Dr. Judith Stoddart and Dr. Henry Campa, III

In partnership with graduate programs across campus, the Graduate School seeks to introduce students to a range of career activities and opportunities with the goal of assisting degree completion and enhancing professional success. To aid students with the career and professional development planning process, the Graduate School developed an organizational model known by the acronym PREP. PREP focuses on four skills that are key to making the transition from undergraduate to graduate student, and from graduate student to professional colleague: Planning throughout the graduate career to identify and successfully achieve career goals; developing Resilience and tenacity to thrive through personal and professional stages; practicing active Engagement in making important life decisions and in acquiring the skills necessary to attain career goals; and attaining high standards of Professionalism in research, teaching, and service. Addressing these skills through various stages of a graduate program, the PREP model helps students maximize their opportunities for professional growth at Michigan State University.

In 2005-2006, the Graduate School will present workshops that target the four key skills at three stages of a graduate program: early (coursework, qualifying exams, career planning), mid (certifying exams, research planning, dissertation prospectus), and late (dissertation writing, job search, postdoc). Programs offered through the PREP model include: Conflict Resolution; Career Selection and Professional Development Workshops; Dissertation/Thesis Completion Workshops; The Ph.D. Job Series (co-sponsored with Career Services and Placement); Responsible Conduct of Research (co-sponsored with the Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies); The Teaching Assistant Program (co-sponsored with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies). Several of these series have been signature efforts of co-sponsored with Career Services (co-sponsored with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies).

Graduate Studies); co-sponsored with the Vice-President for Research and Dissertations/Thesis Completion Workshops and Selection and Professional Development Workshops.

The Graduate School’s Career and Professional Development programs aimed at giving doctoral students and post docs a solid foundation on which to build their careers. MSU is unique in the U.S. in terms of the type and diversity of programs that we offer, the staffing we provide in support of programs, and the developmental model on which our programs are based. Our model is known as PREP.

PREP (http://grad.msu.edu/cpd.htm) is Planning, Resilience, Engagement, and Professionalism. PREP activities include four Saturday conferences on preparing for a variety of careers, 8-10 workshops on specific topics, conflict resolution and communication skills, and the Certification in College Teaching Program. The Saturday conferences often have MSU Ph.D. alumni as guest speakers and break-out session leaders. The experiences of our alumni are both popular and very useful to the students as they plan their futures.

Current data show that across all disciplines, 85-90% of doctoral students will find satisfying employment in the more than 4000 non-research-extensive community colleges, colleges and universities, the private sector, and government and non-governmental non-profit sectors. Relatively few by comparison will be employed by research-extensive universities like MSU. PREP’s goals are to introduce students to many career options and types of employers and to help them prepare themselves to be successful.

What’s in this issue of The Graduate Post?
Rique Campa (Faculty-in-Residence, Fisheries and Wildlife) and Judith Stoddart (Graduate School Fellowships Coordinator, English) introduce the concept of PREP—why this and why now. The interactive matrix that is part of PREP is a terrific tool to help students and postdocs choose appropriate programs.

Matt Helm, Ph.D. (University of Arizona), hired last year on a joint appointment between the Graduate School and Career and Placement Services, describes his background and approach to assisting doctoral students via individual career counseling and targeted workshops. Matt’s position is unique in the U.S.

Bill Holland is an enthusiastic, and well-received Ph.D. alumni speaker at one of the Saturday career conferences. Dr. Holland is completing a book entitled: “Are There Any Good Jobs Left?”. Dean Klomparens interviewed Dr. Holland about his many careers, his book, and his advice for doctoral students and post docs seeking careers in the private sector.

Graduate students in Neuroscience, one of MSU’s Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (CID) programs, describe their experiences in working with faculty to improve the doctoral experience. The CID is a national program, by invitation, that focuses on improving doctoral programs.

As usual, we also salute graduate students who have traveled regionally, nationally, and internationally, to present research papers, collect data, and network. You can peruse this list of scholars by visiting: http://grad.msu.edu/gradpost.htm.

