

Maryland Language Science IGERT: 5 year progress report (2008-2013)

Goals

1. Create model of interdisciplinary student training
2. Catalyze broader language science community
3. Make it sustainable
4. Make it a local and national model

Main Lessons

- Interdisciplinary training requires much more than broad coursework and exposure to diverse ideas and skills.
- Biggest impact: student ownership of program activities

- Training should prepare for lifelong adaptability
- Training should prepare entrepreneurial scientists
- Old dogs learn new tricks slowly: students change fastest, new faculty next, established faculty slowest
- Regular formative assessment really works
- Culture change can happen, but not overnight

Students

- 50 PhD students pursued full program
- 30+ other PhD students benefited from program
- Students drawn from 10 departments & programs

Faculty

- 50 faculty contributed to program, as mentors, course instructors, workshop leaders, research team leaders, rotation supervisors, etc.
- 12 new language science faculty since 2008; interdisciplinary community played key role in recruiting them.

Departments & Centers

- Computer Science (CMNS)
- Electrical Engineering (ENGR)
- Hearing & Speech Sciences (BSOS)
- Human Development (EDUC)
- iSchool
- Linguistics (ARHU)
- Neuroscience & Cognitive Science (BSOS)
- Philosophy (ARHU)
- Psychology (BSOS)
- Second Language Acquisition (ARHU)
- Center for Advanced Study of Language (VPR)
- UMIACS (CMNS)
- Maryland Neuroimaging Center (BSOS)

Courses

- 12 interdisciplinary seminars 2009-2013
... and many regular courses that 'stretch' students
- Students take ave. 15 courses; 5 outside home dept.
- Courses routinely take students outside 'comfort zone'

Activities

- Research rotations for advanced students (enhancing integrated research, not 'shopping around')
- Winter Storm (5x): intensive 2-week workshop with:
 - Research planning workshops
 - Student-led technical courses
 - Daily faculty lunch talks
 - Professional development workshops
 - 'Science is social' events
- Language Science Day (3x): 175 researchers in 2012
- Outreach Program: many annual events benefiting hundreds of K-12 students and community members
- Weekly student lunch talks to interdisciplinary audience
- Student 'apprentices' develop detailed proposal in Year 1

Recruitment, Retention, & Placement

- Students from 2008, 2009 cohorts now graduating
- 4 offered Tenure Track positions
- Postdocs in Harvard, Illinois, Haskins/Yale, UC San Diego, McGill, Paris, San Sebastian, CASL, UMD

- Strong recruiting classes, BUT ...
- Applicant pools saw limited impact; changes are slow
- Insufficient visibility of broad opportunities at UMD
- Most departments & programs do not highlight benefits

Recognition & Awards

- 5 Flagship Fellows (UMD)
- 3 NSF Graduate Research Fellowships
- 4 Distinguished Graduate Student Service awards
- 3 NSF Dissertation Improvement Grants
- Many Best Paper awards at conferences

Assessment & Improvement

- 5 focus groups, 15+ surveys & reports
- Partnered with IRPA, but gradually took on greater ownership of assessment process
- 500+ pages of NSF reports
- 4 visits of external advisory board (2010-2013)
- Constant process of evaluation and change

Sustainability

- Program created irreversible culture change ("this toothpaste won't go back into the tube")
- *Language Science Fellows* program in development
- Maryland Language Science Center in development

More Information

<http://languagescience.umd.edu>

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