

# ACADEMIC PROGRAMS



College of Agricultural,  
Consumer and  
Environmental Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

From the Office of the Associate Dean

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## Technology Will Reshape Research Universities

Information technology is likely to reshape research universities dramatically -- changing how they are organized, financed, and governed -- and will also prod the institutions to emphasize instruction more heavily, a new report from the National Academy of Sciences predicts.

The report warns academe against "complacency" in the face of fast-paced technological developments and new competition from online universities and for-profit institutions. The report cautions that research universities should respond "with carefully considered strategies backed by prudent developments -- not just to avoid extinction but to actively cultivate opportunity."

The document, titled "Preparing for the Revolution: Information Technology and the Future of the Research University," was written by a committee that included current and former college administrators, leaders of higher-education groups, foundation officials, and industry officials -- but no representatives from faculty groups.

The report says the changes will be driven by expanded computer-network bandwidth and dramatic improvements in both hardware and software, such as notebook computers vastly more powerful than today's models and programs called "software agents" that will autonomously collect information requested by a user.

In light of those developments, the report suggests a possible future for higher education that may not sit well with many faculty members: an academe dominated by freelance instructors selling their services to many institutions, which in turn compete for students who buy courses a la carte from many different colleges.

The report predicts that information technology, by allowing students to learn both at a distance and at their own pace, will undercut two commonplace

features of undergraduate instruction: lectures and a common reading list. Rather, students will collaborate online with one another and their instructor, the report says.

The faculty member could become more of a consultant or a coach than a teacher, less concerned with transmitting intellectual content directly than with inspiring, motivating, and managing an active learning process. Faculty may come to interact with undergraduates in ways that resemble how they interact with their doctoral students today.

"Higher education as a cottage industry, in which individual courses are made to order by individual faculty, may not be able to compete much longer in either cost or quality with commodity educational products," says the report.

Mark F. Smith, director of government relations at the American Association of University Professors, said that he has grave concerns about the role of the professor devolving into little more than of an educational consultant. A college education, he said, will continue to rely upon faculty members who are deeply enmeshed in students' learning, through activities such as guiding discussions and presenting their expertise to students.

From an article by Vincent Kiernan in *The Chronicle Daily News*, November 8, 2002.

### ACES Convocation Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Undergraduate -  
Krannert Center for the  
Performing Arts - Great Hall -  
9:30 a.m.

Graduate -  
Smith Music Hall  
10:00 a.m.

## A New Table of Learning

From an article by Lee Schulman in *Change*, November/December 2002.

There is no such thing as a “new” taxonomy; all the likely taxonomies have been invented, and in nearly infinite variety. Probably the single most famous list in the world of educational thought is the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives devised by my one-time teacher Benjamin Bloom. Bloom and his colleagues—as well as other taxonomic pioneers including William Perry, Lawrence Kohlberg, Grant Wiggins – have attempted to create a system for classifying the kinds of learning we seek for our students. Here then, stark and unadorned, is what I will call Shulman’s Table of Learning:

Engagement and Motivation  
Knowledge and Understanding  
Performance and Action  
Reflection and Critique  
Judgment and Design  
Commitment and Identity

That’s all there is. If you ask what comes after commitment and identity, I will suggest it is new engagements and motivations. Like the brave souls whose job it is to paint the Golden Gate Bridge, when you reach the end you return to the beginning.

In a nutshell, the taxonomy makes the following assertion: Learning begins with student **engagement**, which in turn leads to **knowledge** and **understanding**. Once someone understands, he or she becomes capable of **performance** or **action**. Critical **reflection** on one’s practice and understanding leads to higher-order thinking in the form of a capacity to exercise **judgment** in the face of uncertainty and to create designs in the presence of constraints and unpredictability. Ultimately, the exercise of judgment makes possible the development of **commitment**. In commitment, we become capable of professing our understandings and our values, our faith and our love, our skepticism and our doubts, internalizing those attributes and making them integral to our identities. These commitments, in turn make **new engagements** possible - and even necessary.

## Student Awards Banquet

Sunday, April 27, 2003  
Park Inn Conference Center

## Academy of Teaching Excellence Room

The ACES Academy of Teaching Excellence room is open daily for faculty to use. From small group meetings related to teaching and learning, to viewing and analyzing a video tape of your teaching, to checking out resources on many topics, you are encouraged to utilize this excellent resource. Stop by 115 ACES Library, Information and Alumni Center soon! New acquisitions include the following books on teaching and learning, donated by Academy members and the Academy for Teaching Excellence endowment.

### Books

<u>Author/Editor</u>	<u>Title</u>
Fink, L. Dee	Creating Significant Learning Experiences
Tagg, John	The Learning Paradigm College

## Advice from the Best

Thoughts about teaching from 22 American Psychological Association teaching award winners:

- It helps to hang out with people who value and work at teaching.
- Be willing to experiment and try new approaches
- Always demand the best from your students, but be understanding when they seem to fall short.
- Genuinely care about students.
- Never forget what it was like to be on the other side of the lectern.
- Keep your focus on student learning.
- Always ask for feedback, even when it may not be what you would like to hear. Be grateful for your most vocal critics. They may help you realize something you need to know.
- Quit teaching when the passion no longer burns in your soul.

