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The difficult transition? Teaching, research, service: Examining the preparedness of communication faculty entering the academe

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Abstract: This study, based on a survey of graduate students seeking employment, examines the categories and levels of preparedness of new professors/instructors as they enter academe. Preparedness was examined in several ways--specifically knowledge about higher education requirements and their preparation for teaching, advising, and service in the field of communication. In general, the future communication faculty reported that most had participated in teaching preparation activities. Few reported participating or having access to preparation in other academic areas. In hindsight, most respondents would have liked more preparation opportunities in all areas. Even though they did not have extensive preparation in any area, except for teaching, most reported they were confident in their ability to perform the skills of a future faculty member.

Keywords: preparation, faculty, graduate education

I. Introduction.

New faculty members in higher education have numerous roles to fulfill in their position as a professional educator. Academia has become a chief employer for doctoral graduates, but many graduate programs have unsuccessfully prepared future faculty members (Adams, 2002). Out of 3,500 colleges and universities in the U.S., only 102 turn out 80 percent of all doctoral graduate degrees given every year (Gaff & Lambert, 1996). This could mean that graduates are typically socialized into the values of the university from which they received their degree and may remain politically out of sync with the values of institutions where they may be employed (Gaff & Lambert, 1996). Graduate training does not seem to coincide with the academic responsibilities expected of new faculty among colleges and universities (Adams, 2002). Problems often arise when new faculty become employed and are expected to fulfill non-curricular responsibilities they have not been prepared for (Adams, 2002, Gaff, 2002). This study seeks to examine the preparation and expectations of new communication faculty members, ways in which graduate students are prepared for teaching in higher education, as well as some problems and concerns with preparing new faculty members to determine whether or not future faculty members are in fact prepared for the many facets of a career in higher education.

The study is exploratory and directed to the following specific areas:

1. What types of faculty preparation activities are available for communication future faculty?
2. What types of faculty preparation activities are utilized by communication future faculty?

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3. What level of confidence do future communication faculty have in performing faculty roles?

A. Review of Literature.

As the literature is sparse in the specific area of communication and in other areas of higher education as well (Gaff, 2002), the following review of literature examines disciplines and the university in general. For the purpose of this study, we examined expectations, preparation, suggestions for preparation and problems and concerns relating to entering the academia.

Expectations of New Faculty Members.

When new faculty members are hired by higher education institutions a variety of skill sets are expected of them. Teaching takes up a great deal of the new faculty member's energy (Boise, 1992; Adams, 2002). Institutions expect their new employees to be fully equipped and capable to teach. However, the methods of learning how to teach vary among colleges and universities. Adams (2002) found that more creative techniques were expected in the classroom beyond a typical, well-structured lecture—these include teaching general education courses, utilizing various pedagogical styles and addressing multiple learning styles, to name a few.

In addition teaching, another important expectation or criterion for new faculty members is their responsibility to perform research (Adams, 2002). Since faculty members need to remain well-informed in their field and work toward tenure, research skill, perseverance and the effort that goes into research is important. As each institution has differing research requirements varying from no requirement or flexible to the well-defined for its faculty members, preparing future faculty for this responsibility may be difficult. One aspect that all institutions can agree on is that its faculty are expected to create a research program that fits with the university's mission and focus (Adams, 2002). Most institutions view scholarly research as a vital way that faculty members remain connected to their discipline and dedicated to its teaching and the learning of its students, and thus is a key expectation for the faculty (Gaff & Lambert, 1996). Austin and McDaniels (2006) found that faculty members have expectations to help students gain new knowledge, by having the ability to present their expertise to a diverse audience. Faculty are expected to teach students and relate their knowledge skills to the world in which they live in, recognize the connection with other fields of study, and have the ability to present their expertise to a diverse audience.

Faculty members are also expected to adjust to the "academic life" of the institution in which they are employed (Adams, 2002). This could include advising numerous students, serving on various committees, collaborating with colleagues, working with a mentor, etc. The pursuit of a new academic career can take its toll in both personal and professional ways and faculty often have very little preparation for all the details involved with academic life. In addition to adjusting, new faculty members are also expected to have the ability to assure that their new job is the best fit for their educational training. (Adams, 2002; Gaff, 2002). In one study graduates commented regarding their lack of preparation for professional development and job seeking (Nerad & Cerney, 2000). Without the proper understanding of the requirements of surviving a job in academia, preparation for the requirements involved, and adding the complexity of tough economic times, finding the right institution to fit ones needs may be difficult for recent or upcoming graduates.

Preparing Future Faculty.

