

**THE COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS**

**PH.D. COMPLETION PROJECT**

**TECHNICAL WORKSHOP**

**SPEAKERS:**

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DANIEL DENECKE: Okay, we're going to get started.

Much of this project is about commitment; commitment from institutions and commitment from institutional leaders like you: graduate deans and associate deans, and other campus decision makers. Obviously, with such a tight space and with no place to put your arms or elbows in a fairly warm room (although we're working on that right now), we're already testing your commitment right here. (laughter) As Debra mentioned, Heidi Miller is our meetings director who often works miracles, but the one miracle she's not been able to work was to obtain for us a more comfortable room at the end of a very long meeting on a day in which many of you have flights to catch. So I appreciate this first sign for the newcomers to the project of your institutional commitment.

In the Request for Proposals (<http://www.phdcompletion.org/news/RFP-PhDCompletionProjectPhaseII.pdf>), you'll see that we have a variety of ways by which CGS would like to encourage you to express your institution's commitment to issues of Ph.D. completion and attrition, if you intend to submit a proposal.

I should mention early on that while many of us have PowerPoint presentations, we will also be talking through everything that is on the slides. One of the reasons for doing this is that we're providing a transcript of this session for those who could not be here, who were either waitlisted or were unable to attend the meeting.

What we want to achieve in this workshop is to provide an overview of the project and really provide all of you, who may not currently be participating in the project, with tools that you can go back and use at your institutions, whether or not you submit proposals for Phase II of the project. We're going to hear from some research partners in Phase I of the Ph.D. Completion Project. Linda Dykstra from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Maureen Grasso from the University of Georgia, who is leading a consortia project at three universities. They are both going to describe some of their motivations for participating in this project in this first place and the benefits that they have experienced through participation.

We're going to take a coffee break at around 3:20 or so, and then when we come back we realize that some of you have flights to catch and you may need to leave early. I'm going to give a very formal presentation on the requirements stated in the request for proposals and try to be very clear about each of those requirements and minimum commitments. Then we will have time for questions and answers.

For those who have the transcripts but were unable to be here to participate in the question and answer session, CGS will be happy to answer your questions about the

proposal submission process by email or by telephone up until the date (March 16) that proposals are due. (Daniel Denecke, [ddenecke@cgs.nche.edu](mailto:ddenecke@cgs.nche.edu) or Helen Frasier, [hfrasier@cgs.nche.edu](mailto:hfrasier@cgs.nche.edu); [202] 223-3791).

The Ph.D. Completion Project, as most of you know, is supported by both Pfizer, the pharmaceutical company, and the Ford Foundation. There are 45 universities that submitted their proposals to the project, and we said in the initial RFP that we would give 15 awards. We had an external advisory committee review the proposals, and they advised that there were so many strong proposals in the project, and 2 of them, as I mentioned, are consortia proposals, that we really needed to find a way to fund 21 universities as what we called “Research Partners.” These were the funded participants in the project.

Those 21 universities received award amounts of up to \$100,000. Notably, even universities that received significantly smaller award amounts participated extensively in the research, data collection, data submission, and all of the activities and commitments. Also notably, of the 24 what we call Project Partners – (that is, those institutions that are voluntarily participating in some aspect of the project) – a third of those project partners are submitting quantitative data to the project, which we think is a sign of the perceived value and importance of the project.

What we’re asking institutions to do – and we’ll be covering this ground again and again in different ways throughout this workshop – is a kind of comprehensive overlay of data collection activities, policy and practice innovation, policy assessment, and, ultimately, evaluation of the enhancements that the proposed interventions have had on completion rates and attrition patterns overall and on attrition patterns and completion rates for underrepresented minorities and women in particular.

Finally, one of the things that this project is really trying to achieve, something that this project has in common with all of our best practice projects, is to create a cadre of leaders in the graduate community among graduate deans, a group of people who are public representatives and champions of the importance of 1) ensuring that more of our domestic students generally, but also more of our underrepresented minorities and women specifically are completing their degrees, and 2) understanding reasons why students from underrepresented groups have been completing at lower rates than majority students.

Here is what we call the “Ph.D. completion kaleidoscope.” The idea behind the kaleidoscope is that you can spin the parts of the kaleidoscope (institutional factors; and demographic characteristics) in different directions and will be able to envision some specific but commonly-experienced issues that are facing students and different possible approaches to addressing those issues. At the center of the circle, there are student qualities. Obviously, some of these are untouchable from the perspective of policies and programmatic intervention. There are some student qualities, however, that we’re trying to uncover in the areas of selection and admissions: things like persistence, endurance, teamwork, the ability to handle criticism – and researchers are actually trying to name

these and codify these so-called “non-cognitive” indicators of a student’s potential for success in doctoral study.

But in the circle just beyond that, what we’re really looking at as part of the Ph.D. Completion Project is how institutions, university-wide, and also how programs and departments can make changes in these areas of institutional factors: areas of selection and admissions processes, enhancements in mentoring and advising and in the area of financial support (and here, not just the amount of financial support, but the way financial support is structured so that it’s supportive of a student’s progress throughout a Ph.D. program). Also areas such as program environment, the research experience, the research mode of field, whether the student that actually comes into a doctoral program already has research experience suggesting success in a doctoral program, for example, or whether they may experience two or even three years of course work before they even fully realize what it means to be a researcher in the discipline at the doctoral level.

And then there are things like processes and procedures, both in terms of curriculum, but also in terms of the processes and procedures by which the university collects and uses these data in the assessment and review of their doctoral programs. Finally, as mentioned, all of these factors intersect with demographic characteristics of the students and the institution’s student populations. So one of the things that we hope to achieve as a result of this project is to give each of the participants in the graduate community a set of data that will be very helpful in determining what the patterns are by discipline, by field and also by program, and an enhanced ability to use those data as tools for benchmarking, ultimately, and as tools with which to initiate dialogues with department faculty to identify the techniques and the strategies by which mutually agreed upon goals can be attained.

There are a number of resources in the graduate community on the topic of enrollment management, which focuses on the front end of the process. Enrollment management asks questions about how to work with the numbers coming in so as to maximize institutional resources and support and quality of graduate programs. But one of the principles behind the completion project is addressing very similar issues from the tail end of the process. Completion management acknowledges that the number, diversity, and quality of students who graduate from doctoral degree programs has just as much impact on institutional resources and stewardship for those resources and for the quality of the program as the number, diversity, and quality of students coming in.

Universities are managing Ph.D. completion and attrition by collecting the data, sharing those data in real sit-down, face-to-face conversations with faculty members in the departments, faculty who have immediate responsibility for the quality and for the “output,” quote, unquote, of their programs, and thus for defining appropriate solutions to the problems that their department may have. In order to really understand the causes of doctoral attrition, you have to be in close dialogue with faculty: in some cases, faculty may have insights into the problems students face, in others, faculty perceptions may be part of the problem, and in others, there may be external conditions – such as employment opportunities – impacting completion rates. For a long time, the job market

in computer science was luring away students with en route master's degrees. There's an argument to be made that in a hot market where the students can go out and make a ton of bucks, maybe that's good attrition, or at least it's the kind of attrition that can't necessarily be solved with program-level interventions. But there are other fields— or other programs – in which early attrition is happening, not for those kinds of reasons but because of weaknesses in the admissions and/or orientation processes where students are simply not adequately informed about or prepared for the what is really expected of them over the long haul in the program.

And so, engaging faculty in this dialogue about what is good, what is bad, and what is avoidable and what is unavoidable attrition is one of the things that has emerged from this project.

The other reason why the graduate dean is such an important steward of completion is that the he or she is often in a position--certainly to monitor change over time but also--to reward improvement and monitor backsliding in departments that may have had positive completion-rate patterns or attrition patterns in the past but, when you're actually looking at activity over the last several years, there may be problem points that would not be addressed in a timely way unless somebody is monitoring the data and perhaps bringing faculty from these programs together in dialogue with faculty from other programs that may have conquered similar problems.

You all probably know that there are a variety of external reasons that leaders in graduate education have been thinking more and more about degree completion. One of these reasons came to light the other day when an article appeared in the higher education press critical of Margaret Spellings for basically using exaggerated rhetoric about the unavailability of information needed to make informed decisions about where to go to college. The article gave voice to some of her critics who made the case that much of the information she cited as lacking--things like expected time to degree and the financial burden of an undergraduate degree--was not only available, but available on the Department of Education's own website. (Laughter.)

Now, there's a different argument to be made that not every student thinks first off, "I should dig around in the Department of Education's statistical database before I make my college selection," and perhaps more should be done to make this information not just available but accessible. The article solicited nearly 40 responses from people whose comments appeared on the website, but none of these responses made the important point that each of Margaret Spellings' criticisms could be levied persuasively against graduate education. That is to say, when we're talking about things about degree completion and time to degree, we have very, very little information comparable across institutions to share with prospective students. And there is an argument to be made that graduate students have just as much a "right to know" as undergraduates who benefit from the "Students' Right to Know" (which federally mandates that universities receiving Title IV funding make these kinds of information available to prospective undergraduates). And yet there are only a handful of institutions that make these data available to prospective graduate students, who may spend 7 years or more pursuing their

degrees. What's more, we have no national databases at this time that could really handle these data— even if we *could* collect them in ways that ensured their comparability. Not to mention the frequently expressed concerns and resistance to disseminating this information to the public, if we did have it.

The rhetoric behind Secretary Spellings' push for greater accountability in higher education could hardly be said to be exaggerated if we were talking about graduate education. And there are good reasons to think that the wave of accountability that's now washing over undergraduate programs may be washing over graduate programs soon.

One of these is that the NRC doctoral assessment will now collect completion rate data. This means every research doctoral program represented in the project will have their completion rate data included in the assessment's representation of the quality of the program.

Some have said, "Well, why would an institution want to get involved in the Ph.D. Completion Project at this point, now that we're all going to be doing this through the NRC anyway?" One of the advantages is that participation in the Ph.D. Completion Project is that you will have a context for interpreting the meaning of the NRC data by collecting and analyzing multiple layers of data and information to assess ongoing activities.

