

Graduate Education

Vision

The University will attract and enroll outstanding graduate students from the state, nation, and around the world. Students will receive personal mentoring and rigorous training at the cutting edge of their disciplines, will have financial support to compete with the top graduate programs in the country, and will progress to timely completion of their degrees. As a result of their training and achievements, graduates will be in great demand for challenging and prestigious positions in academia, in business, in industry, in the arts, and in public service.

Our Ph.D.¹ programs will be known for their commitment to excellence and for their comprehensive approach to graduate study including recruitment, mentoring, career preparation and placement. Graduates will have had full support for their term of study and will graduate with little or no debt. They will have: mentored teaching experiences; completed the degree in 4-6 years (as appropriate for the discipline); publications or professional presentations at the national/international level; excellent oral presentation skills; original work produced through research, scholarship, creative arts or performance at the cutting edge of the field; knowledge of how to win grants; preparation through formal or informal mentoring to be competitive for top positions; thorough understanding of the important problems in the discipline and know how to conduct research and think creatively to address them; and a degree from a program noted for its diversity. All graduates will expect excellence from themselves and those with whom they work.

Our Master's programs will be known for their excellence and breadth in providing professional training to meet State needs and recognized employment opportunities in the State, the region, and the nation. They will have received external recognition through their own professional accreditation process, as appropriate. Our Master's graduates will provide leadership in their fields and will be known for their command of the theories and practices of their chosen disciplines.

Goals

1. Our programs will be of the highest quality as measured by a high completion rate, a short time to degree, the accomplishments of our students, and the quality of their placements upon graduation. Students will feel that they have been treated well, have had a good quality of life, and have achieved their educational goals. Ph.D. students will normally have completed substantial published scholarly work, or other creative activities as appropriate, at the time they graduate.
2. We will be competitive with public and private institutions for the best students seeking graduate education every year, as measured through actual enrollments. We will enroll a student body that is excellent both in academic achievement and in the promise of outstanding creativity. We will enroll a student body whose diversity will contribute to the vigor, scope, and intellectual excitement of our programs.
3. The Ph.D. graduates of the University will be highly competitive and well prepared for prestigious faculty and professional positions at comparable research institutions and highly selective liberal arts colleges and for responsible research positions in government, industry, and nonprofit organizations. Master's graduates will be in high demand for professional positions in their fields.

¹ In this document Ph.D. programs refers as well to Master's programs that are preparation for Ph.D. training and doctoral programs such as the Doctor of Musical Arts or Masters program's such as the M.F.A. that are accepted credentials for University faculty positions.

Strategies

For Goal 1:

An outstanding graduate program requires an outstanding faculty who maintain leading research, scholarship, and arts programs and participate actively as supporters, collaborators, mentors, and role models for the work of their students. It is the graduate faculty who bear the responsibility for the excellence of all aspects of our graduate programs. They must set appropriate goals for program success and ensure that they are reached. It requires as well that each disciplinary program have the resources it needs to properly train and support the students it admits. Furthermore, the general conditions of living for graduate students, including pay and benefit levels, housing availability, assistantship assignments, and the overall environment must be such that students are not unduly distracted from their pursuit of academic success.

A. Ensure outstanding program quality.

1. Ensure that every doctoral program offers the outstanding faculty, scholarly resources, and intellectual community needed to train its students and to fully support and encourage their creative work. See the separate “Research, Scholarship, and the Creative Arts” section of this Plan for specific details.
2. Within one year, each program will develop benchmarks for satisfactory progress to degree. Each program will also develop goals and maintain measures of program success that include the 10-year PhD completion rate, expected normal time to degree, qualifications of entering students, quality of placement, percentage of students funded on research grants, and measures of diversity. These goals and benchmarks must be submitted for approval to the Graduate Dean and Provost.

B. Fully and adequately fund all Ph.D. students.

1. Every program will assure graduate assistant appointments, fellowships, or equivalent levels of funding for every admitted Ph.D. student for a period equal to the program’s intended normal time to degree.
2. The University will set minimum graduate assistant stipends that are competitive with those of peer institutions. The recommended minimum level is \$18,000 (in 2006 dollars) for 9.5 month appointments and a proportionally higher stipend for 12-month appointments.
3. Resources to accomplish these strategies will be developed by: a) decreasing the total number of Ph.D. students on campus by about 1000; b) exploring, collaboratively with graduate student representatives, a cost saving modification in health insurance for graduate students that does not reduce benefits; c) removing required steps in graduate assistant stipends; d) giving Ph.D. students first priority in the awarding of institutional financial support for graduate students.
4. The University will set and enforce standards to increase the number of graduate assistants funded through research grants, to reach at least the level of the average of our peers. Units will be expected to seek private funding for fellowships to provide support beyond that coming from external grants and contracts.
5. The Graduate School will explore partnerships with federal laboratories and other research organizations, government agencies and businesses to encourage employer support for employees pursuing doctoral degrees through a program of partial tuition remission for full time students.

