THE GRADUATE COLLEGE
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
2013-2014 ANNUAL UPDATE

By the Numbers
In Fall of 2013, there were 5096 graduate students enrolled at Western Michigan University or approximately 21% of the entire student population. Of these, 502 were enrolled in either a certificate program or as a non-degree status student, 3720 were in a master's program and 869 were enrolled in a doctoral or specialist program. During the 2012-13 year, 1402 masters degrees were awarded and 114 doctoral degrees, nearly 28% of all degrees awarded. 2012-13 was the sixth consecutive year that over 100 doctoral degrees were awarded. Each year we welcome over 1000 new graduate students to WMU to pursue their graduate education. This report illustrates a number of the roles/functions the Graduate College plays in recruitment, retention and graduation of our students.

Below is a brief summary of the many different functions and the number of student and faculty transactions/interactions that were carried out by the staff of the Graduate College. Several of these (marked with an *) were new functions initiated during the 2012-2013 year and we continued in 2013-2014. Others marked with a + were initiated in 2013-14. Data is also now being regularly collected in the Graduate College to track our progress in support of graduate education as well as to maximize operational efficiencies.

Correspondence and Visibility
*Sent approximately 500 emails to newly accepted graduate students during Spring 2013 semester
*Created and sent e-welcome newsletter to over 1000 newly admitted graduate students for Fall 2014
*Created and sent quarterly Graduate College e-news to nearly 20,000 recipients
*Sent over 500 thank you letters to donors who graduated with a graduate degree
*Increased correspondence with graduate students, graduate advisors and department chairs about events, workshops, funding opportunities, etc.
*Continue to hold regular meetings once a semester with graduate advising directors and office coordinators
Answer over 100 phone calls and respond to an average of 25 emails weekly regarding questions about graduate education at WMU
*Grew Facebook friends to over 663
*Strengthened the relationship with the Graduate Student Association (GSA)
*Developed strategy to move graduate admission completely online
*Negotiated contract for ApplyYourself, an online application tool from Hobsons

Surveys
Participated in 3 major graduate education surveys (Council of Graduate Schools International Graduate Admissions Survey - Phase I and II; CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees and NSF-NIH Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering). This includes working with various offices on campus including institutional research to collect data and assemble reports.
**Review and Approvals**

- Approved 194 Thesis or Doctoral Committees
- Approved 197 Theses or Dissertations (signed approximately 600 approval forms)
- Approved 43 3000/4000 level courses to include in programs of study
- Approved 194 permissions to elect master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation credits

(227 in 2012-13)

- Approved 120 extensions for time to degree (10 not granted)
- Approved nearly 20 leaves of absence; worked with the Registrar’s Office to ensure

Banner record reflects LOA dates so students are not dismissed (10 master; 12 doctoral)

- *Approved 24 re-admits
- *Approved over 50 catalog graduation audit or admission exceptions
- Approved 334 faculty for graduate faculty status, 215 renewals and 119 new

- Tracked over 1300 graduate faculty for eligibility to serve on graduate committees
- Reviewed approximately 200 curriculum proposals, 184 approved / 17 recycled

**Processing and Awarding**

- Processed 2350 (Summer I 2013 to Summer I 2014) graduate appointments- this includes processing of appointment and salary award in PeopleSoft, tuition awards in

Banner and coordination of healthcare eligibility with Sindecuse Health Center and Aetna

- *Began tracking tuition payments for all assistantships to allow departments to

make offers to best candidates and reduce debt in assistantship budget

- Processed, organized and facilitated the review of 164 applicants for research and travel awards (awarded 70)

- Processed, organized and facilitated the review of 194

fellowship/assistantship/scholarship awards (awarded 28; 23 fellowship/assistantship (3 AGEP, 3 KCP, 4 Thurgood Marshall, 4 Dissertation Completion, 5 Doctoral Scholar) and 5 scholarships (4 Frostic, 1 Dames, 0 Fisher)