In addition to the completion data required of the NRC, universities participating in the Ph.D. Completion Project are submitting a layer of information about attrition patterns and about the types of attrition. If you simply have completion rate data, you've got numbers, but you don't really know what those numbers mean. You simply cannot subtract the completers and the continuing students from those who enrolled, for example, and think that you have an understanding of attrition. You have to know how much is mastering out, how much is stop out, how much is transfer, and how many students there are the progress and whereabouts of whom you really do not know. These attrition data provide another crucial layer of information. But, more importantly, universities are also adding a layer of activity; that is, they are using these data to assess the impact of what they're doing.

Obviously, there are also other external reasons for focusing on completion right now that have to do with national needs for high-end domestic talent and, institutionally, that have to do with using your completion rate track record as a way to maximize financial resources and institutionally differentiate yourself from competitors in an competitive market where universities are increasingly recruiting from a national domestic pool, especially of students from underrepresented groups.

I should say that in this technical workshop we're going to be very technical, but we're not going to be presenting data. We've presented data in every CGS summer workshop and annual meeting since universities have submitted data to the project, and during special workshops and events for the project and at other conferences hosted by various national agencies. But in this workshop we're really going to focus on the

technical aspects of collecting the data and the requirements for Phase II. But I do want to first mention briefly some of the overall lessons that we have learned from the Ph.D. Completion Project thus far.

The first lesson from the project is that one of the most powerful interventions that has already taken place as a result, is that institutions now know their data. Some of the institutions participating have had fantastic data collection efforts for many years, and they are in the project really to use those data to examine the impact of what they have done over the years. But most of the institutions that have participated in the project have been nowhere near ready to report and contextualize these data for prospective students or for the press, or to have serious conversations with faculty members in their departments about what the data might reflect. And so simply knowing the data and providing feedback about those data to departments has been probably the single most powerful intervention thus far.

One of the other lessons that we have learned and have tried to incorporate into an admittedly long list of commitments and requirements has to do with faculty awareness and involvement in the project. We have replaced maybe two requirements, and the two that we have added have to do with faculty engagement. There has been a somewhat uneven level of faculty awareness and involvement in the project across all the institutions. One requirement therefore is that faculty letters of endorsement – a letter of endorsement not just from a faculty member but a faculty member in a leadership and stewardship position in the department such as a DGS or chair, – from each program must accompany the proposals. The other requirement is to ask graduate deans and each of those faculty members at least once a year to come together over their data and over their strategic interventions to really have a serious conversation about what is happening and what needs to happen. This is already being done at most of the participating projects, but it is essential and therefore we want to ensure that it is occurring everywhere.

And the last lesson I'll mention here is that the way in which you carve the data, analyze and present them, may result in different and sometimes even mutually contradictory policy implications. For example, nationally, we have long said that Ph.D. completion rates probably hover around 50%. As a result of the Ph.D. Completion Project, we now think that they're probably around 57%, or maybe even higher. This is a historical rate that we are able to report from our baseline data. And so the completion rates of students who are moving through today's programs may be even higher still, as a result of all the activity that graduate deans have been engaged in through internally or CGS-sponsored activities and through the kinds of activities that Maresi Nerad, who is here, has been fostering through her research as well as with through the Responsive Ph.D., the Woodrow Wilson initiative, the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate, et cetera.

There has been a lot of attention on enhancing and reforming doctoral education, and it's likely that we can see some of those enhancements reflected in improved completion rates. But while citing the national Ph.D. completion rate might be good for policy discussion with a legislator who is interested in the pipeline of national domestic talent, it

is one thing to say (in our opinion, rightly) that it is a problem that we're not completing about 40% of our Ph.D. candidates, and we particularly need to focus on domestic doctoral production, since domestic students are completing at even lower rates. It may also be important in this context to point out that underrepresented minorities are completing at lower rates than majority students in all fields and women at lower rates than men in science. But a different kind of argument takes place when you start looking at field patterns and which demographic groups are struggling in which broad fields – in STEM fields, in the social science and in the humanities. And another kind of conversation takes place when you look at program or discipline patterns and which groups are having the most trouble in which disciplines and who are the right people to involve in addressing those struggles and those patterns. One of the cautions here is that just how we parse these data may influence the kinds of policies that emerge in response, and so we have to be careful and be sensitive to the contextualization of the data that we present.

Now my colleague, Helen Frasier, who is working on pretty much every front in the Ph.D. Completion Project, including the quantitative analysis, along with a very strong team at CGS, will present on the data tools that we are using to collect data in the project.

HELEN FRASIER: Okay, I'm going to try to walk through these as clearly as possible, but as quickly as possible so that we can get to the heart of what you're all here for today, and that's hearing about the RFP and what's happening at two of our current research partner institutions.

There are five templates that universities are using in the Ph.D. Completion Project: one to collect completion data, one for attrition data, one for aggregated demographic data by broad field, factor assessment templates – both institutional level and for each of the programs that would be participating from your institution – and exit survey templates. We have a standard exit survey that collects a student-level administered exit survey for both completers and (wherever possible) non-completers to collect information in each of the areas of intervention, and I'll go through this a little bit more in detail in a few minutes. And then a short form of that exit survey. The difference between the standard and the short form is that the shorter version is the explicit questions we really wanted to have answered. So if you are concerned about survey length and survey fatigue for your students, you would have the option to still administer an exit survey developed for the context of the project that would get at their questions that we felt were the most critical to have included in our dataset. We certainly encourage you to use the standard survey, but that shorter version is there should you feel you need it. And then there are online versions of both of those available. We also have an aggregate demographic template to collect completion data at the institutional level by nine different categories of student demographics.

This is just a screenshot for you of the completion project website. It is [www.phdcompletion.org](http://www.phdcompletion.org). All of the tools and templates that I'm going to talk about today are available in the "tools and templates" section of the website, you can see off to the right. Here is a screenshot of that there – also available in an Excel version or a PDF

version. For those of you who are considering submitting proposals, you will want to download the Excel versions of the templates from this website because that's the mechanism through which we want you to submit your data as part of your proposal to the project.

There are a couple of things about each of the templates that are important to highlight. On the completion template, there are a couple of data definitions by cohort and then on the back of your RFP is an example of the completion template. So you can look at that, the attrition template and the factor assessments. You have those handy today.

By cohort, we mean students entering a doctoral program during a given academic year. We've listed cohorts for 1992-93 through 2005-06. So that is that entering group of students according to this definition in that year.

By candidacy – this is our default definition for the project – we mean the successful completion of coursework and qualifying examinations. Since that is not necessarily the definition of candidacy that all of your programs or institutions are using, you will see on the completion template there are four alternative definitions: successful completion of preliminary exams and/or defense of the dissertation prospectus; award of the Master's degree signifying admission to candidacy; candidacy is not defined or granted by the institution; and other. If you are using an "other" definition, we have asked you to specify what that is just so that when we're doing data comparisons and analysis down the line, we can use comparable datasets and not be comparing apples and oranges.

There are also some specific data questions on the completion template that are important to benchmarking and data compatibility in the project. Does your doctoral program require a Master's degree prior to admission? Does your program have a continuous enrollment policy? Since some programs have this at the individual program level and some are doing this at the institution level, we have asked you to specify on the template for each program not just one question overriding the entire institution. If so, we also want to know when that policy is effective for all students or just those admitted to candidacy. So these are on the data template and an important piece of that.

We also want to know, does your program or institution distinguish between those seeking a Master's and those seeking a Ph.D.? Some of the institutions participating have a general enrollment policy: you are admitted to department of blank as a graduate student, and we want to make sure that we know, is that a distinction of just admission to the department or are you admitted as a Master's or a doctoral student specifically?

This is just a version of the new template. One of the things that some of you may notice who have participated in the first round of the project, we have separated out off to the side, to the right-hand side of template, the data verification columns, just so that it's not confused with anything that we're actually using in the analysis of data in the context of the project.

This is a little bit bigger version of that. The data verification columns, there are four different areas where we want to be able to give this to you as a tool to help check what you are submitting. The first is looking to assess whether or not the number of students admitted to candidacy is less than or equal to the size of your entering cohort. You don't want to be saying that you have 30 students admitted to candidacy when only ten were admitted to the program. Likewise, that the number of degrees awarded and continuing students after candidacy is less than or equal to those admitted to candidacy.

For the attrition checks, these are simply indicators for you to ease your work when you are filling out the attrition template, looking at the number of students who you would have to account for, those who have not graduated – and since we do not have continuing students in years less than ten on the completion template, there's not a way for you to indicate for a cohort, let's say, that has only had seven years. There are so many students that have completed in the first seven years, but then there are some who are expectedly continuing. So this is a way for you to account for those students purely for your own purposes.

When we're looking at the attrition template – and again you have a copy of this in your handout – during years one through four we have used three different definitions of what type of withdrawal a student might have engaged in – well, what type of withdrawal a student has done, looking at students who withdrew without a Master's degree during the first four years of enrollment; students who withdrew with a Master's degree but without candidacy – whatever your institution's specify definition of candidacy is – and then looking at those students who withdrew with a Master's with candidacy. So these are the definitions. They are also provided on the template itself so that you have that.

In each of the first four years, if you look on this side from transfer out down, those categories are also present – looking at students who transferred, stopped out, received the Ph.D., are continuing, or the information about the student is unknown. From your five through ten, we have lumped the three categories of withdrawal used during the first four years into simply withdrawal, partially because the student's degree objective, if they were seeking only a Master's degree, it is more likely that they will have completed that and left by the time they reach the five-year mark. Once they reach the five-year mark, we're not as worried about whether or not the student is a Master's objective or doctoral objective. It's fairly certain in most circles that that person is a Ph.D. student.

We've also collected our data for a ten-year period. There are, in a number of fields, students who continue to enroll beyond the ten-year point, but to be able to have some context and some limitations regarding what we can analyze in this project, we are looking at a ten-year period.

This is a picture of the template itself, and then a close-up so you can see the detail. When you are using the Excel version of the completion and attrition template, it is a two-worksheet template. Some of the data entered on the completion template will

automatically carry over to the attrition template for you, for instance the size of the entering cohort, once entered in the completion data, will automatically transfer to the attrition template so you do not have to replicate that data entry, hopefully reducing any human error.

A couple of challenges have presented themselves during the first phase of the project with regard to data readiness on the completion and attrition templates: clarifying student degree objective on your campus, making sure that that's understood within the programs and in the graduate school how each departmental program is making that information available; clarifying mastering out, whether or not the students are leaving with or without candidacy; also looking at transfers and stop outs. These are not data categories that many institutions have trapped in previous data collections, so working with your departments to identify those students that have left in a timely fashion and those students who have transferred, whether they are transferring within your institution or transferring to another institution.