A number of institutions offer a seminar for future faculty members focusing on preparing them for their role as a future educator. In 1993, the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Council of Graduate Schools, created the national Preparing Future Faculty program (Koblinsky, Kuvalanka, & McClintock-Comeaux, 2006). The program was designed to help to prepare graduate students with important aspects of working as a college instructor at various institutions (Jones, Davis, & Price, 2004). This program focused on the sciences, mathematics, humanities and social sciences (including history, political science, psychology, sociology, communication and English). Weekly seminars were available for students that entailed group discussions, classroom duties, presentations, issues of service and research and other aspects of careers in the academic role (Gerdeman, Russell, & Eikey, 2007). Several institutions have implemented this model to help better prepare students for careers in academia at both the masters and doctoral levels. The co-director of the Preparing Future Faculty Project stated that a bridge was still lacking between graduate education and preparation for the academic role (Gaff, 2002). The Preparing Future Faculty Project (PFF) suggests six specific principles that graduates should be taught:

1. The graduate experience should include
   a) increasingly independent and varied teaching responsibilities,
   b) opportunities to grow and develop as a scholar, and
   c) opportunities to serve the department and campus.
2. Apprentice teaching, research, and service experiences should be planned developmentally so that they are appropriate to the student's stage of development and progress toward the degree. These experiences should be thoughtfully integrated into the academic program and sequence of degree requirements.
3. PFF programs should build upon and go beyond teaching-assistant (TA) orientation and development programs. While TA orientation is crucial, graduate students should not be sent the message that preparation is a one-shot activity. The establishment of ongoing, discipline-based professional development seminars, the involvement of graduate students in departmental governance and decision-making, and the development of active strategies for advanced graduate students to find academic employment are examples of ways departments, and PFF, may build upon the most common teaching assistant training activities.
4. The graduate program should include a formalized system of mentoring in teaching and other aspects of professional development. This should be as integral to the degree as the supervision of the dissertation.
5. Graduate students should learn about the academic profession and have direct and personal experience with the diverse kinds of institutions that may become their professional homes.
6. The graduate experience should prepare future faculty for the classrooms and campuses of tomorrow. This includes becoming familiar with the role of technology in the delivery of instruction, dealing with the diverse needs of students, and using some of the more active and collaborative methods of teaching and learning. (Gerdeman, Russell, and Eikey, 2007, pg.2)

The Preparing Future Faculty program reports success in helping to inform future educators and appears to be a program that continues to improve. One of the more recent advancements is an "electronic conferencing system called First Class (FC)" (Cody & Hagerman, 1997). The system allows all PFF members to exchange information and materials in a relatively simple manner and to allow students and faculty mentors to communicate openly and effectively (Gaff, Pruitt-Logan, Sims, & Denecke, 2003). The electronic connection appears to be a good opportunity for those who may not have a seminar or program in their institution

Some believe that preparing future faculty for higher education institutions in their specific discipline should begin at the graduate level (Nelson & Morreale, 2002). Each academic discipline is different and acknowledging this is useful in ensuring accurate preparation for future faculty members. Some programs allow students the opportunity to "shadow" a faculty member in their field providing the students with a view of what is expected (Nelson & Morreale, 2002). Some institutions have implemented a three credit pedagogical course that is specifically dedicated to teaching a college course in their discipline (Wimer, 2006). These classes focus on designing a course and have been offered online for those who are planning a career in teaching in higher education and are not enrolled at an institution that offers the course in their discipline (Wimer, 2006).

When preparing future educators, many graduate and doctoral programs have adopted the learning community model (Richlin & Essington, 2004) (often called faculty learning communities) where faculty and graduate students focus on cohort or topic-based teaching seminars, courses, and "brown bag" luncheons. The faculty learning communities offer a realistic model of what the career as an educator should resemble while providing specific pedagogical methods and focus on teaching issues. These communities allow future faculty members to gain knowledge about teaching, scholastic life, and faculty responsibilities in a safe environment (Richlin & Essington, 2004). There appears to be much work in preparing future faculty. Faculty are often used as instructors at the institutions in which they are completing their graduate work. While this is good, once hired in the academic arena, these faculty need to be aided into the transition of academic professionals. There is very little that relates to preparation programs for faculty in their first year of the job. Many new faculty members are included in formal and informal mentor programs (Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel, & Hutchings, 2008). However, in the studies listed, no specific preparation for new faculty was noted.

Problems and Concerns.

Certain knowledge is needed to perform suitably as a higher level educator that includes understanding the differences in the culture and expectations of the institution at which one is employed. Comprehensive universities have different missions in comparison with other institutions, thus making preparation to be an educator more difficult. Teaching at a comprehensive university typically requires a large teaching load, the probable research requirements, and the ability to provide a service to the institution and to the community (Henderson & Buchanan, 2007). Henderson and Buchanan (2007) found that faculty members at comprehensive universities tend to be less satisfied with their careers, especially in the first year due to the amount of responsibilities expected of them. Another problem for future faculty members is the huge emphasis on research during their graduate studies. Henderson and Buchanan, 2007, reported that research preparation in graduate school has been found to not

always coincide with the research expectations at comprehensive universities. Meyers, Reid, and Quina (1998) found that graduate students rarely learn to be successful educators, learn the rules of the academic world, or fit into the "college community."

Richlin and Essington (2004) identified important elements needed to effectively prepare future faculty members. Currently there are three important areas that are classified as not being addressed during the education process. These include the lack of an understandable tenure system, "a lack of community, and a lack of integration of their academic and personal lives" (Richlin & Essington, 2004). Clearly graduate students need to understand the scholastic process in order to choose the institution that will work best with their needs and interests.

In addition to the above, some changes in the Preparing Future Faculty model are also suggested. Although the program attempts to effectively help prepare students for their future careers in academia, Furniss, Blomquist, Butler, McDougall, and O'Bannon (2002) reported that some of the following improvements could be made. These improvements include assuring that graduate students receive an institution-specific perspective for teaching in higher education while helping them to focus on the different types of institutions and the requirements as an academician. Future faculty could become more informed if they were aware of the missions of different types of institutions (Furniss et al, 2002). Effective and valuable teaching is in demand among current and future faculty members, therefore a greater emphasis should be placed on teaching during the students' graduate studies (Furniss et al, 2002).