- Continued to seek, through competitive application, state funding for KCP awards

**Student Interactions**

- Provided training to nearly 300 new graduate assistants in fall semester

- *Hosted over 200 students in meetings with the Dean in addition to the regularly

scheduled GSAC and GSOC meetings

- Hosted over 200 students in workshops. Topics for the workshops included

successful strategies for time management, publishing in your field, successful strategies for

applying for research and travel funds and using ref works citation manager

- Interacted with 465 prospective students at 34 graduate recruitment fairs/venues

- Co-hosted yearly Graduate and Professional School Fair that brought to campus

representatives from over 55 different universities/programs and professional schools to

interact with approximately 225 students and talk about future opportunities

- *Institutionalized the dissertation writing retreat and dissertation cafes that each

served nearly 20 students in the critical writing phase of the dissertation

- Sponsored 14 student visits to campus

**Student Success**

- *Nominated 4 different students for national awards such as the CGS/Proquest

Outstanding Dissertation Award and K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award

- Worked collaboratively with departments and colleges, Office of Student Conduct,

Ombuds, Legal Affairs, Office of Financial Aid, Accounts Receivable, Registrar’s Office and

Admissions to help resolve student concerns and issues
Beyond the Numbers - Progress made on the Graduate College Strategic Action Plan

In 2011, a strategic action plan for the Graduate College was drafted. Each of the subheadings below represents an action area within this plan. During 2012-13 and 2013-14, the Graduate College used this action plan as a template to guide and move a number of initiatives forward.

Listed in parentheses next to each subheading of the Graduate Strategic Action Plan, is the number of goals and strategies aligned to both the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan (bold) and the University Strategic Plan (bold and italic).

**Strategic Growth in Graduate Enrollment (3.1, 4, 4.5; 3.2)**

- Continued conversations about graduate program capacity and growth opportunities with colleges and departments
  - Increased marketing for Accelerated Degree Programs to current students through LHC and to incoming students through Admitted Student Events, the Medallion competition and the Multi-Cultural Leadership Scholarship competition
- Work with colleges/departments to expand Accelerated Degree Programs and graduate certificate programs
- Continued conversations with regional 4 year liberal arts institutions to create a pipeline of graduate students
- Clarified language in Graduate Catalog for transfer credit to facilitate and develop language for 3+2 and 1+1 programs with international partner institutions

**Graduate Admission, Recruitment and Retention (3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.8, 4, 4.3, 8.5; 1.2, 2.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.3)**

**Advertisement/Recruitment**

- Continue to expand our social media presence. Have daily updates on Facebook (over 700 friends) that include not only important information about awards, deadlines, etc. related to graduate education at WMU but also news items related to graduate education worldwide.
  - Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn (in process), YouTube (featured student videos), e-news (*Graduate Standard* and *Grad Word - a grad student blog*)
- Moving webpage into university template and identifying inconsistencies in program webpages so that webpage is more attractive for recruiting
  - Expanded attendance at recruitment fairs including WMU Open Houses, Admitted Student Events, Medallion competition and Multi-Cultural Leadership Scholarship competition
- To promote accelerated masters degree programs (developed specific recruitment material for accelerated degree programs such as inclusion in WMU Viewbook).
• Interacted with over 500 potential future graduate students at 40 different fairs and venues

• Developed a comparison chart for WMU’s US News and World Report ranked graduate programs

• Began holding office hours prior to each semester and summer session for WMU employees interested in entering graduate school

• Created Graduate Student Ambassador positions
  o Ambassadors help to reach out to our current student body both on main campus and our regional sites. They also attended local grad fairs including WMU graduate fair with Tony Dennis; answered questions from prospective students; met with visiting students

• Began outreach to local business community through Southwest Michigan First/Chamber of Commerce

• In collaboration with the Office of Business and Finance developed and implemented a deferred payment plan option for individuals with employer reimbursements. This plan is open to both graduate and undergraduate students