The factor assessment templates are designed to collect baseline data and information about the duration of existing policies, practices and programs on your campus, as well as those activities proposed for implementation through the completion project. For those institutions that submitted pre-project assessments during Phase I and participated in Phase I, we encourage you to submit a new factor assessment, but you're not required to.

These templates are looking at the areas of intervention that we've identified in the project are of most importance to you intervening in the doctoral completion and attrition process, looking at admissions, advising, mentoring and research, financial support and funding structures, program environments and administrative processes and procedures of both the institution and the program.

I have a little caveat on here and it is also on the templates: Not everything on the factor assessment is recommended as some sort of intervention for all programs. It's not a prescriptive list; it's not an all-inclusive list. On the factor assessment for Phase II, you will note that we have added a space for "other" in each of the categories and areas of intervention just so that if you have something that is innovative or exciting that is happening in one of your programs, you can include that. It does not – we do not want to limit the creativity and innovation of participation in the project.

For doing the data entry on the factor assessment templates, we've asked you to use an A-to-D scale to identify the number of years that a program or practice has been in place, if in place, and then to indicate those that you will be embarking upon or engaging in with the Completion Project in the second column. So here I've just put together a quick sample. This example institution has done the following: holds pre-admission visits for zero to two years; will start providing completion data to prospective students; uses selection criteria other than the GRE or your students' GPA in admissions; and is going to start doing university-sponsored new-student graduate orientation.

So this hopefully gives you an idea. It's intended to be a very straightforward assessment, but it gives us a data picture of where your institution stands and how long these projects and practices have been in place.

The student exit surveys give us a window into the student perspective on completion and attrition issues and are an invaluable piece of our data collection for the project. The completion and attrition data are departmental and institutional level. They give us broad field and large aggregate demographic quantitative information. The student exits surveys tell us, what do the students think about what's happening on your campuses, and as the project progresses will also give us an idea of how the students perceive changes in the institution.

Each of their surveys, both the standard version and the short version, include a demographic sheet. This demographic sheet can be separated from the survey responses themselves. It's intentionally set up that way partially so that it makes it easier for you to work with your institutional review boards because there is complete anonymity for the student when filling out this survey responses. We're not able to reconnect what a student says about their doctoral experience with a student's gender, race, ethnicity, domestic status, et cetera.

Again, similar to the factor assessments, the student exit surveys are looking at areas of intervention that we felt were the most important and critical in the design of the Completion Project. We ask general questions about the student's experience and are they completing or withdrawing from the doctoral program. We look at admissions, advising and mentoring, financial support, curricula processes and procedures, program environment, research experience, career placement and professional development. These categories of questions are in each of the survey templates.

We've also asked three final qualitative questions in each of the surveys to give students an opportunity to provide us and you information about their doctoral experience in their own words: What was the most positive aspect of your graduate program, the least positive aspect of your graduate program, and what would you recommend your graduate program or university to do to attract, retain or graduate more and better students?

I'm not going to encourage you to write the links down since we will make these PowerPoints available to you afterwards, but we have sample versions of both online exit surveys that you can go in and take. The results of the sample survey are not connected to the actual dataset, so you could be from whatever institution you want and fill out whatever responses you want, but I encourage you if you are considering using an online exit survey and want to use one of the templates that we have already developed, these are available resources and we'll make sure that the links get to you as soon as these PowerPoints are published to the CGS website. But these are sample versions for you to look at.

The aggregate demographic completion templates that I mentioned are very similar to the completion template itself – again, using the same definition of cohort as on the completion template, the same default definition of candidacy, and for alternative definitions of candidacy. We have asked you to specify that again on the demographic templates to make sure that since these are at an institutional level, that we are clear on what your data are and how to use it for benchmarking and comparison.

We're collecting aggregate demographic templates and data for six areas – engineering, life sciences, mathematics, physical sciences, social sciences, and humanities – for nine different student demographic groups, looking at male/female across all doctoral students within the U.S. and domestic student population – American Indian, Alaskan Natives, Asian American, black, Hispanic, white, and other – and then international students so that we're able to distinguish citizenship for analysis purposes.

There are some changes forthcoming in the demographic data collection.

DR. DENECKE: I think before Ken Redd shares some earth-shattering news about how we are all going to need to collect demographic data going forward (laughter), which is likely to be a rich discussion in itself, if there are any questions for Helen, specifically about the data collection tools that she described, we could take them now. We will address the requirements and minimum commitments after the break and after the presentations by our research partners. But for now, are there any questions for data about the collection tools?

Q: I was just wondering. You said that you separated out the demographics from the responses. It seemed like there can be some rich information in being able to link them. Is that because of IRB processes?

DR. DENECKE: Yes, it was. And this is also a member organization – (chuckles) – conducting what is both a best practices and, simultaneously, a major research project. So we have to be particularly sensitive to the IRB processes, even if there were just a few institutions who said in effect 'there's no way we could submit these data if you tried to collect it that way.'

Q: Is that because the datasets were small?

DR. DENECKE: Yes, it's because of the small n's or numbers of students from underrepresented groups in these programs, which would run the risk that even purely numerical data would identify individual students. I should say that on the exit survey, you will also see that we asked the university to detach the demographic sheet from the survey responses, so there is no reason why you at the university level can't analyze these in relation to each other (correlations between student responses and student demographics, for example), before separating the two sets of data. But CGS has deemed it necessary to separate the two for reasons of sensitivity to IRB concerns as well. You can certainly take advantage of all of the richness in those data, but we will be analyzing those responses for other patterns.

Q: And you can't even do that in the aggregate?

DR. DENECKE: There would have been ways to join to the two, and we have discussed some of those ways with researchers, but even then we would have lost two or three institutions, and for us it was much more valuable to get an aggregate picture of student experience by discipline for all of the partners than to get responses by demographic group – with very small numbers and student experience of individual institutions. It was a judgment call about what would yield the project the most valuable data. But again we really would love and hope to hear what institutions have to report about their own findings in the aggregate as part of the research in the project.

MS. FRASIER: Yes?

Q: Helen, do you assume that all graduate schools use grade point average and GRE scores as part of their admission criteria?

MS. FRASIER: No. Many of the research partners and participants in the first phase indicated that was an intervention which they would take on, but it does not – it's not meant to be a prescriptive indicator. Hopefully, you're using other criteria already, but –

Q: No, your statement is selection criteria in addition to grade point average and GRE – (inaudible). It sounds like you are assuming that GPA and GRE scores are used automatically.

DR. DENECKE: I know what you're asking; there will surely be institutions that don't recognize themselves or their basic practices in what we list there, and even how we phrase these sample interventions, and there may be other institutions that do. But if the program or university that you're thinking about actually primarily uses an entirely different selection criteria, then that would be important information to share with CGS and other members of the project so that we could look at selection and admissions in that context as well.

MS. FRASIER: Yes?

Q: This may be a really silly question, but I want to be precise. When you described the year that you make the cohorts, you show it beginning with summer and end in the spring. We begin our cohorts in the fall and end in the summer. Will that make a difference? You said summer, fall, then to spring.

MS. FRASIER: Right.

DR. DENECKE: I don't think that would make a difference.

MS. FRASIER: It shouldn't, as long as you're institutionally consistent with the data and let us know.

Yes?

Q: What kind of a response are you getting on student exit surveys?

MS. FRASIER: It varies by institution. A number of institutions participating had implemented the exit survey as part of the requirements to complete the doctoral degree. So among their completers they have a very high response rate. One of our other institutions has started administering the exit survey to all of their doctoral students once or twice a year to be able to capture those students who are completing, those students who are anticipating withdrawing, and those students who are continuing – so using the tool in a little bit different mechanism. But the institutions have been reporting varied responses. Since the online survey became available that has helped most of the institutions. All the institutions that have implemented that after having implemented the paper version have seen an increase in their response rate.

DR. DENECKE: In addition to the differences that Helen described, there are also some institutions that have tried to administer this centrally and others that have designated somebody at the department level to make contact with the students to whom they're sending these out. There is some anecdotal evidence that the departmental administration has been successful because it means to the student that not only do the senior administrators care about this issue, but also people who are responsible for helping to shape their experience in the program.

So the departmental administration has been, at least by anecdote, a little more effective in their response rate, short of integrating these surveys into the degree completion requirements, but we have also heard as Helen indicated that the online administration has really boosted response rates, because then it's just a matter of knowing the students e-mail address and for the students it's now second nature to take a quick online survey.

MS. FRASIER: Yes?

Q: In submitting for this RFP, we're supposed to be submitting attrition templates as well as completion templates.

MS. FRASIER: Correct.

Q: But at our institution, and maybe many of yours, I cannot determine whether or not the person has left, transferred or stopped out without administering the exit survey, except that we have – we're trying to gear up to doing an exit survey. Are we expected to be participating in the exit survey of non-completers in order for it to be applied, or do you have suggestions on how we can get those data without doing exit surveys of non-completers? It seems like a chicken-and-egg kind of thing.

DR. DENECKE: Institutional databases generally have the ability to track completion, but it's been very rare that an institution says, "and we will use our central administrative database to provide you with the attrition data." It's much more often the case that that is the entry point for a necessary dialogue between the graduate school and the departments. And this is where you need somebody at the department level with – if not the data (though often they have much of these data) – than with the institutional memory, and you start actually counting: many institutions have gone name by name: Where is this person? What are they doing? Where is this person? What are they doing? And this is actually a good conversation to have to bring the graduate school together with the department faculty.

MS. FRASIER: Yes?

Q: The exit survey: I have a similar question about people who leave without a degree, particularly attrition, when people sort of stop out. How are folks collecting or administering surveys for the population? Is there a certain survey about this population of students, or could you explain how institutions are implementing an exit survey?

MS. FRASIER: It has been a lot more at the departmental level or the program level to have the faculty working to identify the students in their department – who are the students that are actively enrolled in a semester and who are the students that do not enroll in a subsequent semester – so that they can then reach out to and contact those students that did not enroll. It has been tricky because if the institution does not have a continuous enrollment policy making sure that that is not a negative contact, but where are you and what's happening versus we're assuming that you dropped out. So it has been a lot more effective at the departmental level to reach those students.