The prospect for independent teaching opportunities would be useful in helping to prepare future faculty members. Masters and doctoral students have the chance to become teaching assistants during their academic careers, however these roles as graders or attendance takers often times do not reflect the experience needed to become an effective educator (Sales, Commeau, Liddle, Perrone, Palmer, & Lynn, 2007). Gaining real teaching experience while following the research-based criteria will in fact help to better prepare future faculty members for their teaching roles. In many cases most responsibilities of teaching assistants' consist of grading assignments or simply assisting the instructor, which offers little preparation for a future career in academia (Sales et al, 2007).

New Faculty Development.

Educational training improvements are not the only ways to help prepare future faculty. In the first few years of their careers, institutions should implement ways to help new faculty members adjust to academic life. Preparing them could include providing a formal or informal mentoring program. This would allow new faculty to network and become acclimated to the institutions' culture (Solem & Foote, 2006). Most institutions require new faculty to go through an orientation, but having someone (a mentor) with experience to help them acclimate more comfortably in to the academic setting can effectively help to better prepare new faculty members for their careers at that institution (Solem & Foote, 2006). If institutions provide a mentor program, it is important that the mentor has "wide knowledge of procedures and current instruments to document effective teaching" (Border, 2002).

The literature that has been review shows that graduate and doctoral programs are implementing effective ways to help prepare future faculty members for teaching in areas of higher education. The research that has been conducted has also found that more efforts could be done to improve future faculty members' preparation for that academic role. Very little research was identified from the communication world of academia. More research is needed to gain

insights, to determine the preparation received, as well as changes or additions to the educational programs for preparing future faculty. Assessing current faculty, new faculty, and students, on their perceived preparation would be useful in determining how effective these programs are and what the types of programs that prepare faculty for working in the academic setting might be. Furthermore, in a time when budgets are being scrutinized and state governments are asking for more accountability, it is important to know how best to spend limited preparation dollars and then how to report it to the government. It is not difficult to imagine that universities facing budget shortfalls will reduce preparation activities. For these reasons, this exploratory study aims to make an important contribution to the literature.

II. Method.

A. Design.

The project was completed in two phases. Phase one used two focus groups with recent hires to explore their experiences when transitioning to full-time faculty. From the focus group information, four areas of preparation were found: knowledge of field, teaching, advising, and service preparation. A survey was developed to address these four areas of preparation and was administered to job-seeking graduate students; the survey inquired about their preparation and concerns about entering the academic role in higher education.

B. Population and Sampling.

The target population for this research was graduate communication students completing their degrees within one year and actively searching for their first academic jobs. A non-probability purposive sample was acquired by recruiting participants at the 2007 National Communication Association Conference's job fair. Additionally, recruitment emails were sent to national and regional communication listservs requesting participation from people who met the research criteria. Furthermore, faculty members in graduate programs were asked to forward the recruitment email to their graduate students.

The survey was completed by 83 anonymous participants. Most participants were Ph.D. candidates (68 participants), and 15 were master's students. Almost all started their advanced degrees in 2000 or later (95%), and all expected to receive their degree in 2008. Additionally, most of the participants were recent recipients of undergraduate degrees. Eleven received their bachelor's degrees before 1989, 31 between 1990 and 1999, and 40 between 2000 and 2008. The mean year for the awarding of the participants' bachelor's degrees was 1997. The mean year of birth for the participants was 1974. The majority of participants were female (71%). They were evenly split between married/partnered and single (52.5% married/partnered; 47.5% single). All were U.S. citizens, and they were primarily Caucasian (94%).

The population for the focus groups consisted of recently hired communication faculty. All communication faculty hired in the last three years at a comprehensive mid-Atlantic university were invited to participate in a focus group about entering academe. A total of 12 faculty members participated in two 90-minute structured focus groups. The focus group discussed the topics of faculty preparation and their first jobs in academe. These discussions were used to inform the resulting questionnaire for this study.

C. Survey Instrument.

After reviewing the relevant literature and the responses from the focus group a 27- question survey was constructed that asked questions related to the preparation for entering academia, career plans and respondents' backgrounds. Participants were queried about what preparation opportunities they had participated in and what were their areas of knowledge of the field including: teaching, research, advising and service. Additionally, the respondents were asked to self-report their confidence, interest, and preparation levels for common faculty tasks in the same areas. The survey used both multiple choice and open-ended questions and had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.809. See Appendix for survey.

D. Survey Procedure.

As the survey was available on paper and online, both versions were identical except for formatting required by the medium. After agreeing to an informed consent document, participants completed the survey and returned it to the researcher or submitted it online. The paper version of the survey was used only at the National Communication Association job fair. The university institutional review board approved both versions of the survey and the overall procedure. The online survey was available for six months and was accessible via an online link.

III. Results.

A. Preparation Activities.

Participants responded to questions in four areas regarding their preparation in becoming a faculty member (see Table 1). The four areas included knowledge of field, teaching, advising, and service. Respondents also indicated if the preparation task was available on their campuses and if they participated in the task. By a large margin, the most used preparation task occurred in the area of teaching. For all but one of the teaching preparation tasks, more than half of the respondents had participated in the activity. The highest percentage obtained of all distracters revealed a 95.2% for receiving written evaluations from students. Visiting a teaching development center was the only teaching preparation activity to measure below half with 35.4% of respondents using this resource.

