

NOVEMBER 2021

GRADUATE COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN

Academic Years 2021 through 2026



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
GRADUATE COLLEGE

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Introduction

Organized in an easy-to-use and informative manner, the Strategic Plan for the University of Delaware Graduate College establishes key priorities and goals that will help guide the Graduate College's mission over the next five years (academic year 2021 through academic year 2026).

Focused on six primary categories of graduate education operations—**Operational Excellence, Graduate Community, Innovation in Graduate Education, Professional Development, Recruitment and Retention, and Graduate and Postdoctoral Research, Scholarship and Creative Expression**—the strategic plan includes objectives and action items for each category and lists metrics to aid in assessing the Graduate College's progress in meeting its objectives.

While the strategic plan reflects the intentions of the Graduate College and other University stakeholders, it will be revisited semiannually to reassess priorities, assess progress and incorporate revisions.

From the Dean

Dear Students, Colleagues and Alumni,

Since its creation two years ago, the Graduate College has engaged the entire UD community and has been greeted with tremendous support in our mission to advance graduate education and research and improve postdoctoral preparation. To most efficiently take advantage of the opportunities that lie before us as a University community, the Graduate College needs a strategic plan, a plan that will capture the aspirations of our students and the expectations of our faculty and administration. It will help us channel our finite resources in ways that will have the greatest possible impact and move the University in the directions we want it to go.

The strategic planning process began in fall 2020 with a clear articulation of our mission and vision developed in consultation with the Graduate College Council. The five goals articulated in that vision plus operational excellence form the basis for our strategic plan. The plan itself emerged from efforts of five working groups of faculty and students, led by Graduate College team members. These reports were distilled into a draft that was circulated to faculty and students for feedback in late spring 2021. The Graduate College team used that feedback over the summer of 2021 to prioritize the various objectives and action items so that the plan would reflect a consensus of the UD community's priorities. The Graduate College team believes that this plan will substantially improve graduate education on campus and elevate the stature of our graduate programs nationally and internationally.

This plan is for both the Graduate College and the University of Delaware community. Within the Graduate College, we are committed to achieving our mission in the special ways articulated in the plan, and we will measure our progress with multiple metrics knowing that no single metric should ever become a focus, especially for an operation as complex as the Graduate College. Like any good strategic plan, we have been mindful to propose something that is both ambitious and achievable. We're going to take risks. We do not expect everything we try to work, but we are confident that these endeavors will

create the capacity within our community to achieve the excellence that we aspire to. We cannot do everything, and the Graduate College will use the plan to maintain our focus.

Outside the Graduate College, we are happy to share our plan in full transparency. We invite other units on campus to join with us to advance graduate and postdoctoral preparation. For those interested in partnerships, the plan articulates specifically where the Graduate College wants to go and the major activities that we are leading or will lead to move us in those directions.

Finally, the Graduate College team accepts that things can change in the course of five years. Knowing that we may have to adapt to changing circumstances, we will treat this as a living document and are prepared to make minor revisions to maintain its utility and relevance.

With best regards,

Louis F. Rossi

Dean of the Graduate College

Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education

Professor of Mathematical Sciences

Our Mission

The mission of the Graduate College is to achieve excellence in graduate education and graduate research, scholarship and creative expression at the University of Delaware. In doing so, the Graduate College will elevate the stature of our graduate programs nationally and internationally.

Our Vision

Established in 2019, the University of Delaware Graduate College is an expression of the will of the faculty and administration at the University to dedicate itself to the needs and aspirations of our graduate students and postdocs. We will advocate for our graduate students' and postdocs' success and well-being in all parts of their lives on and off campus. The Graduate College will enhance graduate experiences by:

- building a welcoming, respectful, strong, diverse and resilient graduate community,
- fostering innovation in graduate education, especially in creating and supporting interdisciplinary programs, delivering online courses and programs and extending educational opportunities to nontraditional learners,
- providing opportunities for professional development so that graduate students and postdocs can achieve their career aspirations,
- recruiting and retaining the best and brightest students,
- supporting, developing and enhancing opportunities for graduate and postdoctoral research, scholarship and creative expression.

We place the highest value on our common humanity, and therefore we will reflect and act upon issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in the decisions that we make. Operational excellence and operational continuity will be our guiding organizational

principles. Best practices, data and evidence will inform all our actions, and we will maximize our impact by working harmoniously with the Graduate Council, the University's other colleges and units, as well as partners from outside the University.

Our Leadership Team

The Graduate College leadership team consists of:

- **Louis F. Rossi, Ph.D.**
Dean of the Graduate College and Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education
- **Steven Kendus, MPA**
Director, Marketing and Communications, Graduate College and Division of Professional and Continuing Services
- **George Irvine, Ph.D.**
Associate Vice Provost, Division of Professional and Continuing Studies
- **Mary Martin, Ed.D.**
Associate Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education and Associate Dean
- **LaRuth McAfee, Ph.D.**
Senior Assistant Dean
- **Cynthia Rechsteiner, MBA**
Business Officer, Graduate College and Division of Professional and Continuing Studies
- **Suprawee Tepsuporn, Ph.D.**
Senior Assistant Dean for Graduate Professional Development

Operational Excellence

The Graduate College will assess and continually improve programs and policies designed to achieve our objectives as completely and efficiently as possible.

