



Council of Graduate Schools

Advocacy, Research, and Innovation

Challenges and Opportunities for the Professional Doctorate: A North American Perspective

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the Professional Doctorate
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What is the Council of Graduate Schools?

§ Founded in 1960

§ Members:

U.S. and Canada: 521

International: 19

§ CGS institutions annually award more than 95% of all U.S. doctorates and over 84% of all U.S. master's degrees.



Drivers of the Professional Doctorate in the U.S.

- § Workforce trends
- § Industry needs and demands
- § U.S. political priorities
- § Student demand



Workforce Trends and Projections, 2006-2016

Professions with largest employment growth:

- #1, Registered Nurses (23% increase projected)**
- #8, Post-Secondary Teachers (22.9%) requiring doctoral degrees**

Among fastest-growing occupations:

- #19, Mental Health Counselors (30%)**
- #22, Dental Assistants (29.2%)**
- #29, Physical Therapists, (27%)**



U.S. Industry Demands

- § **Industry needs** advanced degrees that close the gap between research and practice (Coghlan, 2007; Gill and Hoppe, 2009)
- § **Industry has demanded** a stronger domestic talent pool across the applied sciences



New Political Priorities, New Questions...

§ Accountability in Government Spending

Will there be efforts to shrink the gap between graduate education and workforce needs?

§ Utilization of Science in Decision-Making

Does this imply a need for new degrees that better link theory and practice?

§ Execution of Health Care Reform

Is the “up-skilling” of the health care workforce essential to health care reform?



