Proposal for Change in GRE Requirement for Selected Programs

This proposal applies to the following programs:
 MsED in Higher Education and Student Affairs
 PhD in Higher Education
 EdD in Higher Education
 M.S.Ed. in History and Philosophy of Education,
 M.S.Ed. in International and Comparative Education
 M.S.Ed. in International and Comparative Education (online)
 M.S.Ed. in International and Comparative Education-Educational Leadership Track
 M.S.Ed. in International and Comparative Education-Higher Education Track

Current Requirement: GRE required for all applicants

Proposed Change: The GRE will NOT be required for students who are applying with undergraduate or graduate degrees from accredited U.S. institutions.

Date of Implementation: Immediately following faculty governance votes in Fall 2019 (see timeline below)

Rationale: Requiring the GRE has been the annual practice of top ranked graduate programs for decades. The value of the GRE as part of the admissions process has been questioned in the last few years, resulting in a number of graduate programs removing the GRE requirement completely or making the test optional. Within top ranked Higher Education and Student Affairs programs, Michigan State University (MSU) has not required the GRE for their master's program for the last few years and Ohio State University (OSU) just announced the removal of the GRE requirement for the master's and doctoral programs. Both programs are considered to be key competitors for prospective master's students in HESA at IU. Over the last three years, HESA master's applications have declined annually. In spring 2019 conversations during national conferences, fellow graduate program coordinators noted that their applications had declined. However, those institutions that removed the GRE requirement or went GRE optional indicated a rise in application numbers. While we don't have any research that specifically looks at the GRE in relation to higher education and student affairs programs, we do have evidence that the GRE does not add additional value to the application review process for STEM and business programs. The "GRExit push" within the sciences has resulted in 44% of molecular biology Ph.D. programs dropping the GRE requirement in 2018, with that number only expected to rise (Langin, 2019). Many of these programs cite the cost of the GRE and the barriers it presents to increasing diversity. Standardized tests, including the GRE, have repeatedly been found to discriminate based on race, gender and age (Bridgeman, Burton, & Cline, 2008; Kuncel, Crede, & Thomas, 2010; Park, 2018).

Prospective HESA master's students are aware of the criticism that surrounds the GRE. Over the last few years students have intentionally sought out programs that do not require the GRE. The recent announcement by OSU has increased the dialogue surrounding the GRE requirement, especially through social media and other public venues where prospective students seek input on which programs to apply. Prospective students are publicly making statements that they are

not interested in applying to institutions that require the GRE. This will impact our application numbers for Fall 2020.

Rankings Implication: While we understand that rankings are a beauty contest, it would be naive to not consider the implication of this type of change on our national rankings. In consultation with the Office of Graduate Studies in the School of Education, the suggestion is to encourage applicants to send their GRE's if they have them available to be considered in the application process and for possible funding opportunities (e.g. fellowship opportunities). The admissions selectivity for US News & World Report is 15% of the ranking, with GRE mean scores 1/3 of that total (5%). Previously, and is expected to be the same this year, schools reporting on less than 75% of new admits "have their scores discounted on a sliding scale." MSU (#3) is an example of a ranked institution that does not require the GRE for the master's program, but does for the doctoral programs. While we can't predict the implication on our own score, the risk to our overall ranking is minimal.

Timeline:
In consultation with the Office of Graduate Studies in the School of Education, we can implement this change in Fall 2019 by following the suggested timeline:
- Departmental Vote: ELPS Retreat – Tuesday, August 20, 2019
    - The Counseling and Educational Psychology Department is also proposing a change in the GRE requirement that would align with the same proposal presented for the HESA M.S.Ed.
- Graduate Studies Committee Vote – August 28, 2019
- SOE Policy Council Vote – September 25, 2019
- Public Announcement of Change for Fall 2020 Admission Process – End of September 2019

References

Bridgeman, B., Burton, N., & Cline, F. (2008). Understanding what the numbers mean: A straightforward approach to GRE validity. ETS GRE Board Research Report No. 04-03. Retrieved July 22, 2019, from http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RR-08-46.pdf

Kuncel, N. R., Crede, M., & Thomas, L. L. (2007). A meta-analysis of the predictive validity of the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) and undergraduate grade point average (UGPA) for graduate student academic performance. *Academy of Management Learning and Education, 6*(1), 51-68. http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AMLE.2007.24401702

Langin, K. (2019, May 29). A wave of graduate programs drops the GRE application requirement. Retrieved July 22, 2019, from Science Magazine: https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2019/05/wave-graduate-programs-drop-gre-application-requirement

Park, J. J. (2018). *Race on campus: Debunking myths with data*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.