Reference: Buskist, William. “Effective Teaching: Perspectives and Insights from Division Two’s 2- and 4-Year Awardees.” *Teaching of Psychology*, 2002, 29 (3), 188-193. Adapted from *The Teaching Professor*, December 2002.

# CONTRIBUTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

*Change*, November/December 2002

The November-December 2002 issue of *Change* magazine included an interesting article titled “The PhD: A Tapestry of Change for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” The author addressed the convergence of powerful influences on graduate education, from those who fund and hire graduates to the students pursuing degrees. The chart below is a summary of the sources of influence (the stakeholders) and their goals and contributions, plus the issues that each group brings to the discussion. In the next issue of *Academic Programs*, the core competencies of doctoral programs will be shared. These two articles should be helpful as ACES graduate programs continue to address outcomes assessment for program improvement.

Stakeholder Groups or Sectors	Members	Goals	Contributions to Re-Envisioning Doctoral Education	Issues to Navigate
Those who aspire to the PhD	Doctoral students and potential doctoral students	Achieving a fulfilling professional life	Aspirations, talents, knowledge, inventive minds Feedback on processes that enhance learning, fulfill aspirations	Opportunity costs Time to first professional appointment Family responsibilities Creative opportunities
Those who prepare PhDs	Research institutions	Preparing the next generation of deeply trained humanists, and social and physical scientists Producing the nation’s research	Recruitment of students Design of educational experiences Mentoring Setting of standards for conferral of degree Providing transparent expectations for success	Inflexible structures Institutional traditions Carnegie Classifications NRC Ratings Faculty reward structure Funding policies Lack of experience outside the academy
Those who fund PhDs	Government agencies Business and industry Foundations Universities	Producing the nation’s workforce and research Producing outcomes of particular interest to particular funding agencies	New funding models Redirection of dollars for new goals	Research institution culture, recommendations of peer review panels Concern about creative, innovative future workforce Trends in funding
Those who hire PhDs	Research-intensive institutions Teaching-intensive institutions Government Nonprofit organizations Business and industry	Teaching, research, and service in proportions appropriate to academic sector Critical and analytical thinking, creative ideas, intelligence, leadership for all sectors	New contexts for teaching Extended audiences for research Explication of societal needs New career options Explication of expectations of employees	Carnegie Classifications Non-departmental interdisciplinary institutional structures Differential leadership responsibilities Intellectual property issues Corporate/nonprofit/government needs
Those who influence PhD education	Professional societies Educational associations National rankings Accrediting associations Governance boards	Setting agenda for what is valued Measuring what is valued Approving what will be offered at doctoral level	Improving standards to meet new needs Collaborating within sectors Maintaining conversations about doctoral education	Valorization of research Disciplinary customs Dependence on national rankings Prestige of research faculty

## Students, Faculty Perceive Student Evaluations Differently

A research team at Ohio University-Athens recently published a study in an important area of student evaluations: differences in student and faculty perceptions of student evaluations of teaching. The researchers were interested in both faculty and student perceptions across a variety of dimensions.

The researchers discovered significant differences in perceptions for the two groups (in this case 331 students and 81 faculty from four different academic areas). Listed below are some of the items along with the percentages of faculty and students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

•*Students give better ratings to instructors that teach less demanding courses.*

Students, 29 percent agree/strongly agree

Faculty, 53 percent agree/strongly agree

•*Students base their course ratings on how entertaining a professor is and not necessarily on how much they learn in the course.*

Students 35 percent agree/strongly agree

Faculty, 47 percent agree/strongly agree

•*Student evaluations encourage faculty to grade easier.*

Students, 12 percent agree/strongly agree

Faculty, 57 percent agree/strongly agree

•*Faculty make significant changes to course content based on student evaluations.*

Students, 24 percent agree/strongly agree

Faculty, 44 percent agree/strongly agree

•*Students don't take evaluations seriously enough to provide meaningful feedback to faculty.*

Students, 33 percent agree/strongly agree

Faculty, 47 percent agree/strongly agree

Students and faculty were also asked how they thought faculty responded when faculty received evaluative feedback indicating the course was too hard or the teaching was substandard. More than 45 percent of the students reported that the faculty did nothing as compared with only about 14 percent of the faculty indicating that was the response.

But faculty and students did agree about one aspect of evaluations. Almost 84 percent of the students and 80 percent of the faculty agreed that the way ratings are conducted should be changed. They also agreed that students need to be specific in their evaluations, and that faculty could benefit from peer evaluations of teaching.

Adapted from: Sojka, Gupta, and Deeter-Schmelz, (2002). Student and faculty perceptions of student evaluations of teaching: A study of similarities and differences. *College Teaching*, 50, (2), 44-49. In *The Teaching Professor*, January 2003.

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101 Mumford Hall, MC-710

1301 W. Gregory Drive

Urbana, IL 61801