

## **Task Force on Graduate Education: Selective Excellence Update**

The Task Force on Graduate Education was developed by the Provost as part of the strategic initiative process to refocus *The Iowa Promise* for 2009-2014 and to assist with and formulate academic and budgetary planning.

**Charge to the Task Force.** At the Task Force's first meeting in April, Provost Loh charged the group to articulate a strategic vision and set priorities for selective excellence for graduate education at The University of Iowa. The Provost asked the Task Force to prepare a report on its recommendations which is to be submitted in December 2009. The report should articulate the criteria for determining excellence and should address which programs are strong and should be reinvested in, which programs should continue at a steady state and which programs should be downsized or phased out. Other recommendations pertinent to the delivery of graduate education at The University of Iowa may also arise from these discussions.

**Summary of Meeting Discussions:** The Task Force met several times during the spring semester. The Task Force reviewed background information about the master's and doctoral programs offered at The University of Iowa, looking at those that participated in the NRC Assessment and those that have been ranked in the top 50 of the USNWR. To get a sense of what is going on around the country, the Task Force discussed the following publications on the future of graduate education and on similar assessments completed at other institutions:

- ["Quality, Accreditation, and Graduate Education: What Does the Future Hold?"](#)
- ["Postsecondary Education Spending Priorities for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009"](#)
- ["Ohio State Gets Jump on Doctoral Evaluations"](#)
- ["University of Arizona Graduate Program Assessment, March 2009"](#)

The Task Force then discussed criteria that should be reviewed in order to assess excellence and how it could adequately review Iowa's very diverse graduate programs where excellence is often measured by very different criteria. The following plan of action was put in place.

**Plan of Action:** In an attempt to get feedback from each degree program, the Task Force has requested that departments/programs prepare a brief (2-3 page) strategic assessment of their degree programs, specifically addressing the mission of the graduate program and issues related to the admission processes and criteria, program outcomes, and program characteristics. This assessment should also include a brief summary of the distinguishing features of the program and the outlook of the future of the graduate program. The strategic assessments are due by September 15.

Collegiate Deans will then be asked to review the assessments and meet with the Task Force to present feedback. Open forums also will be held on campus in the fall. The Task Force will then review all written assessments and collected data in order to draft the report requested by the Provost.