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### Rethinking Doctoral Education

Barbara Fennema

*Franklin University*, [barbara.fennema@franklin.edu](mailto:barbara.fennema@franklin.edu)

Fawn Winterwood

*Franklin University*, [fawn.winterwood@franklin.edu](mailto:fawn.winterwood@franklin.edu)

Wendell Seaborne

*Franklin University*, [wendell.seaborne@franklin.edu](mailto:wendell.seaborne@franklin.edu)

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# Rethinking Doctoral Education

At Franklin University 2016

Barbara Fennema, Ed.D. – Fawn Winterwood, Ph.D. – Wendell Seaborne, Ph.D.

## Franklin University: Leaders in Education



Franklin University is a leader in innovative practices and programs tailored to our students' needs. Our doctoral programs are one more manifestation of our leadership in higher education. Our current and future students want and need additional degree choices to move forward in their careers and to reach their educational goals.

## The Need

Attrition rates for doctoral completion varies. Current research indicates that 50%-60% of doctoral students do not complete their degrees (Creighton, 2008; Golde, 2005). Also, 25% leave their programs once they finish the coursework (McIlveen, George, Voss & Laguardia, 2006). The Council of Graduate Schools (2010) notes that 63% of doctoral students cite mentoring/advising as a factor contributing to their degree completion.

## Preparing Our Faculty

To meet the needs of our doctoral students, we first prepare our faculty to support students' successful completion of doctoral studies.

Doctoral faculty serve as instructors, advisors, mentors, coaches, committee chairs, and course developers. In most universities, new faculty members are included in existing doctoral committees and "learn" how to do things by watching what others do.

In academia, there is no standardized process for onboarding new doctoral faculty members into their role(s). While new faculty members enter academia possessing appropriate degrees, their experiences advising and coaching doctoral students is unpredictable. New faculty practice what they perceive is taking place as they observe others, or they repeat their personal experiences with doctoral faculty. This results in inconsistent practices in this multifaceted and highly important role (Knox, Schlosser, Pruitt, & Hill, 2006) as stated by Harding-DeKam (2012, p. 6) in *The Hidden Curriculum of Doctoral Advising*.

## Franklin University's Approach

The University approached meeting students' needs by exploring multiple perspectives, collaboratively agreeing on processes, procedures, and approaches for building a graduate culture and consistent community of practice. Significant to this initiative is the Rethinking Doctoral Education seminar series.

Two of our institutional goals are:

- Ensure Academic Excellence
- Advance Student Success

To meet these goals, our doctoral faculty must be highly-qualified and well-prepared.

To address this need, we synthesized input from a variety of resources to provide multiple perspectives and guidance as faculty who are new to this role at Franklin University embark on this journey. These include:

- A network of people from multiple universities
- Graduates from multiple universities
- Scholarly articles from multiple authors who are researching in the field of doctoral faculty development Professional organizations (e.g., Council of Graduate Schools, Preparing Future Faculty, Department of Education,)

White and Nonnamaker (2008) state, "Research suggests that faculty advisors play a pivotal role in the doctoral student journey (Zhao, Golde, & McCormick, 2007), yet are selected inconsistently and with criteria and processes that greatly vary from student to student, discipline to discipline, and institution to institution. This research indicates that support in the way of mentoring, both formal and informal, is an essential aspect of the journey (Stewart, 1995).

## The Seminar Series

We offer four seminars in the  
**Rethinking Doctoral Education Seminar Series**



**Rethinking Doctoral Education: Overview of the Franklin University Doctoral Programs:** This seminar course challenges participants to examine the professional doctorate degree, explore the doctoral programs available at Franklin University and survey the expectations of the professor, advisor, and student.

**Rethinking Doctoral Education: Pedagogical Practices:** This seminar explores various pedagogical practices designed to support doctoral students on their path toward becoming independent practitioners prepared to make a difference in their professional field.

**Rethinking Doctoral Education: Communities of Practice:** This seminar explores ideas around creating and sustaining doctoral learning communities.

**Rethinking Doctoral Education: Coaching Doctoral Students for Success:** During this seminar, participants develop skills and knowledge in coaching doctoral students to attain their academic goals.

We also offer one seminar for advisors and dissertation committee chairs and members



**Rethinking Doctoral Education: The Dissertation Process:** This seminar explores current perspectives in supporting doctoral students through the research and writing process.



Learn more or register for the Rethinking Doctoral Education Seminar Series

## Contact Information

Barbara Fennema, Ed.D.  
barbara.fennema@franklin.edu

Fawn Winterwood, Ph.D.  
fawn.winterwood@franklin.edu

Wendell Seaborne, Ph.D.  
wendell.seaborne@franklin.edu



201 S Grant Ave  
Columbus, OH 43215

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