Karen Klomparens, Dean
The Graduate School for many years; the Ph.D. Job Search Series and the Career Selection and Professional Development workshops are recent ventures. What is new for all of the programs is the goal to align them in a developmental model to ensure that the needs of students at all phases of their programs are being addressed, and to target planning, resilience, engagement and professionalism as key skills that carry through the various workshops. This focus will bring together the evaluation and assessment of each program into a larger, long-term research project that looks at how to measure the impact of such interventions on retention, completion and job placement. The evaluation effort will also bring together the efforts of offices across campus in ways that are unique in the national landscape of research universities.

The organizational tool for the PREP programs is the matrix (for a fully interactive version, go to [http://grad.msu.edu/cpd.htm](http://grad.msu.edu/cpd.htm)), which offers a gateway to career and professional development resources at MSU. Featuring relevant workshops, activities, web links and contact people, it helps graduate students organize a wealth of available information according to different phases of a doctoral program. Each cell is an interactive link that provides a different conceptual means of approaching the career and professional development trajectory. Information can be accessed through a key skill, a phase in the graduate program, or through a particular workshop that is most appropriate to address a specific skill at a given stage. As the web site grows, the skill and stage resources will be expanded to include bibliographical references, web links to interactive

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<td>Navigating the Ph.D.: A Writing Workshop</td>
<td>Career Selection and Professional Development: Translating Academic Success into Expanded Career Opportunities</td>
<td>The Teaching Assistant Program: Orientation</td>
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resources, workshop notes, and research gathered from workshop assessments.

The PREP model responds to recent research on graduate student development, from studies that have investigated the gap between the graduate school experience and the first years in an academic or non-academic position (Golde and Dore 2001; Nyquist, Austin, Sprague and Wulff, 2001; Nerad and Cerny, 1999) to those that consider factors contributing to completion and attrition (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004; Lovitts, 2001; Weidman, Twale and Stein, 2001; Golde 2000; Tinto, 1993). Information gathered in the spring 2005 MSU Ph.D. Career and Professional Development Survey (see pages 5-6) will be used to refine the model and focus on graduate student needs that are not being adequately met. As co-coordinators of the Career Selection and Professional Development workshop series, we discovered that the interest in such offerings is growing. The new workshop series last year had a combined attendance of over 350. Karen Klomparens, Dean of the Graduate School, notes that while Ph.D. programs and faculty provide excellent education and training in conducting research and pursuing scholarly endeavors, as well as information on academic careers in institutions with which they are familiar, there remains a gap in information on other satisfying careers. PREP’s four all-day Saturday conferences and the subsequent shorter workshops fill that gap.

Workshop participant response has been positive. One of the attendees wrote: “Thanks for providing this workshop and the others the Graduate School has provided. My department had never provided this or any similar information like this and I would never have gotten it without the Graduate School.” One sign that the workshops are addressing timely issues is that they typically fill within 48 hours of the workshop electronic posting. Dean Klomparens has good reason for optimism about PREP’s direction: “The record high attendance at these events and the number of students and research associates/postdocs who remain on the waiting list tell me that these are successful! I’m very pleased with this program and look forward to participating this year.”

The Conflict Resolution workshops will be the first to undergo an IRB human subjects-approved outcome assessment study. Dr. Julie Brockman explains:

“We are using a mixed-method approach to determine graduate students’ conflict-resolution style preferences prior to and several months following the conflict resolution workshop. As part of the evaluation we will conduct focus groups to obtain qualitative data about the strategies graduate students use when preventing or resolving conflicts with faculty.”

The assessment will try to measure whether active participation in the six hour conflict resolution workshop, using an interactive teaching method, enhances the students’ knowledge and understanding about the interest-based approach to resolving conflict, thereby altering their perceived preference when selecting a conflict resolution strategy. As formal assessments of all of the programs are implemented over the next few years, the Graduate School will gather valuable data on how the PREP model impacts the graduate experience at MSU. Few national studies have addressed how we know whether specific interventions make a difference. PREP attempts to set the parameters for such a discussion. The PREP model also sets the stage for cross-campus partnerships that can build on that discussion to strengthen the infrastructure for graduate education and help students meet their professional development objectives.

