

What is Academic Excellence in a Governance & Policy Doctoral Program?

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From Georgia to Georgia

- Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young visits Tbilisi in 1986: sister city agreement
- Mayor Young asks Georgia universities to engage in cultural and academic exchanges.
- In 1990, Georgian Academy of Sciences and the University of Georgia set up a graduate program in environmental management & planning.
- In 1994, the Georgian Institute of Public Administration is established, currently with undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs.



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**PUBLIC POLICY AND
POLITICS IN GEORGIA**
Lessons from Post-Soviet Transition

Doctoral Programs in Georgia

- Since 2012, the US Department of State began funding programs for developing research skills and publication records for Social Scientists in Georgia.
- Though many Georgian scholars received top-notch education at universities around the world, their publication record was lacking.
- George Washington University, George Mason University, and the University of Georgia were each awarded a multi-year project.
- My task: to teach research methods and applied statistics to the faculty and PhD students in Georgian Universities in 2017-2020.

What is Academic Excellence in a Governance & Policy Program?

- The essential characteristics of a productive social science Ph.D. program (Clark, Hartnett, and Baird 1976; Morrison et al. 2011; Nerad and Evans 2014).
 - ❖ Presence of well-trained core faculty, with a strong toolkit in qualitative and quantitative skills, and active in publishing.
 - ❖ Time and resources to produce research. Teaching, while important, cannot be a dominant part of a job: Research 50-60%, teaching 30-40%, service/administrative duties.
 - ❖ Funds for research or support for grant-writing.
 - ❖ Training of doctoral students: a special story.

What We Observed in Georgia

- Faculty or PhD students have heavy teaching or administrative loads. Conducting top-notch research is a Herculean task to begin with, doing it part time is even harder.
- Salaries and stipends are low: often folks hold a “second” job. Research infrastructure is weak.
- Faculty are well trained in their fields, normatively and theoretically. However, either they lack qualitative or quantitative research skills themselves, or
- They considers themselves as “teachers” of students rather than “colleagues” nurturing doctoral students. Lack of doctoral classes explains some of it.

Toward Solutions

- Substantial investments are needed for building a productive doctoral program. Hard proposition in Georgia, but it must happen.
- Return-on-investment will accrue to the next generation, often 10 to 20-year plan is necessary.
 - ❖ Acquisition of well-trained faculty is critical.
 - ❖ Rewarding research prospectively, not retrospectively. Access to research facilities and funds.
 - ❖ Pooling resources: joint PhD programs– both for doctoral courses and mentorship (UGA-GSU-GATech; Duke-UNCCH-NCSU; The Big Ten Alliance).

Thank you!

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