DR. DENECKE: There are also some anomalous departures, and having departmental involvement in the administration of the survey can allow departments to make some judgment calls about people from whom exit information may not be particularly valuable or appropriate.

Q: Because they're angry or –

DR. DENECKE: Well, not so much. I mean, the concern has not so much come up with anger or disaffection, but rather with some serious policy infractions or unusual psychological issues that would make administering a survey inappropriate.

MS. FRASIER: Let's take one last question.

Q: What about interdisciplinary degrees? Will we be able to decide what happens in life science or – or how does that work?

MS. FRASIER: The institutions make that determination, but we do have a taxonomy that we used that we'd be happy to share with any of the interested applicants, and then we can talk about that in an offline conversation.

DR. DENECKE: There is a small enough pool of institutions in the Ph.D. Completion Project that we are able to come to a quick consensus on most programs. And now I think Debra Stewart would like to say something.

DR. STEWART: You know, my only role here is, of course, to say that we are absolutely delighted at CGS that we're able to extend this project now through 2010. It allows us to give an opportunity for the people who have been working so hard on the project up to this point to compete for the possibility of continuing to work with us in the project in a variety of ways, allows us to expand in some important ways to bring in some new partners, and most importantly, it allows us, I think, at the end of the day, to ensure that we will be able to generate a very rich understanding of those factors that really do influence the likelihood that students will complete or depart from a Ph.D. program across a wide number of fields.

You know, being able to run for this timeframe is going to give us, from kind of a research point of view, better policy information than has ever been known before about what should be recommended to graduate schools in terms of kinds of things that can be done to increase completion rates, and with particular emphasis and concern for students from various underrepresented populations by fields.

So first, it's just a real testimonial to the participants in the project thus far, both the research partners and the project partners, the amount of effort that it took to participate in this project. This was sort of a little bit of support from CGS and a huge amount of work on the campuses, and we really do understand that, and that's the new opportunity that we're offering to you again. (Laughter.)

And the only sort of really good news here is you have to know that you're participating in a very, very important, big idea, and that there is nothing in the history of what we have done at CGS that has attracted so much interest from press, from foundations, from legislators, from university presidents, from basically every stakeholder group where you could imagine, and one of the challenges that the project team, Daniel and I, regularly deal with is not saying anything. I mean, you know, to say very nicely, the project is going on but I'm sorry we cannot really share anything yet until we're at the point that we're comfortable with what we're sharing. But there has just – I mean, it's not even close. This is the item in which there is the most intense interest that we've ever experienced in anything we've done at CGS.

So not only do we think it's important, but key stakeholders think this is very important. And so I say that just to know, for those of you who have been working on this, that the work is very much worth the effort, and for those of you who will continue to work on it and begin to work on it, I think it's a hugely important enterprise.

So thank you for your work and thank you for the proposals that you will submit. As Daniel told you, we will use an external proposal review committee. You know, there's too much at stake here for us to be choosing this because, of course, I think all of our members are wonderful and I think they, you know, should all get \$100 million every day for everything they do. So because of that, we're sort of very much a step removed from the selection process and we have an advisory committee.

So it really is a quality-of-proposal situation, and I know that we will have many good proposals, and hopefully an enlarged program partner group because that group in this project in some cases has turned out to be just a very, very strong partner group, very actively involved in the project.

So I guess I also just want to take this opportunity to say how proud I am of the CGS program staff who are leading this effort. This is a lot of hard work. You know, they know what the stakes are and they understand how bad it would be to screw up in this – (laughter). Right. And so – I mean, I'm just teasing, of course. But there really was just a huge amount of work, as you might guess, that goes into this. And I know you all do a lot of work on your own campuses, and they take this very seriously. So I just want to publicly thank Daniel for his leadership and Ken for his good work joining us in this project this year, and Helen, of course, for her constant work on this, and to you who've been participating in it for being our partners.

(Applause.)

DR. DENECKE: Thank you.

DR. STEWART: I mean, I can answer almost nothing about the project. (Laughter.) I'll be very happy to try, but I mean, if there is anything really serious that needs to go to the project team.

Yes?

Q: Well, I think that Ken is about to talk about something that concerns a lot of us, and it seems like it's not quite written in indelible ink yet. And I wonder if the Council of Graduate Schools as a body were to take a position –

DR. STEWART: Oh, I know what you're going to ask me, but go ahead.

Q: Well, you know, there's a change in definitions and –

KEN REDD: I'm not sure – Debra, I'm sorry, I don't mean to interrupt. I'm not sure everybody in the room is aware of what the changes entail.

MR. REDD: I don't know if you want me to describe those now?

DR. DENECKE: If we can just have a brief comment, first, yes. It is the changes in the collection of demographic data, but we actually have somebody who is going to have to catch a flight who is scheduled to present right away. So we're going to have to put her on shortly after Debra might be able to give a yes or no answer to whether or not –

DR. STEWART: We will talk about this. (Laughter.) I mean, I know the topic you mean. Many people here may not. It is a challenge, and we will talk about it.

MR. REDD: And we will discuss it after the break, yes, and after this presentation.

DR. STEWART: Yes, right. Okay? Well, with that answer I think I'll leave while I'm ahead.

DR. DENECKE: Yes, with that teaser –

DR. STEWART: Thank you all. We'll look forward to reading your great proposals.

DR. DENECKE: Now, because one of our speakers, Linda Dykstra, does have to catch a flight, we'll let her make her way up to the podium. Let me just remind you that Debra and I and Helen have all emphasized how much effort we recognize and the disproportion between the size of the rewards and the amount of effort. But it is important to note that these are, in fact, the largest awards that CGS has ever given out as part of any grants projects. So in recognizing all of this effort, we do also see these as substantial awards, if not necessarily comparable to all your efforts at least from the perspective of our organization's history.

LINDA DYKSTRA: I guess this is like folks who have to speak and are keeping people from their lunch, their breakfast or their dinner, and because of my flight plans I have to keep you from this very important question that I really want to know the answer to as well. So after I speak, maybe I can stand at the back and hear what it is, or at least read the transcript.

Those of us who are now partners in the CGS project were asked– at least I was asked to–speak a little bit more qualitatively than we have. We've gotten some really good background both from Dan and Helen about the nuts and bolts of how you collect your data and how you do all those things, but there was – when Dan made his presentation – and I'm using one of your slides because I did not prepare a PowerPoint – what to me was the most exciting part of this project was, aside from collecting numbers, which we all love and adore, it was the interventions that we would have an opportunity to try out. And as Dan presented to you, there was a series – you'll all, when you write your proposals – and those of you who plan to continue them – will be asked to put forth interventions in a number of different areas.

And I'm going to talk to you about just some of what I think are our unique – somewhat unique interventions. We did, at UNC Chapel Hill, propose to encourage departments to bring in students prior to selecting them, considering them for admission prior recruitment visits. We were already doing that, but we encouraged them to do even more of it. We put the Ph.D. completion data – we discussed it with the departments, but we also put it in – inserted it formally in our program review process so we could go over the data at that point. We restructured fellowships – and this is one of the hardest things to do because it requires money, but we encouraged departments to take chances in terms of making their offers to students for more than one year, rather than dribbling out little bits of information – you're going to get a fellowship your first year and we maybe think we can give you another year, but we're not sure – to say, what do you really do, and in the past, have you been offering fellowships to students, or TA-ships or whatever your mode of support is? Try to lay that out to them. Of course it's contingent on good progress, but to give them a sense of where they will go in the future.

But what I think was the most important thing we did was try to tackle this idea about mentoring and what mentoring is. Now, we looked at our very first survey that we had given after the award had been received, and, wow, it was really good. The students said that they were happy with their funding, that their TAs hadn't stopped their time to degree, that they liked their advisors, they got help all along the way. There was one thing wrong about that information – not wrong with it, but –

MS. : A misstatement?

DR. DYKSTRA: Pardon?

MS. : A misstatement?

DR. DYKSTRA: Yes, and a very important group was missing because those data came from the students who completed their Ph.D.s. And so yeah, they had good mentoring and they had been supported, and so we knew that this was the model we wanted to follow, but if we could follow that model with everybody and make sure that they took advantage early on – we're not going to eliminate students who drop out, but we hopefully can increase retention.

And our original proposal, I guess, maybe was a little bit negative in that we said we were going to have workshops for faculty, but first we did think, I think pretty wisely, that what we really should do is talk to the students. So we started with a series of focus groups from the students in the departments that we emphasized, and our proposal was the basic – the physical sciences and the three social humanities departments that you're asked to include, and within those departments we were emphasizing underrepresented groups including women in the physical sciences. So that was the group we targeted, that was the group we tried to bring together for focus groups, and they came. We were just really thrilled. It took lunch, but still, sometimes even lunch doesn't get people to come and express their ideas.

And secondly, while we were there – and it was probably good fortune that did this – is we had about four or five scribes, and that was myself and the assistant in my office, a few other administrative folks, who took down everything these students said. We might have taped it, that might have been good, but they knew we were listening to them and that these words were going to be attended to. And what we learned from them is that they were not encouraging about mentoring workshops, they told us, but what I think we all know after thinking about it, that those who are pretty good mentors are the only ones that will probably go to the mentoring workshops. And you're not going to reach the people who – the faculty members who think they're good mentors but aren't good mentors or aren't particularly interested in this.

So we took a different approach, and that was to reward mentoring and hope that very visible external acclamation, congratulation of good mentoring, as described to us by the students, would be what we would use rather than what might appear to be punitive kinds of workshops.

So we did two things – and I apologize, because they were so heavy, for not bringing enough for everybody, but I think I have enough for every row of these booklets. You can pass them down, just maybe the first person in the row. And pass it to the side and look over it. It's, you know, a little bit of publicity about Chapel Hill, but it's within a context, I think, that we appreciate. And if anybody really wants one, please contact me. My address, my e-mail is in our little brochure with names and I'll be happy to send them out to you.

What this is is a celebration of mentoring. The title of the brochure or the magazine is “The Many Facets of Mentoring,” and we look at mentoring from student to student, from a student to faculty obviously, faculty to faculty, particularly mentoring between individuals in underrepresented groups, but we were celebrating what is good mentoring and we hoped that that would rub off on other folks.

