PHD Graduate Program Best Practices
Suggestions from 2014 AIDE – Applied Health and Social Sciences Group

- All new students meet with Director of Graduate Studies the first semester to make sure she/he is adjusting to program and understands expectations, milestones, etc.
- Monetary awards for student publications – to increase student publication activity, institute a monetary award for the best paper accepted for publication. May also want to consider paying submission fees for publications.
- Career Development Seminars - “Your Career” seminar – preparing future faculty, includes syllabus design, teaching on-line courses, submitting papers to journals, applying for grants
- Graduate Student Organizations - At new student orientation, the current officers present details on the events scheduled for the coming academic year and pointers on how the new students can get involved.
- Peer Mentoring – matching 1st year students with more experienced students.
- Provide “Buddy” System – begins at admission, helping them find housing, etc.
- Recruiting URM – specific recruiting materials and visits to minority serving institutions
- Offer three-day orientation – includes teaching tips, research expectations, service expectations, last day includes current students
- Teaching observed once a semester and then provided with written feedback
- Day-long symposium every year on preparing for interviews, includes resumes, cover letters, teaching and research statements, interviewing skills, presentation skills.
- Meet with students each semester (as a group) as they approach milestones – prelims, proposal defense, and final defense.
- Entire faculty review each student at the end of the year – keeps faculty accountable for “lingering” students, helps junior faculty know what to expect of PhD students.
- Students immediately admitted into a research lab
- Monthly newsletter that highlights PhD students accomplishments (presentations, TA/Instructor recognitions, papers submitted/accepted, interviews)
- Every student completes a first-year research project with a presentation component included – expectation is the project will be further developed and result in article submission.
- “Advanced” seminar offered for students in final year (topics focused on career options, searching for jobs, preparing for interviews)
- Develop data base of under-represented undergraduates throughout country – contact them their junior year to provide them with information about MS and PhD program.
- PhD students going on job interviews do a “practice” research presentation for faculty.
- Regular PhD alums conference – opportunity for current students to interact with alums.
• Graduate student exchange initiative – students present at partner institutions, goal is to help foster connection at other top institutions, exposes students to other faculty and students.

• “Math Boot Camp” for one week before semester begins.

• Student Advisory Committee – serve as consulting group to department head, faculty regarding issues impacting PhD students.

Other best practices can be found at http://www.grad.illinois.edu/bmp/index