Educational Effectiveness Report

Pardee RAND Graduate School

December 2010

Introduction

As it celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2010, the Pardee RAND Graduate School remains true to its original mission of providing the next generation of policy leaders an unsurpassed education in the fundamental tools of policy analysis and proud of its unique status as the only policy PhD program located within a major independent public policy research institution. PRGS is poised to achieve its vision of becoming the premier policy PhD program in the nation. To accomplish this goal, our priorities for 2010-11 and beyond are as follows: (1) continue to enhance our core capabilities despite a challenging environment for philanthropic support; (2) continue to improve the academic quality and breadth of our PhD program with a particular emphasis on addressing gaps in an overall rigorous set of requirements and offerings; (3) provide adequate financial support to our students in order to enable them to focus on their educational experience and training; and (4) prepare our students for careers beyond PRGS. These four priorities address the three key elements in a premier policy graduate program—our institutional foundation including faculty, students, and finances; our curriculum, including coursework, project work (on-the-job-training or OJT), and the dissertation; and support to students, including admissions, orientation, scholarships, dissertation support, enhanced library services and career services.

At PRGS we have identified five key educational objectives of our program:

1. Understand the purpose of policy analysis and its place within the political process;
2. Master the basic methodologies used in policy research: economic analysis, quantitative methods, and social and behavioral science methods;
3. Acquire an in-depth knowledge in one of these three methodological fields;
4. Obtain a deep understanding of a specialized substantive field of public policy; and
5. Develop project and professional skills relevant to the selected field of policy analysis.

For each of these objectives our aim is to educate our students so that they are able to both produce and utilize knowledge across two dimensions. First, we want them to be able to master the ability to produce policy relevant knowledge, and second we want them to be able to master the ability to use evidence to address policy relevant questions. We believe our core functions are well-aligned to enable our students to attain these goals through coursework, on-the-job training (OJT) and the dissertation process. Moreover, we believe we are well on our way to creating an organization that is geared towards regular assessment and evaluation of significant aspects of our program enabling us to routinely gauge how effective we are at ensuring that all students are achieving proficiency in these areas, and to make changes and improvements as needed to keep us always moving closer to our goals.

This report is divided into two distinct, yet related, sections. In Part I, we outline where PRGS stands with regard to each of the four WASC standards for review: Standard I: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives; Standard II: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions; Standard III: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Stability; and Standard IV: Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement. As this report focuses on educational effectiveness we will place particular emphasis on standards II and IV, providing evidence wherever possible to indicate that learning is occurring and our institutional and educational objectives are being met.

In Part II of this report, we describe in detail our three areas of self study: 1) Learning through OJT; 2) Teaching Effectiveness and Student Learning Outcomes and 3) Dissertation Quality, paying particular attention to how what we've learned and the changes that we have made have contributed to improving student achievement and learning outcomes.

Part I: Where PRGS stands with regard to the Four Standards for WASC Review

Standard I: *Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives*

From its founding, PRGS has had a distinctive and well-defined purpose that grew out of and is shaped by its location within RAND, one of the premier policy research institutions in the United States, which now has a global reach and presence as well. The distinctive elements of the PRGS experience are all determined by this enduring relationship with RAND. Because of the nature of the rigorous analytic work done at RAND along with RAND's commitment to interdisciplinary approaches, the PRGS curriculum is designed to teach our students the multi-disciplinary tools necessary to do high-quality policy analysis. The faculty at PRGS is drawn primarily from the RAND research staff – a staff that includes over 430 PhDs in a wide range of fields and disciplines -- with the result that our professors, in addition to having outstanding academic credentials, are also policy research practitioners. A defining feature of the program is that to augment what they learn, all of our students are expected to work as team members on RAND research projects as part of their academic training. This on-the-job-training (OJT) allows our students to obtain project and professional skills and to graduate with both a diploma and a resume.

This close and continuing affiliation with RAND, an institution known for its high-quality research and objective, policy-oriented analysis, has enabled us to always be pointed in the right direction and focused on quality and objectivity in the pursuit of our educational objectives as well.

We have a number of critical structures, mechanisms and processes created to ensure that our School functions effectively and efficiently, providing students with the resources and support they need to succeed. These structures and mechanisms also enable the free flow of information and advice and continually help us ascertain how well we are succeeding in our educational mission. The chart below outlines the role each structure or mechanism plays in ensuring educational effectiveness.

Structure or Mechanism	Participants	Meetings	Role in Educational Effectiveness
RAND Board of Trustees (BOT)	Individuals who are, or have been, national or global leaders in science, industry, public service and/or academia. [Appendix A]	The entire board meets twice a year. The fall meeting is held in conjunction with the PRGS Board of Governors.	The BOT has governance authority for RAND and is regularly updated on the financial situation and programmatic developments at the School. The BOT has delegated some of its oversight responsibilities to the PRGS Board of Governors, ensuring the effectiveness of this oversight by requiring three BOG members to also serve on the BOT.
PRGS Board of Governors (BOG)	A maximum of 28 members consisting of distinguished leaders in academia, business and public service. At least 3 members serve concurrently as members of the BOT. At least 5 individuals must be from academic institutions.[Appendix B]	Three times per year including once jointly with the RAND Board of Trustees. Additionally, the Dean uses Board member 'task forces" to assist the school with specific issues including identifying new Board members, financial reporting, improving diversity, and building the PRGS brand.	The BOG provides recommendations to the RAND President and the PRGS Dean on long-range strategic and financial planning; the business plan and the annual budget and the organization and programs of the School. The BOG receives regular updates on major programmatic changes, new initiatives, financial execution, and development efforts.
Operations Group (OG)	All RAND Corporate Officers, including the Dean of PRGS, and major operating unit heads.	Every other week plus annual strategic planning retreats and periodic offsites to address specific issues.	Through the Dean's status as a corporate officer, and through the activities of the OG, PRGS is fully integrated into corporate planning and operations at RAND. The Dean regularly works with other officers and OG members to fully leverage the resources of RAND in support of the school, opportunities for students, and to ensure PRGS offers value to RAND as a whole.
Admissions Committee	A selection of ten to twelve PRGS faculty representing a range of research streams and academic disciplines at RAND plus PRGS staff.	Annually in February.	The Admissions Committee is responsible for selecting the 21-25 students each year who will make up the entering class. They are charged with creating a student body which is fully qualified for success at PRGS, represents diverse backgrounds, policy interests, work experiences, cultures, and

			educational experiences and that each student is equipped to learn and to contribute meaningfully to the education of others.
Faculty Committee on Curriculum and Appointments (FCCA)	Three faculty members and one student elected by their peers plus one faculty member appointed by the Dean.	Monthly.	The FCCA exercises the major influence on School curriculum. The FCCA examines new courses, vets course objectives and learning outcomes, evaluates proposed syllabi and reviews qualifications of new faculty. The FCCA is also responsible for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of teaching in all PRGS courses. The FCCA is also fully involved in developing any significant changes to the PRGS curriculum.
Qualifying Exams Committee	Three professors selected each year by the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs. In most cases, they are chosen from among the current professors teaching the PRGS Core Courses.	During the period leading up to the Qualifying Exams each July.	The Quals Committee is responsible for creating the 3 comprehensive exams in policy analysis, economics and quantitative methods covering the methods and basic knowledge taught in the core curriculum. Core Faculty write the questions and grade the responses. Oral exams are offered to those fellows who perform poorly on one or more sections of the written exam.
First Year Review Committee	Three to four professors chosen by the Dean each year, the Dean, the Associate Dean, and the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs.	Once a year in August.	The role of the First Year Review Committee is to review the performance of each fellow in coursework, preliminary exams, research and OJT and make a judgment about the student's academic strengths, weaknesses and prospects in PRGS. The committee may recommend additional coursework, tutoring, or other supplements to a student's program to ensure successful attainment of the school's learning objectives.
Faculty	The PRGS faculty consists of all those RAND staff and visiting professors who teach at PRGS, all RAND staff who supervise PRGS fellows on OJT research projects for at	All-hands faculty meetings are held at least twice a year. PRGS Administration is working with the faculty to provide regular updates in the interest of keeping them	The faculty is responsible for setting educational objectives in courses, OJT and dissertations and for ensuring that each student under their supervision is progressing towards these outcomes. The PRGS faculty has a solid core of dedicated members with regular additions of new faculty depending

	least 20 days, and RAND researchers who serve on dissertation committees	apprised of recent events within the School	on PRGS needs. [Appendix C]
PRGS staff	Dean, Associate Dean, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, Director of Admissions and Academic Services, Registrar, International Student Advisor/Financial Aid Advisor/Financial Manager, Executive Assistant to the Dean, AA, Career Services Advisor, and Director of Development.	Weekly staff meetings; weekly Deans' meetings; annual strategic planning meetings.	The PRGS staff is responsible for the operations of the School and for ensuring that the resources we have are allocated in a manner that enables us to achieve our educational objectives. It also regularly monitors the progress students are making towards program completion, counsel students on coursework, dissertations, and OJT, and intervene as necessary whenever a student is deemed to be falling behind. The Dean, with the PRGS staff, establishes the strategic vision for the school and ensures that each element of the school's program is in alignment with the vision.
PRGS Student Organization/Coordinating Committee (COCOM)	All tuition-paying PRGS students are members of the PRGS Student Organization. This organization elects representatives to the Coordinating Committee (COCOM) each fall to serve as the liaison organization with the PRGS Administration. The COCOM is made up of 3 representatives elected from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year classes, respectively. The remaining students together elect an "nth year" representative to serve with these earlier cohorts. There is also one at-large rep elected by the entire student body.	COCOM meets as frequently as they desire. They hold monthly meetings with the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and other PRGS staff members as warranted and with the Dean at least once a quarter.	COCOM is dedicated to representing and addressing the needs and concerns of the students including issues related to the educational objectives of the program. COCOM is the primary liaison between the school's administration and the student body as a whole, often serving as a sounding board for new initiatives or major program changes. [Appendix D]
On-the-Job	Five to seven students	The OJT Brokers	The OJT brokers are responsible for

Training Brokers	selected by the Associate Dean through an open application process.	meet monthly with the Associate Dean to discuss the OJT status of PRGS fellows.	assisting PRGS fellows in obtaining sufficient OJT to meet both the academic and the financial requirements. They are also charged with continuously improving the quality of OJT. They have been involved in the process of identifying the learning objectives of OJT and in developing a process of communicating those objectives to RAND researchers who hire PRGS fellows. [Appendix E]
Career Services Advisory Committee	Seven student members spanning all cohort years as well as a variety of career interest areas such as government/defense; education; health; international; private sector/consulting. New members are recommended by current members and appointed by the Dean. Members are asked to serve a two-year term.	The CSAC meets with Career Services staff (Career Counselor, Director of Admissions and Academic Services and the PRGS AA) once a month. Additional event planning and strategy meetings occur as needed.	Plans and implements activities designed to further the mission of the Office of Career Services, which is to develop in students the "soft skills" needed for a successful job search; to serve as the liaison between the student body and the Office of Career Services, and to identify ways to improve students' career-related knowledge and skills. [Appendix F]

<u>Communicating Educational Objectives</u>

We make an extraordinary effort to ensure that the educational goals of our program are widely known and that students, faculty, and staff alike internalize our policies and procedures supporting these goals. In general, we communicate with these stakeholders through the various mechanisms described above. In addition, we post all information related to the School, including our educational objectives, on our internal website where it is available for anyone who seeks it out. We also have recently revised our Student Handbook [See Appendix B] provided to each student and available to all members of the PRGS community on the RAND intranet where the learning objectives are now featured prominently. Beginning in fall 2010, PRGS has committed to preparing a Dean's Report covering the key components of our program in a comprehensive way [see Appendix G], which is shared with the PRGS Board of Governors, RAND's leadership, and with other supporters of the School.

Apart from these rather formal and systemic means for communicating our educational goals, policies, and procedures, the PRGS staff prides itself on providing a tremendous amount of individual-level contact with students and faculty to ensure that they fully understand the School's commitment to achieving its goals and adhering to its policies. With respect to students, this process begins at the pre-application phase, where hundreds of e-mails and phone calls are fielded and questions addressed. Our Admitted Students

Weekend provides another early opportunity to acquaint students with exactly what it is we are out to achieve and the processes required of all of us to get "from here to there." Once admitted, PRGS staff spends countless hours with students providing individual counseling that includes enhancing their understanding of our goals, policies, and procedures, as well as providing academic, research and career guidance.

Similarly, with respect to the faculty, the PRGS Dean, Associate Dean, and Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs devote hundreds of hours of their time each year to meeting with individual faculty members. We believe that these meetings not only offer us a chance to educate the faculty about our goals, policies, and procedures, but to elicit their feedback on how they might be modified or refined to better meet the needs of the entire institution.

Over the past two years, PRGS has strengthened its outreach efforts within RAND and with our broader school community including the Board of Governors, major supporters, and alumni. Some of these efforts include regular information sessions on the school provided to RAND staff in the Santa Monica, Washington, D.C., and Pittsburgh offices; a presentation to all new RAND staff members on PRGS during the corporate orientation sessions held several times each year; the holding of at least two all-faculty meetings each year to discuss new initiatives and current issues; and the preparation, presentation, and distribution of a video on PRGS describing who we are, what we aspire to, and the unique values and capabilities of the program. PRGS provided this video to all alumni, has presented it RAND Advisory Boards, the Board of Governors, and the Board of Trustees, and regularly shows it at information sessions held at RAND.

