

GRADUATE SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN

2019-2024



UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON

Graduate School

University of Oregon Graduate School
5-year Strategic Plan
2019-2024

Graduate education lies at the heart of the University of Oregon’s research mission and is foundational to its excellence in scholarship and teaching and to the intellectual richness of the academic community. The Graduate School serves as the institutional home for graduate students and promotes excellence, innovation, and inclusiveness across all graduate programs; provides cross-disciplinary experiences, funding, and professional development; advocates for graduate students, within and beyond the university; and partners with programs to prepare the next generation of researchers, scholars, entrepreneurs, and thought leaders to transform our communities, locally and globally.

One of the major challenges for graduate education is to be responsive to institutional and national changes. Changing career trajectories and a rapidly shifting landscape of professional opportunities require development of new modes of program delivery, interdisciplinary and transformative programs at the cutting-edge of inquiry, and professional development that allows students to thrive in an increasingly diverse range of careers. To make the University of Oregon a top choice among the very best students, excellence in graduate education requires innovation in our training, added diversity, and additional competitive funding packages. To grow the institution’s reputation among our peers, these challenges are in the context of needing to grow – the number of doctoral degrees awarded, the relative proportion of graduate students within the university’s student population, and the number of training grants across the institution.

With those challenges as backdrop, this plan articulates ten major goals the Graduate School will pursue over the next 5 years. Achieving these goals will position the university among our peer institutions as a leader in innovative quality graduate education.

1. Provide support and leadership to recruit larger cohorts of the best students
2. Work with programs and faculty to grow the number of training grants for graduate student education
3. Create a culture of inclusion where diversity is valued as a strength of graduate education and as means to support the institutional mission
4. Implement policies reflective of best practices in graduate education
5. Provide co-curricular programming to prepare students for career paths, both inside and outside of the academy
6. Provide professional development support for postdoctoral fellows
7. Establish a core set of metrics for data-based decision making
8. Foster program development as part of growth of the Knight Campus, cutting-edge interdisciplinary programs, and new online and hybrid master’s programs
9. Strengthen and grow the Graduate School’s development and alumni engagement

10. Raise the Graduate School's profile, internally and externally to the university

Strategic Goal 1: Provide support and leadership to recruit larger cohorts of the best students

Overview:

Current enrollments show a general trend of slightly increased doctoral enrollment and slightly decreased masters enrollment. There are two critical dimensions of growth, the number of doctoral degrees conferred and the ratio of graduate students to total student enrollment. Both are relevant, yet somewhat differing, metrics of the university.

In terms of doctoral degree production, the university conferred 200 doctoral degrees in FY17. The average over the past five years has been 175 doctoral degrees per year. A sustained increase over time would grow the university's stature among AAU and other peer institutions.

In terms of the ratio of graduate students to student body, the University of Oregon is well below the average of peer institutions. Median graduate enrollment among AAU public institutions is 21.7%; University of Oregon's graduate enrollment is 15.98%, or 3638 graduate students of a total student body of 22,760. With no growth in the undergraduate population, 1660 additional graduate students would be necessary to reach the AAU public median. As undergraduate enrollment grows, graduate enrollment will need to grow to sustain current ratios; to improve the ratio to approximate peer institutions, escalated growth in numbers of graduate students relative to undergraduate growth would be necessary.

The balance of masters and doctoral students is vital to address, as growth in masters enrollment in professional programs and in online degree programs will generate revenue to grow doctoral funding, necessary to recruit top students. Both innovative programming and increased funding will be necessary to achieve sustainable levels of growth. As we focus on growth, it is also critical to be mindful of the quality of students we attract with a goal of making graduate programs top choices of outstanding students.

Strategies:

1A. Increase number of graduate students

- Doctoral students
 - Current doctoral enrollment is 1337; a 10% increase, or 134 additional doctoral students, would add to the goal of increased doctoral degree production but not dramatically add to total graduate student body. Any doctoral increase requires added funding, from a range of sources including central funds, grants, donors, and tuition return from growth in master's programs.
- With the projected growth in undergraduate enrollment, increase in graduate enrollment proportionally to maintain and grow ratio of graduate students as percent of total university enrollment with goal to equal or exceed 20% of student body.

