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Introduction

The Graduate School at the University of Minnesota has a proud history and current role in fostering and supporting advanced study at the University of Minnesota. Its strategic directions are guided by its Mission Statement:

"The mission of the Graduate School at the University of Minnesota is to ensure quality in graduate education, advocate for the academic and professional development of graduate students, advance intellectual communication and scholarship across disciplines, and promote cultural diversity, scholarly integrity, and inclusivity."

This Strategic Plan is organized around five goals, each associated with specific strategies, tactics, actions and targeted outcomes. It is intended to provide focus and direction for the Graduate School's work through the five-year period, January 2014 – December 2018.

Goal 1: To advance excellence in graduate education and postdoctoral training

Strategy A: Support the recruitment and admission of highly qualified students by improving quality and efficiencies in graduate admissions

Tactic A1: Provide excellent direct service

Action: Be proactive and highly responsive to constituents (prospective students, applicants, staff, faculty, others)

Outcome: Constituent satisfaction with direct service

Tactic A2: Enhance use of admissions technology

Action: Offer leading-edge admissions technology to all constituents

Outcome: Visible role for the Graduate School as a leader among peer institutions in use of admissions technology

Tactic A3: Engage in outreach activities

Action: Engage stakeholders and audiences on graduate admissions topics

Outcome: High-quality programming and high-profile participation in outreach activities
**Tactic A4: Provide quality assurance**

**Action:** Ensure excellence and security in all areas of graduate admissions processing

**Outcome:** Mistake-free and policy-compliant admissions processing

**Tactic A5: Communicate effectively**

**Action:** Provide relevant and timely communication to all constituents

**Outcome:** Good fit for prospective students through clear information online and in communication campaigns

**Tactic A6: Facilitate administration of recruitment fellowships and funding packages for incoming students**

**Action:** Advocate for strategic investment in attracting top-quality students

**Outcome:** Matriculation of top-ranked students

**Strategy B: Improve the graduate student experience from start to finish**

**Tactic B1: Obtain funding support and funding packages**

**Action:** Advocate for and actively pursue enhanced funding for graduate students in preparation for capital campaign

**Outcome:** Higher levels of support for individual students and higher overall funding levels for fellowships and assistantships, competitive with those of our peer group

**Tactic B2: Sponsor academic and professional development of graduate students**

**Action:** Improve existing initiatives and develop new initiatives, in collaboration with other University offices, to foster graduate students' academic and professional development

**Outcome:** Extensive student engagement with resources for academic and professional development

**Tactic B3: Sponsor advising and mentoring of graduate students**

**Action:** Provide programming and tools to foster and recognize outstanding graduate advising

**Outcome:** Events and online resources that meet needs of students and faculty in the area of advising and mentoring
Tactic B4: Regularly assess student perceptions of their educational experience

Action: Actively participate in the development of a survey of current graduate and professional students and utilize results to improve the graduate student experience

Action: Conduct doctoral exit survey of graduate and professional students and utilize results to improve the graduate student experience

Outcome: Improved and comparative data on graduate students' experiences

Tactic B5: Provide an annual Graduate School Orientation

Action: Plan and execute annual Graduate School Orientation

Outcome: Effective transition into graduate school for students and expanded awareness of Graduate School's role

Tactic B6: Administer graduate student fellowships

Action: Support University-wide fellowship competitions

Outcome: Efficient processes and broad visibility for University-wide fellowship competitions

Tactic B7: Support national fellowship competitions

Action: Efficient processes and broad visibility for national fellowship competitions

Outcome: Greater engagement and success in national fellowship competitions

Tactic B8: Support timely degree completion

Action: Work with programs to ensure attention to degree completion timelines

Outcome: Improved time-to-degree

Tactic B9: Increase timely completion of degrees by students from underrepresented backgrounds

Action: Develop and support programs that help students complete their degrees

Outcome: Completion rates of graduates from underrepresented backgrounds comparable to those of the overall graduate population

Tactic B10: Support placement of graduates from underrepresented backgrounds

Action: Collaborate with other University offices to increase students' exposure to post-graduation opportunities
Outcome: Evidence of placement of graduates from underrepresented backgrounds comparable to that of the overall graduate population