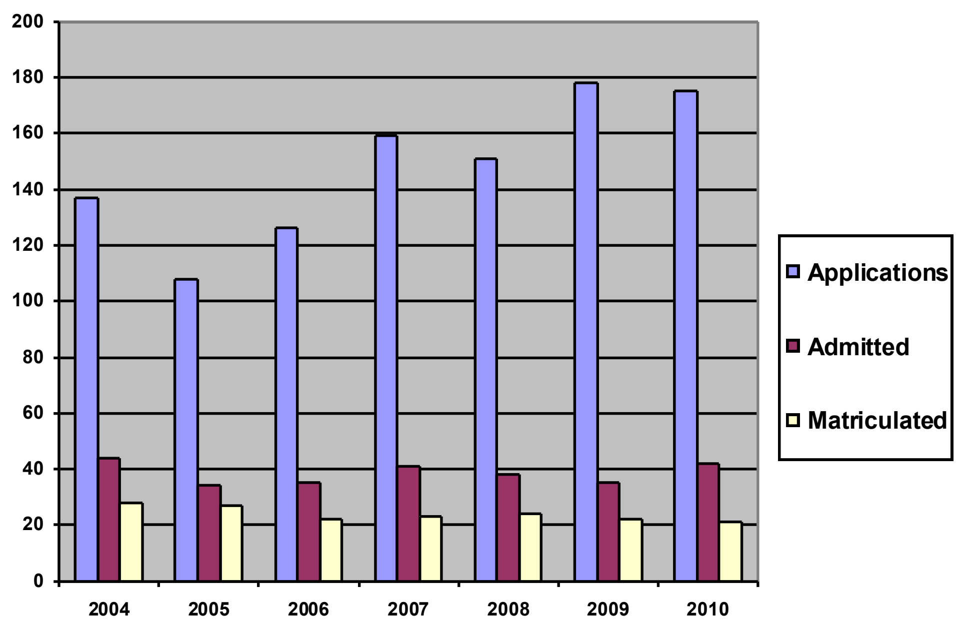
Finally, under Dean Marquis's leadership, we are committed to building a strong and vibrant alumni community. At the PRGS 40th Anniversary celebration held in conjunction with commencement in June 2010, we launched the PRGS Alumni Association and invited all 260 plus alums to join. We have reinvigorated our quarterly electronic alumni newsletter, "Findings," which provides our alumni with a way to stay in touch with PRGS and with each other. The Deans frequently meet with alumni as they travel throughout the country and when alumni visit PRGS. Most importantly, we are reaching out to our alumni community to involve them as mentors for current students particularly as they think about their careers. We are also reaching out to them as ambassadors of our program to assist us in finding good potential candidates for admission.

Standard II: *Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions*

<u>Admissions as the crucial first step in Academic Standards</u>

Policy Analysis as an academic discipline is multi-disciplinary by nature, demanding students possess competence across a large number of disciplines including economics, statistics, econometrics, operations research, social and behavioral science, and cost benefit analysis in order to be successful. Students also need to obtain a certain depth of knowledge in a particular field of policy. Not every student has the drive, dexterity, and breadth of interest to succeed at PRGS. Therefore, the PRGS academic standards necessarily must start with the Admissions process. We set the bar high for GRE scores, especially the quantitative score, because the nature of the core curriculum demands that our students have a facility with mathematical concepts. But we are not looking solely for mathematical genius. We also are interested in recruiting students who have demonstrated a commitment to making a difference in a particular policy field and who have already displayed a talent for leadership in their careers. Moreover, students with either an advanced degree or work experience are valued above those coming directly out of an undergraduate program. Finally, we believe that the quality of the educational experience will be enhanced for everyone if our student body more closely reflects the populations that we anticipate our graduates will be serving, especially if they pursue leadership positions in public service. For this reason, we emphasize to our Admissions Committee that diversity is a key characteristic of a top graduate program in policy analysis. While we ask them to evaluate each candidate on his or her merits, we also request that they make sure that diverse backgrounds, policy interests, work experiences, cultures, educational experiences and other unique factors are considered carefully in their evaluations of individuals. [See Appendix H for Admissions Committee Guidelines 2011]

As the chart below indicates, the number of completed applications has averaged about 150 per year over the past seven years. These 150 come from a far larger pool of pre-application, averaging 600-700 each cycle. Our admissions staff responds to each pre-application, providing guidance on the nature of the program and how an applicant might best prepare for success at PRGS. From the completed applications, we usually have about 100 highly competitive applicants. We offer admission to between 35-40 applicants each year with the aim of creating a class of between 21-25 students.



2008 Cohort:	2009 Cohort	2010 Cohort
GRE: 748Q 621V	GRE: 757Q 641V	GRE: 750Q 627V
12 female, 12 male	12 female, 10 men	5 female, 16 male
9 international students	6 international students	5 international students
15 domestic students	16 domestic students	16 domestic students
63% advanced degrees	50% advanced degrees	62% advanced degrees

We focus on the screening process at admission because we believe if we have done our job well, each admitted student will come to PRGS prepared and able to learn the material we expect them to learn. Therefore, our goal is to support each admitted student who is committed to the program through the core coursework, the qualifying exams, the dissertation process, OJT, the completion of the dissertation, and finally, advancing their careers beyond PRGS. In addition, we assign student and faculty mentors to each entering student; offer refresher courses in mathematics for policy analysis, microeconomics, and decision analysis; and provide tutoring as needed for core courses and qualifying exam preparation.

The Learning Environment at PRGS and RAND Corporation

WASC Standard II: *Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions* asks us to reflect on three aspects of the learning environment: teaching and learning; scholarship and creative activity; and support for student learning. At PRGS we define these aspects as follows: Teaching and Learning happens primarily in the classroom, but also through mentorship on OJT and as part of the dissertation process. Scholarship and Creative Activity are what most faculty are engaged in daily through their RAND project work. Students are therefore exposed to this through their participation in OJT as well as their involvement in proposal and paper writing and the presentation of papers and posters at conferences. Dissertation research also falls into this category. Finally, PRGS faculty and staff support student learning in a variety of ways which will be described below.

We believe we have developed the appropriate structures and processes to communicate and support our academic standards and student achievement and that these structures and processes align with our educational objectives and standards of achievement.

The chart below shows how we map the basic elements of our program to our educational objectives and what learning outcomes we expect as a result of each of these structures or processes. These learning outcomes include both formative and summative types of assessments to allow the faculty and staff to assess student outcomes early and often and to enable interventions as necessary should a student appear to need tutoring, additional mentoring or other forms of assistance to help them achieve the expected level of proficiency.

Key Educational Objective	Supporting Structures and Processes	Learning Outcomes

1. Understand the purpose of policy analysis and its place within the political process	First Year Core Courses: Policy Analysis I & III; Second Year Core Course: Organizational Culture of Government Institutions Electives: Policy Analysis in National Security, Policy Analysis in Fragile States, Federal Budget Overview, Ethics and Public Policy, Principles of Client-oriented Policy Analysis, Media and Public Policy OJT: RAND project work (especially for government clients) Experiential Learning: The Washington Experience	Performance in the classroom and in courses Performance on OJT (Qualitative assessments; quantitative assessments; solicited and unsolicited feedback) Performance on Qualifying Exams (Distinction; Pass; Conditional Pass) Performance on First Year Review
2. Master the basic methodologies used in policy research: economic analysis, quantitative methods, and social and behavioral science methods	First Year Prep Courses: Mathematics for Policy Analysis, Decision Analysis, Microeconomics for Policy Analysis; First Year Core Courses: Micro I & II, Empirical Analysis I, II & III, Methods of Social Science Research, Cost Benefit and Cost Effectiveness Analysis, Operations Research I, Macro Economics Dissertation Workshops Declaration of Analytic Concentration	Performance in the classroom and in core courses Performance on Qualifying Exams (Distinction; Pass; Conditional Pass) Performance on First Year Review Performance in a range of OJT projects
3. Acquire an in-depth knowledge in one of these three methodological fields	Electives to fulfill one or more analytic concentrations: Operations Research II, Program Evaluation, Advanced Econometrics I, II & III, Advanced Statistics for Policy Analysis, Large-Scale Optimization with Applications, Qualitative Research II, Game Theory, Risk Assessment, Robust Decision Making, Workshop on Quantitative Methods and Education, Health Economics, Labor Economics, Economic Development Dissertation: Each student is expected to apply one or more methods from their chosen methodological field in their dissertation research.	Performance in elective courses in area of analytic concentration (exams, papers, class participation, final grades plus comments) Performance in Dissertation Workshops Dissertation Award Competition Dissertation Proposal Defense Dissertation seminar Performance on OJT (Qualitative assessments; quantitative assessments; solicited and unsolicited feedback)
4. Obtain a deep understanding of a	Substantive Policy Seminars: Offered during the pre-term each	Completion of Independent Study

specialized substantive field of public policy	fall. Students are required to take at least one in their chosen area of specialization Declaration of Policy Field OJT: Each student is required to do 50 days in their chosen area of policy specialization. Independent Study: Each student is required to do at least one independent study with a specialist covering a topic or methodology in their chosen area of policy specialization. Dissertation: Each student's dissertation should be on a topic in their chosen area of policy specialization.	Performance on OJT Dissertation research and writing Publications
5. Develop project and professional skills relevant to the selected field of policy analysis	OJT: We have identified 18 project and professional skills that we expect our students to be exposed to and learn at some level through their work on RAND projects. Experiential Learning: Career Services Workshops:	Dissertation research and writing Performance on OJT Initial employment upon graduation

Measuring Learning Outcomes

As the chart above indicates, at each step in the educational process at PRGS, from coursework to OJT to the dissertation, students are expected to master a set of skills and to demonstrate proficiency in those skills. Moreover, as noted earlier in this paper, proficiency involves two dimensions: the ability to utilize policy-relevant knowledge and the ability to produce policy-relevant knowledge and insight. As we talk about learning outcomes, it is important that we define our terms and explain how we think about measuring those outcomes.

Our assumption is that all students entering our Ph.D. program in policy analysis do so because they believe they have incomplete proficiency in one or more of the skills that our curriculum is designed to teach. Because we do not conduct initial placement or other baseline assessment tests, we have no way of measuring which students have incomplete proficiency in which aspects of the curriculum. Thus, all of our tracking of outcomes is designed to assess not the amount of learning that is taking place, but rather whether or not students are achieving a level of proficiency sufficient to pass their classes and the qualifying exams, to perform at the expected level in OJT, and eventually to be able to design, research and write a dissertation of sufficiently high quality to be worthy of the Ph.D. from PRGS.

The PRGS faculty and staff have designed multiple points of assessment along the path to the dissertation, which allow us to recognize when a student is struggling to achieve the expected level of proficiency. As we are a small program—averaging 23 students per cohort with about 100 student enrolled at any given time—we have the luxury of being able to get to know each student as a distinct individual and to provide tailored support to the extent they desire it. For instance, a student may perform poorly on the mid-term (B- or below) in one or more of the core courses. When this occurs, the professor will share the grades with the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs who will meet with the student and devise a remediation strategy—most likely additional tutoring prior to the qualifying exams. Likewise, if a student fails one or more of the qualifying exams (or fails the written part but passes the orals), the First Year Review Committee will take that performance into account when providing an assessment of what the student needs to do going forward to be successful in the program. Such remedial action usually consists of retaking a core course and earning a grade of B+ or better or retaking the qualifying exam and earning a passing grade. In these cases where a student has clearly demonstrated incomplete proficiency in a particular area of policy analysis and then subsequently is able to master those skills, we can assume that real learning has taken place as in these instances, the change is evident.

How well do our students do? In Part II of this report, we will discuss in more detail the efforts we have been making to develop new metrics and other evidence to enable PRGS to track learning outcomes in coursework, OJT and at the dissertation stage. In this section, therefore, we will focus on data and other evidence we currently gather that we believe demonstrates that our students are mastering the core elements of the program and have acquired the ability to use evidence to address policy-relevant questions and to produce policy-relevant knowledge.

<u>Pass Rates of Qualifying Exams;</u>

The first significant test of whether or not are students are learning what we want them to learn occurs in the summer of their first year when all first year fellows are required to sit for day-long examinations in the three areas of the core curriculum: Quantitative Analysis, Economics, and Policy (inclusive of Social and Behavioral Science methods). As is demonstrated by the chart below, the pass rates for all written exams over the past three years ranges from a low of 82% to a high of 91%. Oral exams are offered to all students who fail one or more parts of the written exams. Once orals are factored in the pass rate for all qualifying exams improves to between 95-100%.

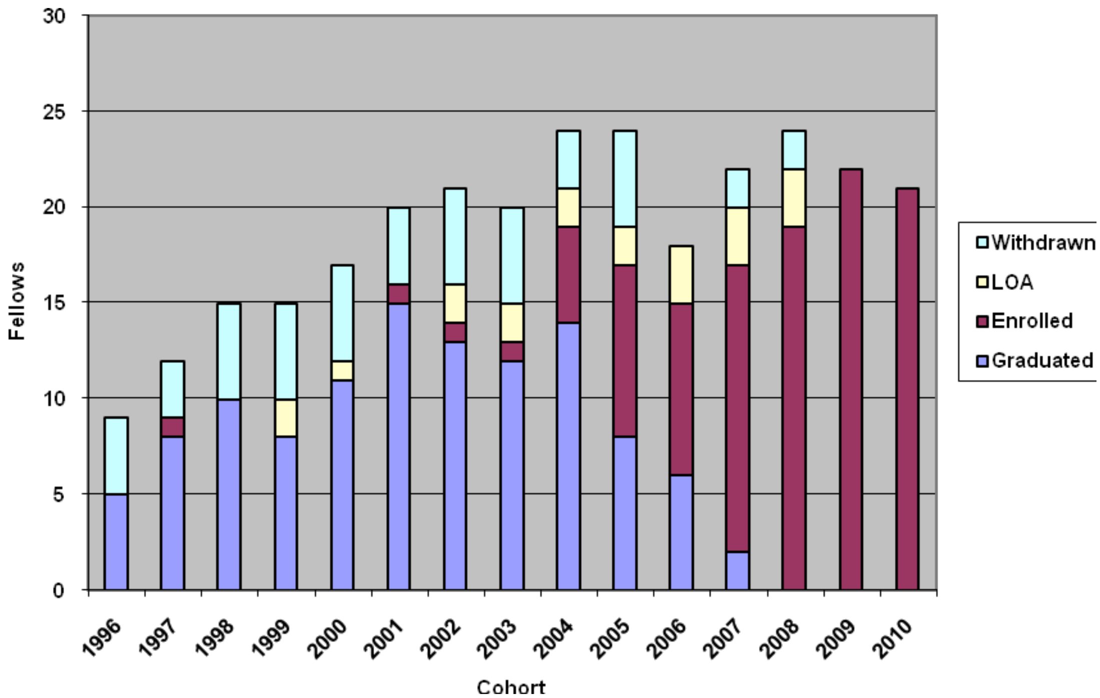
Pass Rates for Qualifying Exams						
	2007		2008		2009	
	Written Exams	Written plus Oral Exams	Written Exams	Written plus Oral Exams	Written Exams	Written plus Oral Exams
Quantitative Analysis	85.7%	100.0%	86.4%	95.5%	86.4%	95.5%
Economics	90.5%	95.2%	86.4%	100.0%	90.9%	95.5%
Policy and SBS Methods	85.7%	95.2%	90.9%	95.5%	81.8%	100.0%

Graduation Rates:

PRGS also tracks the success of our students by what percentage of students who enroll eventually graduate. As you can see by the chart in Appendix I, which shows the percentage of graduates among all students who leave the program over a range of demographic categories, our graduation rates in nearly all of the categories have improved between 1995 and 2010, in some cases rather dramatically. We attribute this increase in completion rates to an improved admissions screening process, the increase in financial support provided to students over that period including increases in scholarships and dissertation awards, the increase in mentoring that has been made available as a result of an increase in the size of the PRGS staff and the institution of formal faculty and student mentors, and improvements in the core and elective curriculum.