C. Match the size of Ph.D. programs to resource availability.

1. Each Master's and each Ph.D. program will recommend a target program size and a plan to reach that size, based on resource availability. Plans will be presented to the Graduate Dean and the Provost for approval who will set specific enrollment targets for each program.
2. Programs should admit only as many graduate students as can be properly trained and supported with available resources. In particular, programs should admit Ph.D. students only when a) there is a willing active research advisor with interests in the field of the student; b) there is a reasonable certainty that funds will be available to support the student for the intended normal time to degree; c) resources and facilities necessary to support the student's research are expected to be available; d) an appropriate scholarly environment, such as a desk, work station, telephone, etc. will be available for the student's use.
3. Professional opportunities for graduates and ease of placement may be considerations in determining the number of student to admit.
4. State supported teaching assistantships and fellowships are institutional financial aid and will be awarded based on program quality and success. Program size should not be determined by undergraduate teaching responsibilities.
5. Ph.D. students, regardless of their source of funding, will be full-time.
6. Programs lacking a critical mass sufficient to provide excellence in education should be eliminated or combined with other larger programs.

D. Successfully mentor all graduate students.

1. Departments will articulate explicit expectations for faculty mentoring. Quality of mentoring will be an important factor in the review of faculty for promotion and merit pay and in five-year post tenure reviews.
2. Programs should hold a formal academic orientation for new students. Ph.D. advisors and their student should share a clear understanding of the program's academic requirements and expectations for satisfactory progress. The research advisor or other program mentor and student should meet regularly to discuss progress toward meeting program benchmarks, preparation for an annual student review, and preparation for highly competitive job opportunities.
3. Programs will provide students with multiple mentoring opportunities, recognizing that facilitating student progress is a responsibility of all program faculty and that student progress may be enhanced by guidance from all members of the student's committee.
4. The Graduate School should celebrate outstanding mentoring and disseminate information on best practices in advising, mentoring, and professional development.

E. Provide educationally productive graduate assistantships.

1. Graduate assistantship assignments will be rewarding and educationally productive and will enhance student qualifications through useful training. Work assignments will not limit satisfactory progress toward the degree.
2. Departments will provide work assignments that graduate assistants receiving full stipends can complete with distinction in no more than a 20-hour average work week, and will ensure that these graduate assistants spend no more than 20 hours per week on average throughout the term of appointment on work unrelated to their research.
3. Wherever possible, programs will provide a mixture of types of support (research, administrative, teaching, fellowship) so that every Ph.D. student who is considering

- entering the professoriate will have the opportunity to teach and no student will have only teaching assignments; programs should consider requiring teaching experiences for all Ph.D. students.
4. All administrative graduate assistant appointments must have a research or professional development component; if lacking, the work should be done by employees.
 5. Each unit chair, working with the faculty, has the responsibility to ensure that graduate assistant assignments are productive, meet the workload goal, and are consistent with the educational objectives of the student and the program.
 6. There will be an institutional grievance procedure to be used in cases where disagreements concerning graduate assistant working conditions cannot be resolved by mutual agreement at the unit level.
- F. Increase the availability of high quality, affordable housing near campus for all full-time students, with priority for new Ph.D. students.
1. New graduate housing units with a total of 1250 beds are planned to be built on East Campus. The University will ensure a key role for Resident Life in controlling graduate student referrals to these beds. It will work to maintain availability to new students by supporting 2-3 year non-renewable leases. Colleges will be able to provide rent subsidies and guaranteed East Campus housing to enhance recruitment of top students.
 2. The University will develop a comprehensive graduate student housing master plan. The aim is to provide access to safe and affordable housing, at least comparable to that of our peers, for all full-time graduate students who want to live nearby.
 3. The University will give preference in graduate student housing in East Campus to Ph.D. students.
- G. Allocate institutional financial support for graduate students based on a program's demonstrated excellence in graduate education.
1. The Provost will conduct triennial, formal reviews of each program's effectiveness in utilizing institutional financial support for graduate students to meet student benchmarks and program goals. These reviews will be used in decisions concerning the allocation of graduate fellowship and teaching assistantship funds.
- H. Promote successful interdisciplinary programs.
1. Because much important original research occurs on discipline borders, the University will encourage opportunities for students and faculty to address interdisciplinary problems without the encumbrance of traditional discipline boundaries.
 2. The University will continue to develop effective models for high quality interdisciplinary research and education programs. For example, certificate programs that offer interdisciplinary credentials through course work; where appropriate, umbrella Ph.D. programs that encompass large general research areas with highly flexible subdivisions reflecting faculty interests; and Field Committees that identify specializations and emerging research areas and that can change as the expertise and interest of the faculty evolve.
- I. Support excellence in Master's programs.
1. The University will expand Professional Master's Programs as resources permit, particularly Entrepreneurial Professional Master's Programs, to serve the needs of the