Tactic B11: Bring timely issues in graduate & professional education before the University’s graduate education community

Action: Offer an annual graduate and professional education assembly for members of the U’s graduate education community

Outcome: U graduate education community will be informed of relevant and timely issues in graduate education

Strategy C: Track placement

Tactic C1: Improve information on placement of graduate alumni

Action: Collaborate with appropriate University partners to develop a central tracking system for graduate alumni placement

Outcome: Improved knowledge of placement of graduate alumni and their use of their earned degrees

Strategy D: Support Directors of Graduate Studies

Tactic D1: Offer orientation for Directors of Graduate Studies

Action: Develop new orientation program for Directors of Graduate Studies and updates on Graduate School initiatives

Outcome: Comprehensive knowledge and engagement among Directors of Graduate Studies that enable DGSs to be evermore effective

Tactic D2: Update handbook for Directors of Graduate Studies

Action: Produce online handbook for Directors of Graduate Studies

Outcome: Comprehensive online access to resources and information for Directors of Graduate Studies that enables DGSs to be evermore effective
**Strategy E: Provide leadership for new models of program assessment**

**Tactic E1: Establish models, metrics, standards and approaches for measuring program quality**

**Action:** Collect and distribute data, including comparative data, on the characteristics and quality of graduate programs and work collaboratively with colleges and departments toward program improvement

**Outcome:** Strong lines of communication with graduate programs to strengthen and improve their self-study processes and planning

**Tactic E2: Maintain and analyze data responsive to program needs**

**Action:** In collaboration with OIR, facilitate access and interpretation of data

**Outcome:** Programs are able to make comparisons using well-informed data

**Tactic E3: Support articulation of graduate student program goals and graduate student outcomes**

**Action:** Provide templates and materials to enhance the efforts of all graduate programs in the development of statements of their intended learning outcomes for graduate students

**Outcome:** Effective communication of graduate programs’ goals for their graduate students

**Strategy F: Support post-docs**

**Tactic F1: Support postdoctoral fellows and associates**

**Action:** Work collaboratively with other University offices and the Postdoctoral Association to advance the professional training and improve the experiences of postdoctoral fellows and associates

**Outcome:** Advancements in the professional preparation of postdoctorates and in the experiences of postdoctorates
Strategic Plan 2010-2015

Goal 1: Enhance graduate education in knowledge across disciplines

Strategy G: Recruit high-quality and high potential students from diverse backgrounds

Tactic G1: Develop a pool of academically strong candidates from diverse backgrounds

Action: Provide resources to graduate programs to facilitate and support recruitment and enrollment of students from underrepresented backgrounds

Outcome: Consistent improvements in the proportions and numbers of graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds

Tactic G2: Support the recruitment of an internationally diverse student body

Action: Collaborate with GPS Alliance, Office of Student Affairs and other University offices towards a more cohesive plan for international graduate student recruitment

Outcome: An international student recruitment plan

Goal 2: To advance intellectual communication and scholarship across disciplines

Strategy H: Facilitate collaboration and communication across disciplines

Tactic H1: Increase graduate student and faculty engagement in interdisciplinary research, scholarship and creative activity

Action: Develop and promote interdisciplinary opportunities for graduate students and faculty

Outcome: Participation by graduate students and faculty in expanded and enhanced interdisciplinary experiences

Tactic H2: Foster innovation in interdisciplinary graduate education

Action: Sponsorship of ongoing and innovative interdisciplinary work of graduate students and faculty

Outcome: Increased activity reflecting ongoing and innovative interdisciplinary work of graduate students and faculty
**Tactic H3: Increase funding opportunities for interdisciplinary inquiry by graduate students**

**Action:** Collaborate to enlarge the funding pool for Interdisciplinary Graduate Groups, the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Fellowship, and similar initiatives

**Outcome:** Flexible and engaged networks with effective and innovative ideas for funding interdisciplinary inquiry; increased funding opportunities for graduate students

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**Tactic H4: Expand visibility of interdisciplinary initiatives**

