

WISCONSIN-SPENCER
DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROGRAM:
AN EVALUATION

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Introduction

During the last part of the 20th century, increasingly it has been believed that educational research can provide knowledge that will lead to major educational change and improvement in the teaching and learning of American youth. At the same time that the importance of educational research is being recognized, educational research has come under attack for being trivial, non-relevant, and poorly done. Much of this attack has focused on doctoral programs that are perceived to be outdated and ineffective in producing graduates who are well educated in research methodologies and motivated to continue to produce research after completing their doctorates.

Recognizing the importance of educational research and the pressures in research universities that inhibit change in doctoral programs, in 1993-94 the Spencer Foundation invited several major research institutions to join with it to create innovative Research Training Programs (RTPs) that would be somewhat unique to each institution. All of the programs were focused upon achieving two intersecting goals: (1) the design and implementation of model doctoral research programs with interdisciplinary components that would have an impact on the structure of the graduate research educational units of the cooperating institutions, and (2) to provide fellowships to promising doctoral students so that they would participate in the model programs and concentrate their energies on becoming well-educated researchers. The Spencer Foundation specified that awarded funds were to be used mainly to support students, so each institution had to provide funds for needed professional and administrative services. Within Spencer specifications, each participating university designed a program to accomplish the goals.

The School of Education (SoE) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) was one of the institutions asked to submit an application for funds to support a model doctoral program that would exist within departments' ongoing programs. In response to the Spencer invitation, a program was designed that was hoped would effect change in departmental doctoral programs and produce future leaders in educational research. The proposal resulted in funds to support a small doctoral program cooperatively funded by the UW-Madison and the Spencer Foundation that began in Fall 1994 and is still continuing.

Three overlapping grants from the Spencer Foundation were received for a total of \$2,925,000. About 90% of this money went to provide three new two-year fellowships per year and professional expense funds for all Fellows. The UW-Madison provided funds for two other fellowships per year for targeted minority or disadvantaged background students plus professional and administrative support for the entire program. In addition, participating SoE departments provided funds for two extra years of support for each funded Fellow. Thus, five students per year were identified as Fellows and were guaranteed four years of financial support. The program was known as the Spencer Research Training Program (RTP) until 2001, when it

was renamed the Wisconsin-Spencer Doctoral Research Program (DRP) to reflect the financial and educational contributions of both the Spencer Foundation and the UW-Madison.¹

In September 2002, the Spencer Foundation announced that their support of all RTGs, including the Wisconsin DRP, will end at the completion of the current grants. In the DRP's case, funding will end in June 2007. Thus, it is necessary for the SoE to make decisions about continuation of the program. In order to assist in making these decisions, as well as to provide information that will be useful in deciding the future direction of doctoral education in the SoE, an intensive evaluation of the program was carried out and the results are reported here.

The Wisconsin-Spencer Doctoral Research Program: A Description

According to an original SoE proposal writer, planning and implementing the DRP has been a "very much top-down situation"² with few faculty members being involved in the writing of proposals for continuation funds (which included the time frame evaluated here). The DRP is a SoE program that crosses all departments, with ultimate responsibility resting with the Dean of the SoE. He is the official recipient of the funds, appoints the Director and the Advisory Committee, meets semiannually with other deans of universities that have received similar Spencer grants, and is seen by the Spencer Foundation as the official spokesman for the program. The Dean has appointed each Director who has assumed responsibility for administration of the DRP and made substantive decisions that influenced the Fellows and the direction of the program. An Advisory Committee advises the Director about substantive matters and makes decisions about admissions. Henry Trueba was Dean during the program initiation and first granting period. Charles Read has been in office during the second and third granting periods. Two Directors have had long-time tenure. Other faculty members have served as Director for brief and/or interim terms.

People who were involved in the early proposal writing said that both the money offered and the prestige of the Spencer Foundation were highly motivating to the initiation of the program. As one said, "Initially it was to get badly needed fellowship money, and if Spencer gives you an invitation, . . . you accept." [It was seen as a good thing to have the prestige of Spencer money], "to hook ourselves up with the discussions of the Spencer Foundation," and "to get badly needed fellowships." However, Spencer's goals of "moving colleges toward preparing a stronger future cadre of educational researchers" by "changing faculty" and doctoral programs soon became equally important to the proposal writers with receiving fellowship funds. Change was to be effected by recruiting a few high-quality students from five departments across the SoE and providing them with a model program that included "elements that . . . would spread best practices." "We were pushing faculty and . . . we were trying to change faculty with student money."

There were also some broad peripheral goals that may have been unique to Wisconsin. "Simply by having a program of this kind, we make a statement about our seriousness as

¹ For convenience, we'll use DRP to refer to the program from its inception at UW-Madison, not limited to the program since 2001.

² Comments in quotation marks are taken directly from comments made in surveys or interviews. Words in brackets are close paraphrases.

educators It is, in effect, a statement about the importance that we attach to educational research and the preparation to do it. It also brings people together to help to cement the identity of the SoE – as a School and a place for professional discussion DRP has enabled us to demonstrate to the [entire University of Wisconsin] that we are serious about doctoral education, open to change, willing to try new things, and [because of this the SoE is perceived by the University] as worth investing in.”

The extent to which the Spencer Foundation determined the initial structure of the program is somewhat unclear. As far as could be ascertained, Spencer specified that the program “should have interdisciplinary components and the money was to go primarily to students,” but they did not provide much other guidance. It is clear that by the time of the second proposal the goals were those of the proposal writers, as it “reflected the strengths of both of our kinds of work [the two faculty proposal writers] and [Dean Read’s] understanding of higher education.” It is fair to say that these proposals shaped the Doctoral Research Program. The program quickly evolved as a unique and substantive Wisconsin program with two consistent goals: (1) to educate students in interdisciplinary research perspectives so that they would develop skills and beliefs that would enable them to continue to produce and/or use high-quality research throughout their careers, and (2) to have an impact on the structure of doctoral research education in the SoE.

The DRP exists within the SoE, where major responsibility for a student’s doctoral program rests with an individual advisor who works within the structure of an academic department’s program. Thus, the Wisconsin-Spencer program was designed to supplement the individual faculty member’s work with students within SoE departments, while at the same time having an impact on the doctoral education program within the various departments. This impact was to happen by having faculty advisors involved with the DRP and by them spreading the program throughout departments.

Students just entering Wisconsin were selected for the first cohort of Fellows. However, because of the number of students who declined to come after having been offered fellowships and the need to select Fellows about whom some knowledge was available, after the first year Fellows were selected from second-year graduate students. By Cohort 4, it was also recognized that larger cohorts of Fellows were desirable, so non-funded students were admitted. This resulted in increasing numbers of non-funded Fellows, until the latest cohorts consisted of approximately one-third funded and two-thirds non-funded Fellows.

The DRP has operated within the five of eight academic departments in the SoE that do education-relevant research: Counseling Psychology (CP), Curriculum and Instruction (C&I), Educational Administration (EA), Educational Policy Studies (EPS), and Educational Psychology (EP).³ While the participating departments are not necessarily explicit about the goals of their graduate education, most have at least two somewhat separate graduate programs. For example, EA prepares its doctoral students to become researchers in an academic setting or prepares students to become certified practitioners, such as superintendents or principals. Each department is almost autonomous in structuring their graduate programs, and the programs differ across departments.

³ The three non-participating SoE departments were Art, Kinesiology, and Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education (RP&SE).

Numbers provide some perspective of the DRP within the SoE graduate program. Total numbers of SoE graduate students, DRP Fellows, and percentage of DRP Fellows for the years 1997-2002 (the years studied for this evaluation) by department are shown in Table 1. As can be seen, the total number of DRP Fellows increased each year while SoE graduate student enrollment remained relatively steady. The percentage of DRP Fellows has been less than 10% of the total SoE graduate enrollment. EPS consistently has had the highest percentage of DRP Fellows, with EP usually ranking second. CP and EA have had very few Fellows.

Assisted by an Advisory Committee representing all participating departments, two senior faculty members have served as the Director of the DRP during the years involved in this study, with one serving the first four years and the second during the next two years. The first, Mary Metz, a professor in EPS, participated in writing all proposals for funds, organized and/or taught the Proseminar and the Advanced Seminar during her directorship, monitored Fellows' progress, and made substantive and administrative decisions about the program. The second, Elizabeth Fennema, an emerita professor from C&I, assumed most roles filled by the first Director, with the exception of teaching the Proseminar. She taught the Advanced Seminar, modified some requirements, but made few other changes in the program.

Procedures for determining which students will be admitted have remained almost constant. Every year, all graduate students in the five academic departments are invited to apply within their home department. They are asked to provide extensive application materials that include information about eligibility to qualify as a member of a targeted minority or disadvantaged background group, GRE scores, transcripts, curriculum vita, letters of recommendation, a plan for doctoral study, and a statement discussing intellectual interests that makes explicit why the DRP would be useful in the development of those interests and career goals. Departments rank their applicants and forward their rankings to a committee composed of representatives from each department. After reading and discussing the applications and considering departmental rankings, this committee ranks the applicants and awards the fellowships. Three fellowships funded by the Spencer Foundation are awarded to those students who appear to have the most promise to successfully complete a doctorate and to continue to do educational research. Two additional fellowships are awarded to students who have research potential and also satisfy the eligibility criteria for targeted minority or disadvantaged background status. All other students who appear to have potential for becoming educational researchers are admitted to the program as non-funded Fellows.

Table 1

Total Graduate Student and DRP Enrollment by Department and SoE

Year	DRP Participating Departments															SoE *		
	Coun Psych			Curric & Instr			Educ Admin			Ed Policy St			Educ Psych					
	Dept	DRP	%	Dept	DRP	%	Dept	DRP	%	Dept	DRP	%	Dept	DRP	%	Total	DRP	%
97-98	96	2	2	160	4	3	91	0	0	38	6	16	79	7	9	464	19	4
98-99	97	3	3	168	6	4	79	1	1	50	6	12	88	6	7	482	22	5
99-00	NA	1	NA	NA	7	NA	NA	3	NA	NA	7	NA	NA	6	NA	NA	24	NA
00-01	98	2	2	170	14	8	73	2	3	47	10	21	73	7	10	461	35	8
01-02	100	3	3	175	16	9	94	4	4	49	14	29	82	6	7	500	43	9
Mean /Year	98	2	2	168	9	6	84	2	2	46	9	19	81	6	8	477	29	6

* Includes five participating DRP departments.

The DRP program consists of a set of components:

- Four years of funding for selected graduate students.
- Professional expense funds for all Fellows.
- First-year Proseminar in multiple research perspectives that is usually taught by a team of two senior professors who have worked in different research traditions. The overall objective of the course is to have students become familiar with multiple research perspectives, recognize types of questions that can be addressed in various perspectives, and to be able to identify each perspective's strengths and weaknesses.
- Advanced Seminars that vary in content and organization, but all are designed around increasing knowledge about multiple research perspectives and building communities of inquiry.
- Formal advising from a mentor committee composed of three faculty members, one of which has to be outside the Fellow's home department.
- Systematic yearly reporting to the Director of each Fellow's progress and a plan for study.
- Student participation in faculty research.
- Student presentation of original research.
- Various activities designed to build a sense of community.

These components fit into logical clusters, shown in Table 2, that assisted us in comprehending the data.

Table 2

Clustering of DRP Components

Cluster	DRP Components ³
Funding	Fellowship funding Professional expense funds
Interdisciplinary Emphasis	Belonging to a community of researchers Cross-departmental participation Education in multiple research perspectives DRP Proseminar
Research Experience	Involvement in faculty research Writing a pre-dissertation research paper Presenting research at a conference
Advising	Mentor committee Annual program planning/reporting

³ The Advanced Seminar was not included because there were several versions over the life of the DRP, and our survey didn't allow us to determine which one was referenced in ratings and comments.

The Study: An Overview

Focus of Study

The goals that had guided the DRP program development and implementation for Cohorts 4-8 were identified by reading the proposals to the Spencer Foundation and consulting with individuals who had played a major role in writing the grants and directing the program. These goals as interpreted in the various DRP components guided decisions about the research. The design selected focused on collecting multiple types of data from multiple sets of people to create a rich database that would provide information to guide both the analyses and the conclusions drawn.⁴

Populations Studied

Four populations were studied:

- SoE faculty that were on campus during the evaluation year.

Faculty Surveys were sent to 85 tenure-track faculty members of the participating departments of the School of Education currently on campus who had responsibility for the graduate programs in the five participating departments. A total of 29 completed surveys were returned, 34% of the faculty members who had received them. Each of the 29 respondents indicated they knew about the DRP, and 25 had participated in the DRP in some capacity. Numbers and percentages of faculty returning surveys by department are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Faculty Response by Department

Department	Number of Faculty	Number Responding	Percent of Department Responding	Total Number of Individual Fellows in Cohorts 1-8
Coun Psych	9	3	33	7
Curric & Instr	33	7	21	22
Educ Admin	13	5	38	5
Ed Policy St	11	5	45	21
Educ Psych	19	9	47	15
TOTAL	85	29	34	70

⁴ We discussed including comparison groups in order to help establish causation. However, because the extensive documentation required for Fellow selection was not available for other students, it was impossible to find a comparison group. Faculty change yearly, so a comparison group was difficult, if not impossible, to find.

Explanations of why so few faculty completed the survey are purely speculative and undoubtedly multiple. The traditional explanations (busy faculty, dislike of surveys, etc.) may apply, but two more helpful speculations have to do with knowledge of and involvement in the DRP and the size of the department in relationship to the number of faculty members. Twenty-five of the faculty who responded had participated in the DRP in at least one capacity, and 15 had participated in multiple roles. Nineteen had served as advisors, 8 had been instructors in DRP courses, and 13 had served on mentor committees. Other DRP activities reported by faculty were Advisory Committee member, lecturer in DRP seminars, Spencer Fellow during his/her graduate work, and Director. Thus, almost all of the faculty who responded had been interested enough in the DRP to have participated in activities that would give them knowledge of the DRP, and perhaps enough interest to wish to actively participate in its evaluation by completing a survey.