Then the second thing we did was to create an award, and the award is called The Award for Excellence in Doctoral Mentoring. We have a lot of teaching awards at our university. I'm sure all of you have teaching awards. We even have something for post-baccalaureate awards. But I have found in my experience in having actually chaired the whole university-wide committee that those folks that were nominated for post-baccalaureate awards usually were folks that were nominated because they taught a pretty good-sized course even though it was a graduate course.

What we wanted to reward is that “one-on-one, took incredible time, took me through my career, taught me professional kinds of skills,” that kind of mentoring. So we put out a call for nominations. The first time (and, you know, first year it doesn't have a publicity), we got about 56 nominations, which we were thrilled with. And it was hard to pick, but the committee – and again it was a committee of students – picked the winner, and they received the award and a good monetary award that went with it that we didn't share widely, but I hope they told their colleagues that that's what they got. And it was

presented to them by the chancellor at our annual doctoral hooding ceremony where a lot of faculty do attend.

And so those – I'll just real quickly, because I know we've got so many things to talk about – what we did to sort of showcase – or how we got turned around by seeing what the students told us, by thinking about where we would go in terms of what we thought was – believe is one of our most qualitative interventions in this project.

So I'll close with that.

(Applause.)

DR. DENECKE: Thank you.

DR. DYKSTRA: You're welcome.

DR. DENECKE: It is up to you, but we do have a coffee break set up outside the room at this point, or would you like to hear the demographic report now before the break?

AUDIENCE: Yes.

DR. DENECKE: Okay. The anticipation is too strong.

MR. REDD: In one of the slides that Helen put up she had talked about the demographic data that we have collected in the past, and as Daniel alluded to, there's going to be some changes to those categories. There's going to be some changes to the way we collect that information, certainly not mandated by us at CGS, but mandated by a directive from the Office of Management and Budget. And I know a number of you have heard this little explanation before, so bear with me.

I'm going to try to go through this for those of you who have not heard it. But you can see here on the right side of this chart that Helen has just put up our traditional categories of students by race and ethnicity. Those categories will change somewhat, at least scheduled to change as of 2009 is the mandatory year, with 2008 being a transition year. And I'll explain why that change is going to happen and then after that I'll, as much as I can, take questions and comments on it, but my only hope is that you don't shoot the messenger. (Laughter.)

In 1997, the Office of Management and Budget, under the authority granted to it by Congress, issued a directive to all federal agencies that they were to begin collecting race/ethnicity data differently than they have been collecting it in the past. And I'll explain what that change is and then explain the timing of it afterwards.

Under the OMB directive, institutions of higher teaching, along with all other federal agencies that collect race and ethnicity data, were to collect the data using a two-

question format, and the first question in that format asks – in our case, I’ll use students just because we’re a college and university setting – will ask students whether or not they are or consider themselves to be Hispanic. And Hispanic is separated because Hispanic is an ethnic group; it’s not a racial group. Students of any race can consider themselves to be Hispanic or Latino. And students will answer yes or no to this question.

And the second question will ask students what race they consider themselves to be, and those race categories will be – will remain the same as you see here, or about the same as you see here. What will change is how you’re being required to report the information based on this two-question format. Essentially, if a student answers that – if a student identifies himself or herself as a Hispanic or Latino, you’re going to be required to report them as such regardless of what they consider themselves to be in the other formats. In other words, if I had a Hispanic grandmother and I considered myself to be Hispanic as well as being African-American, I could list myself as such on this format, but the institution will be required to report me as a Hispanic; again, because Hispanic essentially serves as a tiebreaker. But if I considered myself to be any other race other than Hispanic, you as a college or university would be required to put me under a new category which is not seen here, and that new category would be termed as “two or more races,” quote, unquote. That’s the exact name of the category.

What this means is that obviously in the way we – for the Ph.D. Completion Project, what this means is that starting in 2009, for those of you who are new grantees, the way we’ve reported race and ethnicity will be much different because, as I said – well, you would imagine someone who considered themselves to be a Latino today is going to be much different than someone who’s going to be considered to be a Latino for reporting purposes going forward.

The other situation that we find ourselves in as far as the Ph.D. Completion Project is concerned is that, as Helen mentioned, we have been doing a lot of our initial reporting based on race/ethnicity for reasons of trying to demonstrate under-representation of certain groups. To the extent that we try to report this information in a trend line basis, that trending data will be somewhat compromised in that obviously we can’t use prior data and compare it to data going forward. We will, I’m sure, seek help from other people, perhaps many of you in the room, as to how we will develop a bridge or crosswalk between the old categories and new categories. What that strategy might be is still to be determined, but I know that we certainly – obviously we can’t drop it. We obviously will not not report, if that makes sense, trends and race/ethnicity as far as their completion rates are concerned. The difficulty will be comparing those categories going forward.

And now the sort of the \$64 or maybe \$65.60 question is – as someone alluded to earlier, this is still in – the guidance has been issued by the Department of Education. All other federal agencies – it’s not set in stone. What are the chances that this will be delayed again? Because as many of you may know, this guidance was first issued in 1997, was supposed to be become finalized in 2003 and for various reasons has been delayed a number of times until now. It will be effective in 2009 as part of the mandatory

reporting requirement. It could very well happen. I mean, six months or a year from now, when this is supposed to go into effect, the OMB may very well issue another delay. I'm not predicting that; I'm not saying that that will happen, but it's very possible it could happen, especially since now that this is becoming more and more known throughout the community, more and more people are complaining about it, to be simplistic about it, I guess.

So I don't know. All I can tell you is as of now, we are planning – in our offices we are planning for the worst case scenario, which would be that beginning in 2008, because some schools will start doing the transitioning in 2008 – so beginning in 2008, some of our grantees will start reporting race/ethnicity data for the Ph.D. Completion Project under the new categories and we'll adjust our templates to reflect that reality. And then in 2009, as I said, it'll become mandatory.

And one final word before I take questions – someone asked me this question when I first talked about this, and they brought up an issue that I had forgot to make clear. The OMB directive refers specifically to federal reporting requirements. Some of you have state and other private reporting requirements which are not necessarily required to follow this, the OMB guidance. My guess is that because – for reasons of simplicity many will, but if they aren't required to – so you may find yourself reporting race/ethnicity data for federal agencies that may be different from other agencies. That really is a school's choice. The federal requirements obviously are by law, or carry the force of law, but if you're a state or a private funder, allows you to use the traditional categories as we've come to know them, and you prefer to do them – report to those other agencies that way, then that is the school's right to do, as far as I can tell. But for federal reporting purposes, as I said, the OMB directive carries the force of law.

And one last note to make your lives slightly more miserable than they may already be, the OMB directive covers all race/ethnicity reporting and students – for our purposes, students, faculty, staff, et cetera, anything that you report based on race/ethnicity is covered by the directive, and so that's – you'll have to follow – make the same changes – any change that you make in student reporting, you have to make in faculty and staff reporting as well.

And so I'm not going to try to answer – I don't know what Debra's thinking in terms of CGS response to that, so I can't answer that, but any other question or comment on this.

Judy, yes?

Q: Well, you know, I was on a '99 panel when we discussed this – the report was issued. Now, at that time, first we were going to have an option of doing a two-question or a one-question format because – anyway, we didn't like the two-question format.

MR. REDD: Yeah.

Q: But anyway, it was going to be optional for us. And when they were going to come in 2003, it was only going to start with the 2003 cohort. They were not going to say that you had to go back and resurvey. So has that changed?

MR. REDD: That has not changed, and in fact, as I mentioned, none of this is finalized. It's very possible that – at least for the Department of Education, it's possible that they'll keep with a one-question format, but the one-question will still have the delineation between Hispanic and other – not Hispanic, as far as I can tell.

Q: So you can't – I mean, one question means you just ask those categories.

MR. REDD: Right. What I mean – to clarify my response, what I mean in terms of reporting. You see what I'm saying?

Q: Well, I mean, you would still have kind of a pecking order –

MR. REDD: Right.

Q: – some interesting things on the two-question format – (inaudible) – because ETS has actually done a bunch of testing for them when we were doing SAT testing – (inaudible) – and self-identify. So it was rather interesting back then in the late '90s. But, I mean, because I would say if they aren't mandating – telling schools they have to go back and resurvey, and I didn't think they were going to, then we don't necessarily – we won't necessarily see the new multi-race. I mean, the part that he didn't articulate is students or people will have a choice of checking as many boxes –

MR. REDD: Yes.

Q: And we even had discussion on – you used the word “select,” choose, check, and you did different kinds of responses depending on what word you use. But at least for your students who started school in 2007, you still have the single unless your school has already made that change. Some schools have gone ahead with that change.

So I would say that for the Ph.D. Completion Project, for the second phase of seven to ten, you don't necessarily have to do a change. First, you're not federal.

DR. DENECKE: Right.

MR. REDD: Right.

DR. DENECKE: The point will be that we will be able to make analyses of seven-year and ten-year completion rates with fairly consistent demographic categories and –

Q: It's phase 3 you might have a problem with.

DR. DENECKE: Well, yeah, the challenge would be, though, that if institutions are converting their systems, and we have this exit survey data that's asking them to implement exit surveys and report –

Q: There will be crosswalks, and there were crosswalks supposedly in 1999.

MR. REDD: Well, at least from my understanding of the department, there will be crosswalks, but none of them – how shall I put this – the Department of Education at least – I don't know about other federal agencies – the Department of Education has made it very clear that it will approve crosswalks that schools develop amongst themselves, but it will not create any crosswalks.

Q: Right, but as a non-federal agency with this discussion on the community, you can help us – you can propose crosswalks –

MR. REDD: Oh, sure.

Q: – if you have a student who is Native American and White, then you can propose how you would like us to report it to you.

MR. REDD: We can, yes. I guess I'm only hesitating because I don't – that's something we would have to consider very carefully only because there are some schools obviously who will say – because a crosswalk is obviously optional, and there are some schools who may follow – for our purposes, for the Completion Project purposes, who may follow that and others who will say, well, we've already reported to the Department of Education one way; we'd rather be consistent with that way. But I don't want to presume that because we've not really talked about it.

But to answer your other question, you're right. It's going to be optional whether as far as the resurveying, at least the last time we talked to them about this, the Department of Education has said that they will recommend but not mandate any resurveying, and they won't mandate it because they have no money for it. And some schools may resurvey, others may not. So it will be a little bit confusing for at least a year or two going forward.

Q: Because I know on the – (inaudible) – completion, they weren't going to mandate that change for four years.

MR. REDD: Right.