References

Enhancing Career Preparation for Doctoral Students:
If You Build It They Will Come

Dr. Matt Helm, Graduate Career Services

In the landmark national survey of more than 4,000 doctoral students, *At Cross Purposes: What the Experiences of Doctoral Students Reveal about Doctoral Education*, the authors conclude, “The data from this survey show that in today’s doctoral programs there is a three-way mismatch between student goals, training, and actual careers” (Golde & Dore, 2001). Fewer than 50% of doctoral recipients will find employment as tenure-track faculty in a college or university and most of those will be in non-research institutions. Many students are unaware of alternative career trajectories. In the 2000 National Doctoral Program Survey of 32,000 graduate students through the National Association of Graduate and Graduate Professional Students, doctoral students graded career guidance and placement services, giving a C/C- to their help on careers outside academia, and a B- to their help on careers in academia. Students are seeking career advice and support outside of their academic departments. What are their choices?

The fear of not being able to secure academic and non-academic positions is exacerbated by the powerful academic culture which communicates that to be anything other than a tenure-track faculty member at a research university is to be a “failure”. Students are going through a two stage process of 1) realizing how difficult an academic job search is and 2) coping with the reality that these jobs (in many cases) really aren’t there. Some MSU students say, “I wish I would have done more to prepare myself for alternatives outside of university teaching and the tenure-track in a research one university.”

Guidance on how students may use their advanced training in settings outside of academe is not part of the doctoral preparation process for the majority of students. Students are not asking important questions at key stages of their professional development, nor are they encouraged to do so. They often ask about the job market and how to prepare for a professional search when they are nearing the end of their programs. Students do request help with writing curriculum vitae, resumes, cover letters, academic applications, interviewing, and identifying academic and non-academic job openings. Students should be engaging in the job search from the beginning of their programs (see PREP model on page 2), especially those considering non-academic careers. Faculty who have not worked outside of the academy find it difficult to advise students interested in an alternative career track. Indeed, Dean Klomparens recently said, “As a faculty member and even as graduate program director I had a narrow perspective about career choices for Ph.D.s. As Graduate Dean I participated in many meetings where studies are reported that show even the most prestigious universities place many of their Ph.D.s in non-research universities”.

Among many Ph.D. students and post-docs there is a sense of ambiguity and trepidation about securing professional positions upon the completion of their Ph.D. or post-doc. Students are discovering that the academic job market for Ph.D.s is small in research universities. But other kinds of higher education institutions may have more openings. There are roughly 260 research universities that produce Ph.D.s and 4,000 educational institutions of other types. Universities are classified by the numbers and types of degrees conferred (see Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education - http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/index.htm).

The Creation of Graduate Career Services

Michigan State University has a long history of providing quality graduate education to meet the changing needs of our society. Responding to the challenges defined above, the Graduate School and Career Services and Placement chose an integrated approach to maximize MSU’s impact on Ph.D. career and professional development. The ultimate goal is to encourage doctoral students to complete their degrees and enter a rewarding career.

Career Services and Placement was interested in a counselor who could help students make sense of their doctoral experience and who could help a Ph.D. candidate navigate the various aspects associated with a job search. The Graduate School was already addressing the issue of career and professional development using programmatic interventions. For example, in 2004-2005, under the direction of Dr. Rique Campa (Faculty-in-Residence in
During 2004-2005, a formal infrastructure for Graduate Career Services was created: A one-of-a-kind Graduate Career Services office, jointly administered by the Graduate School and Career Services and Placement.

To organize and direct this unit and to meet the challenges described above, I was hired as a graduate career consultant in the fall of 2004 to work with the growing number of doctoral students seeking support and advice on career and professional development-related issues. I am one of about 30 people nationally (most employed within the past 3-5 years) who work specifically within the realm of graduate career services. My primary roles at MSU are as a Ph.D. career adviser, educator, advocate, and researcher for both academic and non-academic positions.

In talking with my colleagues around the country who are engaged in career and professional development work with doctoral students, it is clear that my joint position between the Graduate School and Career and Placement Services is unique. The willingness to engage in dialogue led the two units, with input from colleges, to create something new and innovative, something that could not have been created as successfully by either unit alone. Across the country, the majority of graduate career advisors are situated in either career service offices or in the graduate school with both offices often providing overlapping programming. The MSU model brings together a diversity of experience and resources that leads to the design of high quality programs and a balance between advising and programming.