Comparing the response rate with the number of DRP Fellows who had been in each department is also enlightening. One of the highest percentages of faculty response (EPS) was in the department that also had the highest percentage of DRP Fellows (Table 1 shows a 45% faculty response and a total of 21 individual Fellows, each of whom were in the DRP for up to four years). One of the early proposal writers who served as Director for four years (previous to the present Director) is a faculty member of EPS. She probably had more influence on the DRP than any other person. EPS is a small department (11 faculty), and the number of Fellows over the years (21) raises the possibility of Fellow contact with each faculty member in some capacity. The lowest response rate was in C&I (21%), and while they had the largest number of Fellows over the years (22), the size of C&I would mitigate against all faculty having contact with the Fellows.

Twenty-two respondents had served on the SoE faculty more than five years and thus would have been faculty members from the beginning of the DRP. Little difference could be seen between responses of the long-term faculty and the newcomers, so all responses were treated equally. Because of the knowledge most of the 29 respondents had about the DRP, it was decided to analyze the information obtained from the returned surveys and not to generalize the results to the entire faculty. This set of faculty will be referred to as Faculty (R) (responding faculty from participating departments).

- Faculty members who could provide specific information about the DRP's impact on students and doctoral education programs (Deans, departmental research leaders, proposal writers, past program Directors) were asked to provide additional information beyond that asked of all faculty.
- Fellows who had been admitted to the DRP in Cohorts 4-8, including those who were currently participating in the program (Participants), those who had resigned from the program without completing it (Resignees), and those who were admitted but declined to participate (Declinees).

When the evaluation was initiated, eight cohorts of Fellows had been admitted to the DRP. Because of the problems in getting the program started, and the differences between the DRP during the first three cohorts and subsequent cohorts (first- vs second-year admission, cohorts with non-funded as well as funded Fellows), only Fellows in Cohorts 4-8 were asked to complete a survey. Of the 46 participating Fellows from Cohorts 4-8, 39 returned the *Fellows Survey* for a response rate of 85%. The breakdown of respondents by SoE

department and DRP cohort are given in Tables 4 and 5, respectively. Nineteen funded and 20 non-funded Fellows, 14 males and 25 females, 36 U.S. students and 3 international students, made up the group. Because of the low response rate from Resignees (17%), their survey responses are not included in the results. Declinees' response data was 33%, and their data are included in the results where appropriate and identified as coming from that group.

Table 4

Participating Fellows' Response by Department

Department	Number of Fellows	Number Responding	Percent Response
Coun Psych	3	2	67
Curric & Instr	16	14	88
Educ Admin	4	4	100
Ed Policy St	14	12	86
Educ Psych	9	7	78
TOTAL	46	39	85

Table 5

Participating Fellows' Response by DRP Cohort

DRP Cohort	Number of Fellows	Number Responding	Percent Response
4 – Fall 1997	4	2	50
5 – Fall 1998	7	5	71
6 – Fall 1999	10	8	80
7 – Fall 2000	13	13	100
8 – Fall 2001	12	11	92
TOTAL	46	39	85

- All Fellows who had received their PhD (Graduates). Five Fellows from Cohorts 1-3 had received their PhD and four from Cohorts 4-8.

Data Collection Instruments and Analyses⁵

Two types of data collection instruments that focused on gathering data about achievement of the DRP's goals and how they were interpreted in the various DRP components (listed above) were developed: (1) surveys; and (2) semi-structured interview guides for conducting interviews with departmental research leaders, proposal writers, past Directors, and graduates of the

⁵ Instruments are available from Jane Hay in the SoE Dean's Office (262-1763).

program. The *Faculty Survey* was composed of (a) multiple-choice items; (b) Likert-type *Scales* focused on DRP components (Tables 6-7); and (c) open-ended items where comments were solicited (for example, about the perceived value of the DRP and its impact on the department). The survey was organized to provide demographic and other information about one's experience with the DRP; the perceived relationship, value, and impact of the DRP on the departmental graduate program; the value of each of the DRP's components; specific advice about the future of the DRP; and any general comments they wished to add. The *Fellows Survey* was similar in format to the *Faculty Survey* but modified as appropriate (Likert-type *Scales*, Tables 8-11).

Surveys were sent with a letter from the SoE Dean that explained the evaluation and the importance of their response. Approximately two weeks after the requested return date, another letter from the Dean was sent to faculty and Fellows who hadn't returned theirs, urging them to complete and return it. During the Fellows' annual meetings with her, the DRP Director asked those Fellows who hadn't returned their surveys to complete the survey in an unsupervised location where they had privacy and to return it immediately.

Individual *semi-structured interviews* with probing were conducted with departmental research leaders, long-term leaders in the DRP (proposal writers, former Directors, the Dean), and Fellows who had completed their PhDs. These were audiotaped and transcribed. While the questions focused on goals and components, they also went beyond specifics to explore more deeply. For example, leaders were asked about things such as changes in the DRP over the years and the perceived impact of the DRP on the structure of her/his department's doctoral program. Questions for DRP graduates included questions about their current professional positions, their past and present research, and their perceptions about the DRP's impact on their research education and projected career. Interviews with identified leaders who had left the University and graduated Fellows were conducted by telephone.

Data derived from the Likert-type response items and multiple-choice items were entered into Excel spreadsheets or SPSS to obtain descriptive statistics, including ranks, means, and variances. Interview transcripts and responses to open-ended questions on the surveys were read carefully. When possible, responses were coded into categories that were similar to the ones measured using Likert-type items. During the interviews, any comments by interviewees pertaining to multiple research perspectives were categorized, and the comments were listed on the coding sheet. When an interviewee identified a topic that had not originally been included, it was also listed.

Analyses for the *Faculty Survey* and the *Fellows Survey* were approximately the same. The *Scales* measured beliefs about the various components of the DRP. These components were grouped into logically related clusters that are shown in Table 3 and were examined for similarity of response. The identity of respondents was known only to the two data collectors, who used numerical and alphabetical codes to connect surveys and interviews to respondents. Data were stored in a locked controlled-access office and were under password protection on the computer.

Data reported here are in three forms: (1) quantitative from various administrative records and survey demographics, (2) descriptive statistics from Likert-type *Scales*, and (3) discussion summarizing the clustering analysis and comments made in interviews or surveys. Results from the Faculty (R) are presented first, followed by the Fellows' results.

The Results of the Study

*Results from Faculty (R)**Faculty (R) Responses to Scales*

The first *Scale* measured the importance of DRP components to graduate education. Faculty were asked to rate items in response to the following question: *How important do you consider the following DRP elements (i.e., components) to be in graduate research education? (1 = unimportant to 5 = extremely important)*. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Faculty (R) Scale Measuring Importance of DRP Components to Graduate Education:
Ranks, Means, and Variances

DRP Component	Rank	Mean	Variance
Fellowship funding	1	4.69	.30
Involvement in faculty research	2	4.58	.41
Education in multiple research perspectives	3	4.46	.50
Belonging to a community of researchers	4	4.44	.42
Presenting research at a conference	5	4.17	.50
Cross-departmental participation	6	4.08	.55
Professional expense funds	7.5	4.04	.71
Prestige of Spencer title	7.5	4.04	.71
Writing a pre-dissertation research paper	9	3.65	1.20
DRP Proseminar	10.5	3.58	.86
Office space	10.5	3.58	.95
Mentor committee	12	3.56	1.30
Annual program planning/reporting	13	3.12	1.11

These results indicate that overall Faculty (R) felt that all DRP elements were important to graduate education, with no mean falling below the midpoint (3) of possible responses. Fellowship funding ranked first. Involvement in faculty research ranked second. Three items dealing with an interdisciplinary emphasis ranked high: education in multiple perspectives, belonging to a community of researchers, and cross-departmental participation. Ranking lower were components that are specific to the DRP and not necessarily included in a department's research program: prestige of Spencer title, office space, mentor committee, and annual program planning/reporting. The Proseminar also ranks low.

The second *Scale* measured Faculty (R) beliefs about the following: *What proportion of the following elements (components) would you say the **DRP contributes** to participating Fellows? (1 = DRP contributes none to 5 = DRP contributes all).* The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Faculty (R) Scale Measuring DRP's Contribution to Graduate Education:
Ranks, Means, Variances

DRP Component	Rank	Mean	Variance
Cross-departmental participation	1	3.86	.50
Professional expense funds	2	3.55	1.02
Education in multiple research perspectives	3	3.48	.92
Fellowship funding	4	3.45	1.02
Belonging to a community of researchers	5	3.09	.66
Office space	6	2.95	.90
Mentor committee	8	2.77	1.23
Presenting research at a conference	8	2.77	.76
Writing a pre-dissertation research paper	8	2.77	1.33
Involvement in faculty research	10	2.70	1.11
Annual program planning/reporting	11	2.32	.89

Once again, those components dealing specifically with the interdisciplinary emphasis ranked high and Faculty (R) felt that the DRP contributed to these: cross-disciplinary perspective and education in multiple perspectives. Professional expense funds ranked second in the DRP's contribution, with fellowship funding ranking fourth. Faculty (R) felt that the DRP contributed less to: annual program planning/reporting, involvement in faculty research, writing a pre-dissertation research paper, presenting research at a conference, mentor committee, and office space.

Several things are suggested by considering responses to both *Scales*. Overall, Faculty (R) believe that most components of the DRP are important in graduate education and the DRP contributes significantly to providing part of these elements. It is clear that an interdisciplinary emphasis in graduate education is perceived as important and the DRP contributes significantly to the interdisciplinary education of DRP participants. Faculty (R) also perceived that the DRP Proseminar was not as important to graduate education as some other elements. Since this seminar was designed to be the major source for DRP Fellows to gain interdisciplinary research knowledge, it is puzzling why it did not rank at the same level as other interdisciplinary components. Funding also appears to be important to Faculty (R) and the DRP contributes significantly to it, but not as much as the DRP contributes to interdisciplinary education.

Faculty (R) perceive that annual program planning/reporting, mentor committees, and providing office space are less important to graduate education and the DRP contributes less to

providing these components than to the others. Does this indicate that Faculty (R) perceive that their departments can provide these components to their students' graduate education if they wish and thus DRP's contribution is less important?

Faculty (R) Comments from Survey and Interviews

Comments came from the *Faculty Survey* and the semi-structured interviews with department research leaders, proposal writers, etc. Comments from both the *Faculty Survey* and those who had been selected as research leaders from the departments were examined together. The research leaders to be interviewed were chosen upon recommendation of their department chairs. However, the interviewees were emphatic that they did not represent their department in any way but were only talking about their personal knowledge, beliefs, and ideas. The interviews provided more extended responses than did the surveys, but when the comments from both the surveys and the interviews were read carefully, it soon became apparent that while specific open-ended questions were asked in both situations, comments often did not address the question directly or addressed some other concern indirectly. Also, comments from the surveys and interviews addressed the same areas. So, it was decided to analyze all faculty responses together.

After repeated reading of the comments from interviews and surveys, certain common themes emerged: interdisciplinary research, relationship of the DRP to departments, impact on students, funding, advising/reporting requirements, the Proseminar, and recommendations for the future of the DRP. Each theme will be discussed separately.

Interdisciplinary research education.

By far the most voiced Faculty (R) comment addressed the idea of interdisciplinary education as a part of the DRP and of doctoral education in general. The importance of interdisciplinary thinking was addressed often. One person commented succinctly, "I don't think we can afford people in education anymore who know one little narrow band of how to do something and then proclaim that they are educational researchers." A common idea in many comments was that the "DRP provides one of the few formal means for interdisciplinary inquiry within the SoE." The lack of interdisciplinary contacts outside of the DRP perceived by many faculty was best expressed by one as s/he said that DRP Fellows are expected "to do what we as a faculty and department are reluctant to do – participate in interdisciplinary, cross-departmental research." The DRP was seen as providing an important opportunity for Fellows to "come into contact with a wider range of research views and content topics" outside of their own advisor's specialized focus. Students had "exposure to methods/content in other disciplines" as they were given the opportunities to "form research perspectives outside" the home department when they interacted with faculty and courses.

According to the Faculty (R), the interdisciplinary community in which Fellows worked appeared to be much broader than the contacts made in normal course taking. The DRP "allows for a better, more intellectually stimulating collegial environment" as it "provides networks with strong students and faculty outside the department." And, this was "very hard for students *not* in the DRP to develop . . . , particularly across departments." This theme of the broad-based network of other students with whom Fellows were able to share work, get help when needed with research problems, and engage in a collegial relationship could be identified continually in the comments.

Not only did the interdisciplinary emphasis of the DRP have an important impact on the Fellows, it also had an impact on the Faculty (R). One said that “conversations that students have across the SoE and networking connections enter their peer education and provide connections for other students and faculty.” Another said, “Students come into contact with faculty who help both of us think about important issues.”

However, a few Faculty (R) members expressed some concern about the cross-departmental emphasis. One was concerned with the time commitment required of Fellows. Others felt that because Fellows worked so much in other departments and disciplines, advisors did not have the time “to tailor a student’s work so as to maximize the benefit in the discipline or in the sub-specialty that they’re preparing a person to be a leader in.” Also, “there may be a little bit of disengagement from the department of these strong students who are finding this other community of people that’s maybe more filling their needs.”

One Faculty (R) member questioned whether it was wise to develop such breadth of knowledge before some depth of knowledge had been acquired. “There is something to be said for beginning to get a sense of what it means to apprentice in a way of thinking before you open yourself to many views of thinking.” “They have to give up something to work in the DRP, or to prolong their stay.” “Students are sometimes not as well connected to their primary advisor. This makes it more difficult for them to develop a coherent research agenda.” One Faculty (R) member was concerned that the DRP could be perceived as being elitist and that “its very existence may create a two-class citizenship among students.” S/he was careful to say that s/he was not stating a personal belief but was just raising the possibility.

In summary, the interdisciplinary emphasis that required cross-departmental work was seen as highly desirable to most Faculty (R). However, a vocal minority raised some critical issues that were in conflict to the others. The conflict appears to be one of basic beliefs in how apprentices are best educated to become experts in the field of educational research, breadth or depth first.

Impact on students.