Objectives

- **Objective 1:** The Graduate College will work collaboratively with other colleges and units in the interests of the University of Delaware to achieve the objectives of the Graduate College.

The Graduate College has an interest in working differentially with our colleges and other units because the University of Delaware's decentralized model allows individual units to innovate. We will work in partnership with other units to maintain these strengths while achieving our goals.

- **Objective 2:** The Graduate College will provide basic program-level support for all graduate programs.

Support for some basic operations including data sharing, professional development, community support and marketing of graduate education is uneven across the colleges. The Graduate College will fill these gaps by providing basic support for all graduate programs where it makes sense to do so.

- **Objective 3:** The Graduate College will curate and share useful and empowering data about graduate students and graduate education to program directors, chairs and deans.

To make sound decisions and improve the quality of graduate education, UD's graduate leaders and directors require robust data about all our graduate programs. The Graduate College will advocate for robust data systems at UD and will lead the effort to build useful reports and dashboards for campus leaders and directors.

- **Objective 4:** The Graduate College will establish and maintain strong, effective and efficient communication ties with graduate education stakeholders on campus, including, but not limited to, graduate students, postdocs, faculty, graduate program directors, the Graduate College Council, the Graduate Student Government, the deans' offices, the Division of Student Life and the Career Center.

Graduate and postdoctoral education and research involves the successful sharing of ideas between all stakeholders. The Graduate College will work with all representative bodies so that everyone has a voice in decisions that impact them and so that information and perspectives are communicated to those who most need them.

Actions

Immediate (AY21-22)

- Objectives 1 and 3 - Work with campus partners to develop appropriate technologies and data use policies for sharing data, either internally or externally.
- Objectives 1 and 3 - Identify gaps in data collection commonly requested in funding applications (e.g., graduate student disability data for NIH proposals) and determine appropriate mechanisms to collect such data.
- Objectives 2 and 4 - Create and curate a program director's manual.
- Objective 3 - Create and maintain a graduate dashboard for administrators, program directors and other decision-makers.
- Objective 4 - Respond to all inquiries within two business days.

Mid-Term (AY21-22 through AY23-24)

- Objectives 2 and 4 - Create and curate a UD Online programs manual.

Metrics

- Satisfaction survey of stakeholders to address effectiveness of data, data sharing methods/technologies and manuals. At a minimum, stakeholders include:
 - The Graduate College team (confidential to the dean)
 - Students (broken down by enrollment status [full time, part time] and demographics)
 - Chairs and program directors
 - Graduate program coordinators
 - Deans' offices
- Measure response times for certain inquiries (e.g., inquiry receipt and response times/dates from email, chatbot, etc.).

Graduate Community

The Graduate College will enhance graduate experiences by building a welcoming, respectful, strong, diverse and resilient graduate community.

Objectives

- **Objective 1:** The Graduate College will be accessible and attentive to the needs of our graduate students and postdoctoral researchers.
- **Objective 2:** The Graduate College will foster a student-centered graduate culture that values differences with the following properties:
 - Welcomes and acclimates new students to the University of Delaware.
 - Develops traditions that make the UD graduate experience cohesive and empathetic.
 - Fosters positive interactions and experiences across cultures, races, genders, classes, sexualities, abilities and other areas of uniqueness.
 - Has focused programs that support traditionally marginalized populations.
- **Objective 3:** The Graduate College will provide professional support for graduate operations while welcoming student participation and involvement in graduate life.
- **Objective 4:** The Graduate College will create an environment in which students can grow and succeed along multiple personal and professional dimensions and that:
 - Articulates clearly how basic needs are met including personal finances, housing, transportation, healthcare, support for families, etc.
 - Creates opportunities for healthy social and recreational activity.

Actions

Immediate (AY21-22)

- Objective 1 - Represent the campuswide interests of graduate students and postdocs to the other colleges and non-academic units on common issues of their welfare, which include housing, transportation and childcare among others, and coordinate action where appropriate.
- Objective 1 - Represent the campuswide interests of graduate students and postdocs who are on contract to the other colleges and non-academic units on issues related to the conditions and terms of work, which include, among others, the graduate student minimum stipend, vacation policy and additional work.
- Objectives 1-4 - Continue soliciting feedback in formal and informal ways from graduate students and postdoctoral researchers. Two primary mechanisms will be used:

