GRADUATE SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR GRADUATE EDUCATION AT UW–MADISON

2023-2028

The responsibilities of the Graduate School at the University of Wisconsin–Madison encompass a wide range of tasks, including the development of campus-wide policies and procedures, and the management of admissions, funding, and degree completion processes for our diverse community of over 10,000 graduate students. Central to the operational goals of the Graduate School is its commitment to providing exceptional service to current and prospective graduate students, as well as the faculty and staff who contribute to graduate education at UW–Madison.

To improve the quality and clarity of our shared priorities in graduate education, the Graduate School started a collaborative process in 2022 to develop a strategic plan for graduate education at UW–Madison. The dean of the Graduate School appointed a steering committee of faculty, staff, graduate students, and campus leaders from across the academic disciplines. The group was guided by consultants from the Office of Strategic Consulting to examine strengths and opportunities for graduate education at UW-Madison, complete an environmental scan, and discuss the school's current mission and values. The process engaged the graduate education community and Graduate School staff through focus groups and surveys, and the resulting vision, mission, values, priorities, and initiatives for 2023-2028 follow.

A unique factor in this strategic plan is that it relies on partnerships between the Graduate School and other schools, colleges, departments, and central units to advance shared goals for graduate education within a decentralized environment. While the school plays a vital role in establishing university-wide standards and policies, it also serves as a dedicated advocate and campus-wide collaborator, actively enhancing the overall excellence of the institution. Initiatives enhancing mentorship of graduate students, belonging and mental health support, access to career services, and multi-year funding support and competitive stipend levels cannot be achieved by the Graduate School alone. Success in these areas relies on engagement, cooperation, and shared responsibility across campus.

We invite you to join us as a collaborator on these strategic priorities to further increase the quality of graduate education at UW–Madison moving forward.

VISION The Graduate School cultivates an inclusive environment of excellence that inspires innovation, advances knowledge, furthers the Wisconsin Idea and prepares the next generation of leaders by empowering every graduate student to reach their greatest potential.

MISSION The Graduate School fosters excellence in graduate education in partnership with graduate programs and faculty by advancing graduate students' research, learning, career development, and professional success.

VALUES Excellence, open exchange of ideas, respect, integrity, inclusion, and collaboration

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PRIORITIES & INITIATIVES

(A) Advance innovative graduate education, career development, and professional success

1. Offer high-quality graduate programs that enhance student academic and professional success
2. Utilize and enhance data resources within the Graduate School to support graduate program quality and student success
3. Sustain resources to help master's and doctoral students develop academic and professional skills, as well as explore and prepare for diverse career pathways
4. Create opportunities for and celebrate student achievements in living the Wisconsin Idea

(B) Recruit and retain a talented and diverse student body

1. Implement tools and resources to help train admission committees to recruit and evaluate applicants using a holistic perspective
2. Develop coordinated and collaborative pipeline programs for recruitment
3. Offer students inclusive mechanisms to bring forth concerns related to equity and inclusion
4. Prepare graduate students to foster environments of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

(C) Establish and support university-wide expectations for consistent and high-quality graduate student mentorship

1. Promote use of evidence-based mentorship best practices, such as compacts and goal setting
2. Advocate for expanded participation in mentorship training for faculty and directors of graduate study
3. Offer training for graduate students to work effectively with faculty mentors
4. Ensure graduate students have access to teaching- and mentoring-related professional development

(D) Strengthen collaboration among campus partners to support the success, wellbeing, and belonging of graduate students

1. Strengthen processes and resources to train and support graduate coordinators
2. Grow current partnership with Dean of Students Office to focus on assistance and support for graduate students
3. Ensure that all graduate students have access to career services
4. Support and offer programming that promotes a sense of belonging among graduate students

(E) Facilitate access to funding, resources, and opportunities

1. Incentivize and increase extramural graduate funding, such as creating and maintaining a repository of extramural funding sources and providing workshops about pursuing external funding
2. Set competitive stipend levels that take into consideration student needs and cost of living
3. Collaborate with programs to offer multi-year funding guarantees and address gaps in student funding as needs arise
4. Advocate with campus partners to promote attention to providing opportunities such as conference funding and professional development
5. Cultivate philanthropic partners to increase grants and opportunities

(F) Sustain the Graduate School as a high performing organization

1. Use equity and accessibility as a lens for all activities that Graduate School touches, e.g., recruiting, admissions, funding, advising, career development.
2. Increase transparency regarding goals, processes, and budgets
3. Embrace continuous process improvement and invest strategically in technology and infrastructure
4. Prioritize the professional and personal development of staff with a focus on equity