

The Formalization and Alignment of the Professional Education Administrative Structure at the
University of Minnesota

Recommendations to the Executive Vice President and Provost

Submitted by,
The Provost's Professional Education Council
Spring 2024

Executive Summary

Problem Statement

The University of Minnesota system has 98 post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and over 250 credit-bearing certificates, fellowships, and clinical residencies. These programs have more than 9,000 participants enrolled, yet they operate independently of the University's Graduate School in terms of collective representation. While leadership, strategy, administration, and oversight occur at the collegiate/school level, there is a lack of clear central representation for graduate professional programs at the University level. This results in these programs being under-represented in important discussions and decision-making processes regarding students and program management.

Since the separation from the graduate school in 2015, the distinction between graduate research and graduate professional programs has been in place and evolving. The experience during this period suggests several organizational improvements that could enhance the voice, representation, and management of the collective professional space.

The executive vice president and provost asked the Professional Education Council to develop a recommendation on how to structure the Professional Graduate Education community to address this opportunity. These recommendations are not intended to affect the academic governance of each college and its professional programs. Rather, they are intended to better organize the professional community to collaborate collectively and advocate for student and program needs.

Recommendations

1. Create a part-time staffed central leadership role (e.g. associate vice provost, special assistant to the provost), reporting to the provost, that is charged with coordinating, representing, and advocating for the Professional Graduate Education community in partnership with the provost's office and the Graduate School. This role will also require adequate staff support to accomplish Professional Education community goals in areas like, but not limited to, policy changes, admissions processes, responses to federal compliance requirements, etc.
2. Formalize the process and structure for Professional Graduate Education consultation.
 - a. University system-level strategy, planning, and discussions
 - b. Cross-collegiate collaboration and dialogue in areas like curricular processes, degree naming, data collection and reporting, etc.
3. Improved clarity of the organization of the professional education community on the Professional Education Council. For example:
 - a. Ensuring each college has a clearly defined primary representative that is appointed by the dean and is responsible for engaging their college or school
 - b. Creating a community that engages every program thoughtfully; for example, broader professional forums on issues of interest to all, potential subcommittees to organize discussion and advocacy in key areas of common interest
 - c. Clarifying the role of the Academic Health Sciences Associate Deans Committee and leadership representation in relation to the Professional Education Council

Background

Professional degree programs attract students whose primary objective upon completion is to acquire an applied professional or practice-based job outside the typical academic or research environment. The University of Minnesota educates a large portion of the professional workforce in the region, enrolling approximately 9,000 students in the fall of 2023 in more than 250 professional degree programs and certificates, making significant contributions to educating and retaining a talented workforce in the state, region, and nationally. The University is the state's primary source for many professional industries. For example, the University granted 232 legal degrees (LLM, JD, MPL), 184 public health degrees and certificates (MPH, MHA, etc.), 279 education degrees (masters and teaching certificates), and 472 business degrees and certifications (MBA, MBT, MAcc, etc.) from the Carlson School of Management in Spring of 2023. The University is the state's only degree-granting institution of veterinarians and one of 34 in the nation, conferring 106 Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degrees in 2023. In collaboration with affiliated health systems, the University also trains more than 1,200 pharmacy, medical, and dental primary care and specialty residents each year. These students come to represent much of the professional class in the region, as alumni, and deeply value their ties to the University.

Within the University's internal organizational structure graduate research programs are distinguished from graduate professional programs. See [this listing](#) of all graduate and professional programs offered at the University of Minnesota. Administrative support for graduate and professional education is aligned to recognize the distinct educational mission of each community. While the [Graduate School](#), led by the vice provost and dean of graduate education, provides support and oversight to graduate programs, professional programs are overseen by their respective collegiate structures and deans and the executive vice president and provost at the institutional level.

The University's Professional Education Council, made up of professional education associate deans and program leaders, meets regularly to discuss collective needs and issues. The Council, the Twin Cities Deans Council, and the Health Science Associate Deans Committee, constitute the primary collective voice for the professional programs to the University. There is currently no central administrative unit or leader specifically representing the professional education community as a collective group.

