

**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL:
PREEMINENCE IN
DISCOVERY, LEARNING, ENGAGEMENT**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2002-2006

**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
PURDUE UNIVERSITY**

AUGUST 14, 2003

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Graduate Strategic Plan, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne
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Graduate Education at Purdue North Central

PREMINENCE IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLAN 2002-2006

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, PURDUE UNIVERSITY

PREAMBLE

Purdue's graduate programs make it a university. The quality of its graduate programs makes it a preeminent university.

The Graduate School is responsible for graduate education University-wide and, with its partners in departments and programs, for achieving and maintaining excellence. As it leads, the Graduate School and its programs plan within a context of increasing change across the landscape of higher education in the United States. Challenges and opportunities for the Graduate School and its programs are numerous and include:

- competitive pressure from our peer graduate programs
- the costs of research and education
- employment opportunities for our graduates
- the new world order and global economic competition
- new and emerging technologies
- the explosion of knowledge.

Internally, the Graduate School responds to changes by promoting:

- expanding support for graduate study
- high quality discipline specific and interdisciplinary graduate education
- the bonding of graduate education and research
- the development of new areas of study and disciplines
- nontraditional methods or techniques for graduate education, including distance learning and a system wide concept for graduate education
- reorganization and improved efficiency of Graduate School administration.

Attracting the quality and number of graduate students to meet Purdue's dynamic research and education agendas is also a challenge. Specifically, quantitative and qualitative growth in graduate programs is impeded by:

- number and dollar amount of fellowships to recruit talented students
- timeliness of fellowship offers
- space limitations in departments to grow graduate programs.

The Graduate School has central oversight responsibility for 64 graduate programs at the West Lafayette Campus and 24 graduate programs at the Indiana University-Purdue University

campuses at Fort Wayne and Indianapolis, and at Purdue University campuses in Hammond and Westville. The Graduate School continually works to improve the quality of graduate education through coordination, assistance, and monitoring of programs, graduate faculty, curricula, and graduate students. Graduate School deans work extensively with faculty who are involved in interdisciplinary programs or who wish to establish interdisciplinary activities. The vitality and growth of Purdue graduate programs contribute in a myriad of ways to the University, including the enhancement of the depth and richness of the undergraduate experience.

To be an effective agent of change and excellence, the Graduate School must do more than respond to challenges. It must also lead and pursue initiatives that will enable it to compete in a changing educational environment at the highest level, a level demanded by Purdue's national and international reputation.

The Graduate School's strategic plan to advance graduate education and research at Purdue outlines the Graduate School's vision for dynamic and innovative leadership of graduate education system wide. While the Graduate School will remain the University's administrative steward of its graduate programs, our plan seeks to enhance the Graduate School's role as an intellectual catalyst in graduate education. Our initiatives include:

- attracting external and internal sources of funding to help achieve our goals
- managing fellowship and endowment budgets to put additional resources into graduate programs
- enhancing recruitment and retention of graduate students to increase the number, quality, and diversity of Graduate School applicants
- initiating meaningful and systematic reviews of graduate programs
- emphasizing mentoring relationships between faculty and students
- fostering interdisciplinary graduate education
- improving services to enhance the quality of life for our graduate students
- streamlining administrative procedures
- increased interaction and presence at national fora of graduate education (e.g. Council of Graduate Studies).

MISSION

The mission of the Graduate School at Purdue University is to advance graduate education and to enhance awareness of the importance of graduate education. Fundamentally, the Graduate School helps to prepare students for successful careers and to contribute to a diverse and changing world.

To attain this vision and to succeed in its mission, the Graduate School at Purdue University must:

- provide competitive and attractive support and services
- attract and support the highest quality graduate students
- enhance the quality of and foster innovation in graduate education
- promote and develop a diverse graduate student population
- increase the number of graduate students commensurate with increases in research activities.

VISION

The Graduate School at Purdue University aims to be one of the preeminent graduate schools in the United States.