Some Faculty (R) who were interviewed said that the DRP’s impact on students could be easily seen, and several described students who were Fellows. They have a “breadth of alertness to standards of evidence.” “They are curious about the work of people outside their immediate area. And, they are comfortable talking about it. They have gained a skill that is sometimes rare in a doctoral student – to be able to explain their work to someone who isn’t a specialist in their area.” “They have to think differently than they would have” [if they hadn’t been in the DRP]. “I am pleasantly surprised by graduate students being mindful of things that they would not have been mindful before I think a kind of alertness to an assortment of issues, not an abandonment of those at one’s core, but a kind of an awareness of the kinds of challenges that one has to buttress one’s arguments against That is more common now.” This highly involved group that was well acquainted with the DRP agreed that the impact of the DRP on students was significant. “The program has had the kinds of salutary effect on students’ learning that we aim for.”

But, this group also had some concerns that had to do with the DRP’s perceived negative impact on Fellows. As noted above, there was concern about development of a research agenda. One said that the DRP “activities are time consuming,” and “the increased number of

classes/seminars/responsibilities required by the DRP is difficult in a department with many part-time and commuter students.”

Relationship to departments.

There were many more positive than negative comments about the value of the DRP to the departments. “The only cost accrued is an awareness that the program is so good that it ought to involve more students. I wish all our students could participate fully in it.” A number of respondents said that it was a powerful recruitment tool and brought “high-quality graduate students into the department.” It was seen by several as a tool for leverage to change the doctoral education program. “It has led us to think more carefully about the quality and coverage of our program. It has given us a stronger awareness of best and worst practices in the SoE, and given us goals and ideas on how to strengthen doctoral training.” It has changed the department, “especially with the more formal steps for advising which we did not do before.”

Some Faculty (R) reported that the DRP had direct influence on changes in their departmental graduate program. Courses were modified or added and structural changes implemented. There are now “more research courses,” or we “pay greater attention to qualitative research approaches.” Another said that while “we have not changed the structure of the department, we have certainly talked about it. We have talked about research requirements. We’ve talked about the need to have students do research, conduct research, earlier in their course work Some people, I think, have changed the content of their courses a little bit to address some of those issues. And, we have hired a new person on the faculty who is a quantitative methods person.”

The DRP appeared to have an impact on faculty and departments in ways that were not anticipated. Being a member of the “DRP executive committee . . . provided new ideals and greatly encourages competition across departments for strengthening programs and research preparation.” It appeared that when departments began to think about their graduate programs, the impact of the DRP created “something of a ripple effect.” Several faculty talked about the effect the DRP had on them individually. “Working with the DRP has provided me with a much better understanding of excellent practices and those that don’t work as well throughout the SoE.” The DRP offered a “professional development experience” when they taught in the Proseminar or participated in the Advisory Committee. “Being a teacher in the DRP is probably a quick vehicle for change in departments – maybe more so than for students.”

However, not all comments were positive. When asked about the impact of the DRP on departments, several said that it had virtually little or no impact. Several said that the impact was on students, not departments. Several thought the financial cost to the departments was substantial for both administrative and faculty time. In particular, departments were affected when members from the department served as an instructor or the Director of the DRP. “What it really costs is you are taking away a department faculty member from students in the department.” “It cost (my department) a faculty member who directed the program for five years.” One faculty member noted that it cost departments some enrollment, particularly when a DRP Fellow didn’t take a department course. Some in the highly involved group felt the program had been ineffective in changing faculty and doctoral programs. “You can lead a horse to water but can’t make it drink The DRP probably didn’t have that much of an effect.” Also, because of the DRP requirement that departments had to support Fellows for two years, some were concerned that money that could be used to support other graduate students was tied up by the DRP.

One set of comments were made that should be noted here, as they might help to explain the few surveys that were returned and the results. Faculty (R) from EPS reported more change in their department than did Faculty (R) from any other department. EA Faculty (R) also reported change, as did Faculty (R) from EP. Faculty (R) from C&I and CP reported little or no change. As reported in Table 1, more students from EPS than from any other department had been involved in the DRP, and a higher proportion of surveys was returned from this department. Does that indicate that the more involvement faculties had with the DRP, the more positive they were and the more the graduate program changed? Certainly, the fact that almost all returned surveys came from faculty who had been involved in the DRP in some way supports this idea. Also, some responses in surveys give support to this idea. One respondent said that members of his department were “aware and supportive to the extent that they have a student involved.” Another commented, “The more a department’s goals match the DRP’s, the more value there is in it.” “Faculty in this department who have had a student in the DRP are more interested.” Another said forcefully, “Since I had no stake in the DRP, it had absolutely no impact on me.” But, another said, “You don’t have to have everybody in a department in order to make change So, what you need is a few committed people who care a lot about it and believe in the goals of it.”

Not all departments changed in the same way, and Faculty (R) noted this. “[One department] was probably moving in that direction anyway, but [two others] probably didn’t change.” The impact on both departments and individual faculty members were highly variable. Two respondents commented that the more the DRP goals fitted initially with the ways departments were moving, the more impact it had. “For some people, it was a mere formality . . . , but for some it was a really critical opportunity.” “We have accomplished some of the goals about having a doctoral program that serves as a model, as a stimulus to discussion, as something that could be discussed and adopted in part.” Change “happened through the operation of a network of people who have been involved in the DRP This network insured that when . . . the departments revisit their doctoral program . . . some of the DRP’s practices will be up for discussion.” “Participating in the seminar as instructors has definitely made people more open to a variety of approaches, more aware of the perspectives represented in the School.” One person put it succinctly. “I think it is surprising that it was as effective as it was. I am amazed at how much change we got, and I think we, as university faculties go, *got* a lot. This is the way change happens. It is like herding cats.”

In summary, many reported that while DRP components had been incorporated into their graduate program, this was due to many factors, only one of which was the DRP. Faculty (R) did not say that the only thing that influenced change in the doctoral research education was the DRP. Instead, the presence of the DRP provided a catalyst that encouraged intellectual conversation about graduate education that led to thoughtful faculty instituting change. It is impossible to attribute all growth in doctoral education to one variable like the DRP. However, the responding faculty felt that the DRP had made a significant contribution.

Funding.

Two kinds of funding have been provided by the DRP: (1) fellowship funds equivalent to that received by project assistants awarded to five new students per year (that represents about one-third to one-half of the students in the DRP) and two years of additional support guaranteed by departments, and (2) professional activity funds up to \$1,000 per year to all DRP Fellows. Responding faculty were very positive about this funding. There were more than thirty positive

comments and no negative ones. Faculty comments did not separate the two types of funding, other than to say that the fellowship funds “frees support for other students” (meaning departmental graduate students not in the DRP). Most comments just indicated that the funds were helpful to students.

Proseminar.

The Proseminar attracted a number of comments from Faculty (R) that were both positive and negative. “The experience of the seminar has been dramatically uneven over the years . . . depending on who is doing the teaching and the team work they have.” “The seminar is great and definitely needs to be kept.” “The seminar was a place where Fellows could talk about and resolve a debate about what I want to do as a researcher.” It should also be noted here that the rank of the Likert-type item dealing with the importance of the Proseminar to graduate education was not high. It appears clear from the data collected that the Proseminar has not always fulfilled its potential. As has been said previously, any instructional environment is complex, and many factors probably entered into the Faculty’s (R) perception of it. It is hard to fully understand the perception of the faculty about the Proseminar, and we cannot dismiss it out of hand. Much more about this is seen later when responses from Fellows are discussed.

Advising/reporting requirements.

Advising requirements of the DRP received mixed comments. Two types of advising are required for each Fellow: (1) a mentor committee, and (2) an annual report on progress and planning signed by the advisor. Each of these components were rated low by Faculty (R) on the Likert Scales. The mentor committee requirement received negative comments on a few *Faculty Surveys* and was ignored by all others. It is hard to understand how Faculty (R) felt about the mentor committee, as they were overwhelmingly positive that contact with faculty outside the home department was positive. Part of the reason that such contact happened was that the DRP required a mentor committee for each student that had to have representation of diverse faculty from at least two departments. Thus, it is reasonable to think that much of the cross-departmental contact that happened was due to the mentor committee requirement; but, faculty comments were negative, such as it was “difficult to arrange.”

Faculty members also appeared negative about Fellows being required to submit an annual report that had to be signed by the advisor. They reported a dislike of writing reports and doing the paper work. But, others reported they liked the “rigor in advising” required, and two departments appeared to have “adopted most of the advisory practices” required by the DRP as departmental requirements.

There was more diversity in the Faculty’s (R) perception and reaction to the advising/mentor committee components than any other. Part of the diverse responses could be due to the changing DRP requirements. There also appeared to be a subtle communication that the DRP was infringing on faculty rights and responsibilities (of advising) by an assumption that faculty had to be told when and how to advise Fellows.

Traditionally disadvantaged groups.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison and the School of Education have been committed to the education of diverse students for many years, and the DRP with its Advanced Opportunity

Fellowships (AOFs) has been an excellent forum for exhibiting this commitment. Two AOF fellowships are awarded annually. In addition, a high proportion of Spencer-funded fellowships are awarded to those who identify themselves as disadvantaged, and many non-funded Fellows of these groups are admitted annually. And, it was noted in the *Faculty Surveys* that this emphasis has been successful. The DRP “makes it more likely that students of color accept our invitation to doctoral study and/or that they will stay to complete their studies.” The DRP “made sure that students of color *are not isolated*. It gave them these opportunities and integrated them. And, it made them visible as leading members of the SoE.”

Recommendations by Faculty (R) for Future of DRP

Two of the last questions on the *Faculty Survey* asked for recommendations about the future of the DRP. One question asked for suggested modifications for change in the DRP, and the responses were plentiful. Some suggested changes would be easy to implement within the existing program, particularly the Proseminar, with suggestions about the continuity of content and instructors, scheduling so it fit better with some of the professional programs, and a better balance between qualitative and quantitative approaches (qualitative receiving too much emphasis currently). Funding received major attention, with some suggestions for how funds should be expended (not for recruitment purposes) and some suggestions for source of funds (from research, not instructional, funds). Funding for Fellows was seen as critical, with one suggestion that administrative costs (including the Director) be eliminated and all funds be used for fellowships. Faculty roles received some attention, with a suggestion for more incentives for faculty to participate, a need for increasing the participation and articulation of the role and involvement of mentor faculty, and strengthening the faculty commitment to involving Fellows in research. Having the DRP less prescriptive and creating more opportunities for Fellows to interact with peers at other institutions were also listed.

Faculty (R) were asked to rank on a 5-point scale the following: *How strongly would you recommend that the SoE look for alternative ways to fund the DRP after 2007? (1 = not recommend to 5 = strongly recommend)*. They were also asked to explain their response. The mean response was 3.6 and the variance was 1.3. Sixteen Faculty (R) marked their responses “4” or “5”; four marked the neutral response “3”; five marked “1” or “2” which indicated they would not recommend looking for alternative funds; and four didn’t mark the scale. While these numbers are on the positive side of seeking alternative funds, they indicate lukewarm support for seeking alternative funds. In view of the overwhelming positive comments that had been evident in all the previous questions, this set of numbers is surprising. And, the Faculty (R) comments were not plentiful (only six wrote a response) and are not enlightening. The negative comments centered around the cost/benefit ratio, while the positive comments centered around the importance of the DRP perspective to doctoral education and the fact that it does not exist elsewhere in the SoE.

Recommendations about the future of the program from the program initiators and leaders are also mixed. “I think intellectually it is a good idea . . . for the students. I think the cross-disciplinary . . . cross-department discussions . . . *are good*. [But, if it costs the SoE money, it isn’t a good idea in its entirety.]” “Continue the program, but without fellowships. Provide professional expense money, attach some prestige to it, and then let the market place decide if it should continue.” All in all, although the faculty who did respond appear somewhat negative, they are hard to interpret in light of the few who responded and/or commented.

Summary of Findings from Faculty

Faculty Surveys were completed by 34% of the tenure-track faculty in the five participating SoE departments. In addition, interviews were conducted with one person from each department who had been identified as being knowledgeable about graduate education in the department. These faculty members, identified as Faculty (R), indicated overwhelming approval of the DRP and what it was trying to accomplish. Overall, they believed that while funding (fellowships and professional activity funds) were the most important aspect of the DRP, most other components are important in graduate education and the DRP contributes significantly to providing many of them. It is clear that an interdisciplinary emphasis in graduate education is perceived as important and that the DRP contributes significantly to the interdisciplinary education of DRP participants. In particular, Faculty (R) believed that the emphasis on interdisciplinary education was substantively correct and necessary to prepare scholars for the 21st century. Not only was it seen as necessary for doctoral students, they believed it was critical for all faculty within the SoE to increase their dialog across disciplines and departments. Faculty (R) currently believe that the DRP is one of the few places in the SoE where an interdisciplinary emphasis is stressed.

The DRP's interdisciplinary emphasis influenced both Faculty (R) and the departments they were in. Sometimes departments changed directly and incorporated DRP components in a form revised to fit the department. Sometimes change was indirect or in the process of happening. Since the DRP's start, doctoral education was discussed more formally within the departmental structure, and while the DRP was not the only influence on change, it was often used as a model that should be considered.

Faculty (R) reported that they profited from their contact across departments and also from the thinking seen in their Fellows. As Faculty (R) saw the Fellows' curiosity and desire to learn about other types of research, they were encouraged to be curious and expand their knowledge about other paradigms. Faculty (R) saw the DRP as one of the few places that students could interact with interdisciplinary knowledge, and many appeared to envy the students for their experience.

Some components of the DRP were perceived as not being very important or that the DRP did not provide them in a significant way to graduate education. Most of these DRP components appear to be things departments routinely provide, such as advising and research experience. However, one specific component of the DRP received less than enthusiastic support. Faculty (R) perceived that the DRP Proseminar was not very important to graduate education. Since this seminar was designed to be the major source for DRP Fellows to gain interdisciplinary research knowledge, it is puzzling why it did not rank at the same level as other interdisciplinary components.