- Regular campus listening sessions with graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, allowing them to provide input and shape the mission, function and activities of the Graduate College and other units at UD (e.g., Student Life, Research Office, OIEDI, etc.). These are also opportunities to inform graduate students and postdoctoral researchers of the college and University events and updates.
- Regular surveys of graduate students and postdoctoral researchers, analyzed in a timely manner to use the learnings to track progress toward goals and identify new opportunities to provide better support.
- Objectives 1-4 - Investigate barriers for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers around use of campus spaces meant to support them.
- Objectives 1 and 4 - Examine current campus resources aimed at graduate students and postdoctoral researchers, such as off-campus housing guides and childcare resources, to determine how well they are meeting the needs of our constituents.
- Objectives 1-4 - Exhibit a culture within the Graduate College that is focused on anti-racism and diversity competency with greater resources for equity and diversity on campus. There are internal and external-facing opportunities to implement for this action item:
 - Internal - Launch diversity workshop and discussion series to increase capacity around diversity/equity/inclusion (DEI) topics relevant to graduate education, revise performance expectations for all positions to include specific DEI goals and metrics, develop culture in which team members from underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds feel their concerns are addressed satisfactorily.
 - External-facing - Update funding allocated for various funding competitions to prioritize initiatives focusing on underrepresented or marginalized populations, revise application and nomination criteria and processes for graduate students/postdocs and graduate programs to include prompts about DEI contributions and commitment, update graduate application and system to facilitate use of holistic application/admissions practices, host workshops on DEI promising practices in graduate education.
- Objectives 2-4 - Develop a strategic communication plan for dissemination of information to current graduate students and postdoctoral researchers, as well as one for incoming students prior to coming to campus and attending student orientation. This will include communication strategies, website and/or social media outlets that will be used in communicating information, incorporating demographic-specific communications based on the different needs/interests of certain populations.
- Objectives 1-4 - Implement initiatives to address needs of graduate students and postdoctoral researchers from underrepresented backgrounds.

Mid-Term (AY21-22 through AY23-24)

- Objective 1 - Develop and pilot survey to learn more about the experiences of postdoctoral researchers.

- Objectives 1 and 4 - Advocate for campus-based resources or partnerships with off-campus entities to provide cost-appropriate services.
- Objectives 1-4 - Engage in campus planning for a multicultural center to advocate for space for graduate student organizations and relevant programming options, as well as common graduate student and postdoctoral fellows-only meeting place.
- Objectives 1-4 - Support existing peer mentoring programs (ex. EmPOWER, SIAM) and develop more mentoring offerings based on successful models at UD or elsewhere.

Long-Term (AY21-22 through AY25-26)

- Objective 2 - Develop graduate student and/or postdoc-specific traditions, such as holding a candlelighting event for new graduate students as part of the orientation program, having a bell that students ring upon completion of degree, holding a winter hooding ceremony, hosting annual major events (e.g., fun run, field day, volunteer day, etc.), or wearing UD paraphernalia certain days of the week.

Metrics

- Overall attendance at each session by demographic group (e.g., grad student, postdoc, race/ethnicity, gender, discipline, etc.) and total unique attendance over the course of the semester/year by demographic group.
- Number and type of comments made by grad students/postdocs at listening sessions.
- Number of requests responded to from listening sessions (whether addressed or not) and how quickly/satisfactorily.
- Feedback provided on surveys regarding satisfaction of grad student/postdoc experiences by demographic group.
- Positive vs. negative responses to specific questions of interest by demographic group, response rates, response trends over time.
- Number of nominees and awardees from underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds in funding competitions.
- Application/admission/yield rates by demographic group.
- Retention and graduation rates by demographic group.
- Readership of newsletter, social media posts, etc. by demographic group.
- Attendance at events or usage of resources (i.e., actions based on information learned through communications) by demographic group.
- Formal and informal feedback from attendees and non-attendees by demographic group.
- Participation on committee(s) by graduate students and postdoctoral researchers.

- Campus responsiveness to graduate student and postdoctoral researcher needs in planning, graduate student and postdoctoral researcher satisfaction with center once opened.

Innovation in Graduate Education

The Graduate College will enhance graduate experiences by fostering innovation in graduate education, especially in creating and supporting interdisciplinary programs, delivering online courses and programs and extending educational opportunities to nontraditional learners.

Objectives

- **Objective 1:** The Graduate College will inspire and support the creation of interdisciplinary graduate programs to provide greater opportunities for students and leverage existing research capacity.

University stakeholders expect universities to provide interdisciplinary solutions to complex, interdisciplinary problems. The Graduate College can foster interdisciplinary thinking, teaching and research by collaborating with and building connections among colleges and departments, identifying courses that can benefit multiple disciplines, being a home for interdisciplinary programs and continuously sharing the vast research and teaching capacity at UD toward complex social problems of technological change, equity and inclusion, climate crisis, equitable growth, and more.

- **Objective 2:** The Graduate College will build and innovate new partnerships to meet the graduate-level needs of companies, organizations and research centers in the region and beyond.

Establishing active partnerships between the Graduate College and organizations helps us prepare our students for positions in the private, public and nonprofit sectors and allows organizations to send their employees to UD degree programs. The advice we gain from our alumni and advisors in other sectors helps our research, teaching and community engagement address important social issues.

- **Objective 3:** The Graduate College will leverage new modalities for graduate education on and off campus to help students learn more deeply and efficiently.

Technological advancements and public health crises have driven changes to how we teach our graduate students. Students and their employers increasingly expect universities to offer fully online, hybrid and in-person degrees to make it more convenient for traditional and nontraditional students to benefit from research-based degrees. The Graduate College can be at the forefront of leveraging new learning modalities to make our graduate programs more accessible to students wherever they may be physically located.

- **Objective 4:** The Graduate College will innovate course delivery and meeting cadences to meet the needs of graduate students with professional and personal constraints.