Characteristics:

- Graduate students of the highest quality
- Catalyst for high quality graduate research
- Appropriate number and amount of stipends for graduate fellowships
- An active process for benchmarking, self-assessment, and evaluation of graduate programs system wide
- Vibrant interdisciplinary programs
- Efficient and effective processes to develop single and multi-campus programs to reach diverse and nontraditional, as well as, place-bound students
- A well-founded support structure for system wide graduate programs provided by distance education
- Efficient and effective operations for the Graduate School, including system wide communications and clearly articulated and consistent policies and procedures
- A culturally rich and diverse graduate student population
- Unparalleled support services for graduate students
- National visibility as an innovative leader in graduate education

GOALS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Graduate School believes that it can guide planned growth of quality graduate education because of its unique system wide perspective. The following plan outlines specific goals and strategies for planned growth and continuous quality improvement for graduate education at Purdue University. The goals are grouped under three primary areas of emphasis: (1) Advancing the Importance of Graduate Education; (2) Enhancing the Quality of Graduate Education; and, (3) Fostering Innovation in Graduate Education.

ADVANCING THE IMPORTANCE OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

Goal 1 Increase the enrollment and retention of the highest quality graduate students

To increase the number and quality of students enrolling in graduate programs at Purdue University, it is essential that they know the name of the University, the graduate programs and opportunities it provides, the quality of its faculty, and the likely rewards for attending the University.

High quality marketing is essential to increasing the inquiry and applicant pool of outstanding students. Effective management of the inquiry and applicant pool is critical in directing competitive recruiting programs undertaken by our academic departments. The Graduate School is in a unique position to provide institutional-level support in recruiting potential graduate students, thereby, enhancing the effectiveness of departmental and school discovery and learning.

1.1 Establish and staff an office of recruitment services

1.2 Develop a system wide graduate student-recruiting plan:

- overhaul Graduate School website to provide more up-to-date information in more accessible and interactive formats
- advertise graduate education to state, regional, and national media
- implement and manage a database to effectively recruit students
- recruit students from targeted institutions
- determine current retention rates and establish strategies and targets to improve rates of retention.

Metrics

- Increase the number of domestic students
- Diversify the international student population
- Increase the number of underrepresented minorities and women
- Improved retention rate
- GRE/GMAT/TOEFL of admitted and enrolled students
- Students with NSF fellowships
- Increased number and amount of fellowships
- Graduate students receiving honors and awards
- Based on peer institution comparison, determine:
 - (i) student numbers, quality, and level of support
 - (ii) draw as a percentage of students available nationally by discipline
 - (iii) number and amount of University fellowships and assistantships and health benefits

Resources Required

- Additional financial resources for highly competitive graduate fellowships and health benefits

Goal 2 Increase the amount of funding and diversify funding sources

The Graduate School recognizes the importance of fiscal resources in recruiting high-quality graduate students. To augment the role of the central administration, the Graduate School proposes an aggressive approach to generate extra-mural support to recruit graduate students. The anticipated Graduate School development officer in concert with Graduate School staff will seek additional funding to support graduate education.

- 2.1 With support from the University Advancement Office, identify and hire a development officer and staff to create and implement a fundraising plan for the Graduate School.
- 2.2 Establish a Graduate School advisory committee
- 2.2 Identify and pursue federal and foundation funding opportunities for graduate education
- 2.3 Engage alumni in Graduate School activities (invite to events, such as the fellowship reception, recruitment events, publish alumni newsletter)
- 2.4 Develop individual, corporate, and foundation partnerships to support innovative Graduate School programs
- 2.5 Partner with academic schools throughout the Purdue University system

Metrics

- Number and amount of funding from the government, private, foundation, and corporate sources for graduate education
- Number of partnerships established with academic schools to develop graduate programs
- Number of fellowships (academic schools/Graduate School)

Resources Required

- Additional personnel, space, and financial support to create an Office of Development and support for associated expenses

Goal 3 Enhance the capability of the Graduate School to interact with constituents electronically

Critical to enrolling and retaining graduate students is an efficient, interactive application process followed by effective and efficient management of student records to ensure timely completion of the advanced degree. To this end, the Graduate School has undertaken an effort to convert paper processes to ones that are fully electronic.