- Growth in enrollment in existing academic and professional masters programs
- Development of online masters programs in collaboration with Associate Vice Provost for Online Education and graduate program stakeholders

1B. Enhance quality of applicant pool and admitted students

- Active recruitment of students
- Marketing of programs and university strengths
- Competitive funding packages for doctoral students

1C. Increase funding for doctoral students

- Central allocation – increased funding for growth in doctoral programs as a result of master program growth and strategic initiatives
- External fellowships – increase students’ awareness of and competitiveness for external awards through workshops, individual development plans, and information regarding funding opportunities
- Donor support – with success of Raymund and Lokey awards, grow named fellowships

1D. Best practices in recruiting and marketing of programs

- Updated webpage
 - Development of Graduate School collateral materials (video, print)
 - Resources and support for program recruitment
- Conduct best practices presentations for directors of graduate programs, program staff, and faculty and maintain best practices resource library on the Graduate School webpage
- Implement a CRM system to allow coordinated inquiry management and tracking
- Develop and conduct Graduate School resource fairs
- Partnership with undergraduate enrollment management
 - Development of collateral materials for recruiter use
 - contacts with UO juniors and seniors re: graduate program options

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Total number of graduate students; ratio to total UO student population

2. Number of doctoral students
3. Number of applications
4. Yield rate of offers
5. Student credentials
6. Amount of new funding
7. Number of and enrollment in new online masters programs

Strategic Goal 2: Work with programs and faculty to grow the number of training grants for graduate student education

Overview:

Areas of strength across the university allow considerable opportunity for the development of training grants. Training grants focused on innovative training approaches, faculty expertise, and strategic initiatives of the university would benefit recruitment, funding, and the reputation of graduate education at the university.

Strategies:

- 2A. Identification of strategic opportunities for training grants
- 2B. Serve as a catalyst to facilitate innovative and interdisciplinary conversations around training grants
- 2C. Support development and submission of training grants

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Development of teams focused on training grants
2. Number of submissions
3. Number of grants funded
4. Number of students supported through training grants

Strategic Goal 3: Create a culture of inclusion where diversity is valued as a strength of graduate education and as means to support the institutional mission

Overview:

As a university, we cannot be excellent without being diverse. Our excellence grows only as we embrace new ideas and new perspectives brought by individuals from differing backgrounds, cultures, and experiences and from those who have been traditionally underrepresented in graduate education. Diversity presents itself in many different forms, including socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, nationality or place of origin, disability, unique work or life experience, creating a rich and complex tapestry of backgrounds forming a community. At its very best, graduate education is a community; a place where each individual feels they belong and that they can thrive.

The Graduate School is fundamental to establishing an inclusive community of scholars where differences of ideas and backgrounds are respected, welcomed, and valued and where each member of our community feels that vital sense of belongingness. One of the highest priorities for the Graduate School is to increase the diversity of our graduate programs and to provide the resources to ensure student success.

Strategies:

3A. Communicate the value of diversity and inclusion

- Develop training resources for graduate programs and staff
- Provide professional development offerings for all graduate students
- Partner with Division of Equity and Inclusion on training resources and events
- Continue to enhance diversity and inclusion sections of the Graduate School webpage

3B. Increased funding of students from underrepresented groups

- Implement model of Promising Scholar funding that ensures consistent funding levels across cohorts
- Grow Future Stewards Program
- Explore developing pipeline to masters degrees for PathwayOregon students
- Donor requests for fellowships for diverse students

3C. Recruitment

- Increase recruitment funds available for diverse students
- Host McNair visits
- Participate in the National Name Exchange
- Create and grow relationships with HBCUs
- Partner with Office of International Affairs to grow international student enrollment
 - Identify regions and venues to target
 - Develop print and media recruitment materials for international audiences

3D. Promote the success of students from traditionally underrepresented groups

- Grow cohort model for Promising Scholars
- Establish peer mentoring program within Promising Scholars
- Extend Promising Scholars programming to all graduate students
- Build community through social events and celebrations of diversity for graduate students
- Establish speakers' series with scholars from underrepresented groups
- Develop training resources on working with students from diverse backgrounds for faculty and mentors

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Increase enrollment of students from traditionally underrepresented groups
2. Increase enrollment of international students
3. Student participation in workshops and events
4. Funding increase for students from diverse backgrounds
5. Retention rates among students from diverse backgrounds

Strategic Goal 4: Implement policies reflective of best practices in graduate education

Overview:

A robust set of policies for graduate education ensures consistency, clarity of expectations, and fairness across programs. Some existing policies are outdated; others have not been formally articulated. As the institutional home for all graduate students, the Graduate School will review, revise or draft as needed, and implement a comprehensive library of policies for graduate education.