DR. DENECKE: But the immediate implication for the project is that this first year, for the newcomers, and this second round of data submission for the currently participating partners will be consistent with our baseline data, so we'll have the beginnings of trend analysis for this first group of partners. And we're thinking about this, struggling with these issues, both from the analysis perspective and also from how

we will collect demographic data so that we can also provide trend analyses for the newcomers and existing partners through the duration of the project.

And as Helen is reminding us, urging us, we should take advantage of the coffee outside the room so that we can come back and hear Maureen Grasso and then discuss the grant requirements.

MR. REDD: I'll be glad to stick around if other people want to just ask me questions outside.

(Break.)

MAUREEN GRASSO: All right. Good afternoon. I'm Maureen Grasso from the University of Georgia and I'm going to talk a little bit about our consortium and our project. A couple of questions – you know, why did we do this? And really a major reason was to be a leader on our campuses in implementing cultural change. And the other part of being a leader is that you can be a leader by yourself or you can be a leader with collaborators and supporters. And I would say that early on Bob Sowell, who's dean at NC State, and I had been talking about doctoral completion and sharing data, and what was interesting is that we realized that we could see data – I'll take chemistry, for example, data from his department of chemistry and my department of chemistry and that they were quite different, so that we could then say to the faculty in chemistry, well, you really aren't unique because look at this chemistry department over here and they can do this, so why can't you?

So, I mean, ultimately it was to bring faculty together so that we could share information and really look at trends beyond just one department so we could look at several departments at the same time. Along the same time, Ken Gerhardt from Florida had some wonderful data and so the three of us began to talk and talk about strength in numbers. And then I think the bottom line for me was to sort of get ready for NRC, so that was the carrot that I used personally when I talked with faculty in addition to the importance of this was that we are getting ready for NRC.

The collaborators, as I mentioned: University of Florida, NC State. The University of Georgia has been the lead institution. We have a fulltime – he's a faculty in residence; he's not fulltime. I do buy out some of his time. And he really works probably – it seems like he works 100 hours a week on this project. We have two graduate students dedicated to this project plus staff in my office: the IT person, an assistant dean now and then when we need that person. I pull in the communication director when I need to get information out about certain things. So we are contributing in many, many different ways in addition to the support from the grant.

I would also say that the main aspect of this project is that it is research-driven, and we've put together some publications and created a website, which you will see. I'm going to talk about the guiding principles very briefly and some of the project activities and then you can see some of our results. You have a handout that describes the

interventions that we're going to do, and let me tell you, we have done them. There is a lot. Look at the list. We must have been crazy to think we could do all of that, but every one of those were very, very important.

One major guiding principle that we've held very true throughout this whole project is the theoretical framework, and I'll show you that. Every question that we ask the faculty comes back to the theoretical framework. This is our research, and what we're doing here in the completion project is grounded in the literature, literature that was made available for CGS, a literature that we did on our own. We also are grounding this project in terms of database. Everything is data-driven. They see data and so the interventions are determined off of that data, the interpretation of that.

And then the collaborative action with faculty, the bottom line. I can stand in my graduate school and dictate whatever I want, but unless the faculty take ownership and buy in and do what they see is appropriate for their program, it's not going to happen. So the underlying principle is that you have to have collaborative action between the dean and the faculty, and between faculty, and it has to be, from our perspective, for our cultures and our universities, program change driven by faculty. When you have program change driven by faculty it's something that they'll live with forever, rather than me coming to tell them what to do.

All right, the conceptual framework, there were four conditions and every time we would talk to the faculty, we refer to these four conditions. The first two really focus about admissions: getting the right people to apply, getting the right people admitted. I'm going to give you a website later that has all of this information so you don't need to write all of this down. If you're interested in writing it down, you'll be able to get it later.

The third condition really looked at that mentorship relationship, faculty to student. And then the fourth one really talked about the climate, a student-to-student support that was very, very important.

There is a fifth one, and the faculty kept trying to bring it up and I wouldn't let them. The fifth one is money. They want me to throw money at them. Help me, right? And my philosophy, and I made it really clear on the front end as we talked to the faculty, is that, yes, we understand money is important, but you can do lots of things without money. So if I just throw money at it, you're not going to address the problem. And so one of the key things and the fundamental things that we have talked to the faculty about, and that is you must implement interventions or changes or goals that you can do with the existing resources that you have, and so they can, and they can very well with condition one, two, and some of these others do not take a lot in terms of money.

Okay. In terms of the database interventions, the types of data, definitely the completion data, we collected – you see the templates. We did all of that. We also did telephone interviews. The two graduate students got on the phone, selected; we have faculty nominate faculty and students in departments represented across the programs, and we did interviews with them to talk to them about their perceptions of why students

complete, why they don't complete, looking at practices, if we could implement practices that would help doctoral completion; what were some of their ideas. So interviews, very important because we used this early on, and I'll tell you how.

Also, self assessments, each department looking at their assessment of how well they're doing based on those four conditions – a lot of collaborative action with faculty. As I mentioned, buy-in is very important with program-level change. We do provide the data. We did. I got to see it. And really, what we're using that is the sort of the benchmark and to go up from there. We asked for self-study at the department level so that faculty-to-faculty would sit down and not just the department head would make up what the interventions would be, and then when we use the term goal-setting, really what we're talking about are the interventions.

Some of the project activities that we've done – and I'll talk a little bit more detail very quickly about some of these. We'll talk about the conferences, the data collection process. One of the key things, I'll just mention it here, the other two institutions had wonderful data systems; we are not quite there yet. We have an old legacy system, and so we had to hand-pull every single file, and same thing for NRC study – hand-pull every file because we don't have data. But one of the things this project has done for us is to say what kinds of data do we need to be continuing to collect, and we've already started that. So from the beginning of this project going forward, at least on our campus, we've made a significant change in terms of the data, information that's collected and uploaded into institutional research.

Research publications, you'll see some of those – not the kind that are going out to the juried journals, but things that are usable for faculty and as a resource and lots of collaborative planning. And its sort of an unintended outcome was a creation of a website that you'll see.

Two conferences. The first one was really significant because what we did was – and this is really weird. I think Bob, Ken and I started to talk about, wouldn't it be great to get the faculty together so they can really talk about it, and not only just discipline to discipline, but mix them up so that the chemist has to talk to the English person and they might actually learn something that was different from what they were doing and they might be able to take an idea back that was different from their discipline, and then – for example, the humanities looked a lot at what the sciences were doing, and is there something there in terms of more contact with students that we might be able to do?

We set up a theoretical framework. We really talked with them, listened a lot with the faculty about data. What are we going to do with this data? They were very concerned about that. We were engaging them. We wanted the faculty to take the excitement about doing this and the commitment to doing this back to the department and continue the dialogue.

Issues about definitions: What do we mean about completion; how do you define candidacy? The question that we asked, they would never answer. What is an optimal

level of completion? You know, is it 80 percent? Is it – you know, so we're still not there yet with getting the perspective on what the optimal – but that conference was critical because it really got a lot of good buy-in and allowed faculty from the three institutions to begin to connect and make contact with one another.

The second conference is coming up this February, and what we will have is faculty will be presenting their interventions, or their strategies for accomplishing the different conditions that they have set up and really talking about some of the best practices and where they are going. So we're real excited about that as well.

In terms of data collection, it was very important as we were preparing the data to have verification within the department because that's the first thing that they're going to question you, and they did. They asked us in the conference: This data can't be real. You know, how do I know that these numbers are right? And so in cases on each campus, the IT person was responsible for working with faculty and departments to take a look. So I'll give you a prime example. Had economics come to me and say, I think your numbers are wrong. We sat down with them, we pulled the file, we gave them the list of names of students so that we could make sure that we were all in agreement the day we started and when we were submitting the information so that we could use that as our benchmark and go forward.

I've already mentioned improving data systems on campus. And let me think if there was anything else about data verification. I think the definitions are a real issue. One thing that we had to do on the three institutions before we started was to make sure that we're all agreeing as to how we define a doctoral student and when do they come into the program; when do you begin counting? So we were just – all those kinds of things are really, really important to make sure that we were clear that we were using the same kinds of things.

The benchmarks that we used were definitely taken from the templates that we submitted to CGS, looking at time to degree, looking at percent completion, and the exciting thing about this was that they could see where they were at UGA with our 12 programs where they rank from one to 12. They could also see where they rank with the 36 – you know, in the total of 36 programs. And so I remember sitting with one faculty member in one department and he wasn't ranked so well and he was – you know, he was quite embarrassed, and that was a great motivator for him and his department to begin to do some great things.

In terms of the research publications, the telephone interviews that we did with faculty and students, we used that at the first conference. We used their data, not, well, someone at this institution across the nation says this, but this is what your colleagues are saying about the perception about doctoral completion; this is our data about our program. It's very, very important. We used that information and information from the literature to produce four research briefs. We also used the four conditions and we asked them about program practices, and here what we asked them, based on the four conditions: How do you do advising? How do you select a mentor? We went round and

round on how to collect that data and we decided to go open-ended. And I'm a quantitative person, and I will tell you, after I saw the responses I was so glad to do it qualitatively because we got responses that we would never have gotten otherwise. Point in case: program, we asked, how are you doing? Can your students change advisors? Yes. And the next sort of opening question was like, well, if they do how often? Never have they done this. (Laughter.) Okay, that tells you a lot.

All right. So just to move it along a little bit. So these are the kinds of things in the benchmarks. Again, I mentioned those about the time to completion. And we are producing some strategy sheets that are going on the website to help them as well.

Collaborative planning, so important. You need faculty-to-faculty discussions. You've got to create – at least we felt the need for them to come together and talk. The role of the dean, as Debra said, is so important.

I found that – a year ago I was – and all the deans were - charging them to go back to the departments and do a self assessment. Well, this is not the right time of year to sort of ask them to do that, but in the timeframe of the project that's what's needed to happen. And so I met with groups of threes and fours of department heads and selected a department head because that's the person sort of leading the way, and asked them to go back and do the self assessment. And I remember one faculty member saying to me: "My faculty are going to shoot me." (Laughter.) That was an important signal to me that I needed to step in and let the faculty know that this is a very important national study – although I've been telling them before – important study from the perspective of what we're trying to accomplish.