Interestingly, 70.3% of respondents reported having a teaching development center on campus. This is the largest difference between having the task available and participating in the activity as asked about in the questionnaire. In general, the participants' campuses had numerous teaching preparation tasks available and the participants took advantage of them. All teaching preparation tasks were available at over half of the respondents' campuses. The most available tasks reported were receiving written student feedback (94.4%) and assisting a faculty member with a class (90.1%). The least available activities reported were working on another campus (54.2%), enrolling in a formal communication/pedagogy course (65.3%), and having a teaching mentor (68.1%).

Fewer respondents indicated they had participated or had the task available in the area of knowledge of field. The most commonly available and participated task was a career-planning workshop on academic job search; 58.7% of participants responded that the item was available to them and 46.3% participated in the activity. Completing an annual performance evaluation had

similar percentages; 49.3% had it available and 50.6% participated[3]. In the middle of percentages was participating in a job-shadowing program with 21.5% having it available and 16.7% participating. The lowest three sets of responses revealed the following: a class on the history, mission and purpose of higher education (17.1% had it available, 11.3% participated), an organized trip to another campus (15.4% had it available, 11.3% participated), and a workshop or seminar about the history, mission and purpose of higher education (16.7% had it available, 9.2% participated).

Respondents' participation in service preparation tasks was low. The highest percentages reflected participating in a workshop or seminar on faculty roles and responsibilities with 50.6% having it available and 37.5% participating. Participation in and availability of a workshop or seminar on the organization and administration of colleges and universities was similar with 44.9% having it available and 33.8% participating. The lowest scoring items were serving on a campus or department committee. Being a non-voting committee member was available to 27.6% of the participants and, of those who had the option available, 28.7% participated in this task. Acting as a voting member was less common with 15.2% having it available and 15.2% participating.

The final area was advising preparations. This had the lowest participation of the four areas. The largest percentages were reflected for those having advising training and that was only available to 13% of the respondents and 11.3% participated in the training. The other two items were serving as a formal academic advisor (9.2% had it available, 10% participated) and working on another campus in an advising role (11.4% had it available, 5.1% participated). As with the other areas, the percentage participating in the activity was close to the percentage that had the task available.

B. Hindsight.

When asked, if they could start their degree programs over, what types of information and training they would seek, a majority of respondents indicated that they would definitely or maybe seek more information about teaching, university structure, advising students, research, and promotion and tenure (see Table 2). The largest positive percentage response was about seeking more information about teaching (53.7% yes, 29.3% maybe). The smallest positive response related to seeking more information about promotion and tenure information (35.8% yes, 23.5% no). The other items are similar with around 7 out of 10 participants responding positively to seeking more about university structure, advising and research.

C. Confidence, Interest and Preparation for Faculty Tasks.

Respondents indicated how confident, interested and prepared by their programs they were for a variety of faculty activities (see Table 3). The activities covered teaching, advising, service, and research. Teaching is the area where the most respondents were confident, interested and prepared. Of all the teaching activities, but one, only 6% or less were not at all confident in their ability to do the task. Additionally, large percentages reported that they were very confident. For

[3] There are a few instances in the data where the percentage participating is larger than the percentage that had it available. It is possible that the activity was not formally available to everyone, but this respondent received special consideration and could participate. The qualitative responses support this.

Table 1. Participation and Availability of Preparation Opportunities in the Areas of Knowledge of Field, Advising and Service by Percentage.

	I participated.	The item was available.		
	Yes	Yes	No	Don't Know
Teaching Preparation				
Participated in workshop/seminar on teaching in your discipline	67.5	73.6	18.1	8.3
Visited a teaching development center	35.4	70.3	14.9	14.9
Taught a free-standing course in which you were the sole teacher	89.2	88.9	9.7	1.4
Taught a lab section of a course	59.0	72.6	23.3	4.4
Assisted a faculty member in teaching or administering a class	78.0	90.1	7.0	2.8
Enrolled in a teaching assistant training course, lasting at least one term	57.8	61.6	26.0	12.3
Created a teaching portfolio	75.9	76.4	12.5	11.1
Received written feedback/evaluation from faculty and/or peers while teaching a lab or course	74.4	73.2	16.9	9.9
Received oral feedback/evaluation from faculty and/or peers while teaching a lab or course	79.5	77.1	14.3	8.6
Received written feedback/evaluation from students in the course while teaching a lab or course	95.2	94.4	5.6	0
Received oral feedback/evaluation from students in the course while teaching a lab or course	77.1	76.1	18.3	5.6
Had a teaching mentor (formal or informal)	69.5	68.1	19.4	12.5
Enrolled in a formal communication education/pedagogy course	48.8	65.3	22.2	12.5
Worked on another campus in a teaching role (i.e., as an adjunct)	43.9	54.2	26.4	19.4
Knowledge of Field Preparation				
Participated in a career-planning workshop on academic job search.	46.3	58.7	14.7	26.7
Participated in a workshop/seminar on the history, mission and purpose of higher education.	9.2	16.7	42.3	41.0
Enrolled in a class on the history, mission and purpose of higher education.	11.3	17.1	38.2	44.7
Participated in an organized trip to another campus to learn about being a faculty member in another setting.	11.3	15.4	56.4	28.2
Participated in a job shadowing program for prospective faculty	16.7	21.5	49.4	29.1
Completed an annual performance evaluation	50.6	49.3	29.3	21.3
Service Preparation				
Participated in a workshop/seminar on faculty roles and responsibilities.	37.5	50.6	20.8	28.6
Participated in a workshop/seminar on the organization and administration of colleges and universities.	33.8	44.9	35.9	19.2
Served on a campus or department committee as a voting member	15.2	15.2	40.5	44.3
Served on a campus or department committee as a non-voting member	28.7	27.6	32.9	39.5
Advising Preparation				
Served as a formal academic advisor	10.0	9.2	61.8	28.9
Had training in academic advising	11.3	13.0	64.9	22.1
Worked on another campus in an advising role	5.1	11.4	73.4	15.2

