Professionalizing Graduate Education

The Master’s Degree in the Marketplace

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Diversity in the Master’s Degree

- Total Degrees awarded in 2003-04 – 1.4 million
- Master’s Degrees awarded – 558,940 (40% of total degrees)
- NCES taxonomy – 32 disciplines, 426 fine fields
- Alternative taxonomies – NRC Research PhDs, NSF S&E, NORC Survey of Earned Doctorates
- Carnegie Foundation – Institutional Typologies
- Peterson’s Guides – 900 degree titles, 1000+ degree abbreviations, 130 distance learning
Masters Degrees by Broad Field, 1990 and 2004

Source: CPST, data derived from NCES
## Statistical Profile of Doctorate Recipients, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>% PhDs with MS in any field</th>
<th>% PhD with BS in same field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003 Total</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys Sciences</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof/Other Field</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transformational Trends

• Professionalization > credentialism
• Globalization > competition
• Accountability > quality control
• Emergent organizational structures > Multi & interdisciplinary studies
• Technological advances > virtual colleges
Critical Issues in Master’s Education

- Implications of reframing master’s outside existing organizational structures
- Inadequate & conflicting degree taxonomies
- Ambiguity of degree hierarchies
- Quality control in unregulated environment
- Impact of for-profits, corporate, and online programs on graduate education
- Impact of credentialism on value of degree
- Lack of attention to role of master’s level universities in preparation programs.