Time to completion:

An important metric for the effectiveness of the PRGS Ph.D. program is progress toward graduation or time to completion. Throughout its history, PRGS has maintained a far shorter 5-year completion average than other Ph.D. programs. Data from a recent study by the Ph.D. Completion Project of the Council of Graduate Schools showed an average 5-year completion rate by discipline between a low of 11.8% in the humanities to a high of 34.5 % in engineering. PRGS 5-year completion rates are over 40%. The average time to completion for students who graduate is about 5 years. And over the past 10 years, our overall completion rate is 75.7%. Our withdrawal rate averages about 11% of all matriculated students over that same time period.



We also believe a good test of our educational effectiveness is to let the market tell us how well we are doing. Our students subject their work to the market test when they submit papers and posters for consideration for presentation at conferences or when they submit their work to journals for publication. In both cases, we have seen impressive success.

Publication records of students

We track student publications primarily through the RAND publications database. This records all RAND publications that students authored or co-authored as well as publications in non-RAND peer-reviewed journals and other publications that they subsequently recorded in RAND's database. A look at the PRGS entering class of 2003 provides a telling snapshot of the publication record of our students. Of the 20 students who entered the program in 2003, 12 have graduated and 1 remains enrolled. The publication record of this group of 13 is illustrative of the accomplishments of our students. The average number of publications for the group is 6.3. This ranges from a high of 27 to a low of 0. Three students had publications in the double-digits; Arkadipta Ghosh with 27, Ricardo Basurto with 16 and David Howell with 13. Students whose policy area was health tended to have more publications on average and to have more of those publications in outside peer-reviewed journals. For instance, of the 27 publications by Arka Ghosh, 15 were peer-reviewed journal articles; of the 9 publications by Yuhui Zheng, 5 were peer-reviewed journal articles, and of the 16 publications by Ricardo Basurto, 7 were in peer-reviewed journals. The two students with no publications beyond their PRGS dissertation were our students who came directly from the U.S. Air Force Academy and had only three years to complete their degree.

PRGS does not currently have a systematic way of collecting data on the publication record of our graduates, but we are exploring the possibility of conducting a survey of our graduates at the 5-year and the 10-year mark to collect data on their career paths and contributions to the field including publications.

Participation in professional conferences

Each year PRGS makes funding available for our students to support travel to professional conferences. Students are required to apply for these funds and priority is given to students who have had a paper accepted for presentation. Funds are also made available to enable students to present posters, participate in panel discussions, attend competitive workshops and seminars, or attend conferences directly related to their dissertation research. We have also made funds available to enable individual students to travel to a conference to receive an award or to appear on TV.

In academic year 2008-9, 14 PRGS students presented papers at conferences as varied as American Academy of Health Behaviors, Society of Labor Economists, and the International Political Science Association annual meeting. In academic year 2009-10, 12 PRGS students presented papers and 2 students presented posters at conferences that ranged from APPAM, to The American Water Resources Association annual conference, to NBER's Economics of Education Program meeting to the Society of Risk Assessment's annual conference. More recently, in November 2010, a poster co-authored by one of our students, Brian Weatherford, won the prize for best poster at the APPAM conference held in Boston. See Appendix J for a complete list of conferences attended.

Job placements and career advancement

One final indication that our graduates are leaving PRGS with the knowledge and skills that we desire them to obtain is demonstrated by their performance in the job market. Of the students who have graduated from 2008-2010, all but one had secured employment prior to graduation in a field that was directly related to policy analysis. Moreover, in recent years as our alumni network has grown and strengthened, there is a clear trend that where one PRGS alumnus is hired, the organization is positively disposed to hiring future graduates. Some recent examples include: Amgen where we now have two recent alumni, the Centers for Disease Control, Abt Associates, and the Strategic Data Fellowship run by Harvard's School of Education. See Appendix K for a complete list of recent employment.

In addition to tracking the employment of our recent graduates, PRGS also has begun to build a more complete picture of its graduates. We have done this in large part as a result of our outreach related to the celebration of our 40th anniversary and in preparation for our fundraising campaign. What we found along the way was that over the past 40 years, PRGS has graduated a long list of game-changers and policy leaders; individuals who are making a difference in their fields.

One such example is **Charles Bennett ('89)**, Center of Economic Excellence Chair for Medication Safety and Efficacy and the Frank P. and Josie M. Fletcher Professor of Pharmacy at South Carolina College of Pharmacy, who directs the only state-supported pharmacovigilance program in the nation. His research to date has been responsible for identification and characterization of 43 severe adverse drug reactions and has resulted in savings of several hundred thousand lives and billions of dollars annually. Anne Trontell, in the New England Journal of Medicine, characterized Dr. Bennett's efforts as evidence of "a prepared mind." He traces his success to his years at PRGS and RAND: "I would like to emphasize that the PRGS training that I received as a graduate student and the two-year follow-on as a researcher at RAND have proven invaluable in my career choice and prior research efforts. The breadth and depth of the PRGS experience has served me very well."

Also making a difference in the realm of health policy is **Ricardo Basurto-Davila ('09)**, our only Mexican graduate to date. Ricardo was a standout at PRGS, earning distinction on the Policy Analysis portion of his qualifying exams. He worked with prominent RAND researchers Jose Escarce, Emma Aguila and Krishna Kumar on his dissertation, which was entitled< "Selection, Wear, and Tear: The Health of Hispanics and Hispanic Immigrants in the United States." Ricardo is on a 2-year Prevention Effectiveness fellowship at the CDC where he has been involved in influenza responses including the H1N1 influenza response last year.

Charles and Ricardo are not alone- many other PRGS alumni are also making their mark in the field of health policy in both the public and private sectors: **Bobby Dubois ('87)** is Chief Science Officer, National Pharmaceutical Council (NPC); **Ze Cong ('09)**, is Health Economics Manager, Dept. of Global Health, Amgen, Inc.; **Rachel Schmidt ('91)**, is Principal Policy Analyst Medicare Payment Advisory Commission; **Sarah Gaillot ('10)**, is Social Science Research Analyst, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Besides the RAND Corporation, a number of other research institutions have benefited from the skills our graduates bring**,** such as **Arthur Brooks ('98).** After completing his dissertation on *Arts, Markets, and Governments: A Study in Cultural Policy Analysis* in 1998, he used his expertise and education to further the development of other future policy makers as a Professor of Public Administration at George State and the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University. . Now, as President of AEI, Arthur's dedication to public policy continues. AEI strives to serve the public with research and education on issues within government, politics, economics, and social welfare. Also, since 2006 Arthur has published three books: *Who Really Cares*, which examines American charitable giving; and *Gross National Happiness: Why Happiness Matters for America--and How We Can Get More of It*, and a textbook entitled *Social Entrepreneurship*. His newest publication, *The Battle: How the Fight between Free Enterprise and Big Government Will Shape America's Future* was published earlier in 2010.
A more recent PRGS graduate,
Others representing PRGS in the world's most important think tanks include **Jane McClure Burstain ('08)**, at the Center for Public Policy Priorities ; **Gustav Lindstrom**

('02) Faculty Member, Geneva Centre for Security Policy; **Maren Leed ('00)** Senior Fellow, International Security Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies; **Katia Vlachos-Dengler ('07)** Researcher, Institute for Strategy and Security Policy, Austrian National Defence Academy.

PRGS also maintains a strong presence within the private sector. **Edward R. (Ted) Harshberger** (**'91)** serves as Corporate Director, Strategy, at Northrop Grumman Corporation. In this role, he is responsible for identifying, evaluating, and prosecuting internal and external strategic initiatives that position Northrop Grumman for high-return growth. Others working for private entities include **Michele Zanini ('01)**, Associate Principal, McKinsey & Company; **John Lund ('87)**, Senior Vice President, Strategic Asset Management, Walt Disney Parks & Resorts; and **Sam Loeb ('05)**, Analytic Business Consultant, Hewlett-Packard.

Last, but certainly not least, our graduates are making a difference on a global scale. One alum, **Daochi Tong, ('99),** now serves his home country as the Director-General for International Affairs, China Securities Regulatory Commission; in November 2010, he made a visit to PRGS en route home from Washington, DC, where he presented his recent work to his counterparts at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

In Africa, **Julius Gatune Kariuki ('06)** is currently serving as a policy advisor with the African Centre for Economic Transformation, based in Accra, Ghana. ACET is "an international non-profit organization committed to promoting policy research and advisory services that contribute towards African governments' attainment of development goals, sustained growth and economic transformation. ACET has its head office in Accra, Ghana and is supported by multilateral and bilateral donors and philanthropic foundations."

Other PRGS alumni making an impact globally include **Nailing Xia ('09)**, Associate Social Affairs Officer, Gender Analysis Section, Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations; **Anga Timilsina ('07)**, Coordinator, Democratic Governance Group/Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP Programme on Anti-Corruption; **Connor Spreng ('05)**, Economist, The World Bank .

Standard III: ***Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Stability:***

PRGS has long been fortunate in being a small school that can focus on excellence in a single degree while having the institutional support of a major research institution behind it. PRGS has a relatively small staff for a program of this size and we are able to maintain the excellence of our program in large part because of our RAND affiliation, which provides us with among other things: a first-rate faculty, which scores high on scholarly productivity indexes; an exceptional facility, including state-of-the-art computing resources and teleconferencing capabilities; oversight by the RAND Board of Trustees and the ability to recruit a high-quality Board of Governors; access to fundraising professionals through RAND's Development office; access to dissemination and outreach capabilities through RAND's Office of External Affairs and Publications Department; business planning and financial management and analysis support from RAND's Finance and Accounting departments; access to library resources; and assistance from RAND's corporate lawyer as needed. Finally, we have the support of the RAND executive leadership, which provides us with investment resources as needed to support new initiatives, launch new courses, and otherwise ensure that our program continues to be the best we can offer.

Keeping these key resources and support structures aligned with PRGS's institutional goals is facilitated by many of the aspects identified earlier in this report: a clear vision and set of objectives identified by the school's administration, ratified by the Board of Governors, and regularly communicated to the RAND leadership and community by frequent outreach and the Dean's role as a corporate officer; a large faculty committed to the success of PRGS and its students while also playing essential roles as researchers at RAND; and the value that PRGS and our students provide to RAND through our students' integration into RAND research projects, PRGS's role as an incubator for developing new capabilities at RAND, and PRGS as a recruiting tool to attract promising researchers with a love of teaching to RAND. As an institution, RAND believes that PRGS brings unique value and credibility to the organization and is, therefore, committed to PRGS's success and the success of our students. This, along with frequent communication so that PRGS's needs are known, ensures that all of RAND's support organizations do all they can to help PRGS achieve its vision and organizational objectives.

These next sections provide more detail on the key resources and structures in place at PRGS. There is a brief reiteration of PRGS's faculty, physical and information resources and then the rest of this section focuses on current financial resources for our operational core, scholarships, dissertations, and new initiatives. We also discuss the major fundraising initiative that is in the earliest stages and is intended to provide an even stronger financial foundation for the future of the school. More information on our planning structures and mechanisms and information resources is found in the discussion of WASC Standard IV that follows.

PRGS Faculty

As described earlier in this report, PRGS has the great benefit of being a small program with approximately 100 students while maintaining a faculty of over 150 members. This extraordinary student/teacher ratio is due entirely to PRGS being a part of the RAND Corporation. PRGS enjoys access to a RAND research staff that includes more than 450 PhDs, not to mention a large number of lawyers and MDs. Although PRGS does bring in a few outside faculty members to address specific areas of policy or methodological expertise and to serve as outside members of dissertation committees, as a rule we are able to draw upon the RAND research staff to provide the academic and research background required to teach a broad range of policy analysis courses, as well as mentorship of students in OJT and service on dissertation committees. An added benefit of being part of this unique institution is that all PRGS faculty members teach or work with students because they like to do so. Unlike a traditional research university with teaching requirements for all, whether they would like to teach or not, PRGS faculty choose to work with students and view it as an important benefit of being part of RAND.

Physical Resources

Since RAND moved into its new headquarters building approximately five years ago, PRGS has had its own dedicated space, which is home to our classrooms, carrel space for first and second year students, and PRGS's administration. We are also fortunate to have a deluxe student lounge area, complete with a television, comfortable furniture, and an area for group study. The space is a great pleasure to work in, with abundant light, high-quality work stations, and overall excellent maintenance of this LEED-certified "green" facility. Additionally, PRGS, our students and faculty have access to all of the rest of RAND's space in Santa Monica, as well as in the RAND Washington and RAND Pittsburgh offices. We make use of these physical resources in a variety of ways: RAND office space elsewhere in the building to house our more senior students who are integrated with RAND researchers on projects; RAND conference rooms, several of which are equipped with state-of-the-art presentation and video teleconference capabilities; and to (literally) nourish us through the full-service RAND Café.

Information Resources

Every student who comes to PRGS is provided with an up-to-date laptop computer and full computer support from RAND's IT staff. PRGS's administration has the full support of RAND's IT staff as well as the business information systems office- a relationship that has been essential as we have procured and are currently implementing our new academic management information system. This system will provide end-to-end support for students and staff from application and admissions to registrar services to alumni support upon graduation. PRGS began implementation of this system this fall and for the first time has been able to offer a fully online admissions process.

Financial Resources

Funding for Core Activities

PRGS funds its core program—the academic program, student support and the administration—through three sources. Tuition and fees cover about 60-65% of these core costs. Endowment draw covers about 20-22% and philanthropic gifts make up the difference. These unrestricted gifts are critical to close this gap in funding as well as to provide us the flexibility we need to meet emergent needs and develop new initiatives that improve the quality of the program. The chart below shows planned and actual funding and expenses for fiscal year 2010 (October 2009-September 2010) and our plan for fiscal year 2011 (October 2010-September 2011). Careful stewardship combined with some lower-than-expected costs for RAND overhead, student health insurance and dissertation committees resulted in a positive cash balance at the end of FY10. As always, attentive management of PRGS's resources is a core value of the PRGS administration as the school makes every effort to contain costs and maximize the effectiveness of our financial resources.