- 3.1 Increase the use of electronic applications:
 - Build upon the electronic application to the Graduate School by expanding electronic submission of other admission-related documents, such as letters of recommendation
- 3.2 Increase the number of applicants who pay the application fee:
 - Work with departments to examine the use of “pre-admissions” and “pre-applications”
- 3.3 Implement electronic plans of study to all West Lafayette campus departments so that by January 1, 2004, paper plans of study will no longer be accepted on the West Lafayette campus :
 - Require that all requests for graduate faculty certifications be submitted electronically by all campuses
 - Provide workshops on regional campuses to faculty and appropriate staff relative to submission of electronic graduate faculty certification
- 3.4 Implement electronic appointment and approvals of examining committees
- 3.5 Implement electronic thesis approval and deposit
- 3.6 Research and implement the electronic storage of graduate records
- 3.7 Continuously update Graduate School information and interactive capabilities on the World Wide Web.

Metrics

- Implement a fully electronic system for:
 - (i) graduate faculty certifications
 - (ii) applications
 - (iii) recommendations
 - (iii) plans of study
 - (iv) appointment and approval of examining committees
 - (v) thesis approval and deposit
- Percentage of paid application fees

- Capability for electronically depositing a thesis or dissertation
- Implement electronic storage of student records
- “Hits” to the Graduate School home page, including topics accessed

Resources Required

- Additional personnel to support the computer specialist position
- Personnel, space, and financial resources to create and support a Thesis Format Approval and Deposit Office with capabilities for electronic thesis and dissertation deposit and storage

Goal 4 Enhance support services for graduate students

While the retention of graduate students is determined primarily by academic departments and programs, the Graduate School contributes largely through its support services, including the Purdue Graduate Student Government (PGSG) and the Black Graduate Association (BGA), information on funding opportunities, and short courses and workshops on teaching and grantsmanship.

In addition to coordinating the National Research Council (NRC) exit questionnaire for doctoral candidates, the Graduate School will conduct its own exit survey for doctoral and thesis option master’s candidates to evaluate the student’s experience, including recommendations for improvement.

4.1 Increase interaction with and support of graduate student associations:

- Advise and consult with the Purdue Graduate Student Government (PGSG) and the Black Graduate Association (BGA) in a faculty advisory role and/or regular meetings
- Identify appropriate funding sources for these student organizations
- Participate in PGSG and BGA official and social activities
- Provide monetary support for travel grant awards, social events, and operating costs
- Provide space for PGSG and BGA officers
- Supplement technological support by providing a workstation, if necessary

4.2 Publicize the availability of graduate funding opportunities:

- Continuously update Graduate School web pages
- Research new links
- Communicate opportunities through flyers, electronic-mail, newsletters, and a funding database
- Nominate masters theses for the Midwest Association of Graduate Schools annual competition

- Nominate doctoral dissertations for the Council of Graduate Schools annual competition
- 4.3 Partner with other Purdue organizations to improve graduate student services
- Utilize the information collected from questionnaires, such as the NRC and other exit questionnaires for doctoral students
 - Monitor the need to increase stipends and health benefits to be ranked in the top four among our Strategic Plan benchmarking peers
 - Increase graduate student representation on departmental, school, and University committees
- 4.4 Provide opportunities for graduate students to interact with government and private sector partners:
- Generate opportunities for new interactions with public and private sector employers
 - Work with the Center for Career Opportunities, PGSG, and the BGA to stage a job fair to which government, academic institutions, and private industry would be invited
- 4.5 Conduct short courses and workshops on career topics (grantsmanship, teaching, social skills, etc.):
- Provide grant-writing workshops
 - Collaborate with the Center for Instructional Excellence to prepare graduate students to work effectively in Purdue classrooms
 - Enhance and diversify a preparing future faculty program
 - Create and implement a preparing future professionals program
- 4.6. Publish the Graduate School newsletter for students, faculty, and staff:
- Publish in electronic format
 - Publish quarterly; expand student profile content
 - Solicit audience feedback regarding content
 - Develop electronic mail listserv to communicate electronically, thereby, reducing paper copies
- 4.7 Conduct exit survey of all doctoral and thesis master's option candidates

