



University of Iowa News Release

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### **National Research Council rates nine UI doctoral programs among top third in the nation**

The National Research Council (NRC) rated nine University of Iowa doctoral programs in the top one-third in the country, according to an assessment of public and private universities released today.

The highest-rated programs were: economics, electrical and computer engineering, free radical and radiation biology, industrial engineering, mechanical engineering, molecular physiology, psychology, Spanish and sociology.

The assessment took into account more than 20 program characteristics, including faculty research productivity (publications and grants), diversity of faculty and students, financial support for students, number of doctoral graduates, rates of degree completion, time to degree and post-graduation employment. Faculty rated how important each factor was in determining the quality of a program in their field.

Data gathered on each doctoral program was subjected to further review by randomly selected faculty from outside institutions. In this assessment, 12 UI doctoral programs were rated in the top third: chemistry, civil and environmental engineering, free radical and radiation biology, geoscience, history, industrial engineering, microbiology, molecular physiology, nursing, political science, psychology and sociology.

A link to the full report is available at <http://www.nap.edu/rdp>.

"The National Research Council provides a thorough analysis of doctoral programs, and our top-rated programs are to be commended for their achievements," said John Keller, associate provost for graduate education and dean of the UI Graduate College. "The fact that several University of Iowa programs fared well in this assessment speaks to the overall quality of graduate education at this institution."

The Graduate College compiled data for the report during 2005-06 and, with program approval, submitted it in 2007. The NRC evaluated 5,000 programs at 212 institutions, including 50 UI programs. The two methods of analysis in the assessment provide ranges of rankings at a confidence level of 90 percent.

"The report provides a detailed look at each program at a snapshot in time," Keller said. "While many changes have occurred since the submission of data -- changes in faculty, funding and policies -- the assessment serves as one measure of the relative strengths, weaknesses, and possible improvements for our doctoral programs."

The last NRC assessment was published in 1995, using a very different methodology. Results from the current NRC report were generally consistent with those of other ranking systems, such as U.S. News & World Report, and an internal assessment conducted earlier this year by the UI's Task Force on Graduate Education.

The NRC functions under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences, the National

Academy of Engineering and the Institute of Medicine. Its mission is to improve government decision-making and public policy, increase public education and understanding, and promote the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge in matters involving science, engineering, technology and health. For more information on the NRC, visit <http://sites.nationalacademies.org/NRC/index.htm>.

For more information on graduate education at the UI, visit <http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/>.

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