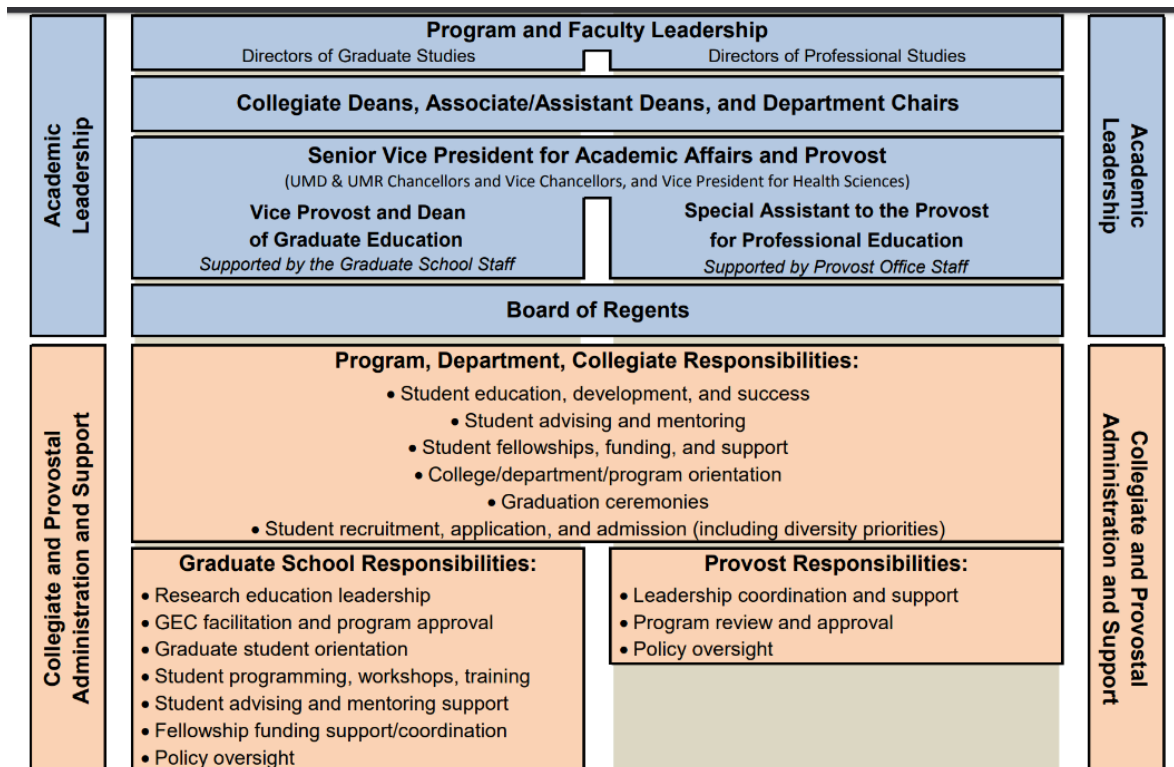
This lack of central administrative structure has historically led to challenges in ascertaining the voice of the professional program community in a variety of areas including marketing of the University's programs, the varied needs and support of professional students, appropriate advocacy for professional programs and challenges they face distinct from the graduate school, and more.

2015 Graduate/Professional Realignment

In 2015, former Provost Hanson implemented a model to realign institutional support for graduate and professional education. This realignment was the product of considerable deliberation and analyses over two years and aligned post-baccalaureate academic programs with one of two communities: traditional graduate education, where a major portion of the degree program involves research or creative activity; or professional degree programs—programs whose graduates most often seek applied professional or practice-based employment, where there is often a requirement of licensure to practice, and where outside accreditation bodies play important roles in determining program requirements.

Briefly summarized, the 2015 proposed structure included:

- A “special assistant to the provost for professional education, supported by provost’s office staff.” This was suggested as a parallel (though not equivalent) role to the dean of graduate education.
- A clarification that the provost’s office housed leadership and support for the community, program review and approval, and policy oversight.
- Clarity that a number of degree types like post-baccalaureate certificates and health education fellowships and residencies were unique to the professional space.
- The creation of a new academic oversight role titled “Director of Professional Studies”.



Current Structure Supporting Professional Education at the University of Minnesota

As part of the realignment, the provost convened the Professional Education Council (PEC), made up of professional education associate deans and/or program leaders, to serve in an advisory capacity and meet regularly to discuss shared topics and articulate needs. Current representation of the Professional Education Council includes any designated program leader put forward by a college or program. This group is supported by staff from the provost's office.