During the past year I met with hundreds of Ph.D. students. In listening to their stories, I developed a deeper understanding of the diverse lives of doctoral students and the various idiosyncrasies associated with disciplinary, departmental, and institutional cultures. I learned that Ph.D. professional socialization is often not preparing students to understand the organizational environments in which they will work and is not giving students experiential learning opportunities to develop this understanding. It became clear to me that most students are unaware of the differences in academic institutional type (Doctoral Extensive I and II, Master and Comprehensives I and II, Liberal Arts I and II, Community Colleges, etc.). Not only are they unaware of the differing missions found in the diversity of American higher education, they are unaware of non-academic career options.

**The “PREP” Model**

As a core part of program development to meet the needs of doctoral students, the Graduate School created a new developmental model for Ph.D. Career and Professional Development (http://grad.msu.edu/cpd.htm). The PREP model focuses on the specific stages of development (early, mid, late) and the four professional skills that are key to career and professional development: Planning, Resilience, Engagement, and Professionalism. The attendance at the 2004-2005 Saturday career conferences suggested that Ph.D. students (as well as post-docs) from many disciplines wanted career and professional development support. In discussing the pilot series Dr. Campa commented, “There is both interest in and a need for the topics we cover in the career and professional development conferences with over 30 departments represented in each of the conferences. This is an indication that there is certainly a need across departments. The evaluations tell us that the students need the information and that they are happy with the quality”. See the PREP article on page 1 for more details.

**Ph.D. Career and Professional Development Survey**

An early task of Graduate Career Services was to design and administer a needs assessment survey in
order to understand the unique needs of MSU doctoral students. While data from national studies cited above are available, our survey allowed for examination of characteristics unique to MSU.

In the spring of 2004, the survey was disseminated via the web to over 2,400 Ph.D. students, with 668 respondents (27%), representing all colleges. Preliminary results suggest that MSU Ph.D. students have comparable experiences to students across the country who responded to the Golde & Dore (2001) survey. Students feel that they are being inadequately prepared for their future professional roles. Students are concerned with their ability to teach, conduct research, write grants, supervise others, find positions, consider career issues, and meet stated and/or perceived expectations of their advisor in career selection. Students also requested more programming focused on grant writing, job searching, networking, and publishing. We used these data to create several programs in the Ph.D. Job Search Series. Look for a complete report of survey findings in the next Graduate Post.

My Role as a Scholar-Practitioner

So what do I bring to the Graduate Career Services office? My position as a Graduate Career Consultant combines the core elements of my own professional background. I have a Master’s degree in Student Affairs Administration. My Ph.D. research at the University of Arizona focused on professional identity. My dissertation was a study of professional socialization, specifically the process graduate students go through as they form a professional identity. I also examined the extent to which market forces were reshaping professional environments.

Professional socialization is the process through which students selectively acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for entry into a professional career requiring advanced training. Ph.D. students are formally and informally socialized to commit to a professional role identity. This internalization process leads Ph.D. students to regulate their professional behavior in accordance with the knowledge, values, and skills associated with the academic profession and their discipline (Weidman et. al., 2001). My research suggested that students internalize the role identity of a “Research I” faculty member which may not be appropriate for other academic and non-academic positions. In addition, I found that new professionals in my field were being socialized differently in the classroom environment than they were in the work environment. Students learned the theoretical and practical application of the field only to find that this expertise was not practiced or valued in the work environment.

My plans for the future include both programs for current students and post-docs and to further research to improve programs to serve MSU. This research will be informed by the suggestions of faculty and students as well as by the input of graduate students and post-docs. I would be happy to meet with faculty or graduate students interested in this topic, and I encourage everyone to provide input on the activities and goals of the Graduate Career Services office.

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References


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Assistance Provided by Graduate Career Services

Ph.D. Career Counseling
CV, Cover Letter, and Resume Critiques
Ph.D. Job Search Workshops
Online Resources for the Academic and Non-Academic Job Search
Self-Assessments
Graduate Career Resource Library
Email Distribution Lists
“The Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate: A Student Perspective”

Robert E. Drolet, Jianhua Ren, Michael D. Schwartz

The goal of the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (CID), sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation, is to understand and improve the graduate student experience through the study of graduate training in disciplines including mathematics, education, history, chemistry, and neuroscience.