Graduate education is increasingly being offered in multiple formats ranging from

post-baccalaureate certificates to full master's or doctoral degrees. Giving our prospective graduate students more choice in how they learn will enhance our relevance and attract more students. Options include 4+1 degrees, stackable master's, pathways from post-baccalaureate certificates to online or in-person master's degrees, and certificates that complement Ph.D. programs.

- **Objective 5:** The Graduate College will work with partners to create innovative on-ramps to graduate education from diverse populations of prospective students.

The 21st-century educational marketplace provides prospective graduate students with a wide range of education programs to select. Attracting students to UD with carefully planned recruitment events and creating on-ramp programming to graduate programs is becoming the norm in graduate education. It is no longer sufficient to launch a high-quality master's degree and expect students to find it. The Graduate College can intentionally design and execute recruitment and retention programming to attract talented undergraduate degree-holders to UD while also launching more courses and programs that serve nontraditional and part-time graduate students so they can benefit from our research-based knowledge and succeed in our graduate degrees.

Actions

Immediate (AY21-22)

- Objective 1 - Create a repository of graduate research methods courses to facilitate interdisciplinary enrollment and improved program planning.
- Objective 1 - Share select graduate classes across related disciplines to foster interdisciplinary collaboration among our faculty and our students at an early stage of graduate studies, e.g., statistics, methods, public scholarship epistemology, etc.
- Objective 2 - Form a Graduate College Advisory Council composed of industry, government and nonprofit representatives.
- Objective 2 - Market and provide master's and post-baccalaureate certificates to organizations to meet employee development needs, help them hire UD students and increase our graduate student count and revenue.
- Objective 4 - Make more Ph.D. students aware of the opportunity to earn graduate certificates while they are studying for their Ph.D. to burnish credentials and strengthen their competitiveness in the job market. (Note: This action item parallels Professional Development strategies discussed above.)
- Objective 5 - Partner with interested departments to recruit UD undergraduates in a systematic way by providing a one-stop mechanism, such as a Graduate Program Fair for UD undergraduates and those at selected colleges in our region to learn about UD's graduate programs. (Note: This action item parallels Recruitment and Retention strategies discussed below.)

Mid-Term (AY21-22 through AY23-AY24)

- Objective 1 - Provide interdisciplinary primer to faculty, students and staff about how to think along interdisciplinary lines and how to procedurally create an interdisciplinary program at UD.
- Objective 3 - Provide consistent student services to online master's students to better engage them with the UD community. (Will be implemented in coordination with similar Professional Development goals outlined above.)
- Objective 4 - Expand the number of 4+1 degree opportunities to make it more convenient for interested undergraduates to earn a master's degree in less time.
- Objective 4 - Create stackable master's degrees in the Graduate College and in other UD colleges.
- Objective 4 - Form permanent focus groups of faculty, students, employers and community partners to inform our curriculum and programming over time to benefit curriculum development, course delivery, career services, etc.
- Objective 5 - Offer credit for UD Division of Professional and Continuing Studies (UD PCS) noncredit certificates by having interested students complete additional graduate-level assignments, using prior learning assessment and other possibilities similar to 400/600 course levels example.

Long-Term (AY21-22 through AY25-AY26)

- Objective 1 - Create a "Design Your Own" Graduate College Ph.D. that would allow suitably motivated graduate students to matriculate in a university Ph.D. to work with an interdisciplinary team of faculty advisors to research critical societal and scientific questions.
- Objective 1 - Develop more professional doctorate degrees that play to UD's research and teaching strengths and meet market demand. Possible fields include healthcare, public health, quantum engineering, data science, etc.
- Objective 4 - Explore new dual degree programs with other domestic or international universities.

Metrics

- Ensure adequate representation from industry, government and nonprofit sectors in Graduate College advisory council and focus groups.
- Grow the number of existing partnerships/contracts with organizations by 5% annually.
- Use market research to determine market demand for professional doctoral degrees. Match demand with UD strengths in the colleges. Invest resources to develop new degrees assuming interest among UD stakeholders.
- Current number of Ph.D. students who earn a graduate certificate compared with past number to assess efficacy of outreach and change over time.

- Current number of students enrolled in a 4+1 degree and current number of 4+1 degrees at UD.
- Service consistency between in-person and online graduate students.
- Track number of graduate degrees that are stackable by design.
- Number of focus groups formed, frequency of meetings and quality of feedback.
- Number of graduate research methods courses and percent of courses that can serve multiple disciplines.
- Number of students registered in a cross-listed graduate course as a measure of interdisciplinary learning.
- Number of 4+1 degrees and number of UD and regional college students who enroll in 4+1 programs.
- Number of UD graduate degrees that are stackable by design.
- Assess the number and viability of “design-your-own” Ph.D. programs in the U.S.
- Determine number and demand for existing UD dual-degree programs.
- Number of graduate students who register for a noncredit certificates.

Professional Development

The Graduate College will enhance graduate experiences by providing opportunities for professional development so graduate students and postdocs can achieve their career aspirations.

Objectives

- **Objective 1:** The UD Graduate College, in collaboration with partners from within and outside the institution, will build data- and outcome-driven, integrated and holistic graduate professional development resources that help graduate students and postdocs thrive during their time on campus and beyond. Upon completing their training at UD, our students and postdocs will have acquired the following competencies:
 - leadership and management
 - effective communication
 - teaching and mentoring
 - personal growth and wellbeing
 - career navigation
- **Objective 2:** The Graduate College will inspire, educate and empower graduate students and postdocs in their career journeys.