**Action:** Communicate the rewards and complexities of interdisciplinary work with specific examples

**Outcome:** Readiness of graduate students to engage in interdisciplinary research and scholarship

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**Goal 3: To promote global and international initiatives and opportunities**

**Strategy I: Work collaboratively with other University offices to support and promote international aspects of graduate education**

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**Tactic I1: Promote international experiences for graduate students**

**Action:** Improve communication about international connections and opportunities

**Outcome:** High levels and appropriate forms of student involvement in international research and service opportunities

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**Tactic I2: Improve graduate experiences of international students**

**Action:** Work with international graduate students and Directors of Graduate Studies to address experiences of international graduate students

**Outcome:** High achievement and satisfaction among international students

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**Tactic I3: Promote intercultural activities and discussions**

**Action:** Partner with other University units to advance initiatives

**Outcome:** Intercultural competency and awareness of intercultural issues
Strategy J: Promote international graduate study opportunities to students

Tactic J1: Provide research travel grants

Action: Administer research travel grant program

Outcome: Increased opportunities for international graduate research and scholarship

Goal 4: To promote scholarly integrity and responsibility

Strategy K: Work collaboratively with other University offices and faculty to promote responsible research and scholarship

Tactic K1: Increase awareness among faculty and students about their roles in promoting responsible research and scholarship

Action: Expand workshops and online resources that support responsible research and scholarship and the rights and responsibilities of academic freedom

Outcome: Engaged and articulate graduate students who understand and enact their responsibilities in research and scholarship

Tactic K2: Provide and highlight resources available on campus for training in responsible research and scholarship

Action: Provide options for satisfying requirements in the responsible conduct of research

Outcome: Clear lines of information and responsibility to foster responsible conduct of research

Goal 5: To position graduate education more centrally and visibly within the University

Strategy M: Strengthen partnerships and collaborations

Tactic M1: Coordinate with other university units to meet graduate students’ needs and enhance opportunities available to them

Action: Increase scope and density of collaborative efforts
**Outcome:** Visible, collaborative partnerships and renewed intentionality about coordination of Graduate School activities

**Strategy N: Enhance strategic communications**

**Tactic N1: Increase visibility and improve understanding of the Grad School's roles and work**

**Action:** Keep faculty, staff and students informed of Graduate School events and activities.

**Outcome:** Widespread awareness of the role and work of the Graduate School

**Tactic N2: Advocate for and recognize the work of students at the post-baccalaureate level**

**Action:** Disseminate information about student accomplishments regularly and through several media

**Outcome:** High visibility and recognition of students' work and accomplishments

**Tactic N3: Enhance the Graduate School's status as a source of data and information on graduate education**

**Action:** Keep faculty, staff and students informed of critical information related to graduate education

**Outcome:** Ready access to critical information related to graduate education

**Tactic N4: Demonstrate intellectual leadership in all aspects of graduate education**

**Action:** Regional and national engagement with leaders in graduate education

**Outcome:** Recognized status of the Graduate School as an intellectual leader in graduate education within the University and among its peers

**Strategy O: Support advisory and governance relationships**

**Tactic O1: Enhance consultation to ensure strong relationships with faculty**

**Action:** Utilize the Graduate Education Council in planning and implementation of programs

**Outcome:** Good working relationships with representatives of the faculty and, through them, engagement with the broader faculty
**Tactic O2: Enhance relationships with COGS/CIGS/GAPSA/PDA**

**Action:** Collaboration with student governance groups

**Outcome:** Good working relationships with representatives from student governance groups

**Tactic O3: Strengthen the Graduate School's connections with the University governance system**

**Action:** Maintain involvement in Senate committees

**Outcome:** Active and consultative role for the Graduate School in governance and decision-making at the University level

**Strategy P: Maintain the Graduate School's role in policy development**

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**Tactic P1: Promote excellence in oversight, compliance, and standards through graduate education policy**

**Action:** Review graduate education policies and maintain involvement in University-level policy development and oversight in conjunction with governance committees and administration

**Outcome:** High standards for excellence in graduate education university-wide