

The 1st Workshop of the iSchools' Ph.D. Program Directors: Enhancing iSchools' Doctoral Education: What's Next?

Summary Report

At the iConference 2012 in Toronto, 16 Ph.D. Program Directors (see attached participants list) from the iSchools came together for a full-day workshop, organized by David G. Hendry (Washington), Lynne C. Howarth (Toronto), and Ping Zhang (Syracuse). The aim of the workshop was to build community, to exchange ideas, and to explore concrete steps that we might take for enhancing doctoral education. This report summarizes the preparation work, the workshop agenda, and the workshop outcomes.

Preparation before the Workshop

A survey was conducted in September 2011 to gather some basic information about different iSchools and to identify key issues to be covered at the workshop. A total of 18 iSchools participated in the survey. Topics for breakout discussions were determined by the extent of interests from the participants. A summary of the survey results can be found in the attached file.

Workshop Agenda

1. *Workshop Introduction: Purpose and Goals*
2. *1-Minute Icebreaker Presentations by Participants about their programs (with PPT)*
3. *Breakout discussions of the following topics:*
 - a. Where will our graduates find jobs? Are they prepared? What kind of new faculty are we hiring? Will we hire i-School graduate?
 - b. How to support students' timely progress through the program?
 - c. How to ensure and improve the quality of faculty-student mentoring?
4. *Examination and Discussion of draft iSchool dissertation award policy*
5. *Discussion of Action Items for Next Year*
6. *Discussion of Agenda Items for Future workshops*

Workshop Outcomes

1. Breakout discussions were summarized in the attached file.
2. iSchool dissertation award policy draft was discussed at the workshop, and also briefly at the deans' meetings. Attached is the finalized iSchool Doctoral Dissertation Award Competition policy.
3. The following action items for next year were identified for the iSchools at the Doctoral level
 - a. Sharing among iSchools: Policy/PhD handbooks; Syllabi of core or key courses; Mentoring tools; Procedures & milestones; Evaluation forms; and Best practices
 - b. Gathering statistics on Recruiting and Placement
4. The following agenda items for future workshops were identified:
 - a. Curricular: core or foundation courses, elective courses, method courses
 - b. Recruiting new students: focus on diversity; seek collective efforts by iSchool PR team; educate why iSchools are better choices for doctoral education
 - c. International/Transnational effort: exchange students; virtual intellectual experiences
 - d. Funding/Research collaboration





*Survey on Enhancing
iSchools' Doctoral Education*

Summary of Qualitative Data
Provided by Respondents
iConference 2012




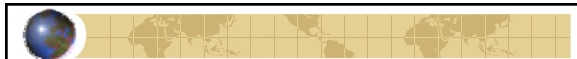
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Possible Topics for Discussion
and Exploration





Curriculum: Topics in rank order from highest to lowest level of interest

- How to support student research experiences
- PhD curriculum in general
- What classes should make up the “core” of the curriculum
- How to support radical differences amongst student research backgrounds and directions?
- How to partner with units outside your school but in your university
- What is the place of “design” in the curriculum





Job Market: Topics in rank order from highest to lowest level of interest

- Where will our graduates find jobs? Are they prepared?
- What kind of new faculty are we hiring? Will we hire i-School graduates?
- Expectations for publications – Are our graduates prepared?
- Expectations for teaching experience – Are our graduates prepared?



Administration: Topics listed in rank order from highest to lowest level of interest

- How to support students' timely progress through the program? [tied with 2, below]
- How to ensure and improve the quality of faculty-student mentoring? [tied with 1, above]
- Diversity of doctoral students – How to recruit minority students?



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3 topics that you would like to engage at the workshop



Topic listed first by respondent -1

- How to offer the needed courses for doctoral students (low n) in times of budgetary constraints
- How to engage students in a high-quality research at early stages of their
- What constitutes the 'core' of the discipline?
- Articulating the purpose of your doctoral program
- Partnering with units outside the school in the university
- Faculty-student mentoring, support student research experience



Topic listed first by respondent -2

- Range of Ph.D. programs coming into existence and how they all relate (SE, Informatics, Information, HCC, ...)
- Comparing European and US PhD programs; how can we make them competitive in the marketplace?
- The place of design
- Core curriculum for iSchool programs



Topic listed first by respondent -3

- Mentoring
- International experiences and differences in PhD programs
- Incorporating students into grant-seeking and instructional experiences
- Increasing recruitment of excellent students to iSchool PhD programs