Growth of Student Demand: Examples, 1996-2007

§ Audiology and Hearing Sciences

5110% increase, from 2 to 1024 graduates

§ Audiologist and Speech–Language Pathology

100% increase, from 68 to 136 graduates

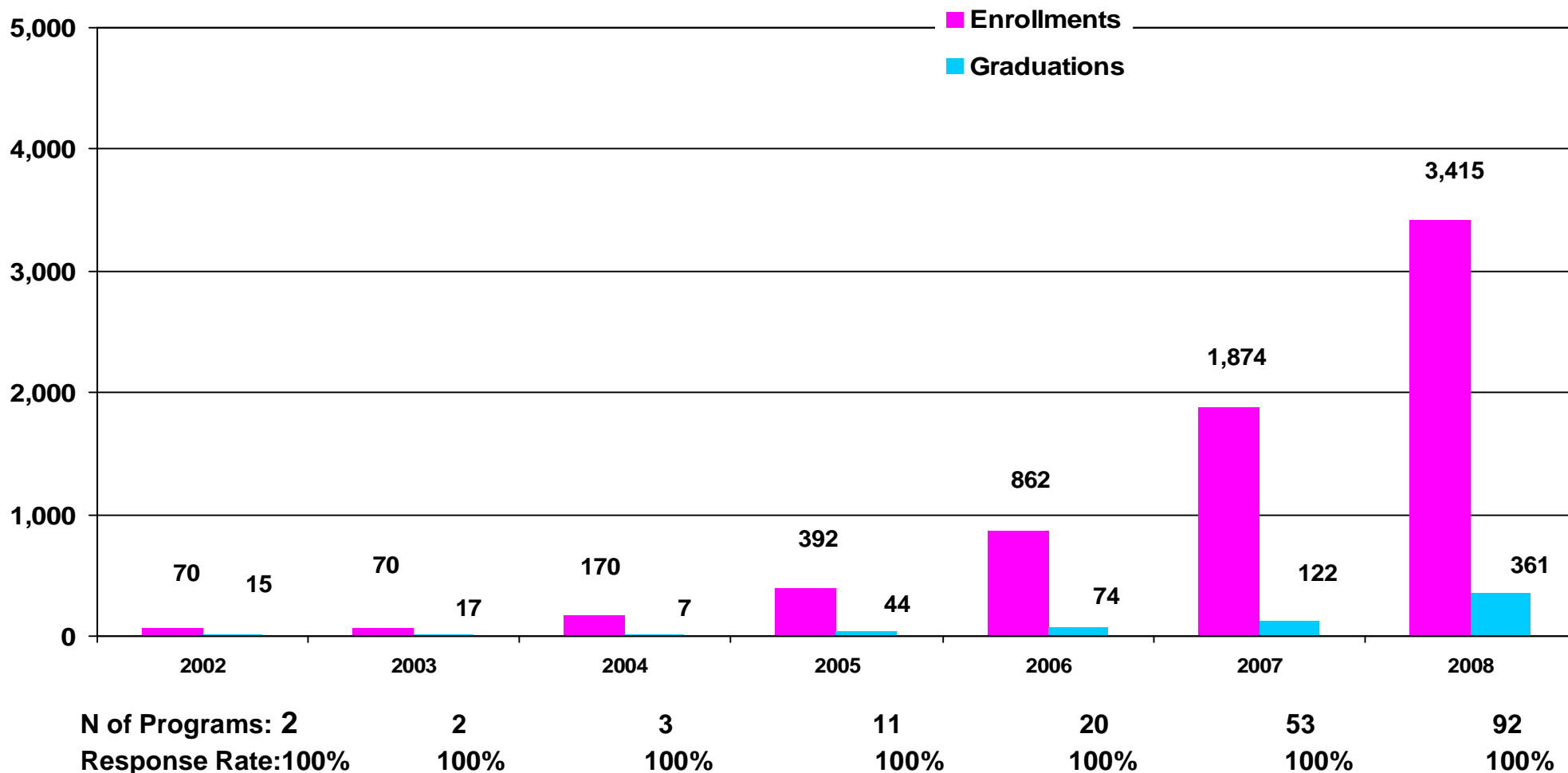
§ Occupational Therapy/Therapist

1200% increase, from 9 to 108 graduates



Student Demand in Nursing

Enrollments and Graduations in DPN, 02-08



Source: © American Association of Colleges of Nursing. All Rights Reserved AACN Annual Survey



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The CGS Response

Task Force on the Professional Doctorate

- § **Mission:** to learn how CGS might provide guidance to member institutions as they evaluate existing professional doctorates and evaluate proposals for new programs
- § **Stakeholders:** Graduate deans, professional accreditors, professional disciplinary societies



Broad Characteristics of Professional Doctorates

- § Addresses demands of professional practice not met by other non-professional degrees
- § Emphasizes applied or clinical research or advanced practice
- § Guided by leaders of the profession who are able to develop standards for others and drive knowledge-based innovation



Distinguishing Features of Professional Doctorates

1. Prior Degrees
2. Coursework
3. Clinical practica
4. Threshold examination
5. Capstone project
6. Relation to licensure



What is the role of the graduate dean in administering professional doctorates?

- § Play a leading role in all institutional discussions**
- § Develop and implement standards and processes of accreditation**
- § Ensure that professional doctorates support (and are supported by) the overall mission of the institution**



What are traits of strong programs?

- § Serve specific institutional needs
- § Lead to the transformation of practice
- § Advance the well-being of society (and not just the holders of the degree)
- § Meet a standard of excellence comparable to standards set for Ph.D. programs



What are unproductive practices?

- § Using a “one-size-fits all” standard, or insisting on the Ph.D. template
- § Accrediting program X because an accrediting association has made it a condition for accrediting other programs
- § Using arguments of necessity: “We have to offer it because otherwise the students will go somewhere that does.”



Lingering Areas of Debate

§ A “coursework only” doctorate

§ “Transitional degrees” or “upgrades”

§ Admission of students without a B.A. or its equivalent

§ Granting of credit for prior work experience



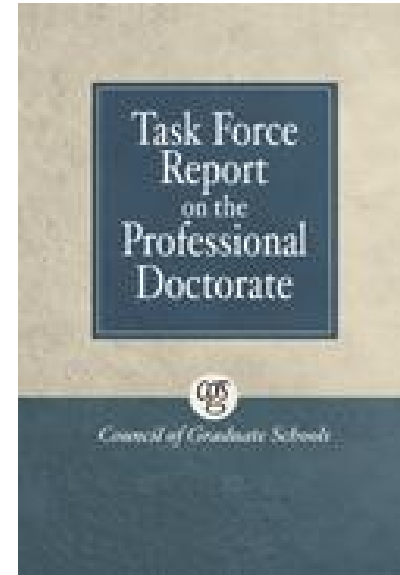
Areas of Consensus and Future Work in North America

- § Need for explicit criteria for accreditation and review, including national standards for professional associations
- § Disciplinary accreditation must be paired with strong institutional review
- § Standards of excellence cannot be mechanically defined (e.g. through number of credit hours)
- § Work done for one degree should not be applicable toward another



Further CGS Sources

Task Force Report on the Professional Doctorate



CGS Website: <http://www.cgsnet.org>



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