Generally, the PEC meets monthly during the academic year. It has in recent years been represented by a member chair or co-chair model. Policy and more detailed discussions are often addressed by smaller working groups.

Professional Graduate Community Details

- There are >350 professional programs (101 degrees)
- >9000 students
- 21 colleges and departments across two campuses

Outcome Statement

The recommendations from the PEC are intended to better organize the professional community to collectively collaborate and advocate for student and program needs within central decision-making spaces and provide added definition and clarity to professional schools and programs at the University level.

Appendix

Provost's Office Professional Education Web Page

<https://provost.umn.edu/academic-oversight/professional-education>

Graduate and Professional Degree Programs at the University of Minnesota

<https://apps.grad.umn.edu/lists/GradProfessional/>

Board of Regents Mission Fulfillment Committee Presentation (Feb 2019): Pages 178-231

Graduate and Professional Education, Part IV: Impact and Outcomes of Professional Education

https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/2019-08/docket-mission_fulfillment_committee-feb2019.pdf

Proposed Graduate Professional Realignment Administrative Structure (2015)

https://provost.umn.edu/sites/provost.umn.edu/files/2020-03/grad_prof_ed_admin_structure_details_oct2015version_0.pdf

Realignment Memo from Provost Hanson, April 29, 2015

<https://provost.umn.edu/about-evpp/communications/october-8-2015-update-aligning-graduate-and-professional-support>

Realignment Update Memo from Provost Hanson, October 8, 2015

<https://provost.umn.edu/about-evpp/communications/october-8-2015-update-aligning-graduate-and-professional-support>

Former Special Committee on Graduate Education (2013)

<https://provost.umn.edu/special-committee-graduate-education>

Professional Education Council (PEC) Membership 2023-2024				
Name	College/School	Role	Primary	Alt
Rina Ashkenazi	CSE	Academic Director	x	
Philip Miller (Chair)	CSOM	Assistant Dean	x	
Diana Beck	Humphrey	Assistant Dean	x	
Cassie Scharber	CEHD	Assistant Dean of Professional and Online Education	x	
Judith Pechacek	Nursing	Assistant Dean, DNP Program	x	
Anne D'Angelo	CSOM	Assistant Dean, Global Institute	x	
Jennifer Coffman	CLA	Assistant To the Associate Dean / Associate Director	x	
Ann Meier	CLA	Associate Dean		x
Elizabeth Wattenberg	SPH	Associate Dean	x	
Karl Self	Dentistry	Associate Dean	x	
Oren Gross (Co-Chair)	LAW	Associate Dean	x	
Ritu Saksena	CCAPS	Associate Dean	x	
Stephen Parente	CSOM	Associate Dean	x	
Susan Forneris	Nursing	Associate Dean		x
Erik Brown	UMD	Associate Vice Chancellor for Grad Ed and Research	x	
Scott Carlson	UMD	Associate Dean		x
Alicia George	Nursing	Associate Director - Student Services		x
Erin Malone	CVM	Assistant Dean of Curriculum	x	
Federico Garcia Lammers	CDES	Director of Graduate Studies		
Allison Hubel	CSE	Professor		x
Patria (Pat) Lawson	CSE	Director of Graduate Studies	x	
Becky Balestrieri	Pharmacy	Director of Curriculum Operations	x	
Jean Moon	Pharmacy	Associate Dean for Student Affairs	x	
Amanda Sharp	Medical School, PT	Associate Director, Director of Student Affairs	x (for PT)	x (for Med)
Brian Sick	Academic Health Sciences	Interim Associate Vice President	x	
Erin Burton	CVM	Senior Associate Dean, Academic and Student Affairs		x
Breanne Richins	CSE	Senior Actuarial Program Specialist		x
Jill Johnson	CSE	Graduate Education Coordinator		x

Stefanie Wiesneski	SPH	Director of Student Records, Curriculum and Compliance		x
Mark Rosenberg	Medical School	Vice Dean	x	
Greg Donofrio	CDES	Associate Dean of Faculty		
Peggy Martin	CAHP (MOT)	Program Director	x	
Peter Haeg	Pharmacy	Director of Student Services		x
Victor Barocas	CSE	Professor	x	
Anne Barnes	Provost Office	Provost's Office Policy and Degree Plan Liaison		
Bri Rosen	Provost Office	PEC Administrative Support Staff		
Erin Slattengren	Provost Office	PEC Senior Staff		