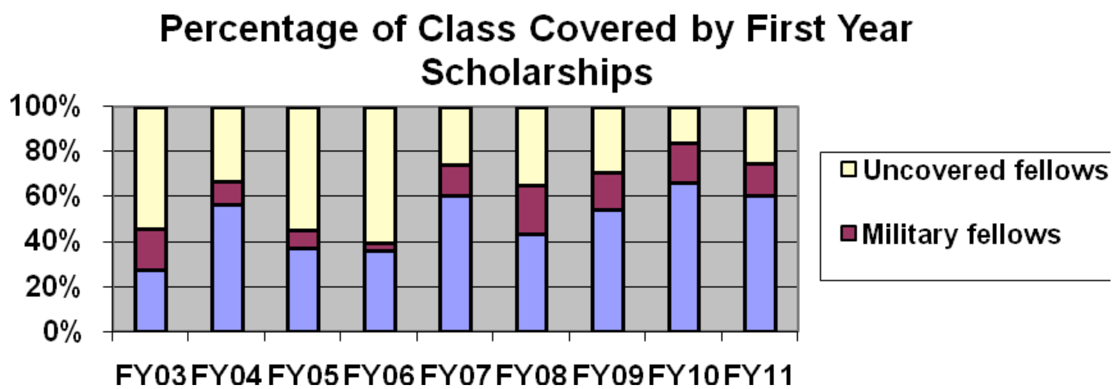
	FY10 Plan	FY10 Actual	FY10 Plan vs FY10 Actual	FY11 Plan	FY11 Plan vs FY10 Plan
Available Core Funding					
Tuition and Fees	$ 1,926,337	$ 1,962,704	102%	$ 1,944,725	101%
Endowment	$ 651,778	$ 647,900	99%	$ 666,107	102%
Unrestricted Giving	$ 153,559	$ 98,250	64%	$ 330,546	215%
Reserves	$ 297,254	$ 333,693	112%	$ 114,833	39%
Total Funding	**$ 3,028,928**	**$ 3,042,547**	**100%**	**$ 3,056,211**	**101%**
Core Expenses					
Academic Program	$ 688,070	$ 597,729	87%	$ 652,650	95%
Student Support	$ 622,948	$ 563,014	90%	$ 668,250	107%
Administration	$ 1,154,179	$ 1,070,471	93%	$ 1,177,543	102%
Overhead	$ 483,731	$ 385,248	80%	$ 456,478	94%
Debt Forgiveness	$ 80,000	$ 80,000	100%	$ 101,290	127%
Total Expenses	**$ 3,028,928**	**$ 2,696,462**	**89%**	**$ 3,056,211**	**101%**
Net Reserves	$ -	$ 346,085			

In addition to our core activities, PRGS also raises funds from our Board of Governors and other friends of PRGS to support two other key components of our academic program: scholarships and dissertations.

Scholarship Funding

Scholarships are an essential part of the support we provide our students. They enable students to work only 60 days in their first year at RAND while earning the full fellowship without incurring any future obligations to repay PRGS through additional work or payments. Without these scholarships, a year's fellowship requires 155 days of project work or OJT. PRGS has one full (Rice) and three partially-endowed (Marshall, Minow and Klitgaard) scholarships. We have 3 additional scholarships we are able to give out each year thanks to a term endowment from the chair of our Board of Governors, Don Rice, who is also a past president of RAND. At the current rate, we will be able to make 3 scholarship awards from this term endowment per year for the next 3 years including FY11. PRGS is heavily reliant on annual giving for most of our scholarships. We continue to have as a goal providing full scholarships (currently $35,000) to all of our non-military students. To achieve this goal in FY11 would have required an additional 5.3 scholarships at $35,000 each, or $185,000.

Thanks to continued support from past and present PRGS Board members, we were able to offer full or partial scholarships to 15 of the 18 non-military fellows in the entering class of 2010 (FY11 on the chart below). This level of support is near historic highs but does have a higher percentage of students receiving partial, rather than full, scholarships with a partial scholarship being defined as anything less than $28,500. For comparison, the 2009 cohort received 15 full scholarships and 3 partial. In 2010, those numbers were 10 full and 4 partial.



Eventually, we would like to extend these scholarships to $50,000 to cover a portion of the work requirement for students in the second year. Currently, students must increase their OJT from 60 days in the first year to 155 days in the second, even while taking a full load of courses and beginning their dissertation work. Increasing scholarships from $35,000 to $50,000 would allow us to reduce the second year requirement to about 125 days, thus reducing the likelihood of significant debt buildup by students during their second year of the program.

Dissertation Funding

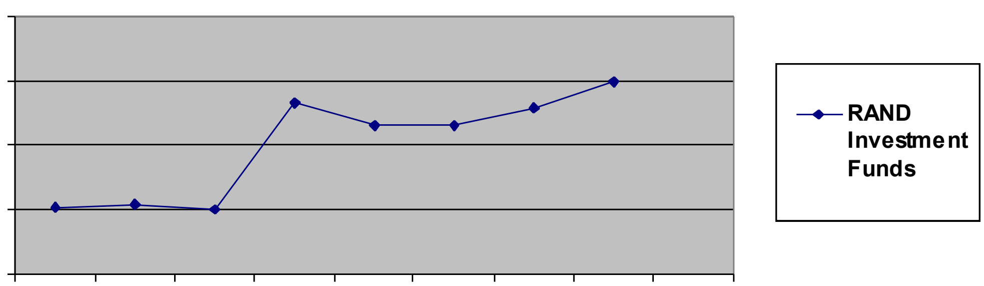
Donor-supported dissertation awards are a critical component of a premier public policy graduate program. These awards enable students to work on a broad range of public policy topics for which they have a passion, such as how to improve learning in our schools, how to fund retirement and provide care for rapidly aging populations in countries such as China, how to fairly and fully pay for America's highways in light of declining gas tax receipts, and what role restaurants play in the obesity epidemic in the United States. Most students begin their dissertations in earnest in their third year in the program. This means that at any given time we have about 55 students actively engaged in dissertation research. Currently, we are able to provide roughly half of this number with some level of funding ($2,500-$42,500) each year.

In 2010-11, PRGS is fortunate to have one fully-endowed dissertation fund, The Rothenberg Award, which generates between $65,000-70,000 annually, sufficient to provide partial funding to 4-6 dissertations per year. In addition, we have a renewable commitment from John Cazier to support one or two dissertations related to sustainability each year; a term grant from Fred Pardee to support multi-nation regional analysis; a multi-year gift given by Eugene Rosenfeld as part of a larger program focusing on Asian Economic Development; and we are completing the expenditure of our multi-year grant to support work related to Energy and the Environment. Beginning next year, we plan to offer an award from the Susan Way-Smith Memorial Fund, an endowment set up by the late PRGS alumna and Board of Governors member's family and friends to support students working on dissertations designed to improve the quality of public education in the United States.

Our goal is to provide about $500,000 in dissertation support each year through FY12, increasing to $750,000 and including support for faculty as well by FY13.

It is important to note that in addition to competing for internal dissertation funding, PRGS students are also competitive for a variety of dissertation grants made available by outside organizations. In the past few years, our students have received dissertation support from the following organizations and agencies: United States Environmental Protection Agency; The Bradley Foundation, the Department of Transportation, and multiple grants from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

RAND Investments in New Initiatives
PRGS continues to rely on RAND investment funds to support new initiatives as well as some key components of a premier public policy graduate program. In FY10, for example, PRGS used RAND investment funds to provide for a Career Services capacity, to initiate an experiential learning program in Washington, D.C., to underwrite the purchase of an academic tracking database, and to support activities related to the celebration of PRGS's 40th anniversary. In FY11, RAND investment funds will again be used to provide Career Services at PRGS, support the Washington Experience, and to enable PRGS to build the groundwork necessary for the fundraising campaign. In addition, RAND also provides PRGS about $75,000 per year to partially support the salary of the Dean of PRGS.



Beyond this direct financial support to PRGS, RAND also assists PRGS by providing the School with the services described in the first paragraph of this section.

Ensuring Future Sustainability and Growth

After four decades of steady growth, PRGS is diligently working to advance our programs to meet 21st century needs to move from excellent to eminent in order to stay competitive. PRGS's strategic planning has underscored the importance of building an endowment and expanding its donor base to support students, faculty and teaching innovations. This challenge is vital to the long-term health of the school and to our continued effectiveness and cannot be met by the school's operating budget. PRGS would like to raise $15 million over the next five years to advance our unique public policy education and become the intellectual hub for the next generation of policy leaders. We have retained Whaley LeVay, a campaign consulting firm with considerable experience in this area to conduct a planning study to help us prepare for a successful five-year leadership fund-raising initiative.

Standard IV: *Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement Strategic Thinking and Planning*

Planning Structures and Mechanisms

PRGS leads or participates in two major strategic and business planning processes: PRGS's internal process, reviewed by the Board of Governors, and RAND's corporate planning processes. In both of these processes, the key elements are strategic planning to define organizational objectives and ensure they are in alignment with the mission and vision of RAND and PRGS, and financial planning to ensure that programs and activities match available financial resources. A description of each of these major planning processes follows. A list of the key structures and mechanisms that exist at PRGS for the purposes of planning and dissemination of information can be found under Standard I at the beginning of this report. A description of augmentations and changes to these existing structures and mechanisms can be found in Part II, where we focus on the roles that they play in the collection and evaluation of data related to classroom instruction, OJT and the dissertation for the purposes of better assessing learning outcomes in our program.

PRGS as Part of RAND's Planning Process

RAND's planning process has two major elements – financial/business planning and strategic/operational planning. Each of these is integrated through the development of each corporate unit's business plan and through regular review of attainment of strategic objectives and financial goals by RAND's senior leadership, including the Dean of PRGS.

Review of RAND's mission and vision, identification and refinement of strategic objectives and thorough communication of financial objectives is accomplished primarily at the Operations Group (including all corporate officers and heads of major units) strategic offsite in the spring of each year. These objectives are reviewed regularly at additional offsites with all of the RAND senior leadership and updated during regular Operations Group meetings. Each corporate unit head, including the Dean as head of PRGS, works with RAND's President, Executive Vice President, and Chief Financial Officer to develop a set of organizational objectives. These organizational objectives tend to have a strong financial orientation but the Dean has worked with RAND's

President to develop new organizational objectives appropriate for a graduate school. As an example, in FY11, PRGS added an organizational objective to reduce student debt upon graduation with the intent of facilitating entry into public service careers. In future years, PRGS is considering adding an organizational objective regarding time-to-completion for PRGS degrees to ensure this number stays at or below five years.

Participating in RAND's corporate strategic and financial planning processes helps to ensure the support provided to PRGS by RAND is fully aligned with the school's vision and objectives. It also ensures RAND's leadership is fully informed of the PRGS program, understands the needs and capabilities of our students, and works to ensure the success of the school. For more information on RAND's institutional principles, please refer to Appendices L, M, N.

PRGS's Strategic and Financial Planning Process

Similar to RAND, PRGS also holds strategic planning offsites to refine our organizational objectives, ensure all staff members understand and support the PRGS program, and to provide the opportunity to identify and address areas for improvement. Because of our size, PRGS can include all members of the PRGS administration in these planning exercises, increasing buy-in, understanding, and commitment to the program as a whole.

PRGS's financial planning is fully integrated with RAND's financial planning process, to include the presentation of a three-year business plan/budget each year. The business plan and budget are prepared by the Associate Dean, with input from each staff member, following the guidance of the Dean. The Dean prepares a written overview for the RAND President and CFO that includes the school's strategic objectives, how the funded program supports those objectives, identifies new initiatives, and supports the business plan/budget. The Associate Dean tracks budget execution throughout the fiscal year, supported by the PRGS staff, and provides regular updates to the Dean.

Information Resources

PRGS has access to the extensive data and information resources available to all RAND staff including financial data reporting systems, the on-line project tracking system, and the comprehensive RAND intranet site. Additionally, we are able to utilize PRGS-specific tools such as:

New database

PRGS maintains its own academic data for tracking and evaluation purposes. This data has been managed in an in-house database, Filemaker Pro, since 2004. While moving from a paper and Excel-based system to a database was a big step forward at the time, this system still lacked some important features including faculty, student and applicant access. In 2009, we contracted with an outside vendor to install a new web-based academic information management system. The new database software program, Populi, covers admissions, academic records, reporting and more. It's web-based so faculty, staff, students, alumni and prospects can use it, and it is intuitive and simple enough for any user to learn.

We are gradually shifting over from Filemaker Pro to Populi, beginning with to the implementation of Populi for the application process in fall 2010. In Populi, prospective students no longer have to complete their application in one sitting, and can track the status of their application components. This process has significantly decreased the number of phone calls to our office from prospective students wanting updates on what's missing from their file. Once we open the system to enrolled students, they will be able to track their progress, print unofficial transcripts, and update personal information whenever it's convenient for them. They will also be able to register for courses online. Faculty will be able to post assignments, track test scores, enter final grades and review course evaluations all online. Career moves and contact information for our alums can be updated, tracked and reported on quickly and easily.

Our ability to track our students' progress from the time they apply to our program, while they're enrolled as students, and once they complete the program will be greatly improved. Creating and running reports to capture this information will not be as difficult or time consuming as in the past.

PRGS staff were trained on Populi in November 2010. We are planning to introduce faculty and students to this new database over the next six months. We are currently in discussions with staff and faculty over the timing and sequencing of the rollout. The ease of access to this system will enable us to share data on student achievement with faculty and to better monitor our achievement of learning objectives. Discussions with faculty and PRGS staff about what specific types of data we should be gathering and reports we should generate on student learning outcomes given this new system will be part of the roll-out process.

New web-based resources pages for faculty and students

PRGS has also been partnering with the RAND Library to create additional web-based internal resources for students and faculty. The first resource page we have developed is for Career Services and is designed to provide students with all the information they need to keep abreast of Career Services events and other activities as well as to provide guidance to them on the job search process post-PRGS.

The second and third resource pages we are in the process of creating are similar in purpose if not in content. One page is being designed for faculty and will host information currently included in our faculty Policies and Procedures manual on teaching expectations, grading policies and use of TAs. But it will augment this information with more details on sample syllabi, complete with examples of expected learning outcomes; OJT, including the newly devised learning objectives; as well as the dissertation process and our standards for a quality dissertation. The third resource page will be designed with students in mind and with a focus on information related to OJT. This will include the new OJT learning objectives as well as information on the OJT brokerage, and on the costs of hiring a PRGS fellow. In all cases, these web-based resource pages are intended to be a convenient hub where students and faculty can go to find necessary forms and pertinent announcements. They will also provide a mechanism for feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Information-based Strategic Planning for the Future

During the past five years, PRGS has been involved in developing and then conducting our self-study, focusing on making significant improvements in teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes; in developing and tracking learning outcomes for OJT and in devising a more rigorous approach to assuring the quality of PRGS dissertations by more clearly defining outcomes and standards and creating a process of tracking and monitoring student progress towards these standards.

