

GPSS Report
Graduate Program Review
Department of Medical Education and Biomedical Informatics

On April 22nd, 2009 the University of Washington Graduate and Professional Student Senate participated in the Department of Medical Education and Biomedical Informatics program review. The review was attended by the GPSS Chief of Staff, as well a peer committee and 17 BHI students. This report summarizes students' comments, as well as the six UW Catalyst survey responses. There was a mixture of both doctoral fellowship students as well as two physicians, ranging from years 1 to 4 in the program. The program is typically 5 years long.

Student Expectations of Program

- Students indicated they were happy with the curriculum and were pleasantly surprised that they received more training than they expected.
- Students were happy with the faculty expertise in a broad range of fields.
- Students were also pleased that the program did not focus on one discipline.
- None of the students were concurrent with other programs.

Focus on Path of Study

- Many students expressed that they came into the program not knowing exactly in what direction they would be headed. Under the NLM fellowship, they were allowed to take whatever coursework they chose.

Funding

- Most of the students were under the NLM fellowship, but they indicated they would have preferred deferring the NLM fellowship to take on an RA/TAship their first year. They explained that this was because after their 1st year, they wanted to focus on their dissertation and with the NLM fellowship they could do that.
- Many students expressed a desire to have more faculty with more funding.

Diversity

- Students were pleased with the diverse backgrounds of their peers. Many students came into the program having received a degree in a different field, or having worked for many years in their career field.
- The diverse work experiences of students contributed to the overall general learning experience
- Students stated that the department made an effort to recruit out of other departments, not just undergraduates who had just graduated.
- Students also stated that the department does not have many requirements when you enter the program, so at times students with a weaker science background may have struggled.

Mentoring and Advising

- Students felt they needed more mentoring and advising mechanisms in the department – someone to discuss courses and plans of study with.

- Students stated that if you do not choose an advisor within the first two weeks, you are assigned one, and most of the time the advisor is not working in your plan of study.
- There was praise for Brian as an advisor and “go to” person.

Community

- Students felt that the community wasn’t very cohesive. There is not central location for them to congregate and socialize.
- Students also stated that the faculty was separate from a central location, so everyone is spread not only across campus, but across Seattle.
- Students also stated a need for offices, or a central location for them to put their things and work.

Overview

In general, the students were pleased with their program. Many expressed that they would recommend it to students seeking a degree in Biomedical and Health Informatics. The students also expressed satisfaction with the diversity of the department and the interdisciplinary nature of their program. There were very few negative remarks from the students, and if they did bring up a problem they stated that the department was very responsive and made changes accordingly.