However, it is clear that while many faculty members are overwhelmingly positive about the DRP, the SoE faculty as a whole is **not** involved in the DRP. The proof of faculty non-involvement is clearly seen in the 66% of faculty who did not return *Faculty Surveys*. Data collected for this study provided no information that would explain the low faculty response rate. More will be said about this in the final discussion, and tentative explanations will be offered.

Faculty recommendations for the future varied widely. Some were short-term suggestions for modifications in the current program. Recommendations for the long-term future of the DRP mostly had to do with funding and questioning whether in the current financial climate the DRP

in its present form should continue. This comment from one Faculty (R) member summarizes the recommendations well. “I think intellectually it is a good idea . . . for the students. I think the cross-disciplinary . . . cross-department discussions . . . *are* good. [But, if it costs the SoE money, it isn’t a good idea in its entirety.]”

Results from Fellows

Fellows’ Responses to Scales

In analyzing responses to the *Fellows Survey*, as we had done in the Faculty (R) analyses, we looked at the DRP components individually and in clusters (Table 2). A set of four *Scales*, each composed of Likert-type items, asked Fellows to rate components on five points. The first *Scale* asked Fellows: *What were your original reasons for applying to the DRP? (1 = not important to 5 = most important)*. Response ranks, means, and variances are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Fellows’ Scale Measuring Importance of Components in Applying to DRP:
Ranks, Means, and Variances

DRP Component	Rank	Mean	Variance
Fellowship funding	1	4.46	0.73
Belonging to a community of researchers	2	4.44	0.94
Education in multiple research perspectives	3	4.33	0.65
Cross-departmental participation	4	4.03	0.92
DRP Proseminar	5	3.68	1.14
Prestige of Spencer title	6	3.59	1.67
Professional expense funds	7.5	3.46	1.89
Involvement in faculty research	7.5	3.46	1.73
Presenting research at a conference	9	2.92	1.97
Mentor committee	10	2.57	1.64
Annual program planning/reporting	11	2.37	1.18
Writing a pre-dissertation research paper	12	2.29	1.80
Office space	13	2.13	2.24

The highest-rated reason for applying to the DRP was the possibility of receiving a fellowship, followed by the program’s interdisciplinary emphasis (community of researchers, multiple research perspectives, cross-departmental participation, and the first-year Proseminar). Also drawing students to the program were its prestige and anticipated involvement in faculty research. Of less importance in applying were professional expense funds, the DRP’s role in facilitating students’ research, advising (mentor committee, annual reporting/planning), and provision of office space.

The next *Scale* asked Fellows to rate components in response to the question: *How critical was each of the following elements (components) in your decision to continue participating in the DRP? (1 = not critical to 5 = absolutely critical)*. Results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Fellows' Scale Measuring Importance of Components for Staying in DRP:
Ranks, Means, and Variances

DRP Component	Rank	Mean	Variance
Fellowship funding	1	4.58 *	1.04
Belonging to a community of researchers	2	4.11	1.34
Education in multiple research perspectives	3	4.08	1.08
Professional expense funds	4	4.05	1.63
Cross-departmental participation	5	3.89	1.39
Prestige of Spencer title	6	3.74	1.51
Involvement in faculty research	7	3.18	2.00
DRP Proseminar	8	3.17	1.40
Presenting research at a conference	9	2.86	2.24
Office space	10	2.68 *	2.89
Mentor committee	11	2.53	1.74
Writing a pre-dissertation research paper	12	2.52	1.95
Annual program planning/reporting	13	2.19	1.38

* Reports funded Fellows' responses only for this component; N=19.

For those who received it, the fellowship was the biggest incentive for staying in the DRP. For all Fellows, the following were important: professional expense funds, the interdisciplinary emphasis (community, multiple perspectives, cross-departmental), and prestige of the Spencer Fellow title. The Proseminar was less critical, as was the DRP's facilitation of the research experience; the latter furthermore was highly variable in importance among Fellows. Again, the advising cluster was not an important reason for remaining in the DRP; neither was office space, although its importance was extremely variable among those eligible for it (funded Fellows).

The next *Scale* asked Fellows to rate components in response to: *How important were the following elements (components) to your overall research education? (1 = unimportant to 5 = extremely important)*. Results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Fellows' Scale Measuring Importance of Components to Graduate Education:
Ranks, Means, and Variances

DRP Component	Rank	Mean	Variance
Fellowship funding	1	4.58 *	0.59
Professional expense funds	2	4.23	0.71
Belonging to a community of researchers	3	4.10	0.99
Involvement in faculty research	4	3.97	1.68
Education in multiple research perspectives	5	3.95	1.24
Presenting research at a conference	6	3.94	1.63
Cross-departmental participation	7	3.85	1.13
Prestige of Spencer title	8	3.45	1.61
Writing a pre-dissertation research paper	9.5	3.24	2.31
Office space	9.5	3.24 *	2.69
DRP Proseminar	11	3.21	1.58
Mentor committee	12	2.91	1.38
Annual program planning/reporting	13	2.62	1.91

* Reports funded Fellows' responses only for this component; N=19.

When considered in light of their overall graduate research education, most components had importance in overall education (means greater than 3.00). The same components as before received the highest ratings: funding and interdisciplinary emphasis. Research experiences, especially involvement in faculty research and presenting research at a conference, were also considered highly important. Important, too, were the prestige of being a Fellow, writing a pre-dissertation research paper, the Proseminar, and office space (for those who were eligible); the latter was again extremely variable. Of lesser relative importance were the advising components.

The final *Scale* asked Fellows to rate components in response to the question: *How much of the following elements (components) were provided to you by the DRP versus other sources such as academic departments, graduate assistantships, etc.? (1 = none to 5 = all)*. Results are shown in Table 11.

The DRP's biggest contributions to Fellows were in funding (both fellowships and professional expense funds) and its interdisciplinary emphasis. The DRP was the source of almost all professional expense funding in Fellows' graduate education (means greater than 4.00). The DRP provided about half of the advising input and office space (available with DRP fellowships) that Fellows received, but the DRP contributed the least to their research experience.

Table 11

Fellows' Scale Measuring DRP's Contribution to Graduate Education:
Ranks, Means, and Variances

DRP Component	Rank	Mean	Variance
Professional expense funds	1	4.33	1.18
Fellowship funding	2	4.05 *	0.83
Cross-departmental participation	3	3.79	1.11
Belonging to a community of researchers	4	3.56	1.15
Education in multiple research perspectives	5	3.41	1.41
Office space	6	3.00 *	2.44
Mentor committee	7	2.78	1.38
Annual program planning/reporting	8	2.75	1.91
Presenting research at a conference	9	2.73	2.04
Involvement in faculty research	10	2.17	1.97
Writing a pre-dissertation research paper	11	2.11	1.28

* Reports funded Fellows' responses only for this component; N=19.

We thought that components within each of the funding, interdisciplinary emphasis, and research experience clusters would be rated high and similarly. We expected components in the advising cluster would be rated moderate or low. We saw these expected results in the data to a large extent. All components in the funding and interdisciplinary emphasis clusters had consistently high means, and the advising cluster's components had consistently moderate or low means. However, contrary to expectation, components in the research experience cluster were split, with moderate or low means when they were considered as elements of the DRP but high means when considering their overall importance to graduate education.

Fellows' Views about DRP's Role in their Graduate Research Education

Using the clustering of components to help organize the data, we then combined data across all four Likert-type *Scales* with Fellows' responses to open-ended items from the *Fellows Survey* to examine the perceived role of DRP components in furthering its goals for Fellows' graduate research education. The DRP was designed to (a) provide funding for promising doctoral students, (b) produce graduates who were well educated in research methodologies, and (c) provide graduates with the skills and inclination to continue as educational researchers after completing their doctorates. The goals of funding, training in research methodologies, and continuing in educational research are each considered in turn.

Funding.

The DRP provides funding for fellowships for part of the DRP Fellows and professional expense funds for all Fellows. Fellows consider funding to be of major importance. The

fellowship has been the biggest reason for applying to the DRP. This is underlined by the response of Declinees; all six responding named “not receiving fellowship funds” as a reason they declined to participate in the DRP. For those Fellows who did receive fellowships, it was one of *the* most important components of the DRP and in their graduate research education overall. Professional expense funds were a major benefit of the DRP that students didn’t anticipate when applying. Once students were in the program, professional expense funds were rated among the top components across the board for all Fellows, both funded and non-funded.

Fellowship recipients (funded Fellows) commented about three types of benefits fellowship funding afforded them. *First*, they wrote of being relieved of other employment, which gave them time and energy to focus on research and learning. Typical comments included such remarks as the fellowship “allows me to focus completely on my research and education rather than worry about finances.” It “has given me time – uninterrupted by teaching duties – to devote to reading, researching, and writing.” *Second*, for some, fellowship funding opened the door to research opportunities they otherwise wouldn’t have had by enabling them to volunteer their time on faculty research projects. It “allowed me to volunteer on a faculty project . . . I probably would not have been able ‘to get my hands dirty’ in this kind of work if not for [the DRP].” And *third*, fellowship funding supported the development of their own research interests independent of faculty projects. The DRP “gave me more freedom to pursue my own research (funding, travel, moral support), not just my advisor’s (a la project assistantships).”

The DRP was the primary source of professional expense funds for all Fellows and provided them with the means and support “that helped me to feel and function more like a professional.” Professional expense funds allowed Fellows “to attend conferences” and “to meet, get to know, and share my work with scholars across the globe who are working on similar issues.” The funds also had an enabling effect on Fellows’ research in that they “provided me with tools to do research I couldn’t have afforded otherwise.”

Education in research methodologies.

The DRP focuses on providing several dimensions for Fellows’ education in research methodologies. The first is developing a breadth of vision – literacy in and respect for multiple approaches to educational research; the second, receiving excellent training in the foundations and methods of their field and research paradigm; and third, having early, extensive, and varied experience in research. The DRP components were developed to support these dimensions by supplementing the advisors’ and the departments’ work with students. The interdisciplinary emphasis in the program focused on developing breadth, the research experience components were intended to highlight and reinforce department and advisory best practices in developing students’ depth and experience in research, and the advising components were to support students’ graduate education more generally. Fellows were asked to describe their own preparation along each dimension, as well as to assess the importance of the DRP components in their education. Those results follow.

Breadth of vision. Most Fellows described their preparation in this dimension as being in progress, as having had enrichment, exposure, familiarity, understanding, or a foundation in multiple research perspectives. “I think over the years here I have developed a program that provided me exposure to different approaches to inquiry.” Several other Fellows assessed themselves as having met this goal, writing in terms of being proficient, knowledgeable, or well

prepared in multiple research perspectives. “I feel I have a thorough preparation in both qualitative and quantitative methods.”

Breadth is played out in the DRP through the interdisciplinary emphasis components. The DRP endeavors to create an environment for interaction among students of different departments and research perspectives around topics of educational research, both formally and informally, to develop awareness and literacy in multiple approaches to research. Fully half of the respondents credited the DRP, especially the Proseminar, with helping them achieve a breadth of vision about educational research. “Through the [DRP] seminars I’ve been exposed to research paradigms not commonly seen in my own department.” And, “[DRP] experiences with multiple genres of research provided a discourse and knowledge breadth to argue and articulate a critique of the literatures I am working with. This in turn allowed me to frame questions cogently and argue for alternative ways of viewing concepts (and people) within educational policy.” “Without the DRP, my preparation in this goal would be limited.”

Other Fellows developed their breadth of vision independently of the DRP, attributing it to their course work, research experience, or reading research. “As a policy researcher, it behooves me to be proficient at both qualitative case study methods and quantitative analysis techniques. I have accomplished this goal through course taking and research experience.” A few Fellows achieved breadth of vision through participating in multiple institutions. “A lot of the breadth of vision results from receiving a Master’s at one institution and then enrolling in another for my PhD. In addition, I have taught and worked as a PA on research in two different departments at UW-Madison.”

The DRP’s interdisciplinary emphasis cluster includes the DRP components of participation in a community of researchers, cross-departmental experiences, exposure to multiple research perspectives, and the Proseminar. In the Likert-type *Scales*, these components, with the exception of the Proseminar, were second only to funding in their importance and value to Fellows. The Proseminar component had a mixed reaction. It was one of the top reasons for applying but less important in Fellows’ overall graduate research education. The implication is that although the Proseminar provided an interdisciplinary emphasis as indicated in the preceding comments, this wasn’t the most salient feature of the seminar to Fellows. Because the Proseminar didn’t cluster with the other components, we’ll first address the interdisciplinary emphasis cluster without including the Proseminar and then take up its results afterward.

The interdisciplinary emphasis made the DRP “a unique entity in the School of Education” because, in Fellows’ views, “no other interdisciplinary opportunity exists.” One Fellow affirmed, “The School of Education should show support for cross-disciplinary dialogue. [It’s] symbolically very important.” Almost all Fellows made comments on the interdisciplinary emphasis components; the overwhelming majority of comments were positive, and many identified one or more of these components as the top two or three benefits of the DRP.

Fellows derived two main benefits from the DRP’s interdisciplinary emphasis. *First*, personal and collegial relationships formed in the program were valuable outcomes of belonging to the DRP community. Fellows valued “becoming friends/colleagues with students in other departments.” They experienced the DRP as “a valuable opportunity to get to know students from other departments and learn about different approaches.” The DRP provided “access to a community of people interested in educational research.” The DRP as a community of their *graduate student peers* figured prominently in Fellows’ discourse; others referred more generally

to fellow researchers, scholars, or colleagues, with a few specifically naming faculty as members of their community. Several mentioned the benefit of “working with professors whom I might not have met without the DRP.”

The “exposure to a variety of perspectives” in the DRP was a *second* major benefit identified by Fellows. The DRP “explicitly [drew] my attention to different research paradigms early.” The program provided an “opportunity to learn about others’ research” and “a forum to discuss research issues and get a diversity of perspectives.” Importantly, the DRP provided “time . . . to consider the broader world of education research and the different methodologies, philosophies, and methods.” A number of comments reflected on how their exposure to different research paradigms caused Fellows to define their own research more sharply or to carefully consider other perspectives. “Putting students into a group of different, varied perspectives forces them to more carefully, more clearly articulate their own perspective.” Belonging to an interdisciplinary community of researchers “gives me the opportunity to get my own work critiqued by peers and use each other as resources.” Exposure to other research approaches directly influenced one Fellow’s research as s/he “[implemented] paradigms from different departments in my own research.”