In order to systematically review our program, the Neuroscience Program (NSP) developed a focus group of faculty, graduate students, and post-docs called the CID leadership team. Graduate student-members of the CID leadership team first administered a written survey to students, post-docs and faculty in order to identify elements of our training program for evaluation and improvement.

Concurrently, a series of program-wide discussions identified the mission of the training program, as well as the values, skills and experiences that would best prepare students for post-graduate careers in neuroscience-related fields. At present, smaller focus groups are examining individual training elements and revising them as necessary to provide a graduate experience consistent with the mission statement. In addition, the CID leadership team attends national and regional CID conferences to discuss with other graduate programs the problems we identified, and to find innovative solutions.

Through all of these activities, we made enormous progress in building a better graduate training program for the NSP here at Michigan State University. More importantly, as graduate students we gained a better perspective and understanding of: 1) our own Neuroscience graduate program here at MSU; 2) neuroscience as a discipline; and 3) graduate education as a whole.

Initially, the NSP saw the CID as an excellent opportunity to review our entire training program. Student and faculty surveys identified the comprehensive examination as a good first training element for review. CID discussions clarified our thinking on the goals of the comp, namely that it should test ‘real world’ skills such as data analysis and hypothesis testing, rather than knowledge of discrete fact sets.

The initial format was similar to an in-class essay-based exam administered over 2 days, in which students were asked to synthesize and answer questions ‘on the fly’ without reference materials. Based on student and faculty feedback and discussion with other participating CID departments, a new format was adopted that tests students’ ability to write, search, and integrate the literature, and analyze data and their background knowledge of neuroscience.

This review and revision process required us to identify the basic training goals of our program—to train Ph.D.s as independent researchers in, and representatives of, the discipline of neuroscience—and then design new elements to meet those goals. As a result, we are more invested in the NSP with respect to our own training as well as that of our peers. We expect our ongoing CID discussions to continue to facilitate the improvement of the NSP as a Ph.D. training program.

Neuroscience seeks to understand the nervous system and how it mediates an organism’s interaction with the environment, that is, how we perceive, process and respond in a coordinated manner. Through the CID, we also came to see that neuroscience is also by its nature a highly collaborative discipline. For much of our discipline’s history, neuroscientists were not
trained in programs such as the NSP, but rather were initially trained in a diversity of fields, including but not limited to physiology, cell biology, toxicology, and psychology. This diversity encourages collaboration between researchers examining the same phenomena from different perspectives and levels of analysis.

However, it also makes the ‘depth-versus-breadth of training’ issue particularly difficult, as breadth in this case can extend from molecular biology to cognitive psychology. Given this, how can we design a course curriculum that balances a sufficiently broad-based background in neuroscience with time to develop in-depth specialization in the lab? How can we effectively design a comprehensive exam that taps both pools of knowledge?

Through the exchange of ideas with other CID participants, we learned that issues such as these are not unique to our program, but are shared by other neuroscience departments. We are also learning that this new type of collaboration between departments helps us arrive at better solutions.

The ‘depth-versus-breadth’ issue is common to many graduate training programs. There is a common analogy linking graduate education to an hourglass. In this model, introductory coursework represents the topmost part, in which a student surveys the entire field and develops a feel for its particular intellectual terrain. The student’s educational focus will tighten through further coursework and research, until, at the middle of the hourglass, one is usually considered an expert (perhaps the world’s only expert) on a relatively narrow topic.

Finally, the progressive widening of the hourglass may be thought of as placing research on a highly specialized topic back into the context of the established body of knowledge. Doing so perpetuates the discipline. We do this partially through our own work, but more broadly, we do it through communicating the results of that work, and through recruiting new faces into our field.

For example, many disciplines are increasingly dependent upon extramural funding provided by both government and private sources. To obtain funding, we must convince people within our specialty and outside of it that our work contributes broadly to our discipline. The ability to express the importance and meaning of our research is also critical to generating interest in future generations of scholars and scientists, the undergraduates we teach, high-school students volunteering in our labs, and grade-schoolers in outreach programs.