Topic listed second by respondent -1

- Ways to keep students moving forward in their programs
- What are the most efficient strategies to develop ability of students to work independently
- What will make graduates especially competitive on the job market?
- How the master's and doctoral programs can interact/benefit each other



Topic listed second by respondent -2

- Connections between information disciplines and technical fields
- Inter-school collaboration on phd programs
- Job prospects in today's economy (both within and outside of iSchools)
- How to foster a sense of community and well-being amongst PhD students



Topic listed second by respondent -3

- The core -- what should it be
- variability in mentoring norms by faculty with diverse different academic
- Curriculum
- Developing resources to fully fund our students for their complete course of study
- Graduate outcomes assessment



*Topic listed **third** by respondent -1*

- What are the most crucial records and skills that students should possess as a mandatory pre-requisite for graduation.
- Ideas for creating a sense of community among students, including faculty.
- Recruiting doctoral students who match program and faculty goals



Topic listed third by respondent -2

- Are we hiring our graduates
- New faculty hiring
- How to encourage students to publish
- Mentoring -- how to make it better
- Market expectations for iSchool grads



Topic listed third by respondent -3

- Models of doctoral programs
- Interdisciplinary mentoring with more than one faculty member
- Improving time to completion for doctoral students



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2 topics that you would be willing to consider leading at the workshop




*Topic listed **first** by respondent -1*

- Interdisciplinary research opportunities for doctoral students
- I could lead either of above topics
- Examining different models for doctoral education (e.g. UK, Canada, US, Europe)
- Interdisciplinarity in iSchools' doctoral curricula





Topic listed first by respondent -2

- Faculty -student mentoring
- The process for evaluating students and providing them with feedback on their progress
- Mentoring
- Re-designing curricula
- Building community across doctoral students, faculty, and staff





Topic listed second by respondent -1

- Curriculum issues related to research methods
- Developing a strong research community
- Support student research experience
- Publication





Topic listed second by respondent -2

- Teaching teaching -- students prepared to teach well and thrive in their pre-3rd year review years
- Celebrating doctoral student research





Survey on Enhancing iSchools' Doctoral Education

Suggestions for the workshop (e.g., goals and purpose, length, format, what might make a good topic of a keynote talk, etc.)





Suggestions - 1

- Include input from current doctoral students from several schools
- NSF style workshop with several brainstorming groups and follow up fusion of the bigger picture
- Keynote: many schools are hiring faculty whose PhD is in a cognate area: what does this add, how does it affect curriculum, how does it affect the doctoral program, is there an optimal mix, etc.?



Suggestions - 2

- Half day workshop would be enough, more discussion or panel discussion, more focused discussions. would like to see the survey results, and even the raw data from each school.
- From a pragmatic point of view, I would be interested in Curriculum issues and curriculum revision, and how to meet the challenges of interdisciplinarity.



Suggestions - 3

- For a keynote I could suggest Marcia Bates to speak about the information disciplines in relation to the curriculum, or someone who can provide a historical trajectory and address the traditions of our field and how that defines our future. I would also be interested for someone to address tensions within our field and how that is reflected in our programs and curricula.



Suggestions- 4

- Make sure that everything is captured -- live blogs that encourage PhD students who can't afford to attend ask their questions - tweeting that gives them a way to do so in real time -- clinics/drink/teas for experienced program leaders to talk informally with those who are learning to manage their programs -- swap syllabi by getting them all on a flash drive with names of those who'd be willing to talk with people about their materials -- gather basic info on recruitment (e.g., those programs that deliberately avoid recruiting their own graduates would be ideal places from which others could recruit but we've no idea which programs do that)



Suggestion - 5

- What are the overall goals of the workshop?
How will we use the data that we get from the workshop?
- Goal: exploring the challenges and opportunities of interdisciplinary doctoral programs
Length: 1 day
Format: combination of mini-talks and brainstorming activities



Survey on Enhancing iSchools' Doctoral Education

Designed, administered, and
compiled by
Prof. Ping Zhang (Syracuse)