N=84

Individual items are listed in the order presented in the survey.

example, 85.5% reported they were very confident in teaching lecture courses and 84.3% were very confident in teaching discussion sections and courses. The exception to this was in teaching laboratory courses with 27.5% not at all being confident in their abilities and 37.5% being very confident. The respondents' interest in teaching mirrors that of their confidence in teaching. With the exception of teaching lab courses, only 7.2% or less reported not being interest in the teaching tasks. 34.2% were not at all interested in teaching lab courses. Furthermore, a majority of participants reported that their programs had prepared them for teaching. The lowest not at all prepared percentages were found in teaching lecture courses (12.0%) and teaching discussion courses (15.9%). The highest not all prepared items were found in teaching lab course (48.1%) and incorporating technology into the classroom (42.2%).

Table 2. Participants Seek More Information/Training If Restarting Their Degree by Percentage.

	Yes	Maybe	No
Seek more information/training about teaching	53.7	29.3	17.1
Seek more information/training about university structure	45.1	23.2	31.7
Seek more information/training about advising students	42.0	27.2	30.9
Seek more information/training about research	44.4	30.9	24.7
Seek more information/training about promotion and/or tenure	35.8	23.5	40.7

N=84

D. Advising.

In general, advising was the lowest in confidence, interest and preparation. Almost 1 in 10 (9.8%) had no confidence in advising undergraduates and 1 in 5 (19.5%) had no confidence in advising graduate students. More than two-thirds of respondents reported that their program did not prepare them for advising. Even without specific preparation, over a majority of respondents were interested in advising students.

E. Service.

In the area of service, respondents were asked about serving on departmental/university committees, working in the community, and serving the discipline. The responses indicate that most do not think they were prepared by their program for service. 55.6% were not prepared at all to serve on departmental/university committees, 57.5% were not prepared at all to serve the community, 35.4% were not prepared at all for disciplinary service. The respondents were interested in serving in these areas with only 7.3% not being interested in disciplinary service, 6.1% not interested in departmental/university service and 2.4% not interested in community service. Though the respondents did not report they were prepared for service by their programs, most were confident in their ability to perform this service with only 13.4% not being confident in departmental/university service, 6.1% in disciplinary service, 3.7% in community service.

Table 3. Confidence, Interest and Preparation for Faculty Activities by Percentage.

	I am confident			I am interested			I was prepared by my program		
Task of faculty job:	Very Much	Some what	Not at all	Very Much	Some what	Not at all	Very Much	Some what	Not at all
Teaching									
Teach lecture courses	85.5	12.0	2.4	62.7	34.9	2.4	43.4	44.6	12.0
Teach discussion sections and courses	84.3	13.3	2.4	81.7	14.6	3.7	52.4	31.7	15.9
Teach laboratory courses	37.5	35.0	27.5	29.1	36.7	34.2	32.9	19.0	48.1
Teach specialized graduate courses	42.2	51.8	6.0	78.3	18.1	3.6	18.1	39.8	42.2
Incorporate information technology in the classroom	61.0	39.0	0.0	65.9	31.7	2.4	20.7	47.6	31.7
Develop and articulate a teaching philosophy	74.7	24.1	1.2	71.1	21.7	7.2	33.7	38.6	27.7
Create a classroom climate inclusive of a diverse population of students and diverse learning styles	77.1	21.7	1.2	87.8	9.8	2.4	36.6	42.7	20.7
Effectively manage a classroom	78.3	20.5	1.2	84.1	13.4	2.4	33.7	48.2	18.1
Advising									
Advise undergraduates	45.1	37.0	9.8	52.4	36.6	11.0	7.4	24.7	67.9
Advise graduate students	34.1	46.3	19.5	54.9	35.4	9.8	8.5	24.4	67.1
Service									
Serve on departmental and institution-wide committees, help craft policy and engage in university governance	31.7	54.9	13.4	39.0	54.9	6.1	11.1	33.3	55.6
Apply my expertise to service to the community beyond campus	57.3	39.0	3.7	67.1	30.5	2.4	20.0	22.5	57.5
Review papers, serve on disciplinary society committees and engage in other forms of service to my profession	50.0	43.9	6.1	64.6	28.0	7.3	24.4	40.2	35.4
Research									
Conduct research	58.5	39.0	2.4	67.1	28.0	4.9	56.1	35.4	8.5
Publish research findings	43.2	48.1	8.6	64.6	32.9	2.4	35.8	49.4	14.8

N=84

F. Research.

Respondents were asked about conducting and publishing research. The positive responses in these areas were not as high as in teaching, but still affirmed they believed they were prepared for research. Most respondents thought they were prepared for research responsibility by their programs. Over half (56.1%) were very prepared by their programs to conduct research. Additionally, the respondents were interested in conducting and publishing research with about two-thirds of the respondents being very interested in both conducting (67.1%) and publishing (64.6%) research. Research was an area where the respondents were confident with only 2.4% not being confident in conducting research and 8.6% not being confident in publishing research.