Metrics

- Number of graduate students participating in the PGSG and the BGA

- Number of departments and interdisciplinary programs with representatives on the Graduate Student Senate
- Graduate student involvement in departmental, school, and University committees
- Grant-writing workshops/teaching assistant workshops
- Report on results of exit surveys from master's and doctoral candidates
- Electronic Graduate School newsletter

Resources Required

- No additional resources

Goal 5 Enhance operational effectiveness of graduate student services

The Graduate School is the information source for the University community concerning graduate student admissions and records; policies and procedures concerning graduate students; graduate courses and graduate certificate and degree programs. In this broad context, the Graduate School is continually reviewing institutional policies and procedures, evaluating operational efficiency, and soliciting input on its operations from department, school, and University staff, graduate students, faculty, and administrators.

- 5.1 Serve as an information source for the University community, including formal workshops for departmental/school graduate program personnel
- 5.2 Continually update information on policies and procedures
 - Track number and types of requests for exceptions to policies and practices
- 5.3 Escalate operations staff effectiveness and efficiency
 - Lead Graduate School staff to become problem-solvers and help providers
 - Encourage Graduate School staff members to participate in at least one continuing education workshop, conference, or other professional activity each year.

Metrics

- Annual update and distribution of the policies and procedures manual
- Effective and efficient operations
 - (i) Masters/PhD. student exit survey
 - (ii) Academic programs survey (Graduate School contacts and departmental graduate committee chairs)
- Staff development
 - (i) Professional development workshops

(ii) Conduct a Graduate School update meeting each fall and spring semester

- Number of policy exceptions requested

Resources Required

- No additional resources required

ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

Goal 6 Enhance support services to graduate departments and schools

A cornerstone in enhancing the quality of graduate education is a periodic review and assessment of graduate programs, including the comparison of benchmark data with peer institutions and CIC universities. A regular review and assessment, involving self-assessment, external review validation, and institutional commitment is essential to improving the quality of graduate education, scholarship, and research at Purdue University. While academic programs are responsible for setting discipline-specific standards, the Graduate School has an overview of issues, opportunities, and standards at a national level. From this perspective, the Graduate School engages department and school administrations to advance graduate education and research.

6.1 Provide oversight and benchmark data for assessment of graduate programs:

- Meaningful and systematic participation in all campus and regional graduate program reviews
- Define and implement an appropriate assessment process
- Define program and institutional criteria for assessment and benchmarking with peer institutions and Big 10 universities
- Provide significant follow-up to review team recommendations in concert with the relevant school dean(s) and the office of the Provost

6.2 Engage academic school deans on issues, opportunities, policies, and actions that impact graduate education at Purdue University:

- Incorporate institutional benchmarks with aspirational peers
- Define other benchmarks
- Determine existing data sources
- Develop new mechanisms to collect consistent, standardized data
- Conduct benchmarking exercises with Big 10 and other peer institutions
- Expand annual report to include benchmark data
- Update comparative assessment data and finalize utilization objectives

6.3 Education of departmental graduate committee chairs and departmental graduate office staff:

- Develop a training program for new staff that entails all Graduate School systems; provide individual training/assistance as necessary
- Participate in scheduled meetings with graduate program contacts
- Conduct *ad hoc* workshops that cover current topics, such as recruitment strategies, international transcripts, funding opportunities, and other relevant issues