Actions

Immediate (AY21-22)

- Objective 1 - Develop a leadership certificate program with specific tracks for graduate students to prepare them for diverse, global working communities by collaborating with the Women's Leadership Initiative, Blue Hen Leadership Program, Professional and Continuing Studies, cultural clubs, identity-based student organizations, and other campus units as needed.
- Objective 1 - Offer grant-writing workshops to help increase graduate students' pursuit of and competitiveness for internal and external funding opportunities.
- Objective 1 - Develop training and resources to help academic departments launch graduate student peer-to-peer mentoring programs where senior graduate student mentors provide support and guidance to first-year graduate students.
- Objective 1 - Continue to provide graduate students and postdocs Accelerate to Industry™ (A2i) Job Search Strategies workshops as career exploration programming and an option to engage with prospective industry partners.
- Objective 1 - Cultivate partnerships with academic departments, UD offices and employers to create experiential learning experiences for graduate students.

- Objective 1 - Enhance connections between doctoral students and doctoral alumni by launching and managing a pilot Grad LEAP alumni mentoring program.
- Objective 1 - Establish postdoctoral leadership fellow positions to help build a postdoc community. The fellows will create opportunities for postdocs to connect with one another through National Postdoc Appreciation Week events, postdoc Slack channel, and community-building events throughout the year.
- Objective 1 - Develop and manage a tiered teaching certificate program for graduate students and postdocs that includes topics such as inclusive teaching practices, understanding and identifying implicit bias, Title IX, campus climate, and the history of racism and DEI practices at UD.
- Objective 2 - Support career development of graduate students and postdocs by providing 1-on-1 career assistance to help them navigate the job search process and prepare effective application materials.
- Objective 2 - Promote employment opportunities from employer partners to focus on academic departments within UD and A2i academic partner institutions.

Mid-Term (AY21-22 to AY23-24)

- Objective 1 - Organize and host events and programs, such as the [Three-Minute Thesis](#), to create opportunities for students and postdocs to translate their graduate-level skills and communicate their scholarly activities to a broad range of audiences.
- Objective 1 - Collaborate with UD's College of Arts and Sciences' Writing Center and Research Office to offer training on book and article writing to enhance students' publishing skills.
- Objective 1 - Develop a visual, digital and social media communication certificate program in collaboration with Professional and Continuing Studies to help graduate students and postdocs present and promote their research and professional experiences in multimedia and multiplatform applications.
- Objective 1 - Provide support and community to graduate students from traditionally underserved and marginalized populations through collaborative partnerships with campus units and match students with peers, faculty and staff.
- Objective 1 - Curate online resources for graduate students and postdocs to help them navigate advisor-advisee relationships.
- Objective 1 - Co-develop a comprehensive personal development and wellbeing program with campus partners to provide a full year of events on topics that enhance graduate student experiences.
- Objective 1 - Coordinate with Professional and Continuing Studies, colleges and academic affairs units to develop credit and noncredit (transcript notation) graduate-level certificate programs to help graduate students and postdocs acquire high-demand skills.
- Objective 2 - Continue to conduct focus groups and surveys with diverse groups of graduate students to receive feedback/perception about current services and make recommendations about future offerings. Focus on BIPOC and URM students to

create career and professional development programs and resources tailored to these students.

- Objective 2 - Develop and standardize the use of doctoral and master's student [Individual Development Plans](#) across all graduate programs to help students define and achieve their academic and professional goals.
- Objective 2 - Create and market a portfolio of on- and off-campus learning opportunities for high-demand skills to boost transferable skills, enrich our graduates' lives and increase their employability.

Long-Term (AY21-22 to AY25-26)

- Objective 1 - In collaboration with the Career Center, Lerner Career Services and ISSS, further determine the needs of international students within each college concerning transitioning to U.S. culture, wellness, and professional development and career success. Co-develop responsive programs and funding opportunities within and across colleges.
- Objective 1 - Create a framework and training for the Career Ambassadors Program to (1) help raise awareness of professional and career development opportunities offered by the Graduate College and (2) develop tailored programming that meets the needs of the specific student population.
- Objective 2 - Fundraise to expand [graduate student professional success awards](#) supporting training, professional development, conference participation and internship or research grants.
- Objective 2 - Develop the syllabus and create content for the Graduate Student Career Management Course in Canvas to provide career development resources and interactive career skill-building activities and track student engagement level over the course of their graduate training.
- Objective 2 - Showcase graduate students and postdocs who have previously won external grants and fellowships on the Graduate College website to create a learning community of peers that can provide guidance and feedback on grant applications.

Metrics

For Overall Professional Development

- Percentage of stakeholders who utilize professional development resources or are engaged with the professional development team via program requests or participating in one of the initiatives.
- Percentage of stakeholders who are satisfied with professional development resources (by degree programs, disciplines and demographics).
 - Students (by degree programs, disciplines and demographics)
 - Graduate student organizations
 - Chairs and program directors

- Graduate program coordinators

For Leadership and Management Competency

- Leadership certificate is in place by December 2022.
- Number of graduate students participating in leadership certificate broken down by demographic, degree program, college and discipline.

