



ITAA 2017 Special Session

The Next Step: Priorities and Structure of an ITAA Graduate Education Alliance

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Panelists: Marilyn DeLong, University of Minnesota
Ann Marie Fiore, Iowa State University
Kathy Mullet, Oregon State University
Rodney Runyan, Texas State University
Jane Swinney, Oklahoma State University
Pam Ulrich, Auburn University

Description

The two above coordinators have organized special sessions for 2016 and 2017 ITAA conferences. Many of the panelists in the first special session also participated in the second special session. The first session focused on *determining the need for an alliance* of stakeholders (e.g., ITAA members, industry members, graduate students) to enhance the impact of ITAA on graduate education in our field. An overview of the first special session can be found at http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/itaa_proceedings/2016/presentations/116/. The second special session focused on *identifying priorities and structure of an alliance*. The content below summarizes the 2017 special session, which centered on gathering information from session participants.

The special session began with brief presentations by the six panel members regarding perceived priorities or roles of an ITAA alliance aimed at strengthening graduate education in our field. (See Appendix A for slide notes from panel members.) Small groups were formed to elicit input, and the groups' summaries were shared orally with all participants. Additionally, participants were given a handout of panel-developed hypothetical goals for an ITAA alliance focused on enhancing graduate education in our field, and the participants were asked to rank the list of priorities. Participant scores were used to create the rank order of priorities below. A sample of participant comments related to each priority are in italics below each ranked priority.

Rank order of priorities of a hypothetical ITAA graduate education alliance

(1 = the highest priority)

1. **Collaborations among stakeholders** (average ranking score 1.5)
 - a. *ITAA should track information, like a census, of graduate programs such as enrollment numbers for MS, PHDs, strengths of programs. This could be summed across all programs and used to track each program*
 - b. *Gather information: "What does industry say they need? If you had the ideal person, what is the specific skill or skill set(s) that make that person ideal?"*
 - c. *More outreach, service-learning, co-op experiences for graduate students*
 - d. *Show industry the value in hiring a PhD over an MBA or an MS*
2. **Improve marketing of graduate education and subfields through ITAA** (average ranking score 2.7)
 - a. *Hold 3MT (Three-minute thesis) competitions—virtually done for undergraduate and graduate student for ITAA and the winners come to the ITAA meeting*
 - b. *More support for undergraduate presentations at ITAA to foster student interest in and preparation for graduate education*
 - c. *Gather stats on employment following education*
 - d. *Gather information from industry or students themselves about speed of getting promotions after graduation from graduate programs*
 - e. *Develop media (e.g., You Tube videos) that summarizes research from the conference for industry; perhaps share these through Business of Fashion, NRF*
3. **Enhancement of best practices for programs** (average ranking score 2.8)
 - a. *We need to increase interest in research among UGs (undergrads) early on to increase interest in graduate education; Graduate students mentor undergraduates in research*
 - b. *Collaboration among universities in offering graduate courses*
 - c. *Gather stats on employment following education*
 - d. *Need to demonstrate to administrators that we are research relevant—get members to broaden scope or build collaborations that will enable them to secure external funding*
4. **Assessment of student needs and preferences** (average ranking score 3.1)

(No comments fit this priority)

Summary

In summary, the two special sessions show that many members concur that there is a need for more emphasis within ITAA on supporting graduate education to a) emphasize the value of our graduates and scholarship to stakeholders outside of academia, b) ensure graduates have skills and experiences relevant to current industry and academic positions, c) increase (undergraduate) student interest in our

graduate programs, and d) enhance the strength/number of our graduate programs and graduate course offerings. The next step will be the discussion of the idea of a graduate education alliance among ITAA Council members at their midyear meeting in late February.

Appendix A: Presentation notes from panel members

Marilyn DeLong University of Minnesota

- What is our mission for graduate education?
 - To provide specialized & diverse graduate programs to insure that our students are educated and prepared for their chosen profession in academia and/or industry.
- How can we find commonality in our mission?
 - Agree upon a set of best practices that include attention to faculty, advising, relevant curriculum
- Form an ITAA alliance for the health and well-being of our graduate programs.

Ann Marie Fiore Iowa State University

Best practices to increase image w/i university

- Become more integral to the fabric of the university through Involvement in
 - Interdisciplinary research initiatives
 - Innovative, timely interdisciplinary degrees
 - High visibility service/admin position
- Be cognizant of university metrics when determining dept. goals
 - Retain numbers of PhD students over MS
 - Expand external funding
- Encourage student application for external awards

Kathy Mullet Oregon State University

- Show value-added/invaluable nature of our graduate degree to outside constituents
 - Help companies value our advanced degrees
 - Help companies value our degrees over business college degrees moving from MBA to MS
- Retain tenure-track faculty lines with specializations, instead of Professors of Practice
 - Demise of graduate programs due to lack of number of tenured faculty with specialty

Rodney Runyan Texas State University

- Increase overall demand for graduate education
- Work *together* to increase the size of the graduate applicant pool
 - Focus less on own enrollments and more on total
 - Enlarge the market; then compete for best students
- Work *together* to educate industry on need for graduate education
 - Make the MS/MA more relevant and value-added for industry

- Clarify and promote the need for PhDs to continue the field in higher ed

Jane Swinney Oklahoma State University

- 3Es to keep graduate education vibrant
- Engage our industry Advisory Board member
 - Form a collective ITAA-level advisory board from these industry members
- Encourage top UG to go to quality schools
 - Build diversity of thought by going to other schools; don't hoard our students
- Enumerate to industry why graduate education matters to them
- Teaches what the industry needs to survive
- Provides well-prepared entry executives

Pamela Ulrich Auburn University

- Profile our UG and graduate students
 - UG: Reasons for grad study, background, path, benefits, goal transition
 - UG: Following positions & perceived value change
 - M.S.: Why a PhD if not for academic position, kinds of academic positions sought
- Market our programs through ITAA
- Testimonial for degree, not school
- Board descriptive intro to the grad school listing on ITAA website