IV. Discussion.

A. Types of faculty preparation.

According to this data, most of the participation activities are aimed at teaching preparation. With percentages ranging from 54.2% to 90.1%, it would appear that graduate programs are giving many opportunities for future faculty to gain experience in teaching. For example, most graduate students gain the experience of being the sole teacher for a course (90.1%). Additionally, most graduate students are given tools, such as the use of a teaching development center, seminar(s) on teaching, and multiple feedback opportunities, to develop and improve their teaching. The least available activities are working on another campus (54.2%) and enrolling in a teaching assistant training course (61.6%). These two activities point to areas that campuses who want to improve teaching preparation could focus upon. Both provide additional training and experiences that could improve teaching skills before fully entering academia.

In the knowledge of field preparation, the only activity--participating in a career-planning workshop--was available to a majority of participants. According to this data, future communication faculty received little information about academe in general. This is problematic in that faculty enter the academic role not fully understanding what is involved in their profession.

In the area of service and advising, the amounts of preparation activities that are available are dismal. Only one activity was available to more than half of the participants, a workshop on faculty roles (50.6%). Very few opportunities to learn about service and advising were available with more activities only being offered to less than 20% of the participants. This is a significant shortcoming in their preparation. From the beginning of their first jobs, advising and service will be expected, and they will not have the necessary training. These skills will have to be learned on the job, and that will diminish the time they can put into teaching and research. These data illustrated the phenomenon of faculty arriving at their first jobs and becoming overwhelmed with all that is required of a faculty member. For the entirety of their graduate education, these faculty were prepared to be an expert in communication, but now they are being asked serve to on committees and help students pick classes. Those unprepared for obligations could lead to feelings of exasperation and beleaguerment and future loss of retention in the academic role.

B. Utilization of faculty preparation.

As already mentioned, most of the preparation opportunities students receive are for the role of teacher. In general, graduate students often take the opportunities they are offered to improve their teaching, but do not use the opportunities to prepare in other areas. This is a positive finding for faculty preparation in teaching and points out that graduate students see teaching as an important part of their future profession and see the value of improving their teaching skills. It also implies that additional preparation opportunities could be well received and utilized. The one teaching opportunity that was not used by a majority of participants was visiting a teaching development center. Only 35.4% of participants engaged in this activity, while most (70.3%) had access to a center. Many reasons could exist for these discrepancies. Graduate students are exceptionally busy and a voluntary activity like this could be pushed to a low priority. These findings suggest that the importance of utilizing teaching centers need to be encouraged. Participation may even need to be made more formal with specific requirements. If participation

is not increased, the financial and other resources required by a teaching center might be better used in other areas.

In the areas of knowledge of field, service, and advising, students participate in fewer activities. The opportunities are extremely limited and those minimal opportunities are not being utilized. Service and advising can easily take up a third of a faculty member's work time, and people are entering their first jobs unprepared for these activities. The low participation rates could mean that graduate programs not only need to provide training activities in these areas, but also need to encourage students to use these activities. For example, only 15.2% of graduate student had the opportunity to serve on a committee, and of that limited group, only 15.2% choose to do so. Service and advising may not appear on the comprehensive exam, and that may be why these become low priorities, but both are vital to future job success in academe.

The need for additional preparation activities is corroborated by the participants responding that they would seek more information about teaching, university structure, advising, research, and promotion. These students at the end of their academic degrees realized in hindsight that more preparation would have been beneficial to their careers. Interestingly, most respondents stated they wanted more training about teaching even though that was the area of highest confidence in preparation.

C. Confidence in performing faculty roles.

The results of this study provide areas of confidence for the respondents. They state that they are confident in their ability to teach and conduct research but are less confident in advising and service. In addition, the respondents are confident even in the areas that they self-report little preparation, yet, in hindsight, they desire more information and preparation. The researchers question whether the self-reporting is overconfidence or a lack of real understanding. We believe also that there exists a graduate school mentality of always saying 'yes' that might carry over into answering the questions posed. Also, we do not want to rule out that the respondents could have been in job search mode believing in the mentality of 'I am applying for these jobs, hence I must be able to do these tasks.'

In the area of service, the majority did state some confidence in their preparation. The question remains, if they are confident, why would 82.9% seek more information in hindsight? Service duties, like serving on committees, are largely unknown areas and may create a lack of confidence and lack of knowledge when once in place at their first academic jobs. How to behave or what is expected of committee members is not an area of discussion in most committee work that we have ever encountered. If this is the case for all those who enter academia, where does this learning/skill come from? Identifying how this knowledge is acquired is an area for future consideration.