This does not mean that we have been standing still in all other areas of our program. In fact, we have been continuously evaluating other aspects of our program and where a need for improvement is indicated, we have responded accordingly. For the purposes of this report, we would like to highlight three such instances:

Improving our Curriculum

PRGS has continued to evaluate and refine our curriculum to ensure we are providing the academic foundation essential to policy analysis and are staying current with respect to the needs of our students and graduates. Over the past 10 years, faculty members have led the revision of three components of the core curriculum. Both the Economics sequence and the Empirical Analysis sequence have been revised with an eye towards making each more coherent as a sequence and more appropriate for a school of policy analysis. In 2009, PRGS introduced a sequence of Policy Analysis courses to provide a framework that integrates across each of the analytic disciplines. In 2010, at the suggestion of the core faculty in Social and Behavioral Science (SBS) and with the support of the Dean, we have begun a comprehensive review of Social and Behavioral Sciences curriculum. Sandy Berry, PRGS professor of Social Science Research Methods, is taking the lead on this initiative.

The SBS faculty and the Dean have recognized that while the social and behavioral science curriculum (SBSC) was originally presented as the “third leg” of the PRGS stool (now the fourth, with the addition of the policy analysis area) it has never been fully accepted as such and has, at times, been subsumed into the policy analysis component of the core as part of the Political and Social Science (PSS) track. Recent changes in the curriculum that created the Policy Analysis track and a Social and Behavioral Science concentration highlighted the need to revitalize and strengthen this component of the curriculum.

The goals of the SBS curriculum revision are to design a curriculum that:

- Provides all students with a core set of basic concepts and tools that come from social and behavioral sciences and are needed for policy analysis
- Provides students who wish to focus on social and behavioral sciences with a menu of courses that are relevant across substantive areas RAND covers
- Can be staffed and taught at a high level of quality

This review and revitalization is taking place over the course of the 2010-11 academic year with the intent of having the new curriculum ready for fall quarter 2011. This effort is led by PRGS's faculty, using the objectives provided by the Dean.

Improving Diversity

As is evident in the chart below showing the demographic breakdown of the PRGS applicant pool over the last three years, PRGS struggles to generate an applicant pool that reflects the ethnic diversity of the U.S. population. While we are not unique in higher education in this regard, given that we are a program in public policy we believe we need to do a better job of recruiting under-represented minorities.

Demographic Breakdown of Applicant Pool					
2008 applicant pool		**2009 applicant pool**		**2010 applicant pool**	
African American	2	African American	2	African American	1
American/Alaska Native	3	American/Alaska Native	0	American/Alaska Native	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	12	Asian or Pacific Islander	13	Asian or Pacific Islander	15
Did not state/other	4	Did not state/other	5	Did not state/other	5
Hispanic, Latino, Puerto Rican, Mexican American	2	Hispanic, Latino, Puerto Rican, Mexican American	3	Hispanic, Latino, Puerto Rican, Mexican American	0
Non-resident alien	82	Non-resident alien	97	Non-resident alien	85
White other than Hispanic	46	White other than Hispanic	57	White other than Hispanic	69
Total applications	151	Total applications	177	Total applications	175
2008 admits		**2009 admits**		**2010 admits**	
African American	1	African American	0	African American	1
American/Alaska Native	1	American/Alaska Native	0	American/Alaska Native	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	6	Asian or Pacific Islander	4	Asian or Pacific Islander	4
Did not state/other	0	Did not state/other	0	Did not state/other	0
Hispanic, Latino, Puerto Rican, Mexican American	0	Hispanic, Latino, Puerto Rican, Mexican American	2	Hispanic, Latino, Puerto Rican, Mexican American	0
Non-resident alien	13	Non-resident alien	13	Non-resident alien	11
White other than Hispanic	21	White other than Hispanic	19	White other than Hispanic	23
Total admits	42	Total admits	38	Total admits	39
2008 accepts		**2009 accepts**		**2010 accepts**	
African American	1	African American	0	African American	1
American/Alaska Native	1	American/Alaska Native	0	American/Alaska Native	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	3	Asian or Pacific Islander	1	Asian or Pacific Islander	3
Did not state/other	0	Did not state/other	0	Did not state/other	0
Hispanic, Latino, Puerto Rican, Mexican American	0	Hispanic, Latino, Puerto Rican, Mexican American	0	Hispanic, Latino, Puerto Rican, Mexican American	0
Non-resident alien	9	Non-resident alien	6	Non-resident alien	5
White other than Hispanic	10	White other than Hispanic	15	White other than Hispanic	12
Total accepts	24	Total accepts	22	Total accepts	21

To achieve its vision of being the world's premier policy doctoral program, PRGS recognizes that it, like all other graduate programs in public policy, must include among its students and graduates a diverse representation of perspectives, backgrounds, nationalities, ethnicities, and race. The school has made great strides in the past ten years to broaden its outreach and attract a wider range of applicants; however, there is more work to be done if the next generation of leaders in the field of public policy research and analysis is to reflect the diversity we see in society today. Please see Appendix O for current student rosters.

From the beginning of her tenure, Dean Marquis has set the goal of increasing the diversity of PRGS's student body as one of her key objectives. Taking advantage of the relationship RAND has in the southeastern U.S., Dean Marquis and other members of the PRGS administration have begun recruiting more actively in that part of the country, with a focus on the region's prominent Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). But this alone seemed an inadequate response. In conversations with Deans at other public policy schools, Dean Marquis discovered that other programs also struggled with the same lack of minority representation. And in her conversations with faculty in the southeastern U.S. she discovered that they lacked a comprehensive understanding of the field of public policy and the value of academic training in this field. Out of these discoveries emerged an idea that has come to be known as the Next Generation Initiative (NGI).

The NGI's initial phases include outreach, a national conference, and a series of workshops for faculty from targeted institutions. Activities in all phases are linked not only by the theme of diversity in public policy, but also by the fact that the targeted institutions in these initial phases are largely in the Gulf States region, with some expansion to Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) in California and the southwest. The range of Gulf States colleges and universities targeted will enable the NGI to enhance the region's policy research and analysis capabilities through: direct training of faculty; collaborative research relationships between faculty and RAND researchers; providing undergraduate faculty with a source for authoritative research for use in coursework; and opening up faculty opportunities in the region to PRGS graduates.

There will be three phases to the NGI:

- Outreach to HBCUs, HSIs and regional colleges and universities with diverse student bodies
- The Next Generation of Policy Leaders National Conference to include faculty and administrators from the targeted institutions, major public policy graduate programs, and foundations with a commitment to improving diversity in higher education
- Faculty Summer Workshops for faculty from the targeted institutions emphasizing professional development in current analytic tools and methodologies, ongoing policy research, and relationship building between faculty and RAND researchers.

Improving Student Services

Until very recently, PRGS lacked a career services function entirely, relying instead on dissertation committee members and OJT mentors to provide their students with the appropriate guidance and advice. This gap in services was frequently noted in surveys of student satisfaction and was the subject of frequent formal and informal complaints from student groups including COCOM and the OJT Brokers.

In response to this, PRGS launched a new Office of Career Services in May 2009. This office is staffed by an experienced Career Counselor and is supported by the PRGS Director for Admissions and Academic Services and the Administrative Assistant. The goal of Career Services is to raise early awareness of the various career paths open to students and to provide guidance, support and assistance to students in both focusing their career planning and in obtaining jobs. Career Services exists to foster the "soft skills" not otherwise obtained through the academic program that are necessary to make our graduates successful in their careers.

The Office of Career Services is the focal point for student career planning and job searching within PRGS. Its mission is carried out through individual counseling of students from their first year in the program through graduation and successful completion of the job search; a number of activities designed to hone students' career-related skills and help them explore the variety of career trajectories open to them.

Additional resources through the Office of Career Services include:

A Career Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) has been formed by students to serve as a liaison between Career Services staff and the greater student body.

Web-based Resources- In 2010, the Office of Career Services launched two new websites to augment the other resources available to students in their job searches. First, an external-facing site was established as part of the main PRGS web page to market current job candidates and their skill sets to external audiences. Shortly thereafter, in conjunction with the RAND Library, an internal career services page was developed in order to provide additional resources to students at a variety of stages of their career searches, including Job Postings tailored to PRGS graduates, information from past Career Services events, and Quick Reference sheets on Interviewing, Resumes, etc.

Metrics- Perhaps two of the best metrics of the success of the Career Services office are the placements of recent graduates and the relationships being forged with organizations looking to hire individuals with the skill sets our graduates possess.

Relationship-building**:** The Office of Career Services actively works to build relationships with potential employers. Recently, a number of organizations in a variety of sectors have expressed an interest in hiring PRGS graduates on a continuing basis, including Harvard Center for Education Policy Research, Abt Associates, and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Employment Statistics: PRGS has achieved nearly 100% placement at graduation for those completing the program between 2008-2010. We are extremely proud of this statistic, especially given the current economic climate.

In sum, the launch of the Office of Career Services has proved to be an excellent investment in our program and we anticipate the addition of more services in the coming years, including services to alumni on at least a limited basis. For more detailed information on the Office of Career Services, refer to Appendix P.

Part II: How is this all evident in our three areas of self-study?

Theme 1: Learning Through On-the-Job-Training (OJT)

Purpose: PRGS has developed an explicit system that measures how and to what extent OJT learning objectives are being attained by all students

On-the-job-training (OJT) is a critical component of PRGS since the school's creation and is one of the characteristics that distinguish PRGS from other schools of public policy. By working on RAND research projects, students gain invaluable professional experience, apply research techniques learned in the classroom, and obtain in-depth substantive knowledge about their chosen policy field and fund their graduate studies. Given its significant role within the doctoral program, PRGS chose to evaluate the existing OJT model and develop a more formal system for tracking, understanding and improving OJT-related learning. The goals of our accountability system are to:

(a) make explicit the expectations and responsibilities for OJT learning;
(b) identify ways to measure and monitor each student's OJT experience;
(c) incorporate the monitoring process into ongoing student assessments and annual program assessments;
(d) establish mechanisms for motivating students, OJT project leaders and others to meet these expectations; and
(e) ensure that students, project leaders and others have the capacity to carry out their OJT responsibilities.

We believe this will improve the effectiveness of the OJT experience and enable us to more directly shape this unique learning environment that complements our academic framework.

The Re-accreditation Committee created a task force led by Gery Ryan, the Committee's faculty representative, and staffed by Sarah Outcault, one of the Committee's student representatives. Their task was to engage with students and faculty to create a new accountability system for OJT. Their work was divided into four broad areas each of which will be discussed below.

- Establishing learning standards;
- Establishing a mechanism to measure and monitor learning;

- Establishing mechanisms to provide feedback to and receive feedback from students; and
- Using the findings to strengthen the program.

Establishing learning standards

To measure how and to what extent OJT learning objectives are being attained by all students, we needed to clearly articulate the expectations of what students should learn during their OJT experiences. We saw this as a two-step process. First, we needed to identify a core set of methodological and professional skills that PRGS wants students to develop through their OJT. To ensure that we captured the full range of student learning that occurred during OJT, we planned to engage key stakeholders in an iterative elicitation and refinement process. Once we had established a core set of skills, the second step would be to decide how PRGS would prioritize and incentivize the acquisition of the different skills. For example: Should the program emphasize breadth or depth in the acquisition of these core skills? Which skills should students be required to demonstrate (if any) and which would be optional? What could the program do to encourage students to seek out opportunities to acquire core skills and what could the program do to encourage OJT supervisors to offer such skill-building opportunities?

Progress to date

Over a two-year period both faculty and students have been consulted through a variety of means to gather input on the list of core OJT learning standards. Semi-structured interviews with students and researchers who supervise OJT work yielded an initial list of 14 methodological and professional skills. This was then vetted by the Re-accreditation Committee. Next, the list was incorporated into an OJT self-assessment instrument (see below) and field tested by the student body. Student comments resulted in a revised list of 18 skills that was presented to and reviewed by the Faculty Committee on Curriculum and Appointments (FCCA), which accepted the new list. Table 1 presents the list by sub-category. The second annual OJT self-assessment was administered to students in October 2010 and further comments were gathered regarding the skills list. We will continue to collect user feedback and make improvements to the survey instrument to ensure that our learning standards are adequate and appropriate.

We also used the data from the initial OJT self-assessments to better understand the process by which students were acquiring the core list of skills. For instance, we observed that fellows tend to engage in a broad range of OJT projects in their first and second years and begin to narrow their substantive focus as they progress in the program. In many cases, this strategy may provide fellows with the opportunity to utilize a broad range of skills, the composition of which may change as they gain more experience. The data suggest that there were many opportunities to acquire some skills (e.g., literature reviews, quantitative data collection, management and analysis, writing and collaboration) and far fewer opportunities to acquire others (e.g., proposal writing, client relations, modeling/simulation). We also observed that there was considerable variation in the core skills that students reported learning. Some students reported having acquired a broad range of the skills, while others tended to specialize (often along qualitative and quantitative lines).

Next steps

To date, we have permitted fellows to manage their OJT portfolios themselves, making their own choices about the skills they wish to focus on developing through OJT, with the only requirements being that they complete at least 300 days of OJT and that at least 50 days be related to their declared Policy Area Specialization. PRGS has not imposed any requirements as to the skills fellows must develop, whether they be a particular minimum set of skills or a given balance across the skill areas.

We are currently in the process of determining whether such a requirement would be appropriate and if so, in what form. Establishing "norms" for the program could be in terms of expected skill exposure and/or attainment in any of the categories of OJT learning (i.e., skills in project initiation, activity & management and professional duties, as well as substantive topics). To determine whether such norms would contribute to our objective of improving student learning through OJT, we are engaging the faculty and the FCCA in discussions to determine which skill areas they think are most important.

When considering establishing specific OJT learning requirements, we need to be mindful of several things. Any requirements mandating a certain amount of breadth of learning across skills may come at the expense of depth of skill development. In addition, projects often hire students for skills they already possess, making it difficult to gain experience using nascent skills.

Once we articulate more specific OJT learning requirements, the program will need to follow a 2-step intervention process: (1) determine how best to increase student exposure to those skill-building opportunities; and (2) determine how to improve student learning once they are exposed. For example, if we wanted all students to acquire presentation and briefing skills, we would need to consider how we might encourage more OJT supervisors to involve students in this aspect of their project work. Likewise, if we were to adopt detailed requirements for skills acquisition through OJT, PRGS would need to be prepared to support fellows by providing opportunities to develop required skills if they are not forthcoming among OJT projects, perhaps by offering more workshops such as the SAS workshop currently offered each summer.

In addition to developing core professional and research skills, we also assume that OJT experiences will allow students to gain critical substantive knowledge in their fields of study. Relative to students' exposure to the range of skills involved in research projects, their exposure on substantive topics need not be quite as broad. However, developing some breadth while exploring across RAND's many research topics is one of the unique opportunities PRGS provides. The OJT study group's ability to track how students trade off substantive breadth and depth over the course of their time at PRGS will help us to understand the strategies students employ to prepare for their careers ahead. It may also help us to identify key substantive policy areas where PRGS may need to engage in fundraising in order to bolster work opportunities in one or more important policy areas.