• Updated one page recruitment flyer for all graduate programs that is linked to a QR code that can be read and then downloaded on a smart device

• Advertised through University Relations using webpage pop-ups and landing pages for programs/inquiries

• Investigated participation in virtual graduate admission fairs

**Application/Admission Process**

• Selected and negotiated contract for Hobson’s ApplyYourself (AY), an online application system for graduate and undergraduate admissions

• Developed a position description, advertised and hired a systems analyst whose responsibility is to implement Hobson’s ApplyYourself for graduate admissions

• Worked with programs on admission requirements that would be built into AY

• Assembled an ApplyYourself implementation team to ensure AY could communicate with Banner

• Continued to work across units (OIT, IR, admissions, EUP, academic departments, etc.) to ensure adoption of new application software would meet the needs of various constituents

• Developed template letters for departments to use for admitted students to improve correspondence and ensure consistency
Yield Activities
- Continued to sponsor visitation from underrepresented minority (URM) applicants from HBCUs and regional McNair Fellows
- Developing campus tour protocol for Graduate Ambassadors to use with prospective students
- Started visitation programs with students from MIAA schools
- Sponsored a second cohort of 5 new competitive doctoral associateships to attract top students
- Began conversations regarding common decision deadline for new students offered graduate appointments
- Centralized graduate tuition under the Graduate College to facilitate the appointment of graduate assistants regardless of residency
- Beginning conversations about policy change to allow 4\textsuperscript{th} year of Medallion Scholarship to be used for graduate study

Strategies to Foster Enrollment
- Continue to send emails to admitted students encouraging their enrollment at WMU
- Send an e-welcome letter for new matriculating students
- In collaboration with the Graduate Student Association (GSA), hosted the Resource Fair and Welcome Celebration that attracted over 200 new and returning graduate students
- Continue working with the Haenicke Institute to ensure recruitment strategies target international students for programs with capacity

Retention Activities
- Met with various graduate student groups organized by Graduate Student Ambassadors to learn of their issues and concerns
- Expanded new graduate assistant training to include more information on university and community resources
- Worked with the Office of Faculty Development to expand workshops and resources for students who teach, including a Graduate Teaching Summer Institute (GTSI). The Institute was a week-long intensive experience focused on effective teaching pedagogy and working and communicating with diverse learners. Students who continue attending workshops have an opportunity to develop a teaching portfolio that will be evaluated for a credential
• Continued offering professional development workshops including the migration of a few to an online format. Also developed workshops for personal development

• Working with departments to ensure completion of graduate student annual reviews

• Asking departments to develop mentoring plans for re-admitted students

• As part of an application to NSF with the Michigan Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate investigating mentoring models and learning communities for underrepresented graduate students in STEM/SBE

• In partnership with Career Services, increasing career development workshop opportunities for graduate students

• Continue sponsoring, along with Career Services, the College of Arts and Sciences and GSA access to the Versatile PhD for Fall 2014-2015

• Rolled out GradSense, an online financial education resource developed through the Council of Graduate Schools,

• Working with Accounts Receivable on residency policy language to allow for students who study/intern abroad

• Offering workshops for new faculty on advising graduate students

• Developed in collaboration with Transfer Student Services an online orientation for new graduate students through e-learning. All new students are enrolled in this class to access information

• Began regular communication with non-degree seeking students to gauge interest in degree program

• Began conversations about graduate student housing needs and a need for a gathering space for students

Diversity in Graduate Education (3, 3.7, 7, 7.1, 7.3; 4.1)

• Encouraged Graduate College staff to participate in Everyone Counts series offered through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (4 have fully completed)

• Continued commitment to success of URM in STEM fields and expansion to SBE fields including hosting the dissertation writing retreat with University of Michigan in Spring

• Continued sponsoring URM student participation in MI-AGEP activities

• Investigating possible 3:2 programs with HBCUs and 3:2 and 1+1 programs with international partners
• Expanded new graduate assistant training to include a session on cultural competence