State, the region and the nation. All Master's programs will be widely recognized for their excellence in training.

For Goal 2:

In order to recruit and retain the best graduate students we must have, first of all, the outstanding faculty, outstanding research programs, and the resources to train and support students described in Goal 1. In addition, there needs to be a proactive and effective set of outreach strategies.

A. Develop a program of active recruitment.

1. Faculty will actively inform colleagues at potential feeder schools of the strengths of their programs, the availability of strong financial packages, the success of recent graduates, and the strengths of the University of Maryland.
2. The Graduate School will enhance block grant fellowships, Wylie dissertation fellowships, and similar programs to support recruitment and timely completion.
3. The Graduate School and the Division of Student Affairs will provide potential applicants information on graduate housing, student organizations including international student groups, student services, etc., when they first inquire about our programs.
4. Graduate programs will complement the use of GRE and undergraduate GPA in admissions decisions with other criteria that predict successful completion, such as potential for innovation and creativity, originality of approach, commitment, work experience, successful undergraduate research, etc. Programs will assess the match between student goals and program goals prior to admission.
5. Programs will actively recruit talented applicants by such measures as personal calls from faculty, students and possibly alumni, and by sponsored visits to the University, including organized "recruitment days", overnights with current graduate students, or other in-person, or electronic equivalent, interviews.
6. Programs will maintain informative up-to-date web sites that contain the program's expectations for students, including formalized benchmarks for satisfactory progress and continued funding.

B. Renew and intensify the University's commitment to a diverse Graduate School.

1. The Provost and the Dean of the Graduate School will consider the success of its graduate programs in recruiting and graduating a diverse population of graduate students by appropriately apportioning institutional financial support to programs, departments, and colleges.
2. The Graduate School will provide information and training to graduate directors and interested faculty on best practices in recruitment and retention of students from underrepresented groups.
3. The Graduate School will maintain and publicize an up-to-date list of outside sources of support from funding agencies and foundations that are specific for minority and women graduate students.
4. Graduate programs will develop specific plans for recruitment of underrepresented students, which will be reviewed by the Graduate School. The Graduate School will assist programs to develop active Faculty Partners Programs and other outreach activities and will distribute best practices for creating diverse, inclusive, collaborative educational environments and academic communities.

For Goal 3:

The first requirement for high quality placements is the excellent training and body of completed work that graduates will have as described in Goal 1. In addition, students must be adequately prepared for the job market and programs need to take proactive steps. Preparation for placement begins when the student enters the program.

1. Programs will inform potential applicants about the positions that graduates from the program have secured and the positions the program expects future graduates to pursue and will develop a formalized program of career preparation, including, where possible, a designated career advisor.
2. Programs will actively track employment and contact information of alumni, including first placement.
3. Programs will be required to assess their success in meeting University and program specific placement objectives in the 7-year program review. Program success in placing graduates in prestigious positions will influence budget allocation decisions.
4. Programs will provide opportunities for students engaged in research to present their work annually to peers and graduate faculty in a formal departmental seminar or informal “brown-bag” research group talk and will work to ensure an environment of mutual respect in which research issues are openly debated.
5. Whenever possible, programs will provide resources to support travel to national and international meetings, introduce students to visiting researchers, and provide other avenues of exposure for students to increase their national visibility. Programs will report these awards annually to the Dean of the Graduate School.
6. The Graduate School will provide workshops describing best practices in career preparation and placement.
7. The Graduate School will continue to support Goldhaber travel grants and explore other opportunities to increase student participation beyond the campus.
8. The Graduate School, Center for Teaching Excellence, and University Career Center will collaborate to provide career service support including career training workshops, career fairs, and workshops on development of teaching portfolios. Graduate programs will encourage participation in these activities.