Metrics

- Implement graduate program assessment process
- Calendar for assessment of programs and first program assessments completed
- Collection of institutional benchmark data
- Annual reporting on graduate programs
- Committee for Graduate Education, composed of Graduate School deans/directors and academic school deans or designates
- Training sessions, workshops, and seminars

Resources Required

- Administrative support to collect, analyze, report, and disseminate local and comparative data
- Financial support to share the costs of external reviews with departments and schools

Goal 7 Enhance diversity in the graduate student population, especially for under-represented minorities:

While increasing the number and retention of high-quality graduate students is a goal of the Graduate School, our Office of Minority Programs focuses attention on recruiting and retaining under-represented minority students. Critical in recruitment and retention is an institution that is engaging and one that offers a supportive atmosphere. The Graduate School's Office of Minority Programs, while one of a cast of many, plays an important role in both of these functions.

7.1 Expand the Office of Minority Programs to offer greater service to a broader range of graduate programs

7.2 Assist schools and departments to enhance their minority student recruitment programs

- Encourage the use of the Graduate School prospective student inquiry system

- Offer assistance in developing recruiting strategies
- 7.2 Enhance the current Historically Black Institution (HBI) Visitation Program to include students from the University of Puerto Rico Campuses
- 7.3 Ensure that minority students are financially able to enroll and complete their graduate studies:
- Work with the Advancement Office to increase funding
 - Seek additional Graduate School Purdue Fellowships
 - Seek funding from government grants, foundations, industry, and individuals as appropriate
- 7.4 Provide outreach and follow-up for prospective minority graduate students:
- Utilize the Graduate School's prospective student inquiry system to maximize prospective student contacts
- 7.5 Participate in the Graduate School's prospective student inquiry system to provide a standard tracking procedure to assess the effectiveness of recruiting strategies of the Graduate School's Office of Minority Programs
- 7.6 Survey recruitment activities across departments:
- Follow up on best practices with departments
 - Enhance summer research programs for undergraduate students to encourage graduate study
 - Develop a database of undergraduate research participants
- 7.7 Provide formal and informal retention activities:
- Enhance formal mentoring programs in chemistry and biology and expand to include other areas as funding becomes available
 - Continue orientation programs for new students
 - Seek to assist students to network with students outside their own discipline
 - Acknowledge excellence in academic performance
 - Provide assistance to students through an "open door" policy in the Graduate School's Office of Minority Programs

Metrics

- The number of minority students completing graduate degrees, as a percentage of the total number of graduate degrees awarded
- The number of minority students receiving Graduate School fellowships and assistantships

- The number of minority students receiving financial support through the Office of Minority Programs
- The number of minority students supported by University-directed funds
- The number of minority students by academic discipline as a percentage of the total number of students in that discipline

Resources Required

- Additional personnel, operating budget, and space for the Office of Minority Programs
- Additional Graduate School fellowships and directed funds from the University

Goal 8 Enhance the role of the Graduate Council as the academic program decision maker and academic policy advisor:

The Graduate Council is the academic arm of the Graduate School representing the University graduate faculty. The president of the University appoints members of the council, usually for a three-year term. All academic schools and major areas of study are reflected in the membership of the council. The Graduate Council is responsible for the approval of all graduate courses and graduate certificates and makes recommendations concerning new graduate degree programs. In addition, the council is responsible for all academic policies related to post baccalaureate study and degree programs. The Graduate Council is vital in maintaining the quality of graduate education at the University.

- 8.1 Use the Graduate Council as the recommending body for the Graduate School's academic policies and procedures
- 8.2 Use the Graduate Council to identify and recommend priorities for the Graduate School
- 8.3 Improve the knowledge base of Graduate Council membership by inviting local, national, and international speakers to address priority/emerging issues for graduate education
- 8.4 Promote the role of the Steering Committee in defining the agenda of the Graduate Council
- 8.5 Promote academic quality and program relevance

Metrics

- Graduate Council is an important, but largely internal, part of the management of graduate education. For that reason, metrics are internal in nature.