So we wrote letters to every single faculty member. I wrote a letter and let the deans know what we're doing – of course, they've been informed all along, but again, that wouldn't have come out if I just sent an e-mail and said, go do this. So the face-to-face is really important.

When they finished the face-to-face and they did the self assessment, they would submit it back to each of the deans. And we – each dean had an individual meeting with each department to review. We read all the program practices so we knew what they were doing, we looked at those benchmarks with them, and we reviewed their sort of self assessment. And this was as – in the South we say, you know, come to whatever meeting. You can fill in the blank. (Laughter.) If you're in the South, you understand.

But it was a time of reckoning for them to sit down one-on-one with the dean. And I knew a lot about their program. I was asking questions. I was trying to get positive reinforcements in terms of good practices that they were doing, and where they were so vague and they didn't answer, they got to go back and revise. And so I made it really clear that they had to be providing good information.

The other thing that happened is that they provided lots of information for me, like the graduate school should do this, the graduate school should do that, and some

departments didn't put anything in it of what they were going to do. So I thanked them for those comments and turned them back around to say, what are you going to do now? And so had some good examples and asked them to set some particular interventions or goals.

This is our website, and this will take you right to the website where the project is housed, with lots of good information. It's really housed at a different location, but this is the easier website to write down and remember: [www.grad.uga.edu/cgs](http://www.grad.uga.edu/cgs). And it's called "Strategic Intervention for Doctoral Completion." And it is a collaborative initiative to understand and improve completion. And I'll put this up at the end again.

This is what the original – this is what the opening page – it gives you an overview, gives you the principal activities, and on the left side you can see all the little areas that they can click in there from the theoretical framework to the grant proposal to publications, to resources, program data, conference information, problem-solving forum.

Just the research briefs that came from the telephone interviews in the literature review that we did from early on and continue to do – for example, one of the most effective admission practices for doctoral programs – and then also our strategy sheets. If you click on there, you'll get a research brief that we put together, and it has good suggestions for faculty of kinds of things that they can do. In terms of resources, lots of different resources. This is not totally complete. There are several pages here from CGS too – as I find articles we upload them as resources for faculty.

In terms of the data, we made an agreement that we would not publicize the data. We didn't want to penalize the faculty. Now, Florida and NC State can release their own data and they probably have on their own websites, but for the project we have on the completion data in the benchmarks, which is the time to degree and percent completion, kept that internal for the faculty because we want them to continue to participate. At some point we will make that available. But program practices, that is response to those four conditions and what they do in terms of admission, orientation advisement, social interaction, and then also the self assessments, what their interventions are going to be.

So when you go to program practices you can see that you can look across and select chemistry from any one of the three schools, click it on, and then pull up the responses. You see the questions and then you see the responses that they provided, and everything is based around those four conditions.

The same thing with the program self-assessment and the goals. These are really what we call the intervention. We just use different terminology with the faculty. So you can again click on any one of these, and so chemistry can see what other chemistry programs are doing from Florida to NC State. Again, states the four conditions, and so that – not everybody is doing everything for every condition. So they had to decide as say talk amongst themselves and their department, which conditions – or only one if they're going to do one, or several were they going to do – what were the strategies, and give me a timeline because I want to be able to go in and talk to them: Okay, you said you were

going to do this by fall 2007. So that means that come January, I can start a conversation with this program and begin to ask them about how are they doing, I see this, where are they and I want to see changes, and how effective was that.

The other exciting thing that we've just now completed and just initiated, which was one of the interventions that we said that we would do, and that's a problem-solving forum. We know that doctoral education is very, very complex, lots of different problems, and so we've written four case scenarios here that is open to any of you here, any of your students as well. And so you can click on, for example, "Grace's problem," and it reads the – you get the case of – lays out the scenario of what's going on and asks you to submit. So you could submit your response and give advice as to what Grace should do, or what your recommendations would be. The only thing that we ask is that you identify yourself either as a student or a professor and your university, and we have someone screening those, and then we'll upload.

So this will be a wonderful resource that I think will be helpful to students. And so there's that website again. Thank you.

(Applause.)

DR. DENECKE: Maureen Grasso is one of the few graduate dean recipients of the request for proposals two years ago, almost three years ago now, who looked at the RFP and its list of requirements and commitments that you have on your chair and said, "this is not enough." (Laughter.) I need to also take responsibility for working with two other graduate deans and have a meta-project within the project in which we're really doing inter-institutional analysis as well and activities as well. And so that was very impressive.

Okay, here we're going to get to more nuts and bolts, and these are probably some of the nuts and bolts that you who expect to be, or are considering, submitting proposals for Phase II want to know before you leave today.

First of all, the grant period will be, as Debra mentioned, through 2010. This is a three-year grant, just as the last phase was a three-year grant. The key dates for the release of the RFP and the proposal and the selection are here. Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>: we will release this request for proposals on Monday. We will send it out by broadcast e-mail. The deadline for completed proposals in all categories – and I'll show you the three categories in a moment – will be Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. And on Tuesday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, mid-April, we will expect to make award announcements based on the recommendations of the proposal review by external selection committee, as Debra mentioned.

There will be three categories of participation in Phase II. The first category we call "New Research Partners." These are New Research Partner grants. These partners will do what the Phase I Research Partners were asked to do, which is to create and pilot intervention strategies and evaluate their effect upon Ph.D. completion rates and attrition patterns. The second category – I'll explain the award amounts in a moment – is

Continuation Grants. And these are for existing Research Partners as well as for actively participating Project Partners, that is to say those voluntarily participating universities who have been submitting data to the project without grant funding, but who will now be eligible for Continuation Grants.

And then we have the third category that we're calling, somewhat clumsily at the moment because we haven't thought of a better name for it yet, Data Only Grants. Now, obviously those institutions in the Data Only Grant category will be doing much more than simply submitting and analyzing the data, but from the perspective of what's required to participate, as far as the grant reporting, obligations, and requirements, it's simply submitting and analyzing the data with us.

Okay, so here are the award amounts, and this gives you some sense that this process will be very competitive for some of the categories. For New Research Partner grants, we expect to give five awards of \$80,000 each. As I mentioned, in Phase I the award amount that we stipulated in the initial RFP was up to \$100,000, but when you look at this award amount you should consider that the average award amount was actually less than \$80,000. So most of the universities that participated in the project – participated through Phase I participated with slightly smaller award amounts than this on average.

Okay, the second category of Continuation Grants. There are now, as we mentioned, 21 currently funded research partners and there are eight institutions that are actively participating project partners in the sense that they've been providing data. And so, for the Continuation Grants, we have 29 universities who will be eligible to compete for what we expect to be 22 slots with awards of approximately \$50,000 for the three years. CGS obviously is interested in seeing as many of those universities continue to participate and receive funding as possible.

And then we have Data-Only grants. Even though the award amounts are somewhat smaller at \$15,000 for the three-year period, these will also be competitive. We expect to give approximately five of those. And institutions need not apply separately for two categories if they might be eligible for two categories. So if you apply for either the new research partner grants of the continuation grants, you will automatically be considered for the data-only category as well.

Okay, so here are some of the selection criteria. You have a question about the award? Sure.

Q: Yeah. If you've been a member of the phase I with project funding, if you would now fall into that research partner or project partner pool, can you apply for the new grant?

DR. DENECKE: No, if you received funding for Phase I – the criteria under New Research Partner grants is “CGS member universities that did not receive Phase I grants.”

But if you were a “Project Partner,” i.e. you did not receive money to be a participant, you would be eligible to apply for New Research Partner grants.

Q: You can apply for all the three?

DR. DENECKE: You could –

MS. FRASIER: If you did not get money the first time, you could apply for all three if you participated fully in the Phase I data collection effort.

Okay, so here are some of the selection criteria. It’s actually phrased much more carefully in the RFP, so I should read the exact language that we use here, about the scope of the doctoral enterprise within the fields selected for participation by the funders: Pfizer for the STEM fields and the Ford Foundation, social sciences and humanities. The language that we’ve used is, “Institution selected for funding to participate in this initiative will reflect a cross-section of both private and public universities that produce the bulk of Ph.D. graduates in science, engineering and math fields and social science and humanities disciplines. Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to collect completion and attrition data and use these data to benefit prospective students as well as currently enrolled STEM and social science, humanities programs.”

I don’t think we actually have a slide listing all of the universities, but if you look at the Web site, you will notice that the universities participating are highly inclusive of a very broad range of institutions in the doctoral enterprise.

The second criterion here is a record of effecting change. In the first round, we asked institutions to demonstrate that record by virtue of their participation, for example, in a variety of national initiatives. I’ve already mentioned some of them: Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate, CGS’s PFF or Preparing Future Faculty program, or the NSF’s AGEP or IGERT programs –, but also, some institutions elected to demonstrate their record of effective change by documenting institutional initiatives, and that is perfectly fine. So some record of an ability of the graduate school to help leverage change across programs.

The third priority consideration is the quality of proposed interventions. Reviewers will be looking at proposals from the perspective of innovation, but also for the thought that has gone into the interventions proposed. In other words, at the end of this request for proposals, we do have a list, something like a smorgasbord of proposed interventions. We certainly don’t mean by providing this list to limit you to the items on the list, and as Helen mentioned, many of these would be detrimental in some contexts and very helpful in others. So there really needs to be some careful thought about which interventions are appropriate to which of the various participating departments and programs.

And then finally here, “evidence of department faculty and institutional commitment to sustain project activity and evaluation beyond the three-year period.”

Obviously this is not in the category of a grant “requirement” because CGS can’t hold you to sustained activity beyond the grant period, but a demonstration of that commitment by virtue of letters of endorsement from senior administrators at the university, the chief academic officer (as I’ll mention) as well as a letter of endorsement from each faculty representative is an important indicator of that commitment.

Okay, here are the requirements for all proposals; that is, proposals in each category. The first is that the graduate dean must be the PI or principal investigator. We recognize that there are project directors who are doing a lot of the work and much of the analysis, and who may be engaging faculty as much as the graduate dean, but it is very important that the graduate dean exert the leadership that we’ve heard from both Linda Dykstra and Maureen Grasso today.

The second, as I just mentioned, is to demonstrate senior administrative endorsement from either the president or the chief academic officer and faculty commitment for participating programs by virtue of letters of endorsement from either the department – we mean the DGS, director of graduate studies, or the chair of each participating department.