Since respondents have received little preparation in advising, service and the field in general, we noted that they wanted more, participated in what little training was offered, took advantages of preparation activities, and would do more if available. This might be explained by the finding that few graduate students ever advise, serve on committees, or even observe faculty mentors in these roles. The overall lack of understanding the mission of higher education, begs the question that perhaps overviews of higher education are not included in communication pedagogy courses or at least not covered in detail. More methods to improve their knowledge and confidence could be addressed in the fashion of more structured mentoring by faculty. Stronger mentoring programs appear to be an area that is needed. Future professionals would

benefit to see their mentors functioning in these roles or at least hear anecdotal evidence of these activities. In addition, mentoring would assist with questions of professionalism, understanding the aspects of higher education, and perhaps even academic advising. Since advising was an area that was lowest in confidence, interest and preparation, more access to the role of advisor would be beneficial.

D. Recommendations and Conclusions.

Knowledge of what candidates need and have in their professional arsenal is important to the future of the academic role, especially in a time where candidates proceed through the academic process without gaps or other work experience that aid them in their academic careers. While participation in teaching preparation activities is high, participation in other areas is low. Many reasons could exist why these activities are not utilized more, but more faculty promotion of these activities could be beneficial. We recommend that faculty promote all preparation activities uniformly across teaching, research and service. Additionally, faculty could discuss the importance of the preparation activities and how these activities will help them develop essential skills for the students' future jobs.

Furthermore, it might be beneficial to explore what might be restraining faculty from recommending these activities. This might be the result of faculty not valuing activities beyond teaching and research. For example, advising may be seen as an unimportant part of their job and thus they don't see the need for graduate students to learn about advising. Faculty may be so focused on preparing students for teaching and their research agendas, the absence of the other areas could be unnoticed. University structure may be another compounding factor. Advising may be centralized; differing ranks having different advising requirements; and FERPA regulations limiting access to student information. Considering lack of knowledge of committee work, size and content might be exclusionary of graduate students serving on committees.

Beyond promoting existing participation activities more, we recommend additional preparation activities be made available. This study did not explore which types of activities are most beneficial, but it does show that students in hindsight wanted more activities. These expanded offerings could take the forms of traditional courses or experiential learning. At minimal levels, graduate students could be allowed to observe committee work, advising and day-to-day faculty work. This may violate the norms of faculty life. Faculty members may be guarding students from the mundane aspects of faculty life or perpetrating an idealized vision of faculty life. Graduate students could also be allowed to just observe and, where appropriate, given active roles and allowed to participate. For example, graduates students could take on advising roles with the faculty member mentoring the graduate student. This would give students more experience without increasing faculty workloads. We worry that lack of faculty promotion of preparation activities combined with the lack of preparation opportunities communicates to future faculty the unimportance, or even, contempt for these activities.

Based on the data, teaching centers are common across college campuses, but not well attended by graduate students. This discrepancy may by beneficial when deciding future preparation activities. The study did not ask about why students did and did not participate, but the usage of teaching centers was the least frequent activity used in the teaching area. Possibilities could include the center being sponsored by the university instead of department limiting student access and knowledge of the center. Additionally, the center's value may be minimized, or even stigmatized, by faculty in that only teachers with problems go there. The

availability of teaching centers implied that campus administration and faculty see these organizations as useful, but this data questions that assumption. These centers may truly be a great preparation asset that is underutilized, or these centers might be a draw on resources that could be used elsewhere.

E. Limitations and Future Research.

In looking at the areas of academic preparation, the researchers agree that more follow up is needed. The exploratory nature of this study points to limitations in studying graduating students who are actively seeking employment. Access was limited due to their busy schedules. Additionally, their responses may have been shaped by the job search process. The purpose of the study was to describe the current situation with communication faculty preparation. With additional research that identifies best practices, recommendations for preparation programs could be produced. In addition, the researchers would like to conduct pre-first-job interviews and follow those up with post-first job interviews at the end of the faculty member's first full year in academia.

Future research could be expanded to include other disciplines beyond communication. Follow-up also is needed to learn if the expectations of preparation match their actual experiences in academia. Interviews of the respondents of this survey and even interviews of candidates after their first year of work in the academic role would provide important information that could assist those who provide training for future academicians in the field of communication and for those who hire those candidates.

F. Conclusion.

Many roles are expected of new faculty in higher education. Participants in this study highlighted the efforts that have been made in preparing them as teachers, but the other roles such as service participant, committee member, and advisor, are largely ignored in graduate education. New faculty state they are confident in their abilities to practice the many roles expected of them, but without preparation the confidence may be unfounded. Most time in graduate school is focused on content knowledge and may not allow introduction of many non-curricular experiences. However finding time and opportunities for future faculty to practice, or minimally, observe glimpses of future responsibility will create a better-prepared faculty.

Appendix

Survey Instrument

Thank you for participating in a survey about your preparation to enter academia. In this survey, we want to learn about how you were prepared for a job in academia. We are also interested in how confident you are in that preparation. Your input will help inform us about current graduate education and how to make future improvements. No special expertise is needed to complete this anonymous survey, and it should take about 15 minutes to complete.

When you have completed the questions, please place the survey and the consent form in the appropriate box.

PREPARATION
Following is a list of opportunities and experiences that some campuses have to help student prepare to enter academia.

- For each item listed below, did you use /participate in the item?
- Next, tell us if it was available to students like you.