However, assessment of quality of graduate programs at Purdue is linked with successful operation of Graduate Council and should be considered a metric for evaluation.

- Number of issues developed and brought forward to the Graduate Council by its committees
- List of speakers and topics addressed for Graduate Council
- Number of new graduate courses and certificate programs

Resources Required

- Additional resources to cover travel costs for invited speakers

FOSTERING INNOVATION IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

Goal 9 Expand and enhance interdisciplinary graduate study:

Interdisciplinary graduate education is a vital element in the national research and education agenda and is critical in developing areas of study in science, engineering, agriculture, education, social sciences, and human health. Interdisciplinary graduate education is essential for the University to fully capitalize on its research and education agenda in helping to meet the needs of the state of Indiana and the nation.

9.1 Provide leadership, service, and support as the administrative home for the University's interdisciplinary graduate programs.

9.2 Streamline procedures required for initiation of interdisciplinary graduate programs

9.3 Support development of an interdepartmental/interdisciplinary life sciences group, combining responsibilities for recruiting and admissions for many life science programs

9.4 Develop a plan for solicitation of development funds for graduate fellowships in interdisciplinary programs, working with Graduate School development and with schools and programs across campus

Metrics

- Number of active interdisciplinary graduate programs
- Number of graduate students enrolled in and graduating from interdisciplinary programs
- Active use of a dual-tracking system for student enrollment in interdisciplinary programs

- Actively used model for recruitment, application, and admission of students in interdisciplinary programs
- Number of training grants applied for and funded in interdisciplinary programs
- Number and quality of students enrolled in interdisciplinary life science graduate program
- Number of graduate fellowships in interdisciplinary programs

Resources Required

- Funds to support proposed budget for increased number and level of fellowships for first-year students in life sciences program
- Increased administrative and business office support to manage life science program and associated training grants

Goal 10 Strengthen interface with non-West Lafayette Campus graduate programs:

The Purdue University Graduate School is a system wide school. The Graduate School office in West Lafayette has the oversight responsibility for all Purdue University graduate programs, including those that are not on the West Lafayette Campus. System wide strategic planning and implementation of graduate programs are critical to the success of the University in meeting its learning and discovery goals. (SEE ATTACHMENTS FOR GRADUATE STRATEGIC PLANS FOR IUPU FORT WAYNE, CALUMET, AND NORTH CENTRAL.)

- 10.1 Implement strategic plan for system wide graduate programs developed in conjunction with non-West Lafayette Campus representatives and members of the Graduate Council
- 10.2 Meet regularly with graduate program representatives from non-West Lafayette Campuses
- 10.3 Visit each campus annually to learn of graduate education issues of concern to students and/or faculty

Metrics

- Completion of system wide strategic plan
- Number of graduate students enrolled at non-West Lafayette Campuses
- Number of graduate programs at non-West Lafayette Campuses.

Resources Required

- No additional resources

Goal 11 Provide advocacy for postdoctoral research Fellows:

Postdoctoral research and/or instruction are vital to the research enterprise of any research university, and Purdue is no exception. The Graduate School provides a forum to identify institutional-level issues, provides input for issue resolution, and provides advocacy for institutional-level implementation.

- 11.1 Provide an open forum for representatives of Purdue's postdoctoral fellows to discuss issues and make recommendations concerning benefits or working conditions
- 11.2 Investigate the status of independently funded postdoctoral fellows with the aim of increasing the number of such fellows.
- 11.3 Investigate and improve access to benefits and campus privileges for postdoctoral fellows
- 11.4 Advocate establishment of a office in the Vice Provost for Research area that will be charged with overseeing issues related to the postdoctoral experience on campus

Metrics

- Establishment of an office for postdoctoral issues

Resources Required

- None from Graduate School