Task Force on Graduate Education: Selective Excellence

Program Ratings and Rationale

Program: Teaching and Learning: Special Education M.A., PhD. Program
Rating: Good

Special Education is an especially important area as an increasing number of young students are diagnosed with learning disabilities and psychological/mental diseases and afflictions. The job market is likely to expand in this area. Recruitment into the MA and PhD program is strong, but the size is decreasing (from 60 in 2003 to 24 in 2008) due to decreased resources despite tremendous need in modern society. Only 4 of those 24 students were enrolled in the PhD program. A large part of the decline was due to the expiration of state-funded support for Master’s students. However, there appears to be a good plan for the future, with the start of an on-line degree component for fall 2009. The median TTD of 5.6 yrs and the % completion of 69% are good. Special Education is the home to the REACH program, a new effort to help Iowa students afflicted with difficult learning problems. As biomedical science and healthcare efforts increasingly focus on issues of behavioral and mental issues, it would seem the area is ripe for improvement and interaction with our Health Science campus. It is not clear from the narrative that these options have been explored. The new online program appears to have promise and may draw increased enrollments from place-bound students.