For Teaching and Mentoring Competency

- Higher education teaching certificate is in place by September 2022.
- Number of graduate students participating in the higher education teaching certificate program broken down by demographic, degree program, college and discipline.
- Percentage of graduate students who strongly agree UD prepared them to be an effective teacher in a postsecondary education setting.

For Career Navigation Competency

- Percentage of graduate students who strongly agree UD prepared them to successfully lead and manage people and projects.
- Percentage of graduate students who are confident they will graduate with the skills and knowledge to be successful a) in the job market and b) in the workplace (measure in first year and at graduation).
- Percentage of graduate students who strongly agree they are confident in their abilities to succeed in a global workplace and with colleagues from diverse backgrounds and ideas.
- Percentage of graduate students who believe their graduate programs will lead to a good job within their discipline (measure in first year and at graduation).
- Percentage of graduate students who strongly agree they are confident about their career direction.
- Percentage of graduates indicating a high level of career and personal success five and 10 years after graduation as measured by their wellbeing, employment metrics and satisfaction.
- Percentage of graduate students receiving career advice, mentorship, job shadowing experiences, and internship and job search assistance from UD graduate program alumni before graduation.
- Percentage of recent graduate student alumni who circle back to provide career advice, mentorship, job shadowing experiences, and internship and job search assistance to current students due to the value of support they received while in their programs.
- Percentage of graduate students who strongly agree UD provides an expansive and relevant network of employers and alumni to engage for internship opportunities, jobs and career guidance.

- Percentage of graduate students completing internships, field experiences, job shadowing, clinical experiences and faculty-supervised research.
- Number of colleges and academic departments with structured alumni networks in place to support graduate students and departmental initiatives.
- Percentage of academic departments and programs utilizing Individual Development Plans as part of their advising programs and percentage of doctoral and master's students actively using their plans.

For Communication Competency

- Increased success in students securing competitive internal and external funding and awards as measured by:
 - Percent of doctoral students with year-round funding in their first five years.
 - Number of competitive awards given for travel, language courses, project supplies and other enrichment resources.
 - Number of students applying for and winning internal and external grants and fellowships.
 - Achieve equity in students pursuing and securing internal and external funding opportunities based on race, ethnicity and other demographics. Measured by tracking the number of funding opportunities graduate students applied to and awarded and analyze the data based on various demographics.
- Percentage of graduate students who strongly agree that they are confident in their ability to understand and articulate their skills, experiences, research and academic or professional goals in writing, online and verbally.
- Percentage increase in graduate students with published articles within three years of graduation.

For Personal Growth and Wellbeing Competency

- Number of programs, events or workshops on the topics of wellness, mental health and personal growth.
- Percentage of graduate students who strongly agree that UD is committed to their wellness, mental health and personal growth.
- Number of graduate students participating in Grad LEAP broken down by demographic, degree program, college and disciplines.
- Number of graduate alumni participating in Grad LEAP broken down by demographic, degree program, college and disciplines.
- Number of academic departments participating in or utilizing peer-to-peer mentoring resources.

Recruitment and Retention

The Graduate College will enhance graduate experiences by recruiting and retaining the best and brightest students.

Objectives

- **Objective 1:** Work with graduate programs to implement admissions practices that employ holistic approaches to minimize bias in the admissions process.
- **Objective 2:** Leverage student retention data and best practices so that our students thrive intellectually and attain access to their professional aspirations.
- **Objective 3:** Establish informed Graduate College recruitment goals for the entire University that:
 - Develop goals based on U.S. and global graduate enrollment trends, costs and projections as well as market demands.
 - Maintain a sustainable balance between master's, terminal master's, doctoral and certificate programs.
 - Account for existing capacity and other strategic interests at UD.
 - Incorporate a healthy strategy that includes internal recruitment where appropriate.
 - Incorporate a diverse, robust and pragmatic international strategy.
 - Build graduate cohorts that include domestic graduate demographics that are similar to those of the United States.
 - Build international graduate demographics that are similar to those worldwide.
- **Objective 4:** Develop a robust University-wide marketing and recruitment strategy that:
 - Achieves the Graduate College recruitment goals.
 - Recruits UD undergraduates in a systematic way by providing a “one-stop” mechanism, such as a Graduate Program Fair for UD undergraduates and those at selected colleges in our region to learn about UD’s graduate programs.
 - Distinguishes between internal and external recruiting and includes plans for each.
 - Works harmoniously with other colleges.
 - Develops pipelines from UD summer programs.
 - Clearly articulates what distinguishes UD graduate education.

