MSU has five graduate programs ranked as No. 1 in the country

By Katie Winkler | Published 21 hours ago

Five of MSU's graduate programs — elementary education, secondary education, rehabilitation counseling, organizational psychology and nuclear physics — were recognized as No. 1 programs for U.S. News & World Report Best Graduate Schools.

These rankings are based on peer assessments, student selectivity, faculty resources and research activity. Among these, faculty to student ratios, percent of faculty with awards, doctoral degrees granted, percent of students in doctoral programs and percentage of faculty engaged in research is considered.

Three of the programs are under the College of Education, which have been consistent for some time. This is the 21st consecutive year that elementary education and secondary education programs have been noticed as the best in the country.

"I believe that a key reason why our programs are so well recognized is because of the work of our faculty to integrate the research they do with our academic programs," education dean Donald Heller said in an email. "Our undergraduate and graduate programs benefit from the cutting-edge research conducted by our faculty."

When interviewing faculty candidates or speaking with prospective graduate students, Heller said that they often mention the rankings, showing that they have a positive impact on the impression of the college.

Chu-Hsiang Chang, associate professor of the department of psychology and director for the organizational psychology program, said that it is research, productivity and training measures that sets their organizational psychology program above others in the country.

Experts explore topics in areas such as learning, motivation, work-family related issues and team effectiveness, in addition to basic human resource functions, including testing, selection, training and performance management, giving a wide array of research areas.

"We disseminate our research findings at international conferences and publish articles at high-impact journals and book chapters," she said in an email. "Our training follows the scientist-practitioner model, so students are exposed to innovative theory building and research design, and sophisticated data analytical methods, and they also develop very hands-on experiences and become independent thinkers once they graduate from our program."

Since the 1960s, MSU's nuclear physics program introduced exceptional accelerator facilities, allowing students to work with "unique beams and detectors that cannot be found elsewhere in the U.S.," physics-astronomy chairperson Phillip Duxbury said in an email, regarding their current nuclear superconducting cyclotron laboratory.

These accelerator facilities and the ability to broadly work with other science and engineering programs, including astronomy and astrophysics, has made MSU's nuclear physics graduate program the largest and strongest in the country.

Their program has been further developed by the construction of the new Department of Energy Facility for Rare Isotope Beams.

"The strong MSU nuclear physics program and the construction of FRIB have captured the attention of the international scientific community and also the general public in the Lansing area," Duxbury said.

With recognition comes talented graduate applicants and faculty members wanting to collaborate with others at an institute with high recognition.

"This reputation is helpful for our graduate students when they leave and go on the job market," Chang said. "Having a degree from MSU is highly reputable and our graduate students are very attractive to potential employers."