**Assessment of Graduate Programs (3, 3.5; 5.1)**

• Promoted the development of assessment plans for graduate programs

• Continued to administer doctoral graduate exit survey to gather input on the student experience at WMU

**Leadership in Graduate Education (3, 4, 7.2; 2.1, 2.3)**

• Advocating at every level for graduate education and its role within a learner-centered, discovery driven and globally engaged university
  
  o Represented graduate education on over 20 different university committees- from Faculty Senate Councils to Strategic Planning Committees, to Research Advisory Teams to Enrollment Forecasting

• Continued Faculty Fellow positions to assist in spearheading a number of initiatives important for moving graduate education forward (e.g. Student success programming and data collection)

• Developed position description, advertised and hired an associate dean of the Graduate College

• Maximizing efficiencies by developing online submission of documents

• Continue holding regular meetings with graduate directors and coordinators to enhance communication amongst stakeholders

• Continue data collection for evaluation and assessment of effectiveness of activities as well as to maximize efficiencies

• Held Graduate College retreat to help develop a strategic plan for graduate education
  
  o Began SWOT analysis with various groups
  
  o Gathered input on values, mission and vision

**Graduate Policies and Procedures (7; 5.1, 5.3)**

• Along with the Graduate Studies Council and the associate dean, began investigating best practices in graduate education

• Working with Institutional Research and Office of the Registrar to establish better processes for data collection to monitor progress. Established criteria for information to be included in “new graduate student” profile for FactBook

• Continue to look at annual review of graduate students procedures

• Reviewing policies and procedures to ensure they are current
External Funding and Graduate Research (4.2; 3.2)

- Helping to make funded researchers aware of supplemental opportunities
- Working with OVPR to identify new funding sources for graduate students and to include graduate assistants on grant proposals. Also developing a grants toolkit for students and faculty
- Continue to include in new graduate assistant training a session for research assistants on compliance and funding opportunities offered by Office of the Vice President for Research

Monitoring and Ensuring Student Progress (4; 4.1, 5.1, 5.3)

- Looking to implement graduate candidacy requirement in graduation audit
- Collected for second year annual report on graduate student progress including update on completion of annual reviews
- Beginning data collection on academic probation and dismissal trends

Academic and Professional Support Services (3.8, 7, 7.4, 8.2; 1.1, 1.2, 5.2)

- Continued to streamline research and travel award submission process and offered workshops on application process
- Offered webinar format for some professional development workshops
- Began offering workshops on personal development (e.g. nutrition, stress management) for graduate students
- Tested the online ethics modules and looking to implement use for all students
- Expanded new graduate assistant training to include a teaching session offered by Office of Faculty Development
- Continued to advocate for service learning opportunities for graduate students
- Advocated for international experiences for graduate students
- Continued discussion on moving toward electronic submission of all theses and dissertations
- Working with Epigeum on online mentoring tool for graduate faculty
- Developing a grant tool kit for students and faculty
Alumni Relations and Development (8.1; 4.3)

- Reaching out to alumni through newsletter and thank you notes to all donors who have earned a graduate degree
- Beginning to work with development, alumni and emeriti council for graduate student support

Graduate College Staff
Dr. Susan R. Stapleton, Dean
Ms. Virginia Bowlby, Coordinator, Graduate Appointments
Ms. Linda Comrie, Office Coordinator
Mr. Tony Dennis, Director, Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention
Dr. Marianne DiPierro, Director of the Graduate Center for Research and Retention
Ms. Jennifer Holm, Coordinator Theses and Dissertations
Mr. James Kison, Web Author
Ms. Carson Leftwich, Office Associate
Ms. Angie Phelps, Finance Analyst
Ms. Jodi Ward, Systems Analyst

Graduate College Faculty Fellows
Dr. Julie Apker, Associate Professor of Communication
Dr. Louann Bierlein-Palmer, Professor of Educational, Leadership, Research and Technology