Survey of iSchool Doctoral Programs: Summary

Name of Institution	Year PhD program established	Estimated total number of graduated students from the program (by June 2011)	Number of current full time students as of Fall 2011	Number of current part-time students as of Fall 2011	Over the last five (5) years, on average, how many new students were admitted each year?	Over the last five (5) years, on average, how many students have graduated each year?
University of Pittsburgh (IS&T)	1968	144	54	2	7.3	7
University of Pittsburgh (LIS)	1963	307	19	3	5.5	4.2
Indiana University (LIS)	I don't know	I don't know	32	0	5	4
Indiana University (I&C)	2005	12	190	12	I assume you mean matriculated?	5
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	1978	108	31	19	10	6
The University of Washington	2000	22	46	0	8	3
Drexel University	1970	60	24	8	8	5
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin	unclear	unclear	no full-time students (other structure)	ca. 50	unclear	2-3
University of California, Irvine	1970s	(don't know)	70	0	15 on average	10 on average
University of Texas at Austin	1969	80?	23	3	5	3
University College Dublin	1984	9	7	2	2	1
UC Berkeley	1998	18 since 2003	24	0	3.5	2.5
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey	1961 LIS; 1982 Comm & Info	316	46	80 (includes students writing dissertation enrolled with 1 research credit)	20	12
University of Michigan	1996	44	50	0	9-10 (enrolled)	6
Syracuse University	1969	105	45	0	6	5
University of Maryland	1965	55	30	4	6	3
University of British Columbia	2003	7	15	We don't have a part-time designation	3	2 (last 3 years)
University of Toronto	1972	(don't know)	45	4	6	3

Survey of iSchool Doctoral Programs: Summary

Name of Institution	What is the average time to degree in years (e.g., 5.25 years)?	What is the range (e.g., 4.5 -- 10.0 years)?	What is the desired time to degree in years (e.g., 4.0 years)?	Minimum # of credits to graduate (1 credit = 1 hour student contact time)	# of credits for REQUIRED courses or seminars	Minimum # of credits for ELECTIVE courses or seminars
University of Pittsburgh (IS&T)	5	4-8	5	60	30	12
University of Pittsburgh (LIS)	5	4-7	4	54	36	?
Indiana University (LIS)	6 years?	3-12 years	4 years	90 hours (university grad school requirement)	10, but there are required categories that students must fulfill, such as major, minor, and methods courses.	There is no official minimum. A student could take all required category-filling courses and make up the rest with dissertation writing credits. Most students have at least 9 credits of electives, though.
Indiana University (I&C)	5	4-6	5-6 (depends if they start with Masters)			
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	5.4	3 to 9	4 to 5	36 plus dissertation	12 plus dissertation	24
The University of Washington	5.5	3.5-7.5	4.5	90	24	36
Drexel University	5.5	4-8	4.5	45 with MS degree, 90 with BS/BA degree	18	18
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin				no credits required - strictly an ABD program		
	unclear	3-10	3		-	-
University of California, Irvine	6.25 years	3 - 12 years	5 years	44	20	24
University of Texas at Austin	6	3-10	4.5	85	39	9
University College Dublin	6	4-9 years	4	30	NA	NA

Survey of iSchool Doctoral Programs: Summary

UC Berkeley	5.5	4 to 10	normative time of 5-6 years	36	12 units breadth requirement	24 units major and minor areas requirement
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey	ca. 5.5 years (I need to check on this information)	4 - 7 years	4 - 6 years	81 (does not correspond to contact time in hours)	57 credits	varies by area: 6 credits (COM, LIS); 9 credits (Media Studies)
University of Michigan	6	4-8	5	36	9	25
Syracuse University	7.5	5-17	5	78	18	42
University of Maryland	5.5	4-9	4	25	10	15
The University of British Columbia	N/A	N/A	no response	24	24	0
University of Toronto	6	4.5-8	4 FT; 6 PT	39 + dissertation	30	9

Summary of Breakout Discussions

Where will our graduates find jobs? Are they prepared? What kind of new faculty are we hiring? Will we hire i-School graduate?

- iSchool hires are coming from computer science, administration, iSchools, education, English, B-Schools, communications, HCI/HCC, and LIS.
- Graduates are finding places as faculty, in government, in industrial research, and in non-profits. Some leave the program before graduating.
- Career counseling is important with some programs providing specific classes and workshops that address the question – What does it mean to be a researcher? What does it mean to be an engaged intellectual?
- Explicit training, mentoring and coaching such skill as the follows is important – reviewing, shaping public intellectual discourse, networking and working a social or hiring event, resumes and CVs, performing well at conferences, selecting publication venues, and so forth.
- There is a heightened importance of quality indicators, including of # of publications, prospects for funded research, teaching experience, ability to collaborate, and so forth.

How to support students' timely progress through the program?

