Graduate School

Strategic Plan
2020-2025

2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Graduate Education Mission Statement

Prioritizing graduate education is critical to supporting and advancing the research, teaching and outreach missions of Georgia's flagship University. We seek to foster excellence in a broad, inclusive, and growing graduate enterprise that prepares intellectual leaders of the State, Nation, and World.

Vision

To empower and enrich global communities through advancements inspired by graduate education

Goal 1: Support graduate student success and well-being.

Strategy 1.A: Enhance advocacy on behalf of graduate students for University and System-level decisions (health insurance, fees, assistantships, access to mental health care etc.)
- Increase graduate student representation on University-level committees and advisory boards
- Increase the number of faculty representing the interests of graduate education on University-level committees and advisory boards
- Promote graduate education as an institutional priority, as evidenced by budgetary and resource commitment

Accountability measures:
- # of committees and advisory boards with graduate student representation
- # of faculty representing graduate education on University-level committees
- Budgetary resources committed to supporting graduate education

Strategy 1.B: Offer Graduate School programming that is innovative, data-driven, responsive, and accessible
- Participate in conferences to understand and anticipate issues and trends in graduate education and share best practices developed at the University of Georgia
- Conduct regular assessments to gauge and anticipate graduate student needs
- Design programming informed by best practices to address graduate student needs at all stages of training
- Design programming that is broadly accessible (e.g. extended campuses, scheduling, format) and maximizes participation
- Pursue synergistic partnerships to maximize efficient use of Graduate School resources

- Conduct ongoing program evaluation based on measurable learning outcomes
- Provide frequent opportunities for stakeholder input

Accountability measures:
- # of presentations made and sessions organized at graduate education conferences
- Annual graduate student needs assessments
- # of programs conducted
- # of students participating in programming
- Program modifications based on evaluations and feedback

Strategy 1.C: Facilitate the enhancement, excellence and enrollment growth of Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs (IGP)
- Promote comprehensive review of IGP funding and administrative structures and promote best practices and consistency across IGP
- Advocate for and raise profile of IGP
- Develop policies and mechanisms for supporting IGP
- Establish templates and provide administrative support to launch new IGP (and certificate programs)
- Advocate for clear, consistent guidelines for IGP funding models and clear guidelines for "counting" students at college, university and USG levels

Accountability measures:
- # of IGP
- # of students enrolled in IGP
- # of awards received by students in IGP
- Publications and presentations by IGP students

Strategy 1.D: Develop and implement strategies to ensure effective graduate student mentoring
- Promote effective mentor training for all faculty members
- Implement grievance policy and process for graduate students
- Establish an ombudsman program for graduate students

Accountability measures:
- Assessment of mentoring needs among faculty engaged in graduate education
- # graduate program faculty participating in mentor training
- Grievance policy developed and in place by FY 2022
- Ombudsman program developed and in place by FY 2022
- # of students being assisted by ombudsman program

Goal 2: Endorse equity and justice in graduate education by promoting access and retention, particularly for underserved students.

Strategy 2.A: Ensure access to graduate education by recruiting historically underrepresented and first-generation graduate students.

- Deliver effective recruitment programming for diverse communities
- Support graduate programs in their recruitment efforts
- Follow and encourage best practices in recruitment outreach
  Foster/maintain relationships with underrepresented academic organizations (SACNAS, etc.)
- Promote and encourage holistic application review by graduate programs

Accountability measures:
- # of programs offered to support underserved students
- # of program attendees
- Attendee satisfaction
- Funding to graduate programs for student recruitment programs
- # of underserved attendees who apply to UGA Graduate School
- # of underrepresented and first-generation graduate students contacted
- # of underrepresented and first-generation graduate students who apply

Strategy 2.B: Promote retention of historically underrepresented and first-generation graduate students.
- Provide programming to assist the transition of underrepresented students into graduate school
- Offer retention programming for underserved graduate students

Accountability measures:
- # of programs offered to support underserved students
- # of program attendees
- Student satisfaction
- Funding to graduate programs for student retention
- # of underserved students who complete graduate degrees

Goal 3: Strengthen and simplify processes to support Graduate School stakeholders.

Strategy 3.A: Work with Graduate Council to re-engineer its function and structure
- Restructure Graduate Council to enhance effectiveness, including strengthening advocacy for graduate students
- Improve the communication function of Graduate Council so that it more effectively raises issues and concerns to the Graduate School leadership and communicates policy changes and other important information back to units

Accountability measures:
- Graduate Council restructure complete by FY 2023
- Annual survey of graduate program faculty regarding Graduate Council effectiveness

Strategy 3.B: Comprehensively review business practices and core functions
- Improve business process efficiency and establish cyclical review with a focus on supporting stakeholders

- Create clarity and consistency in the models for Graduate School student support, such as assistantships and awards
- Realign organizational structure of Graduate School with new strategic priorities
- Create Dean's Advisory Council

Accountability measures:
- Complete process evaluation for Graduate School assistantships and awards by FY 2022
- Complete strategic reorganization by FY 2022
- Complete membership of Dean's Advisory Council by FY 2023