Next is to “define the doctoral attrition problems for students, particularly minorities and women, that each program is seeking to address and the interventions that will be tried.” Here it is important to point out that you may be using the project to initiate dialogue and conversation about problems, and that the project may be funding your knowledge gathering about what those problems are and where they are and how to address them. And that’s perfectly fine, – and the project in fact encourages mid-course changes and mid-course corrections based on what you learn as a result of the meetings and conversations that will take place funded by the project.

Finally here, “demonstrate the capacity to collect completion and attrition data.” In some sense, your capacity will be demonstrated by virtue of the fact that we’re asking you to submit data with a proposal. And we will be working with the institutions that are selected to receive funding. We’ll be working with those institutions to clean the data and to make sure that all of the data CGS has from you are comparable – both institutionally consistent and comparable with other universities and programs. And that process will happen through May and June of 2007.

Okay, second slide on requirements. “Submit completion and attrition data” – and this is exactly through the templates that Helen has described – “for a minimum of five STEM programs – science, technology, engineering, mathematics programs – and three social science and humanities programs.” And this requirement applies for all funding categories. As Helen mentioned, we’re asking you to submit both program-level data and the demographic data aggregated by broad field. And, just as we talked about the separation of the demographic sheet from the rest of the exit survey, the way that we’re collecting demographic data is through this project is to ask institutions to aggregate their program data by broad field, specifically for the same issues of sensitivity to the small numbers in some programs of students from underrepresented groups.

Here it is important for us to state that in the analysis that CGS will be publishing and producing and presenting, we will not at any point identify individual institutions' datasets, those of their programs or their disciplines, nor about their demographic attrition patterns and completion rates.

The second requirement is to administer exit surveys for completers and (wherever possible) non-completers. This is required for the New Research Partners and for the Continuation Grant partners; it is optional, however, for the Data-Only grant participants.

The third requirement is to submit with the proposal completed factor assessments because it is crucial for you and for us to be able at the end of the day to know what practices have been in effect in which programs and for how long.

And then finally, to conduct ongoing project assessment. And this is for both, again, New Research Partners and Continuation Grant partners, and optional for the Data-Only partners.

Here are commitments: this is consistent with the data collection that Helen was describing – “collect data on entering cohorts of students by field, race and ethnicity, citizenship and residency and gender, and submit these data aggregated by broad field to CGS for a three-year period.” Here the only exception is we do encourage proposals from Canadian institutions. The University of Montreal is participating in the project, and they are under a federal mandate not to – as I understand it - collect any data such as race and ethnicity information that would not be used in the admissions/selection process, and they're not able to use that in the process. So by virtue of that they are actually not able to submit race and ethnicity data.

Second: to develop institutionally consistent policies on tracking of things like stop out, transfer out, and change-in-degree objective.

And then there are some additional requirements: “Propose a plan for implementing” – this is for continuing partners – “propose a plan for implementing evidence-based mid-course corrections, changes or enhancements where those are appropriate,” and for the New Research Partners to set targets, or as Maureen was saying, optimal goals for Ph.D. completion based on institutional research. And for both New Research Partners and Continuation Grant recipients to convene graduate deans, which are the PIs, project staff and faculty from each participating program at least once annually to discuss data and strategies for optimizing completion. Again, this is optional for the Data-Only group. The great majority of those universities currently participating are doing this, but as we mentioned there is some unevenness in faculty awareness across all of the programs being represented in the project, and we want to ensure greater uniformity of the awareness and involvement across the projects.

And finally, “host a site visit.” One of the questions that Maureen began with in her presentation was “why did we get involved?” And one of the incentives to get involved, I think, is the site visit, not just because it’s an opportunity for people at the university level who may not be at CGS – typically at CGS annual meetings and summer workshops to see what the national project looks like, or what these issues look like from a bird’s eye view, but also that in advance of that site visit, which we arrange in negotiation with your schedules, we provide something like a 160-page detailed report of your institutional data. The report includes benchmarking data where you will see your completion rates in, say, chemistry against all other participants’ chemistry programs, and then as a result of some of the feedback that we receive, also against institutions by institution type. And so we’re working with ways to provide greater nuance in the benchmarking tools. The ultimate goal is to provide an online benchmarking tool so that institutions can identify their own peers – or aspirational peers, and the online tool would aggregate, say, three institutions’ data and give you an aggregate for each program or each discipline.

Reporting requirements include annual written reports on ongoing evaluations for the new and continuing partners, and outcomes of data collection for the data-only partners beginning in December of 2007, and of course oral presentations at CGS annual meetings, summer workshops and project conferences. We expect to have a project conference this summer bringing together Phase I with Phase II participants so that there can be a best practice exchange at that time, but also some kind of lessons learned from the Phase I to the Phase II so that the Phase II partners can get off to a running start.

And last, here is our website, [www.phdcompletion.org](http://www.phdcompletion.org), where there is a ton of information about what each of the participating universities is doing, or has proposed to do, as a result of the project funding.

There is also the CGS publication, “Ph.D. Attrition and Completion,” that we are now in the process of revising to represent the current baseline data. And then here is some contact information for myself ([ddenecke@cgs.nche.edu](mailto:ddenecke@cgs.nche.edu), 202-223-3791) and for Helen ([hfrasier@cgs.nche.edu](mailto:hfrasier@cgs.nche.edu); 202-223-3791), which we expect to be used often over the next several months as you prepare your proposals and have questions about the RFP or the process.

So thank you. And we are here now to take any questions, of course, that you might have about any of these requirements and commitments.

Q: Dan, this is real simple. Do you all care how the money is spent? I mean, do you all pay any attention to the budget for that?

DR. DENECKE: (Chuckles.) Well, of course, we pay attention to the budget. There are a couple of restrictions that we have on the use of the budget. For example, the budget cannot be used to actually fund students, I mean, in the form of student fellowships, and the subawards do not allow indirect costs. Any other stipulations should be either in the RFP or they will be in the “frequently asked questions” aspect of the

website, which we will put up shortly, and it will have some guidelines about how to prepare the budget.

Q: I just have a simple point of information question about the site visit. Are there standard activities – you know how – (inaudible) – you will want each university to present? And who’s coming to visit?

DR. DENECKE: Okay. What we try to do with the site visit is – of course to have the project staff involved. It has been either Helen and myself, or it may be Helen and Ken, or one of us along with a former graduate dean/senior scholar in residence who is familiar with the project activities and goals. And what we have also tried to do for every site visit is involve a graduate dean who is also a PI at another university. Of course, in conversation and agreement with the university being visited about who might be the most appropriate person to work with? In a few cases, it just simply hasn’t been able to work out to provide a co-PI or another PI on that site visit, but we generally try to do that as well.

But we leave a lot of the site visit structure up to you because we want this to be a really a set of conversations where we can be helpful to you, both in arranging conversations that may not yet have taken place on the campus, and, as I said, to provide a kind of bird’s eye view to people who may be either in the IR, you know, nuts and bolts part of the project or at the faculty level. We certainly don’t want this to just be a showcase. But we do have some groups of individuals with whom we certainly want to meet. And the graduate dean is welcome to be present at each of those meetings, so we don’t necessarily expect to have “clandestine” meetings with disaffected persons, for example, but we hope that you will use these visits to advance your own goals. So we leave a lot of the flexibility in the site visit up to you.

Q: So you say you don’t want a site visit that showcases and you don’t want one that’s problem-laden. (Laughter.)

DR. DENECKE: Well, the showcase is perfectly fine, but a site visit is not going to be particularly valuable to you if all you’re doing is showing us the best of what is happening at your university. You know, if there is no opportunity for feedback from faculty, and there may also not be an opportunity for you to bring people who need to be talking who aren’t currently talking. And that happening and us learning really in detail, not just about the most effective things that are happening but also possibly some of the problems that you’re facing so that you can tap our knowledge about how other universities have grappled with similar challenges could be helpful. I mean, that’s the basic point of the site visit.

Q: Can you talk a little bit more, then, about the weight of innovation or the phrase “6 new interventions” in the RFP? Particularly when thinking about graduating women and minorities in the STEM area, some of these [are] basic, fundamental issues [that can be addressed with commonly proven treatments]. And I’m wondering, how

much does innovation weigh in on that, or is there a weighting scale for the kinds of interventions that are being posed in terms of making decisions on who gets it?

DR. DENECKE: Okay. Well, that's a good question. I mean, we do say "new interventions" in the RFP. By "new," we don't necessarily mean new to the community.

Q: Right.

DR. DENECKE: It may be new to the programs that are participating, and it may be that there's a documented history of this kind of thing working – peer-mentoring – for example, peer groups cross-program or even intra-program peer groups being very effective and yet, the programs that you've selected to participate have had no part in it.

Q: Right.

DR. DENECKE: And so that's what would count as innovation. As to the question whether there was a weighting scheme, there's no point system in the evaluation of innovation, and indeed a few universities are participating currently in the project particularly because they feel like they have done so much, but they don't have any quantitative data to demonstrate the efficacy of what they've done and this is an opportunity for them to do that. So the mere evaluation and assessment of what has worked and what has not worked is an innovation for those universities.

Yes?

Q: Do you think we would be more likely to be selected for a data-only award if you submitted a proposal for consideration to one of the other categories of awards, e.g. the New Research Partners with more information about your programs. How would you advise somebody to submit for the Data-Only category?

DR. DENECKE: That's an interesting question. I don't think so. I believe that each proposal will be judged on its own merits, but we do have – if you would like to submit a proposal for the data-only, we do have a – I think the length requirement for that is half of what it is for the other two categories, and it would certainly be fully considered on its own merits as well. So I don't think there's necessarily a competitive advantage for simply applying to the bigger grants.

Q: If you've been an unfunded participant who has already been submitting data, then we could be submitting three proposals?

Then the question is, do we submit one proposal saying we want to be in all three categories, or do we submit three proposals?

MS. FRASIER: You submit one proposal for which you would be eligible for all three categories.

Q: Okay.

DR. DENECKE: Right.

Q: I would hope we didn't have to submit three proposals. (Laughter.)

MS. FRASIER: No.

DR. DENECKE: That's right.

Q: So a new research partner could submit one and be considered for two categories.

DR. DENECKE: Right. Yes.

Are there any other questions? At this point, as I said, you have our telephone number and our e-mail addresses; you know where we live, and we're available to answer any questions that you have as you consider this project with your team back home. Many thanks to you and to our presenters.

(Applause.)

(END)