Establishing a mechanism to measure and monitor learning

To support the standards of learning through OJT, we needed to develop a system through which we can measure how and what fellows are learning. Gathering this information enables us to both develop appropriate learning standards and monitor fulfillment of those standards, once adopted.

Progress to date

Until recently, the only mechanism for monitoring the student OJT experience was through the hours that students bill to each project. This tells us little about the quality of the experience from either the student's or supervisor's perspective. The lack of a more formal review process makes it difficult to: (a) track progress in learning over time – either at the individual or aggregate level; (b) make systematic comparisons across students and their cohorts; (c) assess to what degree students are fulfilling the expectations of their OJT supervisors and to what degree OJT supervisors are meeting the learning needs of the students; and (d) identify areas for quality improvement in the OJT experience.

As part of our self-study on OJT, we developed a system to explicitly measure and monitor OJT learning. Consultations with students and faculty resulted in a decision to launch a self-administered, web-based self-assessment tool with which PRGS students would report annually what and how much they learned on each of their OJT experiences.

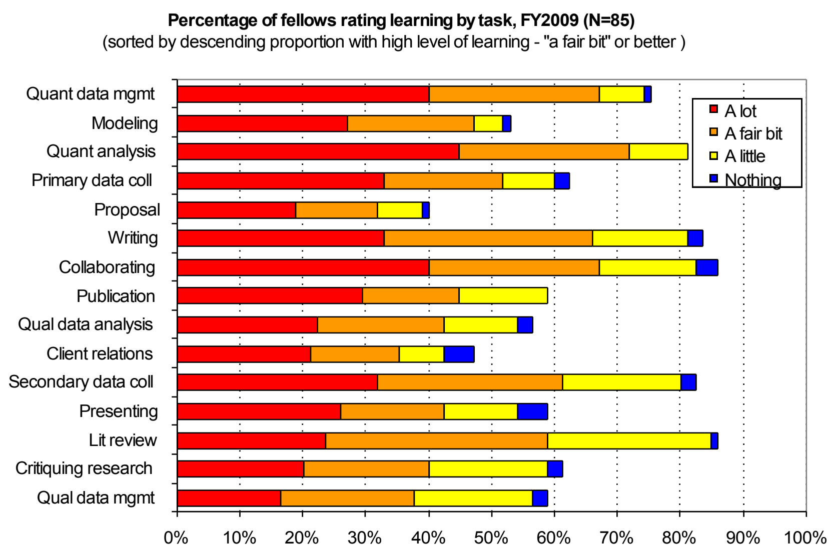
A preliminary version of the survey was developed and pilot tested on a select group of students in May 2009. The assessment tool was subsequently revised based on user feedback and administered to the entire student body in December 2009, with questions pertaining to OJT completed in FY2009. The second annual self-assessment was administered in October 2010, which gathered data on OJT completed in FY2010. This provides us with two years of comparable data. Because our first year fellows are asked to fill out a baseline survey asking them to rate their proficiency in these core skills, we believe we may be able to say something meaningful about the role that OJT plays in student acquisition of increased proficiency across the range of skills we are measuring.

The OJT study group analyzed the data at both the program and individual levels. At the program level, for example, we were able to address the following issues, as experienced by the students at this particular point in their PRGS career:

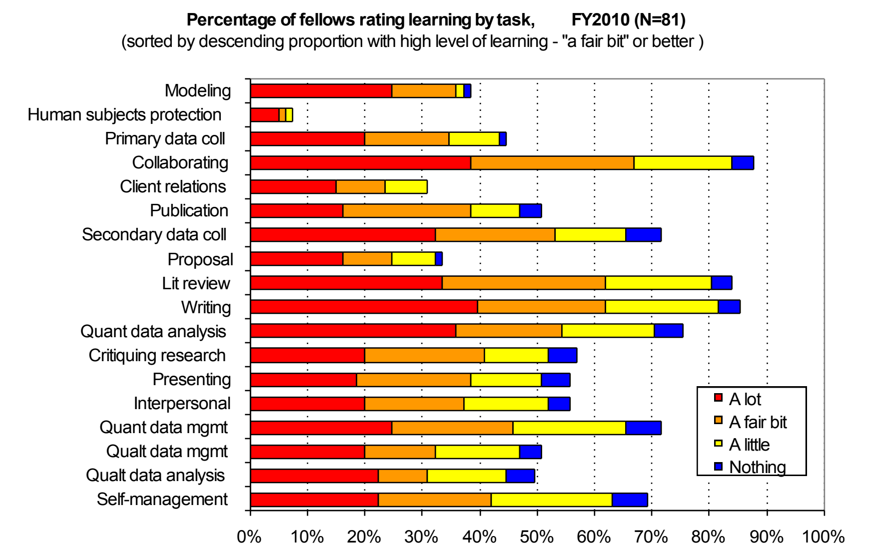
- What kinds of learning opportunities (in terms of core skills and substantive areas) do students report being exposed to during their OJT experiences?
- How much do students report having learned in each of the core skill sets and substantive areas?
- How are the kinds and amounts of learning opportunities distributed across OJT projects and across students? For instance, to what degree are high-learning projects concentrated among few students or a few projects or does everyone have at least a few very good learning opportunities?

In addition, collecting the data each year allows us to make comparisons from year to year. For instance, we are able to see whether the list of skills that students rate as "high learning" is consistent or not over time. Comparing FY2009 and FY2010 we see that some skills provided high quality learning experiences in both years, while others changed in rank. For example, of the top five high learning skills in FY2009, only two (i.e., modeling and primary data collection) ranked among the top five in FY2010, even after accounting for the addition of three new skills to the 2010 list. The three remaining skills in the FY2010 top five (excluding a newly added skill) fell in the middle of the pack in FY2009. In addition, overall, a greater proportion of high learning ratings were given in FY2009 compared to FY2010. At least 75% of exposed students learned a "fair bit" or "a lot" from 10 out of 15 skills in FY2009, while the same was true of only 6 out of 18 skills in FY2010.

2009

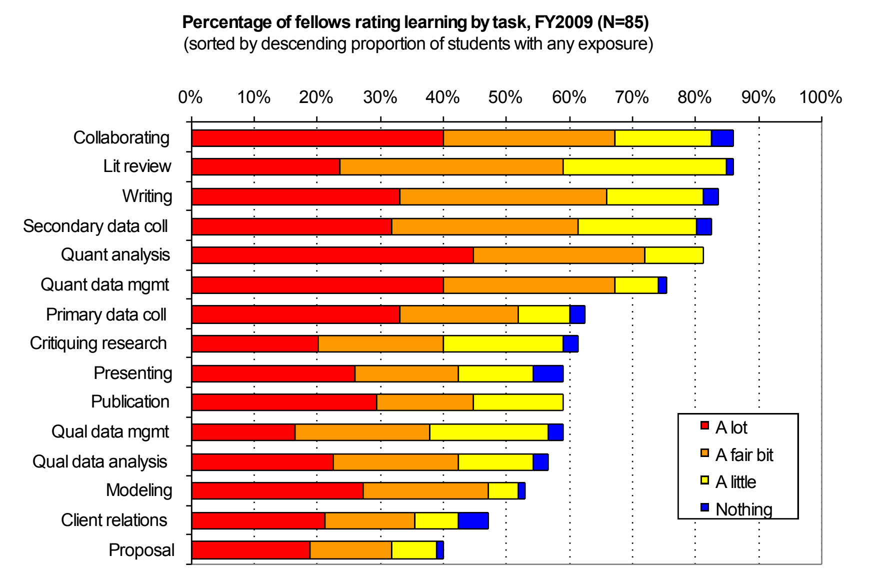


2010

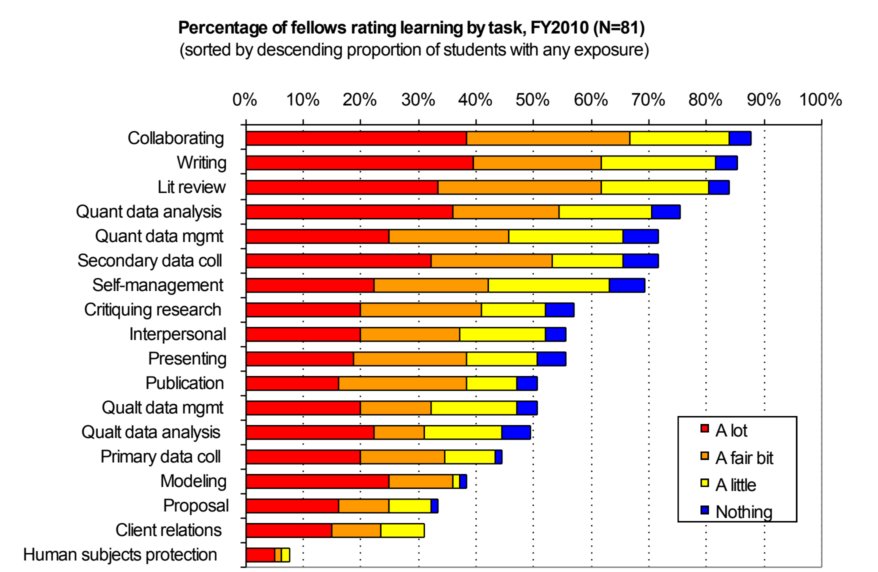


We can also use this data to track patterns in exposure to skills from year to year. The ranking of skills by proportion of students exposed was relatively stable from FY2009 to FY2010. All of the top five skills, by exposure, in FY2009 were among the top 6 in FY2010. With the exception of quantitative analysis, the five most common skills fellows are exposed to are not directly related to data or analysis. This suggests that while students develop skills to work with and analyze data in their coursework, this type of work is likely to comprise a smaller portion of their OJT work. Furthermore, among high exposure skills only collaborating with other researchers consistently ranked among the highest learning skills. It appears to be the case that some tasks (e.g., client relations, modeling/simulation) are less frequently assigned to PRGS students, but when done so, they prove to be valuable learning opportunities.

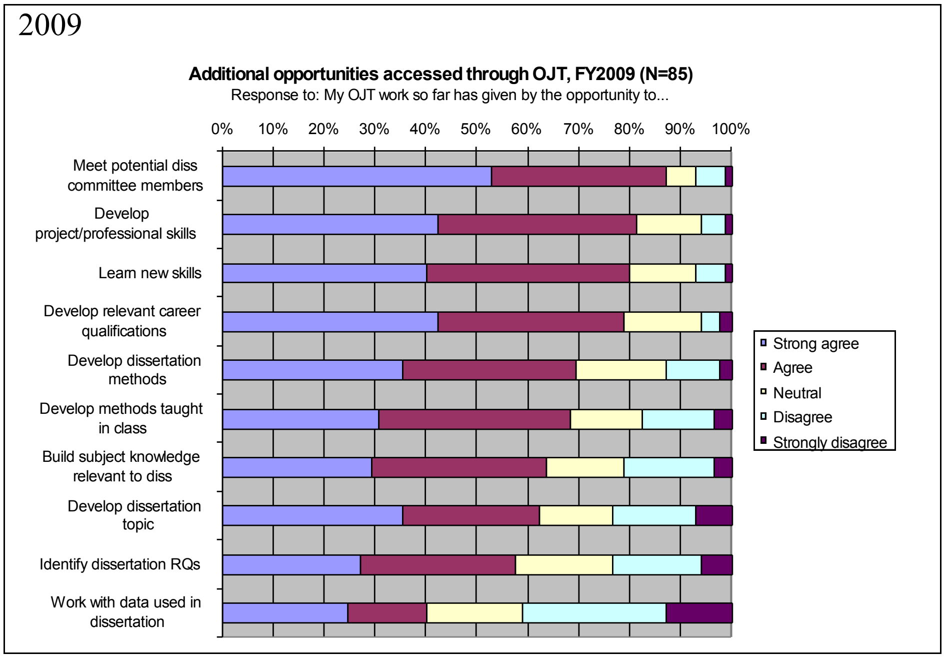
2009

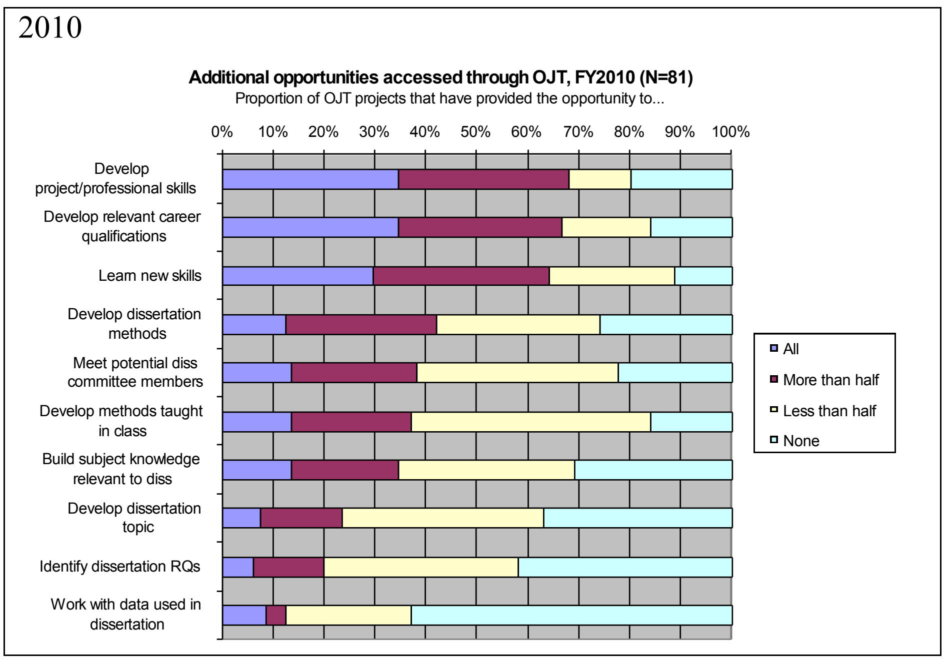


2010



OJT is an opportunity to learn about new datasets and analytic techniques not covered in the PRGS coursework and to meet and work with researchers in the broader RAND community. As a result, there are many additional benefits to OJT. In the survey we ask fellows about ten such opportunities. Among the top four such benefits in both FY2009 and FY2010 were developing project/professional skills, developing relevant career skills, and learning new skills.





Note: Some of the wording of this portion of the survey instrument was changed between FY2009 and FY2010. Direct comparisons should be made with caution.

At the individual level, we were able to address the following issues, as measured at this particular point in time in the student's PRGS career:

- What are each student's strengths and weaknesses in terms of their core learning skills (as described by their own reports of proficiency)?
- To what degree is the student making progress toward augmenting their skills sets (breadth)? Or are they building on their existing strengths (depth)?

- To what degree has a student's OJT experience allowed them to learn more about their area of policy specialization?