A *drawback* of the broad exposure emphasized by the DRP was that it occasionally was seen as conflicting with development of depth in a Fellow’s own discipline. One Fellow reported receiving “some flak from my advisor over getting too broad (in research view) at a time when I should have been going deep and narrow in her view.” Not all Fellows thought the interdisciplinary emphasis was facilitated as well as it could have been, either. Several observed that “there doesn’t seem to be a coherent plan after the first year for continuous discussion of research interests” and noted the drawback of “not much dialogue between cohorts.” Several recommendations were made to improve this, which are included in the section on Fellows’ recommendations.

The two-semester Proseminar was planned not only as the keystone experience but one of the most important experiences for DRP Fellows. For the surveyed cohorts, it consisted of two consecutive semesters during the Fellows’ first year in the DRP; both semesters were usually taught by the same instructors. During the Fall semester, educational research across disciplines and from different perspectives was considered. During the following Spring semester, Fellows usually presented their own research to their peers and instructors in a conference format.

From the Likert-type *Scales*, we may conclude that the Proseminar was a drawing element for applying to the DRP but had a relatively neutral effect on Fellows’ decisions to stay. While Fellows held a wide range of opinions on its importance to their overall graduate education (high variance), it can be said that the Proseminar was just moderately important overall. Opinions about it varied widely. Some Fellows “enjoyed the (Proseminar) greatly,” but others were “very disappointed.” The Proseminar received the most comments of any of the components, indicating its dominance in Fellows’ thinking about the DRP. Negative comments outnumbered positive comments, but their distribution varied by semester and cohort. The Spring semester tended to receive only positive comments, while negative comments often were made about the Proseminar overall and the Fall semester in particular.

Fellows gave the Fall semester of the Proseminar mixed reviews in several areas, the *first* of which was its coverage of multiple research perspectives. Many Fellows found the Proseminar “a valuable opportunity to . . . learn about different approaches [to research].” It was unique in

that “almost none of the graduate courses in education cover extensively, equally both qualitative and quantitative perspectives; only the seminar course offered by the DRP” does so. Examining multiple research paradigms in this forum allowed Fellows to uncover the paradigms’ underlying assumptions. “The seminar in Fall gave me a chance to think critically about assumptions of different fields of research.” Examining the nature of the research endeavor itself gave “a sense of validation that the approach to research I’d been leaning towards was worthwhile – possibly, I think, because we talked about ‘what is research and what can it say,’ a conversation that doesn’t happen often.”

For several Fellows, however, the Proseminar’s coverage of multiple research perspectives was inadequate. Fellows cited the Proseminar several times for a “lack of indepth training in research methodology” and “not enough emphasis on methodology.” Others felt it was not “organized in a way that we learn equally about qualitative and quantitative research.” One Fellow alluded to an outcome s/he felt wasn’t being achieved in that “exposure to different methodologies is helpful, but there is no opportunity to practice these methods. We still continue relying on the methods we used coming into the program.”

Second, Fellows’ views were also mixed on the quality of the discussion that took place in the seminar. Some found the “active discussion in the Proseminar on multiple paradigms” to be beneficial, as was “talking generally about issues surrounding research in the [Fall seminar].” However, discussion often was raised as having been problematic. A difficulty was “the necessary and good discomfort of learning to be respectful when you disagree with the paradigmatic assumptions of others,” but which too often resulted in “poor communication among students in the seminar” and “unfortunate disagreements between students.” One Fellow “found the discussion during seminars to be close-minded and politically loaded . . . I did not find anything enjoyable or productive about these sessions.” And, “‘philosophy of science’ debates in the Proseminar have not been particularly useful for my research, especially given the availability of such courses on campus.” Another Fellow commented on there having been “too much pontification by lead professors.”

A *third* area in which Fellows’ views were mixed was the seminar curriculum, which could vary with instructors from one cohort year to the next. Some found “the topics discussed in class, . . . the discourse in class” were all positives. Others were not happy with the “mediocre readings in the [Fall seminar].” A theme in the comments addressed a perceived “lack of focus/goals and curriculum in the [Fall seminar].” Some Fellows commented that the Proseminar “seemed like a pretty big waste of time because it was directionless,” and they got “the impression that the content is totally dependent on the instructors.”

Finally, Fellows frequently addressed the time demanded by the three-credit Fall seminar. “The [Fall seminar] took more time than I expected – time I needed to work on my thesis. It was difficult to balance everything.” “The [Fall seminar] was not all that helpful, but it was time consuming.” However, another Fellow noted that although “the heavy requirement of the [Fall seminar] was hard to accept . . . , as time goes on I realize its value more and more.”

In contrast to comments on the Fall seminar, reviews about the Spring seminar were entirely positive. Fellows often mentioned the facilitating role of the Spring seminar when they wrote of their exposure to multiple perspectives and belonging to a community of researchers. “The most helpful experience, so far, appears to be the [Spring] semester seminar It has really given us an opportunity to experience differences in methodology.” “It is encouraging and stimulating to

hear about other Fellows' research The seminar in Spring has been helpful in understanding research in other fields than mine." Additionally, the chance to "practice presenting to peers" and "being able to practice presenting before attending conferences" were themselves benefits of the Spring semester format.

Overall, it appears that Fellows were more negative than positive about the keystone experience of the DRP, the three-credit Fall seminar. The Spring semester, on the other hand, appears to have been a positive experience for Fellows. Fellows suggested little direction for changing the Fall seminar. We shall return to this issue later when we examine the range of recommendations made for improving the Proseminar.

Depth in own research paradigm. When asked to reflect on their preparation in this dimension, most Fellows felt they had established a foundation in their primary paradigm and were continuing their preparation. "I feel I have a good foundation and will build on it in the next few years as I gain more experience." Several rated their level of preparation higher than that, saying they were very well prepared and had received excellent training in this area. "I've definitely mastered many of the methods in my expertise area and see myself as one able to lead future doctoral- and master-level students." Other Fellows, however, felt their preparation could have been better. One Fellow described her/his preparation as "adequate though difficult to obtain in [my] department." And for some, their preparation in quantitative methods was lacking. "I have had limited experience in statistics. I am currently . . . teaching myself the necessary stats to do my thesis."

The DRP's contribution to developing indepth understanding of Fellows' own research paradigms was indirect. Some commented that the DRP itself did not provide the type of training or experience that would have helped them achieve this goal; a few expressed the wish that it had. "I would have wanted more detail on research methods that would have supplemented my department's research methods course." "The program has emphasized theory but not research methods."

The DRP's main contribution in assisting Fellows' understanding of one paradigm was to provide a forum for reflection and discussion. "The [DRP] offered me the opportunity to reflect on the foundations and methods of my field." "I learned from other [DRP] participants . . . how they conduct research. This served to improve my understanding [of] my preferred research method." Other components of the DRP, namely, fellowships, professional expense funds, and the license to seek training under the DRP umbrella, also supported Fellows in developing depth in their own research paradigm.

Fellows directly attributed academic sources as one place where they developed depth in their research paradigms. "This I have engaged almost exclusively through the mentoring of my major advisor, her students, and the other ethnographer on my committee." "Courses on methodology and research design in my department have been the primary sources of training in my field." Research, either Fellows' or faculty research, was another source of preparation in this area. In the words of one Fellow, "[I] obtained [this] through a combination of relevant course work and practical research experience." "My own research has worked to apply these methods and other methods of inquiry."

Research experience. The DRP has always seen the need for Fellows to have early, extensive, and varied research experiences during their graduate research education. Several

DRP components address this: participating in faculty research, presenting research at a conference, and writing a pre-dissertation research paper. Fellows' responses, however, imply that these DRP components are not helping them gain research experience. When they applied to the program, students expected that the DRP would provide a means for becoming involved in faculty research; participating in faculty research and presenting at a conference were considered very important in their graduate education. Lower means on the other *Scales*, however, lead to the idea that while the DRP encouraged these activities, Fellows perceived that it generally did not facilitate their realization. The large variances for these components across all Likert-type items imply that the DRP had more of a role in facilitating research experience for some Fellows than for others.

While the DRP made a minimal contribution to providing for participation in faculty research, the DRP did provide an entrée for some Fellows to get involved in faculty research. Several included among the benefits of the DRP “involvement on a faculty project” and “the excuse to ask professors to participate in research with them.” For the majority of Fellows, however, “involvement in faculty research is not dependent on the DRP.”

Many Fellows gained experience from their appointments as assistants on faculty research projects that they accessed through their advisors or other sources. “I have had great opportunities to conduct research with faculty in [two departments].” Fellows' academic requirements also provided opportunities for engaging in research, especially first-year research projects, theses and dissertations, and course work. “This has been achieved primarily through practical research experience with my advisor, other researchers using differing methods, as well as work required by courses, the department, and the DRP.” A few attributed their research experience to previous jobs or other institutions. “I've been doing [research] since undergrad.”

Two-thirds of the Fellows described their level of research experience as good; they gained experience, achieved the goal, and/or were producing research. “I have had great opportunities to conduct research with faculty.” Several of these Fellows also talked about their *own* research in a programmatic way that went beyond academic requirements and that was sometimes facilitated by the DRP. “I have written three articles based on my own research in the past year and a half. I have presented at two academic conferences. The fellowship money has allowed me to concentrate on my own research instead of working.”

But, involvement in faculty research was an area of dissatisfaction to about a third of the Fellows, who perceived their research opportunities as limited or absent. “I have had limited research experiences in comparison to my colleagues in [the DRP]. They are on [faculty research] grants.” Some Fellows observed that “research opportunities in my department are scarce.” A few Fellows felt their experiences hadn't been varied enough. “I would have wanted more hands-on with varying departments.” Meanwhile, another noted her/his variety of research experiences had cost her/him in depth. “The experiences have been varied, and I consequently feel some lack of depth.”

In summary, the DRP facilitated participation in faculty research for only a minority of Fellows and did so indirectly. While the majority of Fellows felt they had adequate research experiences, a large number felt their involvement in research was inadequate. Several suggested that the DRP should do more to make research opportunities known or available to Fellows; their comments are taken up later in the recommendations.

Presenting research at a conference was very important to many Fellows, but again the DRP's contribution was highly variable. For about half of the respondents, the DRP contributed next to nothing; for the other half, the DRP provided about 50% of their ability to present at a conference. The DRP's primary contribution appeared to come from the professional expense funds available for this purpose, among others.

Writing a pre-dissertation research paper was considered by Fellows to be of slight importance across the board, and the DRP's contribution to it was perceived as negligible. Those doing a pre-dissertation research paper largely had it facilitated by course work, departmental requirements, or as a result of conducting research. Many noted, "I would have done it whether I was in [the DRP] or not." The attention the DRP gave to this component did have an indirect effect for at least one Fellow for whom writing a pre-dissertation research paper was "largely supported by course work outside of [the DRP] – but incentive was provided by [the DRP]."

General support: advising and office space. The DRP implemented mentor committees and annual planning/reporting requirements to reinforce and supplement what was being done in departments and by advisors. Fellows did not perceive the DRP's contribution to advising to be an important benefit. Variances were high for these components, suggesting that Fellows' experiences were individualized; some benefited from advising components whereas others didn't.

For some Fellows, the DRP gave them a "license" and "opportunity to work with a mentoring committee." "It's nice to have formal recognition and an excuse to ask people for help." In direct contrast to this were Fellows who viewed the mentor committee as unnecessary, because "students will naturally seek out professors who have expertise in certain areas." Other Fellows felt it duplicated committees they had for their academic milestones. The "mentor committee is redundant with dissertation/prelim committee and forces these decisions too early – unclear what the mentor committee is supposed to do."

The DRP's requirement that Fellows conduct annual program planning/reporting with their major advisor was one of the lowest ranked components across the Likert-type *Scales*. Again, while the DRP made some contribution in this area to many Fellows, experiences were highly individualized. Some Fellows mentioned that the first plan was the most beneficial. "The best part of planning was doing it for the application." Others perceived that "annual reporting is an important factor but not something I see the DRP contributing to," as it was "already [something] I was doing or had access to through my major department."

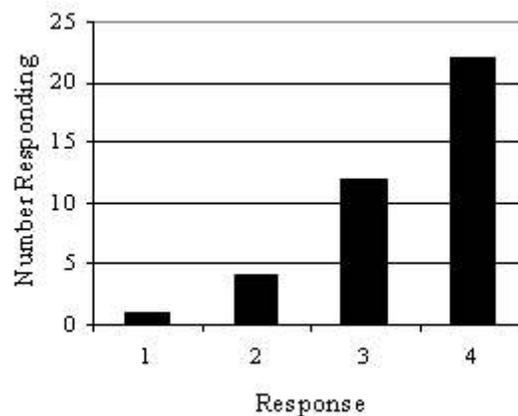
As was customary with fellowship awards in the SoE, all funded Fellows received office space, supplies, and access to computers. Not all Fellows eligible for offices took one. The value of DRP office space was extremely variable among these Fellows, who were also split on its importance in their overall education. Generally, however, offices were ranked as moderately important among the DRP components for funded Fellows.

Fellows' plans for future involvement in research.

The great majority of Fellows plan to be actively involved in educational research after they receive their doctorates. In response to the survey question, *How involved do you expect to be with educational research in your future career?* (1 = consumer of educational research, 4 = intensive producer of educational research), the majority of Fellows replied that they expected to be intensively involved ($y = 3.38$, $s^2 = 0.60$). The frequency chart of responses is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Fellows' Expected Level of Involvement in Research



Supporting this finding, the great majority of Fellows described their ideal job as an academic position at a university where they would engage in “a combination of teaching and research.” Several of these Fellows further specified their goal “to teach and do research at a research university.” A large number of other Fellows described their ideal job as “a full-time educational researcher” at a government or private research institute, foundation, or advocacy group. A few other Fellows described ideal jobs that would include engaging in consultancy in schools, educational computer media, or psychology practice.