Strategy 3.C: Optimize graduate student application and enrollment management system and IT resources
- Implement SLATE CRM tool
- Implement tools for tracking student progress to degree completion, accessible by key personnel in colleges/schools
- Partner with OIR to enhance Graduate School Dashboard with student placement and other outcomes data
- Continue to develop/enhance electronic forms to improve efficiency and reduce stakeholder administrative burden

Accountability measures:
- SLATE launched by FY 2021
- Survey of SLATE end-users
- # of OIR Data Dashboard users
- Graduate student tracking tool implemented by FY 2023
- # of users of graduate student tracking tools
- Graduate School forms converted to electronic versions by FY 2022

Strategy 3.D: Increase training opportunities for graduate coordinators and graduate coordinator assistants
- Offer a certificate in graduate education advising for GCAs
- Seek opportunity to review GC appointment and performance
- Investigate feasibility of creating a GCA job code
- Create online tutorials of Graduate School processes
- Articulate national best practices to staff and faculty, including GCs and GCAs
- Create annual GC and GCA awards

Accountability measures:
- Graduate education advising certificate established by FY 2023
- # of online tutorials created and published
- # of GCA's trained by Graduate School
- # of GCAs who have earned GCA certificate

Goal 4: Strengthen relationships with campus partners.

Strategy 4.A: Strengthen and formalize relations with Office of Research (OoR)

- Clarify shared responsibilities between OoR and Graduate School (e.g., in the area of training grant proposals and management)
- Continue monthly meetings of Graduate School and OoR staff responsible for training grants, fellowship applications, professional development, mentoring, communications, and interdisciplinary programs
- Establish quarterly meetings of Graduate School and OoR leadership

Accountability measures:
  - Monthly meetings by FY 2021
  - Quarterly meetings by FY 2021
  - # of co-sponsored activities or initiatives for graduate students/faculty/staff
  - # of proposals submitted

Strategy 4.B: Strengthen relations with Office of Student Affairs and other offices to enhance graduate student life
- Seek partnerships that promote use of support services by graduate students
- Seek partnerships that create services specifically for graduate students
- Advocate for allocation of physical space(s) on campus that are graduate-student specific

Accountability measures:
  - # of programs specifically for graduate students offered by University support services
  - # of graduate students participating in University support services programming
  - Amount of physical space designated for graduate students

Strategy 4.C: Strengthen relations with Office of Global Engagement to provide services and resources for international students
- Partner with OGE to develop online resources to support international graduate students
- Partner with OGE to increase access to language resources for international students

Accountability measures:
  - # of online resources available for international graduate students
  - # of international graduate students utilizing online resources
  - # of co-sponsored activities or initiatives for graduate students/faculty/staff

Strategy 4.D: Strengthen relations with partners to identify experiential professional development opportunities for graduate students.
- Develop partnerships with the Office of Industry Engagement, Innovation District and Corporate and Foundation Relations to identify professional development and research opportunities for graduate students
- Create opportunities for internships and externships for graduate students

Accountability measures:

- # of internships/externships for graduate students
- # of other professional development and research opportunities for graduate students

Strategy 4.E: Increase fund raising for graduate education and graduate student support
- Seek partnerships with schools/colleges to secure funding for graduate education
- Work with Development and Alumni Relations to increase funding for graduate education

Accountability measures:
- Amount of development funding generated for graduate students
- # of assistantships/fellowships supported by foundation funds

Strategy 4.F: Strengthen relations with Public Service and Outreach
- Work with faculty in J.W. Fanning Institute of Leadership Development to identify broader opportunities for graduate students to participate in community-engaged research and other experiential learning
- Explore opportunities for PSO faculty to receive credit for participating in graduate level coursework/trainings
- Explore internship/externship opportunities for graduate students in economic development.

Accountability measures:
- # of community-engaged research and experiential opportunities for graduate students
- # of graduate students participating in community-engaged research/scholarship/certificates

Strategy 4.G: Enhance partnership with Human Resources to better support stakeholders engaged in graduate education
- Work with Human Resources to better support staff responsible for graduate student onboarding and payroll
- Partner with HR to assess effectiveness and efficiency of processes related to graduate students

Accountability measures:
- Streamlined onboarding and payroll processes for graduate assistants

Goal 5: Enhance communication with stakeholders

Strategy 5.A: Redesign Graduate School website for improved efficiency and user experience
- Solicit stakeholder feedback to continually inform website evolution
- Communicate accomplishments of UGA graduate students, faculty, and programs to raise profile of graduate education
- Communicate roles and responsibilities of Graduate School faculty and staff

- Maintain an updated and accessible list of all assistantships, awards and fellowships, and application deadlines
- Publicize professional development programs and improve coordination to avoid conflicts with department and college programming

Accountability measures:
- Comprehensive, integrated, easily navigable Graduate School website by FY 2022
- Surveys of end-user satisfaction with Graduate School website

Strategy 5.B: Improve effectiveness of Graduate School communication
- Hire Communications Director and establish comprehensive communications strategy
- Develop and implement comprehensive communications plan

Accountability measures:
- Communications Director responsibilities defined
- Communications Director hired
- # of people reached through various communication channels
- Level of audience engagement through advanced analytics