	I participated.		The item was available.		
	No	Yes	No	Yes	Don't Know
KNOWLEDGE OF FIELD PREPARATION					
Participated in a career-planning workshop on academic job search.					
Participated in a **workshop/seminar** on the history, mission and purpose of higher education.					
Enrolled in a **class** on the history, mission and purpose of higher education.					
Participated in an organized trip to another campus to learn about being a faculty member in another setting.					
Participated in a job shadowing program for prospective faculty					
Completed an annual performance evaluation					
TEACHING PREPARATION					
Participated in workshop/seminar on teaching in your discipline					
Visited a teaching development center					
Taught a free-standing course in which you were the sole teacher					
Taught a lab section of a course					
Assisted a faculty member in teaching or administering a					

class					
Enrolled in a teaching assistant training course, lasting at least one term					
Created a teaching portfolio					
Received **written** feedback/evaluation from faculty and/or peers while teaching a lab or course					

Received **oral** feedback/evaluation from faculty and/or peers while teaching a lab or course					
Received **written** feedback/evaluation from students in the course while teaching a lab or course					
Received **oral** feedback/evaluation from students in the course while teaching a lab or course					
Had a **teaching** mentor (formal or informal)					
Enrolled in a formal communication education/pedagogy course					
Worked on another campus in a teaching role (i.e., as an adjunct)					
ADVISING PREPARATION					
Served as a formal academic advisor					
Had training in academic advising					
Worked on another campus in an advising role					
SERVICE PREPARATION					
Participated in a workshop/seminar on faculty roles and responsibilities.					
Participated in a workshop/seminar on the organization and administration of colleges and universities.					
Served on a campus or department committee as a **voting** member					
Served on a campus or department committee as a **non-voting** member					

HINDSIGHT

If you could go back in time and start your degree program over, knowing what you know now, which decisions would you change?

If I did it over, I would:	No	Maybe	Yes
Seek more information/training about teaching			
Seek more information/training about university structure			
Seek more information/training about advising students			
Seek more information/training about research			
Seek more information/training about promotion and/or tenure			

Below are some short-answer questions that deal with hindsight.

> Knowing everything that you know now, what advice would you give others entering or in the early years of graduate school?

> What didn't you get that you wish you had gotten in your education?

> If applicable, what surprised you about your first job in academe?

CAREER PLANS

Now we would like to learn about your plans and dreams for the future. Students consider a wide range of career options. Furthermore, their plans change over time.

- First, consider what you currently hope and plan to pursue as a career after you complete your degree and any post-graduate school training you anticipate.
- Currently, how strong is your interest in or desire for each of these career options.
- Since you began your program, has your interest in this option decreased, stayed the same or increased?

	My current interest and desire			Change in interest since I began program		
	Not at all	Possibly	Definitely	Decreased	Stayed the same	Increased
To become a professor in a college or university						
To teach, but not in a college or university setting						
To conduct research in a college or university (non-faculty job)						
To become an administrator in a college or university						

TASK PREPARATION

Faculty member do many tasks. As you look forward to these tasks, to what extent would you say:

- I am comfortable and confident in my ability to do this task.
- I am interested in and looking forward to doing this task.
- I have been prepared by my program to do this task.

	I am confident			I am interested			I was prepared by my program		
Task of faculty job:	Not at all	Some what	Very much	Not at all	Some what	Very much	Not at all	Some what	Very much
Teach lecture courses									
Teach discussion sections and courses									
Teach laboratory courses									
Teach specialized graduate courses									
Incorporate information technology in the classroom									
Develop and articulate a teaching philosophy									
Create a classroom climate inclusive of a diverse population of students and diverse learning styles									
Effectively manage a classroom									
Advise undergraduates									
Advise graduate students									
Serve on departmental and institution-wide committees, help craft policy and engage in university governance									
Apply my expertise to service to the community beyond campus									
Review papers, serve on disciplinary society committees and engage in other forms of service to my profession									
Conduct research									
Publish research findings									

BACKGROUND

In this last section, help us to know a little more about you.
For each question, check the selection that best applies to you.

What advanced degree have you most recently completed or are currently completing?

- ☐ M.A.
- ☐ M.S.
- ☐ Ph.D.
- ☐ Ed.D
- ☐ Other _____

When did you begin your current advanced degree?
Month _____ Year _____

From what institution did you receive your advanced
degree?

_____

During academic years, I have primarily enrolled:

- ☐ Part time
- ☐ Full time

For the items below, check all that apply to you.

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married or partnered

- ☐ No children
- ☐ Have dependent children living with me

- ☐ US Citizen
- ☐ Permanent Resident
- ☐ Non-US Citizen

If US Citizen, what is your ethnic background?

- ☐ African American
- ☐ Asian American – Pacific Islander
- ☐ Chicano/a – Hispanic – Latino/a
- ☐ Native American – Alaska Native
- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ Other _____

What year were you born? _____

What year did you receive your bachelor's degree? _____

If applicable, what year did/will you receive your master's degree? _____

If applicable, what year did/will you receive your doctorate degree? _____

FOLLOW-UP

We plan to interview some of the participants.
Would you be willing to be interviewed?

- ☐ Yes. You may contact me to discuss in interview.

- ☐ Maybe. I need more information; you may contact me to talk further.

If yes or maybe, please give your contact information.

You can reach me at this e-mail address: _____

or at this phone number:

_____

- ☐ No. I am not interested in this interview

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