfactory, five were rated as satisfactory with concerns, five were rated as limited, four were rated as new or developing, and three were rated as new or developing with concerns.

The ratings should be interpreted within the context in which they were created. It is important to review and be familiar with the material provided in the sections entitled “Explanations and Observations” and “Limitations” that follow the rankings list. The following list reflects all changes that occurred during the appeals process and lists programs that provided dissenting opinions. As with any evaluation, there are limitations which are discussed later in this report.

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6 The Regents’ Advisory Committee on Graduate Study Guidelines and Procedures document identifies MBA, MPA, MPH, MSW and similarly named programs as professional graduate degree programs.
Excellent (6)
A minimum of two-thirds of the task force members voted that the following programs should be considered excellent. Excellent programs were viewed as having both productive and recognized faculty and strong students in a high demand area that resulted in productive, graduating students who were placed in high quality positions.

Biological Sciences – MS,
Environmental and Plant Biology – MS/PhD,
History - MA,
Hearing, Speech, and Language Sciences – PhD,
Physics – MS/MA/PhD,
Psychology - MS/PhD Clinical.

Very Good (15):
Several programs were viewed as having several excellent features, although they did not garner the 2/3 votes necessary to be categorized as excellent. These programs have both productive and recognized faculty and strong students who were often placed in high-quality positions. These programs have been placed together in a category labeled “very good.”

Biological Sciences – PhD,
Chemistry and Biochemistry – MS/PhD,
Communication Studies - PhD Communication Studies,
Electrical Engineering and Computer Science - MS Computer Science,
Electrical Engineering and Computer Science - MS Electrical Engineering,
Electrical Engineering and Computer Science - PhD Electrical Engineering and Computer Science,
Film - MA/MFA Film,
Hearing, Speech, and Language Sciences - MA/AuD Clinical Audiology,
History – PhD,
Journalism - MS Journalism,
Media Arts and Studies - MA Telecommunications,
Media Arts and Studies - PhD Mass Communication (joint),
Molecular and Cellular Biology - PhD MCB,
Psychology - MS/PhD Experimental,
Visual Communication - MA Visual Communication

Good (22):
About 25% of the programs were identified as being good programs when considering the faculty and student indicators collected in this process.

Art - MFA Studio Arts,
Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering - MS Chemical Engineering,
Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering - PhD Chemical Engineering,
Civil Engineering - MS Civil Engineering,
Counselor Education - M.Ed Higher Education,
Educational Studies - M.Ed Computer Education and Technology,
Educational Studies - M.Ed Research and Evaluation,
Satisfactory (26):
Nearly 30% of programs were identified as being satisfactory. The Task Force does not intend for the term “satisfactory” to be interpreted as deficient.

Art - MA Art History,
Counselor Education - M.Ed Counselor Education,
Counselor Education - PhD Counselor Education,
Counselor Education - PhD Higher Education,
Economics – MA,
Educational Studies - EdD Education Administration,
Educational Studies - M.Ed Education Administration,
English – MA,
Environmental Studies – MSES,
History – MSS,
Human and Consumer Sciences - MS Child and Family,
Human and Consumer Sciences - MS Food and Nutrition,
Interdisciplinary Arts - PhD Interdisciplinary Arts,
Linguistics – MA,
Mechanical Engineering - MS Mechanical Engineering,
Modern Languages - MA French,
Modern Languages - MA Spanish,
Music - MM Professional Studies,
Political Science – MA,
Political Science – MPA/EMPA,
Recreation and Sport Sciences - MS Athletic Training (See Appendix M for dissenting opinion),
Russ College of Engineering - PhD Integrated Engineering,
Social Work – MSW,
Teacher Education - M.Ed Special Education,
Teacher Education - M.Ed. Curriculum and Instruction,
Teacher Education - PhD Curriculum and Instruction,
Satisfactory with Concerns (5):
Although the following programs were categorized as Satisfactory, the Task Force, by consensus, expressed concerns about their current status and recommended that significant attention be given to specific weaknesses that are evident within the self-studies.

- Philosophy – MA (See Appendix M for dissenting opinion),
- Recreation and Sport Sciences - MS Coaching (See Appendix M for dissenting opinion),
- Recreation and Sport Sciences - MS Exercise Physiology,
- Recreation and Sport Sciences - MS Recreation Studies (See Appendix M for dissenting opinion),
- Teacher Education - M.Ed. Reading Education

Limited (6):
The following programs were categorized as limited by a 2/3 vote of the Task Force.

- College of Business – MBA
- College of Business - Professional MBA (See Appendix M for dissenting opinion),
- Economics – MFE (See Appendix M for dissenting opinion),
- Educational Studies - M.Ed Cultural Studies,
- Educational Studies - PhD Cultural Studies,
- Recreation and Sport Sciences - MS Athletic Administration (See Appendix M for dissenting opinion),

New or Developing (5)
The following programs recently started or re-started and had insufficient data regarding students to be effectively or validly rated. As a result, the Task Force classified them as New or Developing.

- Civil Engineering – PhD Civil Engineering (no self-study reviewed),
- Information and Telecommunication Systems - MS Communication and Technology Policy,
- Nursing - MS Nursing,
- Public Health Sciences and Professions - Health Sciences – MPH,
- Russ College of Engineering - MS Biomedical Engineering

New or Developing with concerns (3)
The following three programs are also new or recently re-initiated. However, the Task Force had concerns about the quality of the foundation upon which these programs were starting.

- Human and Consumer Sciences - MS Apparel, Textile and Merchandising,
- Public Health Sciences and Professions - Health Sciences – MHA,
- Theater - MA Theater

Explanations and Observations

As one might expect, the process of evaluating 88 graduate programs from a variety of disciplines and professions was a difficult task. With that being said, the Task Force relied on a