Actions

Immediate (AY21-22)

- Objective 1 - Hold workshops on minimizing bias in graduate admissions to educate graduate program and academic college leadership on promising practices around holistic admissions.
- Objective 2 - Devise methods to assess the overall effectiveness of the existing graduate student and postdoctoral researcher support services provided by the Graduate College and the other UD units. Implement new retention strategies based on these assessments.
- Objective 2 - Continue and strengthen efforts aimed at meeting needs unique to graduate students and postdoctoral researchers from underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds.
- Objective 3 - Gather recruitment goals and priorities from UD president and college deans.
- Objective 3 - Research U.S. and global graduate enrollment trends (including tuition costs) and projections for the next 1-5 years.
- Objective 3 - Research UD capacity (housing, instructors, classroom space, lab space, etc.) for additional graduate students.
- Objective 3 - Develop a strong plan for internal recruiting centrally and at program level.
- Objective 3 - Identify major local and regional graduate fairs. Develop an annual plan for attending these fairs.
- Objective 4 - Develop annual marketing and recruitment plans that includes tasks, subtasks, dates, resource assignments, and budgets and considers the recruitment of internal and external candidates.
- Objective 4 - Gain annual budgeting approval for marketing and recruitment plans.
- Objective 4 - Build relevant and compelling messaging that complements the marketing and recruitment goals and associated plans, campaigns and tasks.

Mid-Term (AY21-22 through AY23-24)

- Objective 1 - Identify and implement appropriate changes to the central graduate application and review process to provide information to all graduate programs that will facilitate holistic admissions.
- Objective 1 - Create discussion groups/communities of practices for graduate program leaders to share successes and challenges in their implementation of holistic admission practices.
- Objective 1 - Identify and implement policies and practices in other Graduate College initiatives that incentivize the use of holistic admissions practices (e.g., questions on admissions practices in funding nomination/application processes).

- Objective 3 - Conduct cost and ROI studies to determine high-demand, high-return graduate programs.
- Objective 3 - Develop a list of schools for minority recruitment, both centrally and for specific programs/disciplines, then develop relationships with those institutions that will lead to a pipeline of students from them.

Long-Term (AY21-22 through AY25-26)

- Objective 2 - Research housing interests/requirements of graduate students and postdocs at various ages and life stages. Advocate for campus to build and/or procure housing that meets those needs.
- Objective 3 - Hire or appoint a part-time or full-time Graduate College recruiter with the responsibility to recruit for UD Graduate programs.
- Objective 3 - Create an industry outreach position/function within the Graduate College where the primary focus is relationship-building, needs analysis and program development.
- Objective 3 - Identify opportunities for graduate recruitment efforts to partner with designated international recruitment unit(s) for both undergrad and grad level. These efforts include, but are not limited to:
 - Supporting faculty involvement in recruitment trips/webinars and international yield events.
 - Streamlining international transfer or joint degree negotiating procedures. For example, when negotiating with an overseas higher education institution on joint degree operations (2+2 or 1+3), involve the Graduate College to bring up 1+1 master's or even Ph.D. degrees on the table.

Metrics

- Graduate student degree completion rate broken out by program and demographics, relative to aspirations of incoming cohort.
- Postdoc satisfaction from survey responses.
- Written statements of recruitment and retention goals and priorities.
- Reputable reports from organizations like EAB, Hanover, etc.
- Written statements of housing capacity from campus housing stakeholders.
- Responses on surveys by demographic group; retention and graduation rates by demographic group.
- Number of institutions identified, number of students from those institutions applying to UD summer and graduate programs, other measures of quality partnership (seminars at each institution, research collaborations, etc.)
- Various action item outputs, including:
 - Documented, approved plan with tasks, resources, dates, expenses, etc. built in a project management system.

- Written budget approval from all campus stakeholders. Note that budgets could cross colleges and units.
- Output used in web copy, advertisements, recruitment letters/emails, etc.)

Graduate and Postdoctoral Research, Scholarship and Creative Expression

The Graduate College will enhance graduate experiences by supporting, developing and enhancing opportunities for graduate and postdoctoral research, scholarship and creative expression.

Objectives

- **Objective 1:** Use discretionary research funds (e.g., fellowships and awards) to advance the aims of the Graduate College. These aims include:
 - Removing barriers to DEI.
 - Promoting interdisciplinary activities.
 - Supporting terminal master's on par with doctoral programs.
 - Partnering with funding agencies to pursue training grants.
- **Objective 2:** The Graduate College will develop, deploy and amplify positive research mentorship practices.

Studies show that positive mentoring practices have a tremendous impact on successful retention and graduation of graduate students, and they set graduate students and postdoctoral scholars on the road to successful careers. Further, many funding agencies have recently raised their expectations around mentoring expectations for their funding recipients. Therefore, providing resources to improve mentorship capacity at UD is important for the Graduate College. Additionally, incentivizing positive mentoring behavior through funding opportunities and other mechanisms as appropriate can provide the encouragement for resistant programs and advisors to implement at least a basic level of mentorship practices.

Not only are there valuable mentoring resources for faculty advisors, but providing mentorship training for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars can help them be better mentees now, as well as better mentors now and throughout their careers. The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine published a report in 2019 around mentorship that provides valuable resources that can guide efforts at UD. Further, various training opportunities are available, including free online Optimizing the Practice of Mentoring training through the University of Minnesota and paid opportunities through the Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for both mentor training and train-the-trainer training.

- **Objective 3:** The Graduate College will support and amplify interdisciplinary graduate and postdoctoral research activity.