Through our CID discussions the idea of responsibility or ‘stewardship’ to one’s discipline became part of our vocabulary, and part of our understanding of what it means to be a scholar.

When the three of us sat down to discuss how our involvement with the CID impacted our individual graduate careers and our development as scholars, it became clear that a common theme was emerging. Working with the CID made us more aware of our place within the graduate training process at three levels: within our own training program, within the discipline of neuroscience, and within the context of graduate education across disciplines. Whereas most students quickly learn about the progressive specialization involved in their training, we learned much more about the ‘other half of the hourglass’, where there is a progressive broadening of scope from the individual program to graduate education as a whole. This experience now informs our choices about our own graduate training. It is also a foundation for working collaboratively with others in our field. Most importantly, it places the Ph.D. experience in a broader context of scholarship.
As of November 6, 2005 the Campaign for MSU reached the billion dollar mark. To be exact: $1,068,197,552! Our challenge for the remainder of the Capital Campaign is to continue to raise funding for endowments. The Graduate School efforts are focused on endowments to fund graduate students across the colleges at MSU.

Endowment dollars are of utmost importance to MSU, because those dollars never “go away”. They are here in perpetuity. They can’t be taken away when budget cuts are made, and they can’t be entirely spent. Only a portion of the earnings are designated to be spent on an annual basis, and the remainder goes back into the corpus for growth of the account. So, as the endowment grows so does the stability of Michigan State University, and our faculty’s ability to recruit and retain the best and brightest graduate students.

The Graduate School focuses our Capital Campaign efforts on fellowship support for graduate students through endowments. We look to retired faculty and Ph.D. alumni to help us fund the future of MSU with money directed in support of graduate student fellowships. These fellowships help students devote more of their time and energy to the classes, research and scholarship that will make them successful.

Dean Klomparens and I travel around the country meeting with Ph.D. alums. We often host dinners with 6-10 alumni who are interested in meeting with each other, as well as with us! The map below shows where our Ph.D. alums are in the U.S. and how many are in each state. We hope to tell you more about our international Ph.D. alums in a future edition of The Graduate Post.

If you are a Ph.D. alum, we want to hear from you. What do you remember about your experience at MSU? Did you have financial support? Would support have made a difference in how long it took you to get your degree? Would you be interested in helping someone in the future through a planned gift from your estate or through an annuity that would provide income for you for life, but then help students after you are gone?

If you are thinking about making charitable contributions, please think about MSU and graduate education.

Factoid: 50-Year Ph.D.’s!
MSU has 263 alumni with whom we are still in touch, who received their MSU Ph.D. degrees in 1956 and earlier.
“Are There Any Good Jobs Left?”

Dr. Karen Klomparens, Dean of the Graduate School at Michigan State University, interviews Dr. Bill Holland, author of “Are There Any Good Jobs Left?” Dr. Holland is a presenter in the MSU Career and Professional Development Conference Series that is part of PREP.

Bill Holland, B.A. from MSU’s James Madison College and Ph.D. from the Department of Political Science. Recently retired Executive Vice President, Right Management Consultants, where he had operational responsibilities for the career transition and management consulting businesses in the West Group Consulting Practice, an assignment including responsibility for more than 52 offices and 4 franchise territories representing over 110 million dollars in sales. Previous positions and honors include: Executive Vice President, Meridian Bancorp; Chief Human Resources Officer, University of Pennsylvania; professor of Political Science at University of California-Riverside; professor at Michigan State University (James Madison College); first recipient of Michigan State University’s Excellence in Teaching Citation; served as executive on loan to the city of New York during the Koch administration; first African American elected governor of Michigan Boy’s State.

KK: What was your biggest challenge when adapting to the demands and opportunities in your first academic position?

BH: What surprised me then and now is how politically charged the academic environment is. I was not prepared. I was really naïve. I needed political savvy: it’s an important part of what you need to know and understand in order to thrive.

The reality of politics is also true in business. In that context, often “the truth” is not what is important, or whether you agree or not with what is being said or done. No one has time to argue “the truth” as faculty do in academic settings. In business, an important survival technique is to focus on what is important to the people who are important to your success. Educate yourself on what is important. It’s in your best interest!