We can use the survey data to learn about the relationship between dissertation funding and OJT project work. For example, we found that in FY2010, on average, fellows with dissertation funding had fewer true OJT projects (i.e., not their dissertation) than do those without funding (.92 vs. 1.33). This suggests that to some extent dissertation funding serves as a replacement for relevant OJT work.

Work on OJT projects provides more than the opportunity to learn substantive issues related to one's dissertation. In the survey, many students report that OJT is valuable for meeting potential dissertation committee members and developing one's dissertation topic and methods.

Examples of lessons learned from the analysis of OJT survey data:

- The 2010 incoming first year class had a higher proportion of "high" and "medium" self-assessed proficiency ratings in the majority of skills than the previous incoming class.
- More than half of students worked on 4 or more projects in each of the two previous fiscal years.
- The list of skills that garner relatively more high learning ratings changed from year to year, i.e., there is not a fixed set of skills for which many high quality learning experiences are available.
- By contrast, the rank order of skills to which the most fellows had exposure was quite stable in 2009 and 2010.
- Each skill (with the exception of publishing) and substantive topic garnered interest among a greater proportion of first year fellows than those in their second years and beyond. This is consistent with the notion that fellows desire fairly broad training at the beginning of their tenure before going on to specialize in a somewhat narrower skill set and substantive area.
- In 2010, 25% of students had no OJT projects that related substantively to their dissertations, up from 18% in 2009.

Next steps

Going forward, we plan to administer the survey promptly after the close of each fiscal year (i.e., in October) so that students are encouraged to reflect on the previous year's experiences and establish goals for the coming year. We will continue to collect user feedback and make improvements to the survey instrument to facilitate our objectives of program improvement and ease of use. The long-term goal of this survey is to collect information from all students about the types, amount and quality of learning through OJT to augment the existing mechanisms in place for monitoring OJT at the individual and program level. Results of the survey will be used to provide feedback to individual students and will be briefed to OJT mentors and other faculty and to RAND management and the PRGS Board of Governors. These briefings will form the basis for discussions about how to improve the OJT learning experience.

<u>Establishing mechanisms to provide feedback to and receive feedback from students</u>

In consulting both faculty and fellows over the last three years, a clear message came through: we need to provide additional opportunities to facilitate communication between fellows and researchers regarding fellows' performance on OJT. While there was general support for gathering information about OJT learning, many felt that the value of the exercise could be enhanced if it provided a platform for discussion between researchers and the students they employ about the quality of the work being performed.

Progress to date

There are currently three main channels for feedback between students and researchers. In the first year review, each student is evaluated by an OJT supervisor (i.e., a researcher for whom s/he works). To date, this is the only formal mechanism for reviewing students' performance in OJT and it takes place early in students' tenure at PRGS. More informal channels exist, too. Students and researchers are encouraged to communicate openly about their expectations and experiences. Students often receive feedback on their performance from OJT supervisors, but this is at the discretion of the researcher and student. In many cases the only feedback received is through the amount of additional work assigned (or not). Finally, the OJT Brokerage, which is run by student representatives, is an important conduit between students and researchers. Brokers routinely meet with RAND researchers to learn about new opportunities for students and to check on existing arrangements. While a useful channel, this method of feedback is intended to address general issues, rather than individual ones. As such, it is less effective at facilitating communication between specific students and researchers. Thus it was determined that a new mechanism should be developed through which students could receive feedback from the researchers who employ them.

The OJT study group, in consultation with the broader Re-accreditation Committee has been working with OJT supervisors to develop this new feedback mechanism. The criteria on the evaluation will be comprised of the 18 core skills we identified previously for OJT learning. For each of the 18 skills, the evaluator will be asked, "*Did the fellow have the opportunity to participate in [this skill]?"* If so, then they are asked to rate the student on skill-specific criteria. For example, if the researcher reported having assigned the student a writing task, s/he will be asked to rate the student on two criteria: (1) Content of written material (e.g., accuracy, thoroughness, etc.), and (2) Presentation of written material (e.g., clarity, structure, etc.). Each rating scale uses a 5-point scale (i.e., Excellent, Very good, Good, Fair, Poor). A draft of the evaluation form has been circulated to a select group of OJT supervisors as well as to the OJT Brokers to gather their feedback. Further stakeholder consultation will take place in the coming months and the feedback of all will be considered to determine the content and structure of the final evaluation form. The draft evaluation form, including skill-specific scales is included as Appendix Q to this report.

We believe this two-step evaluation process serves multiple purposes. In addition to improving the feedback mechanisms between OJT supervisors and students, it also helps communicate to researchers the range of roles that students can play. Secondly, and perhaps even more importantly, we expect that asking researchers to evaluate students on each of the core OJT learning standards will reinforce that one of the key objectives of OJT is to provide students real-world learning opportunities.

Next steps

After incorporating stakeholder comments we will pilot test the draft evaluation form with 10 to 20 pairs of students and researchers. Participants in the pilot testing will be surveyed as to the relevance and appropriateness of scale items, ease of use, and clarity of language. After incorporating comments from selected faculty members, student representatives who serve as OJT Brokers, and faculty and students who participated in pilot testing, the skills evaluation form will be submitted to the FCCA for approval. Once the final format has been agreed upon, separate meetings will be held to present the new evaluation process and form to the entire faculty and student body. We plan to hold these meetings in beginning in January 2011.

Using the findings to strengthen the program

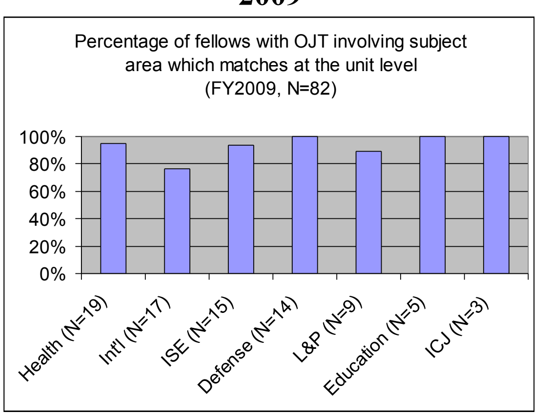
One of the main objectives is to use the various data collection mechanisms to make continuous improvements to our program.

Progress to date

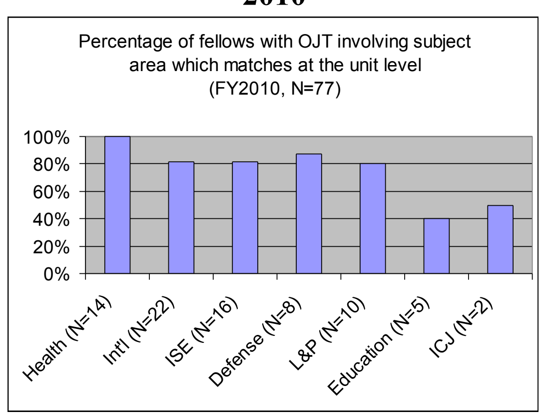
The first comparable data have just been generated and, as is evident from the discussion above, we are in the process of analyzing the data and discussing how best to use the findings. The following example is one area where we may use the data to improve our program.

In 2010, a smaller percentage of students had OJT that was relevant to their dissertation than was true in 2009. When repeating this analysis at the RAND unit level, it was apparent that the areas that had fewer OJT opportunities corresponded to those units where funding decreased between 2009 and 2010. Collecting this type of data enables us to see how trends in client funding affect fellows' dissertation opportunities. This analysis can help us to identify the areas most in need of additional dissertation support.

2009



2010



As illustrated, the system we have adopted to measure and monitor OJT learning will enable us to identify problems and develop strategies to address areas for improvement in the OJT program and beyond.

Theme 2: Classroom Instruction- Teaching Effectiveness

Purpose: ***PRGS has established standards and expectations with respect to classroom teaching and learning and is developing a process for providing more objective feedback to classroom instructors regarding the effectiveness of their instruction.***

PRGS selected classroom instruction and teaching effectiveness as one of our three areas of self-study in response to student feedback that this was an area where they saw need for improvement. In the CPR visit, the WASC evaluation team asked PRGS to expand the focus of the self-study to include a link between teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. PRGS has therefore made some adjustments to our self-study in response to this request.

The goal of this part of the self-study is to develop a more explicit and structured process for providing feedback to our teaching faculty on the effectiveness of their instruction, especially as it relates to student learning outcomes, and on ways to make improvements. With this goal in mind, the revised objectives of this self-study were to:

1) develop explicit teaching standards and expectations;
2) develop student learning outcomes for each course and for the core curriculum;
3) create mechanisms to measure student learning against those outcomes; and
4) study and improve the process of instructor review and feedback.

Developing Teaching Standards and Expectations

The Re-accreditation Committee established a task force to spearhead tasks related to a review of teaching effectiveness. The Teaching Effectiveness Study Group's first objective was to develop an explicit list of standards and expectations for effective teaching.

Through structured interactions with students and faculty, the Teaching Effectiveness Study group created an expectations matrix for effective teaching. This "Expectations Matrix" categorized PRGS classes as one of three types: (1) lecture, with a focus on methods (pertaining to most core courses and some electives); (2) lecture, with a focus on applying methods in context; and (3) seminar classes (focusing on topical issues rather than analytical methods). For each of the three types of classes the Study Group categorized the desired structures and behaviors for four components of the classroom experience: (1) student-student interaction; (2) student-teacher interaction; (3) classroom teaching expectations; and (4) class structure. This matrix was then presented to the

FCCA for their review. The modified matrix, which incorporates their comments, is included as Appendix R.

Subsequently, this matrix was used to create a simplified checklist for course vetting. Each element of the "Expectations Matrix" that related to teaching methods or course structure was translated into a one-sentence affirmative statement. Together these form the Checklist for FCCA Review of Proposed Courses [Appendix S] that is designed for the FCCA to use while vetting courses prior to their inclusion in the curriculum. Each statement such as "Professor describes what students should know or be able to do after taking the course" is intended to prompt the members of the FCCA to either look for an element on the course syllabus or to ask the professor proposing the course how s/he intends to address the expectations. The Checklist has been adopted by the FCCA and is now being used at two stages of the course development process. First, the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs sends it along with the syllabus template [Appendix T] to faculty members who are in the process of developing new courses. The checklist provides them with a clear indication of what information PRGS requires professors to include in their course syllabi as well as to give them an indication of the types of issues that the FCCA may question them about when their course is reviewed.

The FCCA employs the Checklist when they vet new or redesigned courses. While many of the elements, such as "Identifying a method for ensuring required readings are completed," have been part of the review and approval process for many years, other issues addressed by such statements as "Professor has considered a method for dealing with shirkers on group projects" have not been previously raised by the FCCA in a consistent manner. These newer additions have generated lively discussions about the most appropriate and effective methods to use in given circumstances. The FCCA does not require that a professor decide at the meeting which method they will be using to address these concerns, only that they show evidence that they have thought about the problem. How each professor chooses to deal with each possible situation is left up to the professor's discretion.

PRGS is developing multiple strategies for communicating these new standards and processes to the PRGS faculty. They have been briefed at the twice-yearly faculty luncheon and will be posted on the new web-based resource page being developed in partnership with the RAND library. PRGS is also working with the faculty and the FCCA to develop a process to allow for a periodic updating and amendment of the Checklist.

Develop Student Learning Outcomes for each course and for Qualifying Exams

As a result of feedback from the CPR visit, PRGS has asked all professors to include explicit Student Learning Outcomes on their course syllabi. We expect this process to be complete as of Winter Quarter 2011. Concurrently, we have begun the process of revising our course evaluation forms to include questions on whether or not students felt the professors were effective in teaching the stated material. The learning outcomes identified for the core courses will become the body of material students should expect to be tested on in the Qualifying Exams. Having them explicitly identified will also enable faculty, staff and students to better track strengths and weaknesses of individual students.

Create Mechanisms to Measure Student Learning against these desired Outcomes

As stated earlier, PRGS is in the process of introducing a new academic data management system which will enable us to more easily combine data on student learning outcomes and generate tracking reports. For now, although our data is limited, we have looked at data on the relationship between first-year grades and performance on the qualifying exams for classes starting in 2008 and 2009. This data showed that all of the students who did not pass the quantitative or economics exam received below-average grades in that area. This is a positive sign both that the qualifying exams are effectively testing students on course materials, and that we know who to target for additional academic support throughout the year in order to improve performance on qualifying exams.

Improving the Process for Instructor Review and Feedback

The fourth objective of the self-study on teaching effectiveness is to improve the process for assessing classroom instruction and providing feedback to professors.

PRGS currently measures teaching effectiveness and student learning though student grades, performance on the comprehensive exams at the end of the first year, combined with teaching evaluations. We recognize the need to augment these measures and to more consistently track and analyze the data we currently gather. Below we present some data that we currently gather along with our ideas for improving our current process of instructor review and feedback.

Average Course Ratings of Core Courses by Evaluation Area, Year, and Analytical Field

		Organization, Planning	Communication	Faculty/Student Interaction	Assignments, Grading	Course Outcomes	TA Sessions	Class Pace
Policy	2008	3.9	4.1	4.2	3.5	3.6	4.1	3.3
	2009	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.4	3.7	2.6
Quant	2008	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.4	3.6
	2009	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.0	3.6	3.9	3.3
Econ	2008	4.1	4.1	4.3	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.4
	2009	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.6	3.5	4.4	3.4

The first four categories, from organization and planning to assignments and grading, reflect sets of questions in which students evaluated the class or instructor on a scale from "very effective" (coded as 5 points) to "ineffective" (coded as 1 point). The Course Outcomes category asks students to compare this course with others in terms of how much they learned and how much their interest level in the material increased. The scale for this question went from "much more than most courses" to "much less than most courses." The TA Sessions category scoring response scale ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The Class Pace scale ranged from "very fast" to "very slow", with "just about right" at 3. Therefore, while the first four categories can be compared to each other, the others cannot. Policy classes include PSS I, Policy Analysis I, PSS II, PSS III, and Cost Benefit Analysis. Quantitative includes EA I, EA II, EA III, and Operations Research. Economics includes Microeconomics I, Microeconomics III, Microeconomics III, and Public Finance.

PRGS collects course evaluations from students at the conclusion of every class. The chart above summarizes core course evaluations for the cohorts of students who entered in 2008 and 2009, categorized by evaluation area, year, and analytical fields. The first six columns (evaluation areas) are on scales in which 5 is the best possible outcome and 1 is the worst; the Class Pace column is also out of 5, but with 3 corresponding to a class pace of "just about right." (See chart note for more detailed information.)