While graduate students and postdoctoral scholars are gaining key discipline-based skills from their academic programs and research advisors, it is also important to

support the development and implementation of opportunities to support general research- and scholarship-related skills and knowledge of campus facilities/resources that can be beneficial to the research/scholarship activities. This includes support of skills around writing proposals, such as ways to search for opportunities and project management skills necessary to prepare successful applications.

- **Objective 4:** Create opportunities for graduate students and postdocs to share their research and scholarship with others and to learn to share constructive feedback with one another.

Communication and dissemination of scholarship is crucial to the success of our graduate students and postdocs. Therefore, the Graduate College should foster opportunities to develop these communication skills. Similarly, it is important for graduate students and postdocs as experts and scholars to develop the skills needed to reach a wide range of audiences.

Actions

Immediate (AY21-22):

- Objectives 1-4 - Clearly articulate the purposes, processes and policies underlying all Graduate College-funded awards, fellowships and tuition waivers.
- Objective 1 - Develop policies for reallocating assets in the support of external training grants (e.g., matching and cost-shares).
- Objective 2 - Review all Graduate College-funded awards, fellowships and tuition waiver programs for barriers, unstated expectations, redundancy and opacity.
- Objective 3 - Launch a pilot for the Graduate and Postdoc Frontier program
- Objective 4 - Form a standing Graduate Research Forum Committee consisting of students, faculty and staff. The committee's mission is to plan and execute the Graduate Research Forum.

Mid-Term (AY21-22 through AY23-AY24):

- Objective 1 - Provide opportunities for faculty members to interact with and recruit graduate students and postdoctoral scholars from all populations, especially underrepresented groups and international. (Also advances objectives in Recruitment and Retention.)
- Objective 1-2 - Create a single Graduate and Postdoc Research Guide for graduate students and postdocs, which includes sponsored fellowships, research facilities, key offices and research training workshops.
- Objective 2 - Provide promising practices on successful recruitment and retention of mentees from underrepresented groups or international populations. (Also advances objectives in Recruitment and Retention.)
- Objective 2 - Provide Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER) training for faculty and postdocs.

- Objective 2-4 - Create new opportunities for interdisciplinary research and amplify existing ones.

Long-Term (AY21-22 through AY25-AY26):

- Objective 1 - Create a seed fund for independent, collaborative graduate student and postdoc endeavors.
- Objective 2 - Provide training opportunities for faculty, postdoctoral scholars and graduate students focused on building successful research groups.
- Objective 2 - Develop communities of practice for faculty members who have graduate students and postdoctoral scholars from underrepresented populations to support their ability to serve as quality mentors for those researchers.
- Objective 2 - Identify appropriate incentives to encourage participation in research mentor training workshops and continued implementation of positive mentoring practices.
- Objectives 2-4 - Create new opportunities for interdisciplinary research and amplify existing ones.
- Objective 3 - Seek opportunities to involve graduate students in faculty early-career opportunities (e.g., proposal writing workshops and other offerings).
- Objective 4 - Explore ways to invigorate Graduate Student Research Forum, including involving deeper involvement from colleges and alumni.

Metrics

- Outputs from action items.
- Numbers of large training grants (T32, T99, NRT, LSAMP BtD, AGEP, etc.) and sponsored training projects submitted/awarded.
- Interdisciplinary research activity. Aligns with draft UD strategic plan around interdisciplinary activity.
- Research participation by demographics and disciplines measured by fellowships awarded and UD research expenditures.
- Philanthropy supporting graduate stipends.
- Number of faculty on campus receiving research mentorship training broken out by faculty rank.

Appendix

Graduate College Strategic Plan Working Groups

Community

- **Mary Martin (Chair - Graduate College)**
- Ioannis Vasileios Chremos (Graduate Student Government)
- Janica Cimo (OISS)
- Freda Patterson (Graduate College Council - Student Life)
- Katarina Smiljanec (Graduate Student Government)
- Michael Vaughan (Office of Equity & Inclusion)
- Brad Wolgast (Center for Counseling and Student Development)
- Ryan Zurakowski (Graduate College Council - Student Life)

Innovation

- **George Irvine (Chair – UD Online/Professional and Continuing Studies)**
- Laura Desimone (Graduate College Council/ICC)
- Sam Lee (Graduate College Council)
- Mary Martin (Graduate College Council member)
- Charlie Riordan (Research Office)
- Eric Sterin (Graduate Student Government)

Professional Development

- **Nathan Elton (Co-Chair - Career Services)**
- **Suprawee Tepsuporn (Co-Chair - Graduate College)**
- Ann Bell (Graduate College Council)
- Tia Ouyang (Graduate Student Government)
- Karin Silbernagel (Graduate College Council)

Recruitment and Retention

- **Michael Alexo (Co-Chair - Graduate College)**
- **Steven Kendus (Co-Chair – OCM/Graduate College)**
- Sam Bingaman (Graduate Student Government)
- Song Hoffman (EM)
- Francis Kwansa (Graduate College Council)
- Mark Parcels (Graduate College Council)

Research

- **LaRuth McAfee (Chair - Graduate College)**
- Greg Dobler (Graduate College Council)
- Angel D'Oliviera (Graduate Student Government)
- Maria Purciello (Graduate College Council)
- AR Razdan (Research Office)
- Joshua Zide (Graduate College Council)