In summary, Fellows' overall assessments of the DRP's value in their graduate research education were overwhelmingly positive. “It's one of the very best things about graduate school for me”; “I can't think of any significant drawbacks” of participating in the DRP. Many considered the prestige of being a Wisconsin-Spencer Fellow very important, both the recognition it gave them as graduate students and for the “impressive line on my Curriculum Vita.”

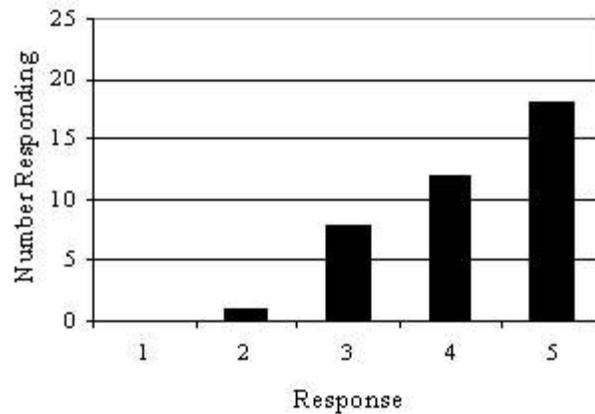
Fellows' Recommendations

We asked Fellows to comment on the value and future of the DRP in several different ways: how strongly they would recommend the DRP to other graduate students, how strongly they would recommend that the DRP continue, and what modifications should be made in the program. Their responses follow.

Fellows would strongly recommend the DRP to other graduate students (1 = would not recommend to 5 = strongly recommend; mean = 4.19, variance = 0.76). The frequency chart of their responses is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Fellows' Recommendation of DRP to Other Students

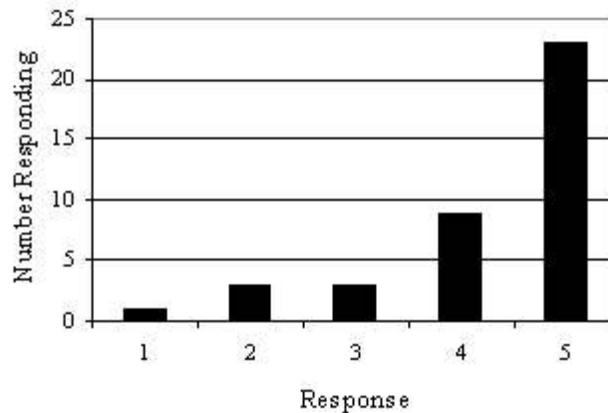


One Fellow succinctly stated a commonly held view. “I have recommended the program to new students on the basis of exposure, funding, and somewhat better opportunities in exchange for giving up a course and time of one’s own.” The DRP had a substantial cost in “the extra time commitment” and “additional course work” it required. Many Fellows noted these costs must be weighed against the benefits of the program in making the decision to participate. An important factor in the decision was the fit between students’ and the DRP’s goals. “[I would recommend it to others] only if they understood the short-term and long-term benefits. Only for those truly interested in a future academic career which included research as well as teaching.” Some felt receipt of fellowship funding would tip the balance in favor of participating. “I would strongly recommend the program to others if they received fellowship funding. If someone was facing the decision of entering without fellowship funding . . . I would be much more reserved in my recommendation.” A few Fellows were “not sure the benefits outweighed the costs” for their own participation, and a couple others felt the program had not in fact paid off for them.

When asked whether they thought the SoE should continue the DRP after Spencer Foundation funding ends, Fellows replied with a strong “yes” (1 = would not recommend to 5 = strongly recommend; mean = 4.26, variance = 1.18). The frequency chart of their responses is included in Figure 3. The overwhelming majority felt that “in terms of professional development, this program has been invaluable. It is not offered in significant ways through other means in the School of Education, hence it is important that it should be continued.”

Figure 3

Fellows' Recommendation for Continuing DRP



An indication of their commitment to the program and interest in its future is the large number of recommendations Fellows made for how it might be improved. The following themes emerged from their comments.

- Redesign the Proseminar. Fellows made several recommendations for how the Proseminar's treatment of multiple research paradigms could be improved. These comments focused on "organiz[ing] in a way that we learn equally about qualitative and quantitative research methods" and allowing "an indepth examination of multiple research paradigms." Several Fellows felt "the program offers quite a bit of breadth in qualitative methods. However, I wish either the DRP, or my department, offered a statistics course for those in education." A few specific and detailed recommendations were offered for bridging the multiple disciplines represented by Fellows in the seminar. For example, "build on what students share – namely, concern for [education] – and move from there to the development of values, purposes, and finally research paradigms"; alternately, look at "how different researchers went about doing their research and then [consider] other ways the question or problem could have been approached."

Fellows also made recommendations for how continuity in the Proseminar could be maintained from one year to the next. Some Fellows recommended "more discussion among DRP staff and instructors about the goals of the program and what might occur in the Proseminar," which would "improve the consistency and quality of the program and keep it focused on program goals." Finally, some Fellows suggested ways in which the discussion in the Proseminar could be improved. Two suggestions were to have "fewer students per year perhaps; expect more work from the students" and to hold brown bag seminars that highlight strategies faculty have developed for "relating to research outside their immediate field, . . . for example, when to be critical and when not to, how to express one's position to the other."

- Improve support for the interdisciplinary community and continued conversation. Fellows suggested that the DRP find ways to "continue the support and development of Fellows' cross-perspective stance on educational research beyond the first year" by helping to "connect students in various fields [around common research interests]." A specific recommendation

made was to provide a “student lounge, or lab” that would allow “regular, frequent conversations among Fellows.”

- Change how fellowship and professional expense funds are allocated and administered. As one Fellow observed, “how the money is divided is always an issue.” Several recommended that fellowships be changed to small, specific one-year “grants to work with faculty or [to do one’s] own research.” Regarding their future availability, one Fellow noted that “fellowship funds, although not ubiquitous, make a world of difference to the recipients. If another source could be found [after Spencer funding ends], I would strongly recommend they be continued.” Another suggested that “even if you can’t fund people [in the future], offer the organization and maybe access to [professional expense funds].”

Several suggested making professional expense funds more available for specific needs such as research expenses or books, or that Fellows be “given leeway to decide how to allocate” their share of the funds. Others suggested the amount of professional expense funds available to Fellows be announced at the beginning of the year and funds be administered quarterly.

- Give Fellows more help in connecting with faculty for research experiences and mentoring. “[Increasing the] communication among faculty about the DRP” might create “opportunities . . . for graduate students to truly work outside their own primary specialties.” Another suggestion was that the DRP “assign participants to professors who can fully mentor and provide opportunities for them to work on projects that reflect their [research area] of interest.” Others were that the DRP require “that departments provide research experiences during years of fellowship funding” and organize Fellows into “research teams with faculty mentors.”
- Stabilize and clarify program requirements. Fellows raised problems with “constantly changing requirements for the program,” “unclear program standards and requirements,” and “requirements [that] are either unrealistic or exist in name only.” Fellows made general suggestions that they be allowed to tailor the program to suit them individually and that the DRP “make a decision about program requirements and stick to it.”
- Spread the program more widely across participating departments in the SoE. Several Fellows recommended implementing DRP elements and goals for all graduate students in participating departments. For example, “incorporate cohorts and seminars into the general preparation at the UW,” and think of “ways of supporting and enriching graduate education . . . spreading the ‘lessons,’ ‘goals,’ etc., of the program more widely across [the SoE].”

Graduates’ Views About DRP

We also interviewed all nine Fellows from Cohorts 1-8 who had received their PhDs (Graduates). Three of the Graduates are full-time researchers at university or private research organizations; two are school-based psychologists; and the remainder serve respectively as a director of a governmental research and academic unit, an assistant professor at a university, a director of a private consulting and research organization, and a director of religious education at a parish.

All except one of the Graduates are engaged to some degree in educational research. Educational research constitutes 100% of three Graduates’ activities, about 50% of two others’

activities, and 0-25% for the remaining four. Research is an important aspect of Graduates' careers; the overwhelming majority whose jobs allow for less than 100% research activity would like to be in positions where it was increased over current levels. One Graduate, whose current position doesn't include research, pursues research on her/his own time; another left an academic post to form her/his own organization in order to more freely pursue her/his research and teaching agenda.

We requested Curriculum Vitae (CVs) from the four Graduates who had received their PhDs one or more years prior to the evaluation to get an indicator of their research productivity. We received three; their CVs reflect they have published 2, 4, and 10 journal articles, chapters, or books since receiving their doctoral degrees, with two of them citing an additional 4 and 6 publications forthcoming.

We asked Graduates to reflect on the value of the DRP components and experience, both in their graduate education and to their subsequent professional positions. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive; in fact, one Graduate had planned to speak to the education program dean at her/his current institution about initiating a similar program there. Graduates concurred with the views of participating Fellows in naming the program's interdisciplinary emphasis as one of its most valuable features. "It's a good way of really fostering conversation across departments," something that doesn't normally happen in the SOE. "It was awesome to see other students from other departments, and how they research, the types of things they read . . . it is not something we have a lot of exposure to [otherwise]." The DRP added breadth and rigor to Graduates' doctoral preparation. "It certainly helped me refine my arguments, and it broadened the scope of what I considered research." "That feeling of academic integrity, of achievement, commitment to scholarly work . . . is what I came away with from that interdisciplinary process."

Belonging to a community specifically focused on *research* was a critical aspect of the DRP for some Graduates. "The most important thing for me with the DRP was just finding other people who are actually . . . interested in research." Several Graduates credited the DRP with fostering their interest and development as researchers. "The DRP played on another level . . . to orient me toward research." "I was really floundering in my research before I had a place to go [i.e., the DRP]." "I can say with no hesitation that it was the research training program [the DRP] and that one professor in the department that really instilled my desire to want to do research."

The networks they formed in the DRP continue to be important to many Graduates. One Graduate collaborates in research with a DRP colleague, another lined up her/his postdoctoral research position through contacts made in the DRP. DRP colleagues are people "that I can email or call and ask about where I might go to learn about [other areas of educational research]." Connections they had with faculty in the program were also important to Graduates. They appreciated "the faculty and accessibility to them," opportunities for "getting to know [specific faculty] as a person, as a professional," and "the participation of faculty members who came to talk to us" in the seminars.

Fellowship funding was a major benefit to the Graduates who received it. Seven of the nine Graduates had been funded Fellows; one of those non-funded had chosen not to apply for the fellowship. Note that five of the Graduates came from Cohorts 1-3, which comprised only funded Fellows; later cohorts, which included increasing numbers of non-funded Fellows, had two funded and two non-funded Graduates. Graduates who had received fellowship funds

commonly held the view, “I wouldn’t have been able to finish my doctoral program without them.” For many, fellowship funds “gave me focus and peace of mind to devote entirely to the doctoral program,” and “it just made life a little less stressful.” For others, “there is no way I could have done it in any other scenario or circumstance. There was no way for me to have that kind of money for expenses and tuition.” Fellowship funding facilitated the research experiences of at least two Graduates. One “used fellowship funding and the ‘blanket’ of the [DRP]” to craft research assistantships with faculty that culminated in several publications. For another, “what really helped me out” was the fellowship, which “gave me my own grant” to pursue research independently of her/his advisor. The access to WCER support and researchers, supplies, and offices that accompanied fellowships also had been beneficial to many Graduates.

Graduates were overwhelmingly supportive of continuing the DRP. It contributed in important ways to their professional preparation. “I think the idea of entry into a field, being involved in education, and having that kind of recognition attached to my education and preparation has served me well.” Being a Spencer Fellow “is a mark of honor When you know you are Spencer, you know that somebody is taking you seriously. And it helps other people to take you seriously.”

Summary of Findings from All Fellows

We received surveys from 39 Fellows in Cohorts 4-8, a response rate of 85%, and interviewed all nine Fellows (Graduates) who had completed their PhDs as of Fall 2002. We collected data comprised of demographic information, Likert-type *Scales* related to DRP components, and open-ended comments about the program. Both Graduates and Fellows were extremely positive about the impact of the DRP on their graduate research education, and they strongly recommended its continuation.

The most important benefits the DRP had for Fellows were: (1) funding, (2) interdisciplinary emphasis, (3) connections with peers across the SoE, and (4) professionalization as educational researchers. Problem areas perceived by Fellows were the Proseminar and facilitation of research experiences. Advising components were seen as peripheral. Fellows’ evaluation of the importance and contribution of DRP components was remarkably similar to the Faculty’s (R) (Tables 6-7 and 10-11). One notable difference, however, was the higher importance Fellows placed on funding. For Fellows funding consistently ranked above interdisciplinary emphasis, while their ranks were reversed for Faculty (R).

Fellowship funds were invaluable to the Fellows who received them. A major benefit of fellowships was relieving students from working and allowing them to focus on research and course work. Fellowship funding enabled some Fellows to volunteer on faculty research projects where assistantships were not available, or to focus on developing their own research independently of funded faculty projects. Many funded Fellows maintained that fellowships made it possible for them to complete their PhDs sooner than they would have otherwise. Others asserted they couldn’t have undertaken their doctoral studies without the fellowship support. Professional expense funds were of great importance to all Fellows, funded and non-funded, a benefit they didn’t anticipate when they applied to the program. Professional expense funds not only supported Fellows in such ways as attending conferences and buying equipment and software for research, it also gave them a feeling of support and recognition as research professionals.

After funding, the DRP's interdisciplinary emphasis was the most important element of the program to Fellows. It supplied a unique and necessary perspective in the SoE. "I am not aware of any other program that can provide a much-needed overarching picture of education. Including diverse kinds of educational research . . . in a graduate school experience is important." Fully half of the Fellows credited the DRP as the place where they developed a breadth of vision about educational research. It was primarily through the Proseminar and their discussions with graduate student peers from other departments that Fellows learned about other areas of research, although their interaction with faculty also was important. Spring semester of the Proseminar was especially valuable to Fellows, as it exposed them to each others' research that represented perspectives different from or complementary to their own. Access to a community of peers from across the SoE was itself an important aspect of the DRP to Fellows.