- Mentoring students in phases:
 - *Launch*: Program advisors, advanced students mentor 1st year students, develop program expectations and shared responsibilities (submitting grants, paper, etc.)
 - *Continue*: Annual reviews, research presentations, students' mentoring ideas
 - *Out of the nest*: Writing boot-camp (writing well and quickly)
- Being ready for interventions and be ready to support faculty when advisor or committee problems arise, funding becomes a problem, writers block, social isolation, and so forth.

How to ensure and improve the quality of faculty-student mentoring?

- Key goal: Moving from “student” to “independent scholar”
- Setting ‘hard’ deadlines
 - Accountability
 - Annual review process

Three cross-cutting themes:

1. The above three overlapping questions are central challenges shared by all iSchools;
2. These questions can be addressed through developmental stages as students as students move through their programs, with formal and informal practices;
3. Faculty members need support and mentoring to be good mentors for students – both collective and individual aspects are important.

iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Award Competition

2012.03.22

Call for Nominations

The iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Competition Committee invites nominations for the iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Award Competition. The Committee looks for outstanding dissertations in the information field that have been completed during the period of July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012 and will select up to two (2) best dissertations for the year. The awards will be given out at the 2013 annual i-conference meeting, and thereafter annually.

The Jury

This year, the jury representing a diverse range of disciplines, consists of the following:

- ... from ... University
- ... from ... University

Eligibility

Each iSchool member school can nominate one applicant for the award. The applicant should have successfully defended the doctoral dissertation and completed the doctoral degree (including all final revisions, if any, and all final paper work) within the academic year from July 1, 2011 to June 30 2012. The dissertation research can be on any topic in the information field, broadly defined, and use any methodology.

Submission Materials for each Nomination

All materials must be in English. The author holds the copy right of the summary paper and the dissertation.

1. A summary paper of the dissertation research. The summary paper should be up to 20 double-spaced pages with 12 point Times New Roman font and at least one-inch margins (excluding the title page and the references), and should consist of three sections: Title Page, Body, and References. The Title Page should contain the title of the dissertation, author name, email, phone number, address, current institution, advisor name and contact information, degree granting institution, and dissertation completion date. The Body of the summary paper should provide a comprehensive summary of the dissertation, introducing, for instance, the topic, the research context and questions, the theoretical or contextual framework, the methodology and methods, and the findings. The summary paper should be written for blind review; hence, all identifying information should be removed from the body of the paper and, as necessary, the references. The first page of the Body should include title, an abstract for up to 200 words, and a list of keywords. Tables and figures can be embedded in the text or attached at the end; they

iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Award Competition

count toward the 20-page limit. The References section should include a list of references formatted in any appropriate style.

2. A letter from the dissertation chair or the Doctoral Program Director of the degree granting institution. The letter attests that, (a) the summary paper is authored by the applicant only and is based on the applicant's dissertation; (b) the applicant is eligible for the award (see Eligibility); and (c) the dissertation is regarded by the dissertation committee and the degree granting institution as being representative of the best level of their doctoral work.
3. A PDF version of the complete dissertation.

Submission Instruction

Nominations should be submitted by September 15, 2012 to either an email address by email attachment, or an online review system set for the task. All three pieces of submission materials should be packed into one zipped file and named with the ischool's name and the applicant's name. For example, Syracuse-Jackson.zip is for the applicant Jackson from Syracuse University. Submissions after this date will not be considered. The candidate's dissertation chair or the Doctoral Program director should submit the nomination. An iSchool can submit only one nomination. Additional submissions from the same i-school will be returned without being considered.

Receipt of the nomination will be acknowledged within 48 hours of submission.

Review Process

The review process has two rounds. During the first round, the jury will review each summary paper in a blind review process. Their evaluation comments and numeric ratings will be used to select a smaller group of finalists that merit more detailed assessment as final candidates for the awards. In the second round, the finalists' summary papers and the entire dissertations will be reviewed. The ultimate selection will be made in this 2nd round. No reviews will be provided to the candidates or the nominators.

Criteria for evaluation

1. Significance of the research problem to today's challenges and opportunities
2. Theoretical contribution to the literature in any information related disciplines
3. Application and rigor of the appropriate research methods
4. Clarity and organization of the presentation
5. Novelty and/or substantial scholarly contribution to the understanding and practice of information related phenomena

Announcement and Honorarium

Winners will be notified ahead of and announced at the 2013 i-conference.

A winner will receive a certificate/plaque and up to \$2500 that can support the travel and registration to the conference.

2012 iConference, Toronto, February 6–10, 2012

Enhancing iSchools' Doctoral Education: What's Next? Attendee List

Friday, February 10, 9:00 AM • Trinity Ballroom, Salons II and III

Participants

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