

GRADUATE PROGRAMS APPENDIX 8

APR Survey Results Summary March 2023

Graduate curriculum oversight

Background: Over the last two years, an ad hoc ‘graduate curriculum working group’ has been engaged in appraising the content, organization and visibility of the graduate program as a whole and of the individual specializations. The group is unelected, and its role is somewhat ambiguous.

Going forward, how would you like this work to continue? Select one option.

The following is a summation of actionable items

1. A graduate curriculum committee to be formally implemented and approved by graduate council and CASNR with members elected for set terms. The committee votes on approval of graduate level courses and strategizes and works towards curriculum and program improvements.	31
2. The existing curriculum committee should continue to have responsibility for voting on graduate level courses.	8
3. The graduate committee should assume the above responsibilities.	10
4. Other/hybrid (please specify).	4

identified prior to and during the October 2022 Agronomy and Horticulture retreat. The priorities fall into four broad themes (A-D). At the bottom is a list of other possible priorities. Respondents were asked to indicate relative priority by responding to one of four options.

Broad Theme A: Program relevance, identity and rigor

Although the new curriculum website helps in framing the identity of the department’s graduate program and provides a means of tracking recommendations of the department’s areas of specializations, further work is needed beyond the website itself for the department to establish an identity and promote its graduate program as a whole.

1. The department should address the following questions: Is there one or more common threads uniting the specializations? How do

courses fit into the overall curriculum of the department and what common courses are lacking (e.g., graduate physiology)?

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	12
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	33
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	5
4. Not a priority	2

2. There is a lack of graduate only level courses in some specializations and the level of proficiency /rigor required within and across specializations is ambiguous. Each specialization or some specializations should identify core required courses.

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	16
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	28
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	4
4. Not a priority	4

3. Each graduate specialization should conduct an external review (similar to the one conducted in 2021 for Plant Breeding and Genetics) to assess rigor and industry relevance.

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	12
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	27
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	10
4. Not a priority	3

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Broad theme B: Career preparedness for graduate students

1. Explore the need for establishing a Career Diversity Advisory Committee, which should include industry representation. The Alumni Advisory Council could provide insight and oversight to the need and development of such a committee.

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	10
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	30
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	10
4. Not a priority	2

2. Develop infrastructure for internship and sabbatical experiences for graduate students to:

– a. create connections between our graduate program and a wide array of companies who seek qualified employees.

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	15
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	27
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	7
4. Not a priority	3

– b. Facilitate extended projects that benefit companies while incentivizing faculty to cooperate with time, tuition and salary compensation.

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	11
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	25
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	13
4. Not a priority	2

– c. Explore opportunities for reciprocal programs, for exchanging internships/sabbaticals with industry and other national and international research organizations.

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	11
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	24
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	13
4. Not a priority	4

3. Develop vocational graduate student training for academic careers in the following:

– a. Training in diverse communication skills from classroom, to government, to industry, to farmers.

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	24
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	19
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	7
4. Not a priority	1

– b. Training and placement in teaching for graduate students and post-docs, especially at the advanced undergraduate and graduate levels.

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	10
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	24
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	15
4. Not a priority	2

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– c. Training in developing and funding independent research programs and projects.

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| 1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap | 13 |
| 2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years | 24 |
| 3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR | 12 |
| 4. Not a priority | 2 |

4. Implementation of Individual Development Plan for all graduate students.

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|---|----|
| 1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap | 14 |
| 2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years | 18 |
| 3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR | 13 |
| 4. Not a priority | 5 |

Broad theme C: Mentoring

1. All students should have a mentor who is separate from their advisor who may or may not be on their committee.

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|---|----|
| 2. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap | 10 |
| 3. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years | 16 |
| 4. Lower importance and probably not include in APR | 19 |
| 5. Not a priority | 7 |

2. Faculty should have access to formal professional development on mentoring as part of their advising or separate mentor roles. Provision should be made in annual reporting to get credit for mentoring.

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|---|----|
| 1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap | 17 |
| 2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years | 27 |
| 3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR | 7 |
| 4. Not a priority | 1 |

3. Opportunities should be provided to late-stage graduate students to serve as peer mentors to incoming students, thereby providing valuable mentoring experience.

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|---|----|
| 1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap | 11 |
| 2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years | 28 |
| 3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR | 9 |
| 4. Not a priority | 4 |

Broad Theme D. Inclusion

Prelude Question. Does Inclusion need to be part of this section on the APR given that we have a whole section devoted to DEI in the APR?

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|--------|----|
| 1. Yes | 33 |
| 2. No | 18 |

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1. There is a need for improved inclusion of isolated and international students. Such students are frequently slower to know of and/or complete required steps in their graduate program and may communicate with their peers less. Such a program needs to be proactive in reaching out to these students before they fall behind.

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	22
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	24
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	4
4. Not a priority	1

2. Students who are located at research centers off-campus especially have the need of more inclusion, with better and other creative opportunities for on-line and distance ed graduate classes and training.

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	27
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	21
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	3

Other Themes Identified

1. **LOW ENROLLMENT COURSES:** Investigate strategies for increasing enrollment?

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	10
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	29
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	10
4. Not a priority	2

2. **FUNDING:** Investigate how we can be more innovative and productive when searching for funds to support prospective and current graduate students?

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	21
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	23
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	5
4. Not a priority	1

3. **GRADUATE FTE:** Investigate how can do better at increasing our graduate FTE for specific needs (e.g., Physiology) and how do we optimize the use of our existing FTE?

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	12
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	29
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	8
4. Not a priority	1

4. **TIME TO DEGREE:** Address the question “does our graduate program prepare students to complete a degree in a timely manner?”

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	7
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	24
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	14
4. Not a priority	4

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5. **EXAMS:** Address the question “should our graduate program have minimal standards for qualifying exams and if so, how should they be administered?”

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	10
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	13
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	21
4. Not a priority	6

6. **EXTENSION INVOLVEMENT:** Investigate how our graduate program promotes extension opportunities and prepares students to communicate effectively and professionally with diverse audiences?

1. Urgent. Elevate in APR and address asap	12
2. Important. Include in APR and aim to address in next 5 years	28
3. Lower importance and probably not include in APR	10
4. Not a priority	2