The Registrar and Assistant Dean review these data by class and discuss results with instructors in order to make improvements. This is done both when a class shows poor reviews in various categories, and when a class shows good reviews but has one or multiple areas which consistently receive poor ratings. We see from this chart that, on average, PRGS students rate core courses as "effective" (4 points). We also see that, on average, PRGS students see the pace of core courses as somewhere in between "just about right" and "slightly fast," which is where we want our courses to be.

Teaching Evaluations

PRGS has modified our existing student evaluations. The criteria now found on the course evaluation survey is meant to parallel the student learning outcomes communicated at the beginning of the course through the syllabus. We will begin to collect this data starting in winter quarter 2011.
Although teaching evaluations are administered so students can complete them online, the response rate is almost always less than 50%. Grades are sometimes withheld in an effort to get a better response, but this approach still does not achieve the 100% response rate we're seeking. Because evaluations are submitted anonymously, we're not able to withhold only the grades of those who haven't completed the evaluation. The evaluations that are received are shared with the instructor in hopes that the feedback will be helpful in improving the quality of the course and teaching skills. Evaluations are not shared with anyone else.

We believe the new database will allow us to improve student responsiveness and streamline the process of sharing the results with professors. Instructors should soon be able to review evaluations after grades have been completed, and students should be able to see their grades only after the evaluation is completed and submitted. PRGS staff will have online access to the evaluations as well.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observation is a widely practiced method of monitoring and evaluating instructional quality. Observation systems come in many flavors. Observers can come from inside or outside the system. In the case of PRGS, inside observers could include school administrators, other teaching faculty, members of the FCCA, or faculty who have received the PRGS Huddleson Teaching Award – an annual prize which is given alternate years to the best core instructor and the best elective instructor based on a vote of the student body. Videotaping is another method of observation and has the benefit of allowing instructors to critique themselves.

The FCCA has endorsed the idea of classroom observation to provide constructive feedback to PRGS instructors. They have recommended that instructors be offered the choice of personal observation and/or videotaping and that they be allowed a choice of the person who serves as an observer should they choose that option. The FCCA has also suggested that PRGS faculty be given the option of requesting that a particular lecture be taped or observed in order for the practice to be designed to provide the most constructive and useful feedback possible to each instructor.

Whatever methods we ultimately select, our intent is to use the observations as a constructive mechanism rather than a "report card"-type critique. While the act of observation may itself raise the quality of instruction in some courses, it is equally likely to create an environment in which pedagogical acumen becomes viewed as important to instructors as analytical skill. Mid-course observations would also allow professors to correct or improve teaching techniques sooner than if they were to rely on end-of-course student evaluations alone.

Theme 3: Monitoring and Measuring Dissertation Quality

Purpose: ***PRGS has refined and clarified dissertation requirements and quality standards for PRGS dissertations, a key indicator of student learning, and has designed a system to monitor and measure progress towards those objectives on an individual and programmatic level.***

Learning Objectives and the Dissertation

At PRGS we have identified five key educational objectives of our program. We expect all five of these objectives will be met and demonstrated, at least in part, by each student through research and writing of the dissertation. These key educational objectives are to:

1. Understand the purpose of policy analysis and its place within the political process;
2. Master the basic methodologies used in policy research: economic analysis, quantitative methods, and social and behavioral science methods;
3. Acquire an in-depth knowledge in one of these three methodological fields;
4. Obtain a deep understanding of a specialized substantive field of public policy; and
5. Develop project and professional skills relevant to the selected field of policy analysis.

This self-study is designed to ascertain to what extent students are demonstrating these objectives in their dissertations, refine and clarify dissertation requirements and quality standards, and to devise better procedures for tracking their achievement.

Changes to the PRGS Program and the Dissertation Process since 1997

PRGS last conducted a dissertation quality review in 1997. Since then, the program has undergone significant change, much of which was designed to bolster student learning and improve the quality of PRGS dissertations. Some of these changes have been in place for several years, while others have been implemented more recently.

In 2006 the core curriculum was reworked and consolidated into the first year. Previously, students took two years' worth of required coursework before sitting for comprehensive exams. In the new system, comprehensive exams are held after only one year's worth of required courses. The second year of coursework focuses on acquiring more in-depth knowledge in a methodological field and increasing issue area knowledge. The primary reason for this consolidation was to enable students to focus on their dissertations earlier in their PRGS career.

Likewise in 2006, PRGS developed formal analytic concentrations in three areas: economics, quantitative methods and social and behavioral science methods. Each student must declare an analytic concentration by November of their second year. The formation of these analytic areas had numerous effects. They helped PRGS to be more strategic in terms of the kinds of elective courses that the program offered. Moreover, by requiring students to declare a concentration early in their second year, students focus more quickly on the selection of their dissertation topics.

Beginning with the entering cohort of2006, students are now required to enroll in a non-credit dissertation workshop in their area of analytic concentration. (Previously, PRGS offered just one generic dissertation workshop.) During their second year in the program, students are expected to select one of three monthly dissertation workshops (economics, quantitative methods, or social and behavioral science methods) depending upon the primary methodology they plan to use in their dissertation. The workshops are designed to enable the student to:

- Develop a research topic and research questions;
- Understand the feasibility of their topic including data sources and funding potential; and
- Secure a committee or at least formulate a plan for identifying a committee chair and committee members.

Fellows are required to submit two items as a fulfillment of these requirements:

- A five-slide briefing articulating the policy issue, research questions, motivation, method and approach, feasibility and personalized work plan for their dissertation, and
- A two-to three-page paper covering the items on the slides in more detail. [See appendix U for template and examples]

We find that these two requirements help motivate students to start considering (and ultimately making) key decisions in regards to what questions their dissertation will address and how they will go about answering such questions.

The program has also introduced revised eligibility requirements for proposing a dissertation to ensure that each student is well-grounded in the tools of policy analysis and has a solid understanding of their chosen policy field. To schedule a proposal defense, students must show that they have:

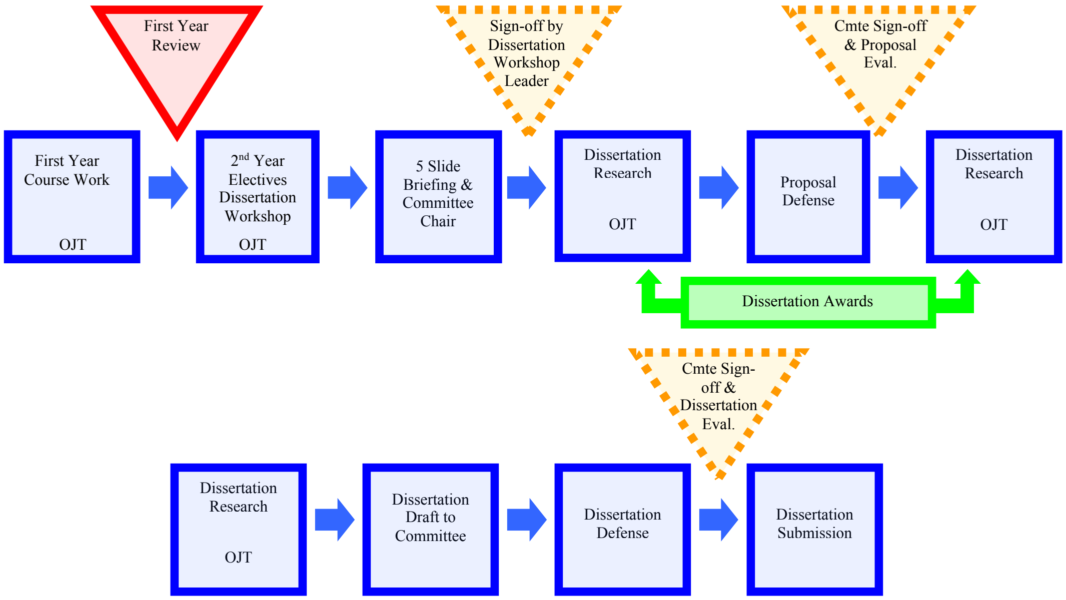
- Satisfactorily completed all core courses
- Satisfactorily completed first year review
- Declared, but not necessarily completed, an analytic concentration
- Completed a policy area specialization which consists of:
    - At least three substantive policy seminars
    - At least 50 days of OJT in their chosen policy area
    - At least one independent study in their policy area
- Successfully completed the dissertation workshop

As stated earlier in this document, since 1997, PRGS has made great strides in securing funds to support students' work on dissertations. While most PRGS dissertations continue to be funded by and closely linked to RAND project work, beginning in 2002 with a multi-year $350,000 pledge from a member of the PRGS Board of Governors, PRGS began to provide dissertation awards on a competitive basis with the goal of catalyzing superb policy research on some of the most intractable problems facing the world. In 2004, PRGS awarded three dissertation fellowships of $42,500 each, for a total of $127,500. Six years later in 2010, PRGS awarded just over $350,000. Twenty-three fellows received grants ranging from $2,375-$47,500 to support their dissertation research. These grants were made possible by annual gifts and contributions to the PRGS Endowment by nine different individuals. (See Appendix V for list of 2008, 2009, 2010 Awards)

Dissertation Quality Assessment
We believe that the dissertation and the process by which students produce it are critical components of PRGS's learning objectives. We chose to focus our assessment of dissertation quality on the explicit milestones directly connected to the dissertation process including dissertation workshops, mentoring, and clearer communication of standards. To conduct this self-study, the Re-accreditation Committee worked directly with faculty and students. Our initial efforts were relatively simple and straightforward changes to existing processes and involved establishing multiple means of communicating information about these processes to students, faculty and other stakeholders. This included establishing more explicit objectives and requirements for the dissertation workshops and clarifying the dissertation requirements for all cohorts of students as described above. The final and largest task for this study group was to establish explicit dissertation standards for both the process of completing the dissertation and the final product.

A flow chart which lays out the major milestones in the revised dissertation process along with points where interventions will take place is shown below.

Figure 1. Dissertation Process



Creation of Explicit PRGS Quality Standards

The final, and most complex, task the Study Group addressed is defining more explicit PRGS quality standards for dissertations. For the last decade, PRGS has used as its model the standards developed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which reflect a broad consensus in the academic community as to what constitutes quality in scholarly work.

However, the Dissertation Quality Study Group recognized that these standards were not designed with either dissertations or the PRGS program in mind. In addition, they did not provide a tool for PRGS or dissertation committee members to assess to what degree students were attaining these standards. Therefore, the Study Group worked with PRGS faculty and students to refine our existing standards and to create two new and related tools for the Dissertation Committees to use to assess dissertation quality. To create the Dissertation Proposal Quality Assessment Tool, the Study Group took the existing Carnegie Foundation standards for scholarly work found in the PRGS Policy and Procedures Manual and, using the categories that applied to the early stages of the dissertation process, turned the questions in those categories into affirmative statements. These questions were then compared to RAND's own quality standards and adjusted to be consistent with this standard of excellence. This was done for seven standards across three categories: goals, background and preparation, and methods. The resulting draft Proposal Quality Assessment Tool was sent to all faculty for comment and revised based upon their input. [See Appendix W]

As of December 2010, the new tool is being used. Dissertation committee members are asked to fill out a one-page evaluation sheet at the time of the proposal defense indicating whether the student passed, passed with conditions, or failed the defense. They are also asked to use this new tool to provide the committee's evaluation of the student's progress on each included standard.

The Study Group used a similar process to create standards against which to evaluate students' achievement as they near completion of their dissertations. In the case of the final product, the Study Group decided that it was appropriate to assess both how successful the student was in meeting the standards which relate to process--such as choosing the appropriate method and adapting methods to changing circumstance--as well as how well they did at meeting the standards which relate to the final product—such as the significance of the results. The resulting Dissertation Quality Assessment Tool [see Appendix X] is more comprehensive than the Proposal Quality Assessment Tool, consisting of twenty-two questions relating to eighteen standards. Again, however, PRGS will ask members of the dissertation committee to arrive at a consensus assessment at the time the student offers his or her dissertation defense.

As of December 2010, this tool is under review by the PRGS faculty. It will be amended and then deployed on a trial basis beginning in January 2011.The results will be used by PRGS to assess any weaknesses in the program and by dissertation committees as they provide guidance to the students entering and in the midst of the dissertation process. One way in which the information may be useful is as an indicator of how well the core curriculum is preparing students prior to their dissertation research. If students are consistently falling below expectations in terms of choosing an appropriate methodology, this will provide a signal to PRGS that enhancements are needed in the core curriculum to acquaint students with how to choose methodologies appropriate to the policy question they are addressing. Dissertation workshop faculty will also find the collected information of value as they refine the content and approach of the workshops.

The results of these Quality Assessments will also be used by faculty and staff to assist students in identifying their individual strengths and weaknesses. These two assessment tools can create a constructive dialogue between the student and his or her committee. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, these assessments can be used to inform students and faculty of what PRGS desires all students to accomplish through the dissertation process.

Outside Review of Dissertations

In sum, our aim in creating these dissertation quality rubrics against which students and faculty can measure their efforts is to create an opportunity for constructive dialogue between the student and his or her committee and that this dialogue will result in better dissertations overall. What we have discussed above are, in essence, all formative measures of dissertation quality—measures which by design are geared to assist both students and faculty in understanding the qualities we expect them to demonstrate in their dissertations.

However, we recognize that at a programmatic level it is important for us to also have a summative view of our dissertation quality as this is the best gauge of student learning in our program and in all Ph.D. programs. Through the dissertation we should be able to assess whether each student and our graduates as a whole have developed proficiency across the two dimensions we have identified as important: the ability to use policy-relevant knowledge and the ability to generate policy-relevant knowledge and insight.

The CPR visit team recommended that PRGS commission an external review and benchmarking on dissertation quality. We agree this would be useful and worthwhile. Therefore, working with the Office of Research Quality Assurance at RAND, PRGS has decided to commission such a study. We will be following the processes and procedures established by RAND for its periodic reviews of the quality of RAND's publications amending the process as necessary to account for the different expectation for PRGS dissertations. The basic approach for the review is as follows:

- Set out the expectations of the review
- Identify the pool of outside experts from which the reviewers will be selected including professors in other policy Ph.D. programs as well as at least one representative from an organization that hires our graduates
- Identify a set of dissertations representing the scope of subjects from which the reviewers may select
- Set a date

The process will be run by Dr. Lynn Karoly, Director of the Office of Research Quality Assurance at RAND in conjunction with Michael Rich, Executive Vice President of RAND. We will be working with PRGS faculty and staff in January to set out the objectives of the review with the goal of conducting the review in June or July 2011.

Final Thoughts

As is evident from the discussions above, our self-studies are far from completed. In fact, we view them as a vital first step in designing on-going processes that will enable us to collect better and more complete data on student learning outcomes in the three areas of our program: classroom learning, OJT and the dissertation. As we gather this data, we will be in constant dialogue with the faculty to make sure that the data we are gathering are useful and relevant for them as well as the PRGS administration.