Strategies:

- 4A. Conduct a thorough review of all existing policies
- 4B. For areas in need of revision or creation, draft policies consistent with nationally recognized best practice
- 4C. Work with the Graduate Council for review, approval, and implementation
- 4D. Develop resources for faculty for best practices in mentoring
 - Introduce best practices annually at new faculty orientation

- Build an online resources library for faculty
- Conduct workshops on mentoring
- Provide faculty consultation on an individual, as-needed basis

4E. Bolster training and resources for graduate program staff

- Implement mentorship match program to connect new graduate coordinators with more experienced graduate coordinators
- Refine quarterly graduate coordinator meetings to include best practices
- Implement regularly scheduled group policy/procedure training sessions

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Policy development
2. Mentoring material development
3. Number of workshops conducted

Strategic Goal 5: Provide co-curricular programming to prepare students for career paths, both inside and outside of the academy

Overview:

Among the most important roles the Graduate School plays in the education of students is providing professional development experiences to prepare students for success in their future careers. To be responsive to an ever-changing employment landscape and to local, national, and international employment trends, a strategic vision for graduate education requires consideration of relevant context and the ongoing changes in our students and in our communities. The shrinking number of tenure-track positions in many disciplines has led to more varied career trajectories for students. While graduate credentialing tends to enhance employment, the career paths of students require professional development that augments discipline-specific knowledge, honors career choices, and addresses core transferable skills, such as writing, oral communication, and thriving within an increasingly diverse workplace.

In addition to the need to evolve professional development offerings, the ability for students to obtain depth in addition to breadth in professional development provides them needed skills and credentialing to succeed in an increasingly competitive job market.

Strategies:

5A. With input from community partners and stakeholders, develop a core list of competencies for varying career paths

5B. Create and implement an academy model of professional development with core and specialized skill training in the following areas:

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – in partnership with DEI
- Grant writing – in partnership with VPRI
- Leadership and Management
- Preparing Future Faculty
- Community Engagement
- Graduate Teaching Excellence – in partnership with TEP

5C. Pilot academy as a graduate certificate program

5D. Implement a professional development registration and tracking system

5E. Develop community and employer partnerships for applied experiences in academies

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Establishment of user-friendly tracking
2. Development of academy curricula
3. Number of students attending workshops
4. Number of students completing academy curricula

Strategic Goal 6: Establish a core set of metrics for data-based decision making

Overview:

A culture of assessment is critical for excellence in graduate education. A set of core metrics will allow programs, the Graduate School, and the institution to address trends, areas of strength and challenge, operationally define quality, and strategically manage resource allocation. The following strategies and performance indicators serve the goal of addressing central issues facing graduate programs and help to support a culture of refinement and growth.

Strategies:

6A. Provide each program an annual succinct summary of the following metrics central to the mission of graduate programs.

- Admissions
 - Applicant pool, selectivity, and yield

- Applicant, enrolled student credentials
- Top reasons for not accepting admissions offers
- Student demographics
- Student support and funding sources
- Student progress
 - Time to degree
 - Graduation rates
 - Scholarly productivity

6B. Track student career placements

- Develop tracking system aligned with implementation recommendations of Council of Graduate Schools allowing seamless tracking from application to career placements
- Assess trends in program alumni career placements to ensure appropriateness of training and professional development offerings

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Creation of annual report template
2. Development of career placement tracking system
3. Revisions of professional development offerings as indicated based on career tracking and alumni and industry partner feedback

Strategic Goal 7: Provide professional development support for postdoctoral fellows

Overview:

Postdoctoral fellows are integral to the research mission of the university. Until 2014, their university “home” was within the Office of the Vice President of Research and Innovation as the Graduate School was a part of that office. Since the Graduate School became a separate unit, postdoctoral fellows’ “home” has been somewhat unclear. The Graduate School is ideally suited to provide professional development and opportunities for mentorship experiences to augment fellows’ work in the lab and with individual faculty mentors.

Strategies:

7A. Partner with UO postdoc association to provide organizational support, listserv development, and presence on Graduate School webpage

7B. Coordinate professional development and career workshops, including grant writing, preparing research and teaching statements for job applications, the job interview, individual development plans, and other topics of interest to the postdoc association

7C. Present a series of teaching workshops, in coordination with TEP, focused on pedagogical approaches and teaching excellence

7D. Create a mentoring program where postdoctoral fellows can mentor graduate students in career planning, fellowship applications, and success in graduate school as preparation for future faculty roles

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Creation of listserv and organized communications with fellows
2. Number of workshops targeted to postdoctoral fellows
3. Number of teaching workshops presented
4. Creation of fellow-graduate student mentoring program

Strategic Goal 8: Foster program development as part of growth of the Knight Campus, cutting-edge interdisciplinary programs, and new online and hybrid master's programs

Overview:

As part of a comprehensive approach to growing graduate enrollment, in addition to growth of existing programs, creation of new degree programs that are strategically aligned with strengths of the university will draw additional students. Innovative programs as part of Knight Campus growth, cutting-edge interdisciplinary programs, and new online and hybrid master's programs all provide the opportunity to create new and transformative programs and expand the reach of graduate programs.