KK: Talk a bit about how life in the corporate world has affected your attitude towards your graduate education and its effectiveness in preparing you for life after school.

BH: I was taught that the Ph.D. is an important part of your portfolio. But that’s not always the case in business. It’s unrealistic to think that it is the portfolio that opens doors. There’s no automatic advantage. Proving yourself is a universal, and it’s the way in which you do this that defines business and academia. It is not just your portfolio; it’s what you’ve done with it. What the Ph.D. and higher education generally represent is the ability to think, and thereby create value. This is of fundamental importance!

At the Career and Professional Development Conference on non-academic careers in business, industry, and government, Becky Humphries, Director of the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources, said that the key to success is to find a job no one wants, to do it, and to do with distinction. She is absolutely correct! You need to create value: that is the key.

To take control of our lives, we cannot concede too much to corporate retirement and health care. In the past, we structured our lives around the continuity of income and the acquisition of debt. We can’t do that anymore.

KK: What are some of the important differences between academic culture and the culture of business and industry that new Ph.D.s should know?
BH: In the academy, the interpretation of information gathered through research is fundamental. The individual alone can contribute or partner with someone else. In business, the individual must partner. People skills are more important. Competence in working with others in collaborative settings is an expectation not a differentiation.

KK: Some people say having a doctoral degree can be a drawback outside academia. What does have a doctoral degree add for students who are making a move from academia to the business world?

BH: The doctoral degree teaches a person to think critically, to analyze data and patterns, and to write and present. These are key attributes for success. Business and industry must focus on practical problem-solving and the “bottom line”, so there is little time for obscure references or a focus on past work. They work on fast timetables and focus on the future.

KK: What is one piece of advice you could give to a new Ph.D. student who is uncertain of his/her career trajectory?

BH: Be mindful that you don’t know what you don’t know. Talk, explore, connect, network. Find out about your options. Use the Internet, and do not just look for titles of jobs. Connect with the connectors. There is more understanding of academia by business than vice versa. Be especially mindful to read pieces about the values and workings of business.

KK: To your mind, what are some specific things that MSU, graduate programs and The Graduate School can do to better prepare graduate students for a 21st century job market, academic and otherwise?

BH: I am currently completing a book entitled Are There Any Good Jobs Left? The book will be published by Praeger, Inc and is due out May 2006. In it, I describe the “age of the disposable worker” and various aspects of what that means. Wages are being set globally, and often by American companies who expect employees to spend considerable time in overseas assignments. Being global or international is very important in this new age. To get a sense of the developing mind-set, recall that a person’s first job typically lasts 5 years in business and industry. I’m glad to see that MSU and other graduate schools are taking career choices and realities seriously and helping students learn what they need to know.

Feedback from PREP Participants

Dear Dean Klomparens,

I am a first year graduate student in Social/Personality Psychology and would like to thank you for all of the hard work you have put into graduate student development this semester. I feel like I am already understanding what is expected of me as a full time faculty member when I leave MSU, and I have greatly benefited from attending multiple seminars sponsored by the Graduate School. I also think that these programs give MSU students an advantage over students at other schools because few other schools have these types of programs.

Thanks again for helping me have a great start to my career at MSU. I really hope to attend similar seminars in the future.

Have a wonderful break.

Sincerely,

Kimberly K. Assad, M.A. Candidate
Department of Psychology

Dr. Helm,

Just a quick note to thank you for helping me prepare for December interviews.

As I stand here after my interviews, I realize how well prepared I was (in both “process” and “content”) for these interviews by the programs you presented and the comments on my materials.

Particularly helpful to me (from a “focusing” standpoint) were:

• What are the 5 things I want them to know about me?
• You are interviewing from the moment you step off the plane to the moment you get back on.
• Never assume they know. Tell them.
• Think “fit”.

Truly - Thank you and the Graduate School.

Steve Mooney, Ph.D. Candidate
Dairy Nutrition
Department of Animal Science

01/06
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To serve as an advocate for graduate education to the University and beyond and to enhance the quality of graduate education at MSU in all its diverse dimensions.

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