When speaking of breadth, many Fellows credited the Proseminar with providing it. When focused on evaluating the Proseminar itself, however, several aspects caused Fellows to be negative about their experience with it overall. Factors related to the coverage of multiple perspectives, syllabi, discussions, and time taken by the Proseminar led to a significant amount of discontent. Evaluations of the Proseminar varied somewhat from cohort to cohort, calling attention to the effect of each year's particular dynamics of the instructors, the syllabus, and the group of Fellows. Furthermore, Fellows' perceptions of the Fall three-credit seminar tended to be negative, while their perceptions of the Spring one-credit seminar tended to be positive. (Fellows made many recommendations for improving the Proseminar that should be examined, such as increasing continuity of the seminar's content and conduct from one year to the next, balancing the treatment of qualitative and quantitative approaches to research, and better facilitation of in-class discussion.)

Fellows valued the DRP for the development and professionalization as educational researchers it afforded them. Its emphases on research, providing a community of researchers, and funding research activities all contributed to Fellows' professional development. What is more, they considered the prestige associated with being a Spencer Fellow a boost to their careers. The majority of current Fellows plan to continue in careers involving a high degree of educational research; those who have already completed their PhDs, while presently involved in varying degrees, all expressed an abiding interest and desire to do research.

A major area in which the DRP had less impact was cultivating Fellows' direct experience in hands-on research. Fully one-third found their possibilities for such involvement to be limited or absent. Several expressed a desire for the DRP to do more to help Fellows access research opportunities. As for the other components, namely, pre-dissertation research paper, mentor committees, and annual reporting/planning, the DRP was not seen as contributing beyond what Fellows were already required to do by their advisors and departments. And, while the DRP's contributions to office space and presenting research at a conference also were considered to be peripheral, the high variances of responses to these items on the *Scales* indicate some Fellows benefited from them more than others.

Graduates' views about the DRP largely concurred with those expressed by current Fellows and were predominantly and strongly positive. Funding and the interdisciplinary emphasis of the program were major benefits. It turned out that most of the Graduates had been funded Fellows, and they emphasized the importance of the fellowships in enabling them to complete their doctoral education. Graduates' research education also had benefited from availability of professional expense funds. The DRP as a community focused on research also was a critical

aspect of the program, and the networks many formed in the program were still operational. The cross-disciplinary conversations the DRP engendered enriched Graduates' education and continued to serve them well in their careers. The research preparation the DRP provided, as well as the distinction of being a Spencer Fellow, were important aspects of their professional qualifications. Graduates attributed a greater role to the DRP with regard to their research experiences than did current Fellows. Not only did several of the Graduates credit the DRP with fostering their interest in research, a couple others became involved in faculty's research or found support for their own research through the program. Finally, besides concurring with current Fellows on the benefits of the program, Graduates also found some of the same components redundant with department requirements or not useful, namely, the advising components and the pre-dissertation research paper.

Graduates and current Fellows alike overwhelmingly supported continuing the DRP beyond the Spencer Foundation's funding. Current Fellows made a number of suggestions for the shape the program might take if future funds were limited. Several ideas were to spread the program's goals across the SoE, to reallocate fellowship-type funds, to continue professional expense funds, and to provide an interdisciplinary focus, as well as other selected aspects of the current program.

In summary, it can be said that the DRP achieved its goals of providing funding for promising graduate students and increasing their breadth of exposure to educational research. Graduates and Fellows indicated their intent to continue in careers involving educational research, but that couldn't be attributed directly or solely to the DRP in general. The DRP had limited effect on achieving its goals for students to have early, varied, and extensive research experiences and indepth education in their major paradigm. Graduates and Fellows were satisfied with their overall research education at the SoE in research methodologies (breadth, depth, and research experience). Finally, current and graduated Fellows strongly supported continuing the essential elements of the DRP in some form beyond Spencer funding.

The Study: Discussion and Conclusions

In 1993-94, the Spencer Foundation invited and subsequently provided funds for the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to design and implement a doctoral research program with two goals: (1) encouraging change in the structure of participating departments' research programs by impacting the faculty, and (2) educating promising doctoral students so that their study would enable them to enter a career and become producers of outstanding educational research. These goals were to be accomplished by creating a model doctoral education program and providing promising students with fellowships so that they would participate. The program, now known as the Wisconsin-Spencer Doctoral Research Program (DRP), has existed since Fall 1994, and nine cohorts of Fellows have been admitted. The evaluation reported here examined as closely as possible the impact of that program on Fellows who were in Cohorts 4-8 and on the SoE faculty of 2001-02. The evaluation study provided grounded evidence that helps in deciding the extent to which the DRP's goals were achieved. And, **the major finding is that the DRP has been effective in achieving its goals.**

Faculty

Did the DRP have an impact on the faculty of the SoE? The answer is yes and no, depending upon one important element: *the amount of involvement individual faculty members had in the*

DRP. The more a faculty member worked in the DRP as an instructor, Advisory Committee member, or advisor, the more they reported agreement with and necessity to implement DRP components in his/her own department. And, the larger the percentage of a department's faculty and students who had been involved, the more departmental change was seen. Of course, this is a chicken-and-egg situation, and direction of causation cannot be determined. Did the individual work in the DRP because of agreement with its goals, or did working in the DRP influence subsequent action and beliefs? There is some evidence that the latter is true and that having an opportunity to explore ideas about graduate education enabled change in faculty beliefs to occur. And, the more faculty that were involved, the more a department would discuss graduate education and change their departmental graduate program. At the very least, the DRP provided a forum for discussion that served as a catalyst and an opportunity to seriously consider graduate education for the 21st century.

Did the DRP have an impact on the **structure of doctoral education programs**? The evaluation study provides some evidence that it at least had an indirect impact. Faculty who participated in the evaluation (34 % of tenure-track faculty) reported that many of its components were implemented in the departments and that more discussion about graduate education had occurred. Attribution of causation is not possible. The DRP and the five departments of the SoE do not exist in a vacuum. They are not isolated from the broad community of doctoral research education and educational scholarship. Many of the same elements that are in the DRP also are being discussed in scholarly venues, and these discussions probably had an impact on the changes that were seen in doctoral education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. But, it appears that the responding faculty believed strongly that the DRP had an impact on the structure of their doctoral programs.

Funding for Fellows was seen as the most important part of the DRP, but almost as important was its **interdisciplinary emphasis**. Faculty saw that an emphasis on interdisciplinary education was substantively correct and necessary to prepare scholars for the 21st century. Not only was it seen as necessary for doctoral students, they believed it was critical for all faculty within the SoE to increase their dialog across disciplines and departments. The responding faculty believed that currently the DRP is one of the few places in the SoE where an interdisciplinary emphasis is stressed and where Fellows accept its premises as correct. This not only has had an impact on the Fellows, but also upon the faculty with whom they come into contact.

But, one must consider the two-thirds of the faculty that chose not to participate in the DRP's evaluation. Is it reasonable to suggest that the DRP had limited impact on them? Perhaps, this is so. But, they did not choose to ignore pleas to participate because they did not care about graduate education. Many non-respondents are outstanding scholars who have served as advisors for many graduate students who have gone on to be outstanding scholars in their own rights. But, there are multiple more valid suggestions that may explain why the faculty did not participate.

Consider the origin, administration, and limited character of the DRP. The idea and character of the program were originated at the Spencer Foundation and presented to the Dean of the SoE. He and a very small group of faculty designed such a program, and the Spencer Foundation in cooperation with the Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin-Madison funded it. It was then presented to those who had the major responsibility of graduate education as a rather inflexible program that was to lead to change. Also, the administration and direction of the program rested mainly in the Dean's Office. The invitation to participate in the Spencer program

was accepted by Dean Henry Trueba (Dean at that time) and perceived by his office (as reported to us) as a “top-down” plan to the faculty. Even though Charles Read, who has been Dean since the second proposal was accepted, has attempted to involve faculty in a variety of ways, the DRP is perceived by many faculty as a program to be accepted without change. It continues to be seen as a “Dean’s” program.

The five cooperating departments in the SoE are large, diverse, and have many faculty and graduate students. It is safe to say that the School of Education and the five departments have a reputation as leaders in producing outstanding educational research and having many PhD recipients in places where they have produced outstanding research. Faculty are justifiably proud of their reputation and graduates. They are equally proud of their doctoral programs that existed before the DRP and continue to exist. The University of Wisconsin is a faculty-governed institution, and doctoral programs are controlled by departments and in turn by departmental faculty. Faculty rights and responsibilities are jealously guarded. Could the origin and administration of the DRP partially explain why some faculty did not appear interested in the DRP?

Secondly, consider the size of the DRP in relation to the total number of graduate students in the various departments (see Table 1). The participating Fellows represented a very small percentage of SoE graduate students, varying from 4% to 9% with a mean of 8%. Only about one-third of the total faculty in the participating departments had an advisee in the DRP in 2001-02. So, it is clear that many faculty would have had little or no interaction with DRP Fellows or the program. It was originally assumed that the ideas on which the DRP was based would be at least partially transmitted to faculty when an individual faculty member worked with an individual DRP Fellow. But, a limited number of faculty worked with Fellows, so change could not occur by this mechanism.

But, is it necessary that all faculty had to be involved to consider the program a success? The faculty who returned *Faculty Surveys* or were interviewed clearly believe that the program was a success and should be continued. Overall, they believed that most components of the DRP are important in graduate education and that the DRP contributes significantly to providing many of these elements. It is clear that an interdisciplinary emphasis in graduate education is perceived as important and that the DRP contributes significantly to the interdisciplinary education of DRP participants. Faculty currently believe that the DRP is one of the few places in the SoE where it can be found.

It would be easy to conclude that because the SoE faculty has not been overwhelmingly involved, the DRP has not been successful in changing faculty beliefs about graduate education and thus no funds should be committed to its continuation. However, this would be **wrong**. In fact, faculty who did assist in the evaluation were overwhelmingly positive. A major finding of this evaluation is that the DRP has been effective in spite of the small pool of involved faculty. One Faculty (R) member said, “You don’t have to have everybody in a department in order to make change So, what you need is a few committed people who care a lot about it and believe in the goals of it.”

However, it appears that the more faculty are involved, the more change takes place. Faculty (R) from EPS reported more change in their department than did Faculty (R) from any other department. As reported in Table 1, more students from EPS than from any other department had been involved in the DRP, and a higher proportion of surveys was returned from

this department. We also must take into account that Mary Metz, the former DRP Director and who probably had more impact on the DRP than any other faculty member, was an active member of EPS. Her influence on her department was obviously powerful. But, a critical mass of students and faculty certainly helped in departmental change.

While DRP funding and an interdisciplinary emphasis were perceived as important, some other DRP components were perceived as not providing much to graduate education. A close examination of these suggests that they were provided routinely by departments. Faculty might have thought that the DRP didn't need to provide them. However, one specific component of the DRP received less than enthusiastic support, and this component has been seen by the DRP as one of its most critical components. Faculty (R) perceived that the DRP Proseminar was not very important to graduate education. Since this seminar was designed to be the major source for DRP Fellows to gain interdisciplinary research knowledge, it is puzzling why it did not rank at the same level as other interdisciplinary components. Of course, only a small percentage of SoE graduate students participate in the Proseminar, so perhaps its emphasis is not as obviously apparent to faculty as some of the other elements that were better described by their names. And, so many variables are at play in any instructional situation (perceived competence of the instructor, intellectual atmosphere, work required, etc.), that variables other than the intellectual content of the Proseminar may have influenced faculty. However, the negative reaction to the Proseminar indicates that its structure and substance need to be examined and modified.

Faculty recommendations for the future varied widely. Some were short-term suggestions for modifications in the current program. Recommendations for the long-term future of the DRP were somewhat negative and mostly had to do with funding and questioning whether in the current financial climate the DRP in its present form should continue. This comment from one Faculty (R) member summarizes the recommendations well. "I think intellectually it is a good idea . . . for the students. I think the cross-disciplinary . . . cross-department discussions . . . *are* good. [But, if it costs the SoE money, it isn't a good idea in its entirety.]" Of course, the comments must be interpreted in light of the current budget situation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison that is requiring major cuts across the entire University. Thus, Faculty (R) could have been responding with the idea that funding the DRP would detract from funding for other programs they considered more essential. Also, faculty members as a group have tended to let funding issues about instruction rest with the Dean. So, they might not have known of ways to raise funds for an instructional program. All in all, although the faculty who did respond appear somewhat negative, the faculty recommendations are hard to interpret in light of the few who responded and/or commented.

Fellows

Did the DRP have an impact on participating Fellows? Yes. Of major benefit to students were fellowships, professional expense funds, and the interdisciplinary emphasis, all of which are in limited supply elsewhere in the SoE. The preparation as researchers and the connections they made with other students in the School that they received through the DRP were also valued. Other aspects of the program, however, were considered peripheral, namely, advising components, facilitation of their research experiences, changing program requirements, and the Proseminar.

Consider the benefits fellowships and other types of **funding** provided. It would be a mistake to consider fellowships a luxury for graduate students. Fellowships served to reduce the constant

stress associated with financing graduate school for which most of them are solely responsible, thus freeing students to devote more attention to intellectual pursuits and often decreasing the time it took them to complete their PhDs. Graduate students commonly deal with multiple responsibilities and pressures on top of their doctoral research, such as: growing children, relationships with a significant other, serious illness, death in the family, primary provider's unemployment or employment, mounting student loans, full course loads. The medical insurance and tuition waivers that accompany fellowships can be as important to graduate students as the stipends themselves. Some have suggested that fellowships be discontinued after Spencer funding ends because funds are hard to come by and fellowships are not available to all Fellows, creating a perceived hierarchy within the program. A better approach, given the difference funding makes to those who receive it, would be to continue to seek as many funds as possible to fund as many students as possible in ways that make a difference. Some of the recommendations suggested include continuing to recognize students of outstanding potential with fellowships, reallocating these monies to provide small research grants to students, or increasing the level of professional expense funding for all students.