Strategies:

8A. Move programs in development stages to approval and implementation, including Planning, Public Policy, and Management Ph.D., Ethnic Studies Ph.D. and certificate programs, and Bioengineering Ph.D.

8B. Development of new interdisciplinary programs

- Driven by student and faculty interests, use the Graduate School as incubator to pilot the viability of new programs that could be scaled up
- Provide seed money to fund pilot new programs to encourage faculty to explore interdisciplinary areas that may lead to new programs

8C. Development of online masters programs based on university priorities and areas of strength, with potential in:

- Data Science
- Bioethics
- Sustainability

8D. Work with Knight Campus leadership to develop additional graduate programs and tracks in existing programs

8E. Develop Honors College 4+1 Liberal Arts BA/MA program

8F. Revitalize and re-brand existing IS:IP interdisciplinary masters degree program

8G. Develop a template for interdisciplinary doctoral programs

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Creation of online programs
2. Creation of new programs
3. Number of students enrolled in interdisciplinary programs
4. Demand measured by number of applications

Strategic Goal 9: Strengthen and grow the Graduate School's development and alumni engagement

Overview:

Unlike other schools and colleges, the Graduate School's alumni are embedded in departments throughout the university. Alumni relationships with the Graduate School are often secondary to their relationship with their discipline-specific home department. Development efforts and alumni engagement thus rely upon strategies that can complement departmental and college efforts and also serve to benefit students regardless of disciplines, to accomplish goals related to growth, increasing diversity, innovation and program creation, and professional development across graduate programs.

Strategies:

9A. Increase initiatives around annual giving

- Build a foundation of annual giving donors
- Grow largely unrestricted spendable cash fund for dean's initiatives
- Expand Day of Giving strategy
- Work with Development for further engagement of dean in institutional events and donor cultivation opportunities

9B. Cultivate large donors to support:

- Additional named fellowships

- Graduate student diversity initiatives and fellowships
- PathwayOregon Masters initiative
- Pilot interdisciplinary programs

9C. Explore ways to increase alumni engagement

- Develop tracking of alumni as part of CRM
- Alumni stories for the web, shared with departments
- Cultivate ongoing relationships with local alumni as
 - Donors
 - Potential employers
 - Community partners for student professional development

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Increased funding
2. Tracking system in place
3. Collection of alumni stories
4. Involvement of local alumni in Graduate School initiatives

Strategic Goal 10: Raise the Graduate School's profile

Overview:

The Graduate School thrives in partnership with virtually every part of campus and should play an important role in campus conversations on key issues. Leadership in areas of student success, equity and inclusion, academic excellence, career preparation, and campus climate for students will contribute to the overall preeminence of the university as a top destination for graduate education. To reach internal and external audiences, strategic and enhanced communication and collaborations among local, regional, and national colleagues are vital to develop, grow, and nurture.

Strategies:

10A. Raise the profile within the university

- Develop comprehensive communication strategy
 - Create a consistent Graduate School identity and branding across communication platforms
 - Webpage re-design and launch

- Prepare an annual report of Graduate School's programs, financial contributions, and accomplishments to be disseminated to students, faculty, alumni, and campus leadership
- Build partnerships in support of graduate students
 - Library – statistics consulting
 - Clark Honors College – Liberal Arts 4+1 BA/MA program development
 - International Affairs – travel grants
 - VPRI grant workshops – NSF application training
 - Grow areas of new partnerships for
 - Training and Professional Development
 - Funding
 - Program growth and innovation
- Lead campus discussions on key issues impacting graduate students

10B. Raise the Graduate School profile external to university

- Grow regional presence
 - Grow collaborations with OSU, PSU, OHSU
 - Attend/coordinate regular meetings among graduate deans of Oregon universities
 - Grow collaborations with community partners
- Grow national presence
 - Attendance by Dean and those in Graduate School leadership at national meeting
 - Council of Graduate Schools
 - AAU Graduate Deans Meetings
 - Admissions and retention Directors
 - Professional Development

Key performance indicators:

1. Development of communication plan
2. Development, testing, and launch of new webpage
3. Growth in Graduate School partnerships
4. Production and dissemination of annual report
5. Participation in conversation related to graduate education at local, regional, and national levels.