Even the relatively modest professional expense funds provided by the DRP for Fellows can make a difference in how well they are able to pursue their research independently of a faculty grant that would fund some of their activities. Such funding is not available to all students, and for those who are project assistants, the faculty research on which they work often isn't related to their doctoral research; although it's a way to gain experience or to pay for school, it doesn't directly further their own research programs. Attending professional conferences, buying recording and transcribing equipment, paying for production of research materials, and buying software and even computer equipment are ways in which Fellows have used these funds, all facilitative and necessary expenses for researchers. An area in which only funded Fellows currently are supported by the DRP is resources such as office supplies, computers, printers, access to technical support, and additional equipment such as laptop computers, LCD projectors, and recording and transcription equipment. Making these resources available to all Fellows, whether or not it's feasible to continue other types of funding, would be another way to facilitate their work.

The **interdisciplinary emphasis** of the DRP provided Fellows with a unique and necessary perspective in the SoE. The conversations about research that happened in the Proseminar and informally in the DRP community broadened many Fellows' visions of educational research. While their experiences with these conversations in the Proseminar varied among cohorts from difficult to pleasantly stimulating, at least this was a place where the discussion was happening. But, it says the DRP needs to find ways to better facilitate discussions about the validity and contributions of different research paradigms and to help Fellows understand how and when to challenge or accept claims about knowledge created by different approaches. That there is a need for a place for such discussions in the SoE was illustrated by a recent flare-up on the graduate student email listserv that could be said to be related to diversity of researchers and approaches to research. The open listserv proved inadequate for handling such a discussion, but no satisfactory alternative venue was found. If handled sensitively and openly, a seminar like the DRP's could provide a suitable forum for facilitating such discussions.

Concurrent with gaining breadth of vision was Fellows' apparent development of more egalitarian views of different research paradigms. Fellows spoke of consulting their DRP peers about different approaches to research and incorporating these into their own work or teaching. There was increasing tolerance and intellectual appreciation of different research perspectives as

they learned and worked as a community. When some found staying within the bounds of their major paradigm too confining, it was a development not always well received by their departments or advisors, where it was sometimes believed that breadth of vision would come at the expense of depth in one's own paradigm, not only in course taking and research experiences, but also in one's resulting perspective on research. Whatever the outcome of this depth versus breadth argument, DRP Graduates appear to be becoming researchers who are well educated in methodologies, and there is an indication that its Fellows will take the lead in promoting cross-disciplinary conversation in the profession in the future.

It has been suggested that the DRP be expanded to provide more, if not all, doctoral students in the SoE with the experience and benefits of an interdisciplinary emphasis. Such a development could be disruptive to departments with their focus on depth, but it could also enrich students' research education as well as discussions in SoE courses among students of different research traditions. The appeal of the DRP's interdisciplinary emphasis becomes apparent when one considers the increasing number of non-funded Fellows accepting the invitation to participate. Whereas in earlier cohorts students were unlikely to participate if they hadn't received fellowships, in recent cohorts the number of non-funded Fellows has risen to twice that of funded Fellows. Participation has actually increased to the point where it was necessary to cap the number admitted in 2003 to provide for productive and participative interaction in the one Proseminar course offered each year.

Another benefit to Fellows is the **connections** they make with fellow graduate students across cooperating departments through the DRP. While they can meet and get to know students from other departments in less formal ways, the DRP community is unique in that it brings together diverse students with a common interest in research. Fellows' positive responses to the Spring semester of the Proseminar reveal how much they value interaction with peers around their own research. Additionally, graduate school is notorious as an isolating experience for students. Outside of their colleagues on research or teaching appointments, connections with other graduate students are difficult to originate and/or maintain. The strengths of Fellows' common interest in research, the structure that the DRP provides, and the cohort experience are all factors that may be helping to sustain this community of Fellows beyond what social groups or individual departments have been able to do. It makes the case even stronger for formal supports for the DRP community of Fellows beyond the first year in the Proseminar. To that end, several varieties of Advanced Seminars have been implemented in the program to continue the interdisciplinary conversation as well as to maintain the community of Fellows and extend it across cohorts. Fellows value participating in the larger community of Spencer Research Training Grant (RTG) institutions as well, through meetings arranged at AERA or separate conferences. There was an interest in developing more opportunities for interaction with RTG communities at other universities.

Fellows were very vocal about their experiences in the **Proseminar**, considered to be the keystone of the DRP. Although half of the Fellows attributed their breadth of vision about research to the Proseminar, they tended to be negative in general about the Fall semester while positive about the Spring semester experience. Their comments indicate more is operating in the Proseminar than the interdisciplinary emphasis, especially in the Fall semester. Dissatisfaction with the quality of discussion and the disagreements among students, already addressed above, appeared to have shaped their views of the seminar. The Proseminar is an important component in that it launches a cohort of Fellows in the program and is the primary forum in the DRP for exploring multiple perspectives within a cross-disciplinary group. Every new group goes through

several stages of formation, some of which can be rocky. This may be the first time many of the Fellows engage in a significant way in interdisciplinary dialog about research. Some have found themselves in a position of defending their major paradigm without the depth of experience and knowledge to do so effectively or comfortably. Instructors, too, find this course challenging to lead, in part because it causes them to confront their own assumptions and to co-teach with a colleague from a markedly different tradition about which they may not be well informed. Changing instructors annually may not allow them to become skilled in this role. The dynamics between the co-instructors also appears to have a major impact on how well the course runs. And, while the syllabus may be passed from one pair of instructors to the next, each pair has the latitude to develop their own, contributing to potential differences from year to year, another source of dissatisfaction for Fellows. As a three-credit-hour course, Fellows reported that the Fall Proseminar required a lot of students' time and attention, for which multiple requirements are already competing. The Proseminar can become a source of frustration rather than a source of intellectual stimulation when such potential problems outweigh the benefits of community and interdisciplinary exposure.

The **demands of program requirements** for activities above and beyond their departments' requirements caused Fellows to caution others to weigh the costs against the benefits before they decided to participate. Receiving a fellowship could tip the balance in favor of the benefits, as could the research knowledge obtained, provided that was aligned with their goals. Program requirements sometimes changed during a Fellow's tenure and increased the level of participation expected of them. One such requirement was the development of a new Advanced Seminar in which third- and fourth-year Fellows were asked to participate, something that was not part of the program when they started. Changing the requirements over the years is understandably difficult for students given the pressures they are under in graduate school. There are often good reasons for making changes, such as continuing the interdisciplinary community beyond the first two years in the case of the new Advanced Seminar. An important message is that changes to requirements should be considered carefully before they're made, given the impact they have on students.

Fellows expressed some dissatisfaction with how the DRP facilitated their experiences in **hands-on research**. Indeed, the DRP has played only an indirect role by setting requirements for Fellows to participate in faculty research, present research at a conference, and conduct original research early in their program. Not all Fellows are finding opportunities to participate in faculty research projects; one-quarter said they hadn't had any such opportunities at all. Students generally find research positions through their advisors or other faculty members; there is no central clearinghouse of such opportunities in the SoE. If the DRP is serious about promoting Fellows' development in this dimension, it should consider how it may more directly effect their involvement in faculty research.

Some of the DRP's components were considered by Fellows to be peripheral, not necessarily because they thought them unimportant, but because these **requirements often overlapped** with what their major departments required or provided. Departments generally provide advising committees and require annual planning/reporting and writing a pre-dissertation research paper, although some departments provide more of these components than do others. Significant differences may exist, too, because the DRP's goal is to engage Fellows in some of these earlier than normally would be done by departments, for example, having a committee member from another department on a Fellow's committee before the dissertation stage. It would be useful for the DRP to consider ways to tailor program requirements to individuals so that it didn't duplicate

what was already in place, while still maintaining the integrity of the program and helping Fellows develop in desired dimensions.

Overall, Fellows valued the DRP highly for the professional development it gave them as researchers. Many components contributed to this and have been discussed. Another component that can't be neglected is the prestige conferred by being a Spencer Fellow. It was viewed as a mark of distinction not only on one's CV but also on themselves while still graduate students, and it led them to take themselves seriously as researchers. The impact of the title suggests an important consideration in the shape of the future program in continuing to select participants in a way that gives recognition to their potential as educational researchers. Because the number of Graduates from the program was small, we can't get a complete picture of how Fellows are orienting to research in their careers. However, a trend is emerging. Among the first group of nine Graduates from 2000-2002, five are involved 50-100% time in research, four spend up to 25% of their time doing research, and all professed an abiding interest and desire to do educational research. Among the second group of nine Graduates who finished their PhDs in 2003, after data collection for this study was completed, eight are going on to university faculty positions while one is starting as a public school administrator. Indications are that the program is indeed having success in selecting and developing future educational researchers.

Overall Conclusions

Seldom do university educational programs receive such intensive, research-based (and extensively reported) evaluation as the Doctoral Research Program. So what does the study that is reported in this lengthy document tell us about the DRP? In brief, we believe the important conclusions are:

- The DRP had a positive impact on departmental faculty and their graduate programs. The amount of impact reflected the amount of involvement by faculty and students.
- The interdisciplinary emphasis was highly important to both faculty and Fellows who had participated in the DRP.
- The interdisciplinary emphasis of the DRP was unique in the SoE.
- Funding was critical for Fellows.
- As far as we can predict, graduates of the program will continue to participate actively in educational research.
- The DRP's emphasis on interdisciplinary research education should continue, although not necessarily in its present form.
- The Proseminar needs critical examination and revision.

Recommendations for the Future of the Doctoral Research Program

The designers, implementers, and interpreters of this study are two diverse, yet similar, scholars who participated equally in the design, implementation, and interpretation of the evaluation reported here. One is an emerita faculty member of the SoE who has been involved in educational scholarship and research education throughout her professional career. The other is an advanced doctoral student who was a funded DRP Fellow for four years and who brought an extensive experiential background to her work here. We represent the two groups that are central to the DRP and, because of our qualifications, were able to communicate well with the subjects of this study. No doubt our backgrounds colored but enriched our interpretations of the results.

Our recommendations address two somewhat different audiences, one that has and will have the responsibility for planning for the continuation of the DRP. The other has responsibility for maintaining the current program and perhaps serving as a pilot site for testing new ideas. Each recommendation is listed below, with its audience identified and followed by a short expansion.

Overall Recommendations

1. THE WISCONSIN DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROGRAM (DRP) SHOULD CONTINUE.

The DRP has been remarkably successful and has the potential to grow and become even more successful. We do not recommend necessarily that the DRP should continue in the exact form in which it is now or that funds should be expended as they are now. But a doctoral education program that cuts across departments, is focused exclusively on educational research, and serves a selected population of students should continue to exist. Such a program has helped, and would continue to help, the SoE to achieve a portion of its mission.

The DRP goals of education in interdisciplinary research and preparation to be lifelong researchers should not be diluted. While other types of graduate education also are important, this program will be successful only if it is sharply focused on its goals.

2. A CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL PLANNING COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF FACULTY AND FELLOWS SHOULD BE APPOINTED IMMEDIATELY, WITH THE CHARGE OF FORMULATING PLANS FOR THE NEW DRP.

One of the major findings of this evaluation is that the more faculty were involved, the more successful the program has been. So, faculty should have major responsibility for planning the new DRP. Fellows have a somewhat different perspective and will bring to such a committee knowledge of how to design a program that can be implemented most effectively with students. While the planning for a new DRP should build on the existing DRP and the findings from this evaluation, it should also consider deviating markedly if another organization with new components seems more appropriate. Seriously considered should be: funding, interdisciplinary emphasis achieved by a cross-departmental organization, faculty involvement, and selection of students to be admitted recognizing scholarly potential and the need to achieve diversity. Program components should be carefully selected and planned. Included should be specific ways for facilitating the

implementation of each component and monitoring it. Components should not duplicate departmental requirements.

3. WHILE ALL STUDENTS ADMITTED MUST BE QUALIFIED, A DIVERSITY OF STUDENTS IS ESSENTIAL.

Wherever funds are found, continued diversity of the Fellow population is essential for understanding interdisciplinary approaches. Considering research concerned with different populations, different questions, and different methodologies has had a major impact on the ways in which educational research is and will be conducted in the 21st century.

4. FUNDS SHOULD BE FOUND TO SUPPORT THE NEWLY DESIGNED DRP, AND THE SEARCH NEEDS TO START IMMEDIATELY.

It is difficult to separate the search for funds and the planning, as one is necessarily dependent upon the other. Nevertheless, the two should be done concurrently. While it is most desirable that funds be found to support as many fellowships as possible, lesser awards to students, such as professional expense funds and other types of support, should be strongly considered. Partial departmental funding should be seriously considered, as it indicates faculty involvement. AOF funding, foundations, government sources, and private sources should be considered.

5. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DRP SHOULD BE LOCATED IN THE DEAN'S OFFICE, AND A FACULTY MEMBER SHOULD SERVE AS THE DIRECTOR.

At the present time, the only cross-departmental governing unit is the Dean's office. As such, only someone who reports directly to the Dean is responsible for a cross-departmental instructional program.

The Director assumes the role of overall administrator and overseer of the many diverse pieces of the DRP. S/he monitors the Fellows and their progress and responsibilities, provides support to Fellows in a variety of ways, works with faculty, etc. S/he is seen locally and perhaps to the funding agency as a key person so needs to have the stature of a faculty member. An Advisory Committee composed of a faculty member from each participating department, with the Dean an ex officio member, should assist and oversee the Director's work and serve as liaisons to the departments.

Recommendations for Continuation of Current Program

1. THE PROSEMINAR NEEDS TO BE REORGANIZED WITHIN ITS CURRENT TWO-SEMESTER STRUCTURE.

Faculty and Fellows alike suggested the Proseminar needs revisions and made many suggestions for change. Fellows and faculty both need to be involved in planning for this change.

2. THE DRP SHOULD BE A FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM, SO SOME FORM OF STRUCTURED INVOLVEMENT BEYOND THE PROSEMINAR SHOULD BE REQUIRED.

The DRP experiences should build communities of scholarly inquirers and increase Fellows' understanding of interdisciplinary work while they pursue their own research. Anything planned should focus on these goals. Most Fellows now are expecting the Advanced Seminars to continue, so that might be the best route for the immediate future.

3. THERE SHOULD BE CONTINUED EMPHASIS ON FACULTY INVOLVEMENT.

This can be done through an active Advisory Committee, brown bag lunches, or involvement in the Proseminar.