By the Numbers
In Fall of 2014, there were 5067 graduate students enrolled at Western Michigan University or approximately 21% of the entire student population. Of these, 563 were enrolled in either a certificate program or as a non-degree status student, 3607 were in a master’s program and 897 were enrolled in a doctoral or specialist program. During the 2014-15 year, 1348 masters degrees were awarded and 117 doctoral degrees, nearly 28% of all degrees awarded. 2014-15 was the seventh 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 2014-15 year. 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. We are also working with institutional research to create institutional reporting for graduate education.

Correspondence and Visibility
- Sent over 1100 emails and e-welcome newsletter to newly accepted graduate students during Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 semester
- Created and sent quarterly Graduate College e-news to nearly 20,000 recipients
- Increased correspondence with graduate students, graduate advisors and department chairs about events, workshops, funding opportunities, etc.
- * Investigated the use of the two current CRM tools on campus (EMAS and Radius) for tracking graduate student prospects and applicants- have moved forward with the use of Radius
- *Worked with student housing to create graduate specific on-campus housing information that was then sent to all admitted graduate students who indicated an interest in on-campus housing
- 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 787
  - *Oversaw the implementation of the first year of ApplyYourself for graduate admissions
  - and assisted with the use of AY for undergraduate admissions

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 284 Thesis or Doctoral Committees
Approved 215 Theses or Dissertations (signed approximately 600 approval forms)
Approved 40 3000/4000 level courses to include in programs of study
Approved 111 permission to elect master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation credits (194 in 2013-14)
Approved 85 extensions for time to degree
Approved 8 leaves of absence (4 at master and 4 at doctoral level); worked with the registrar’s office so Banner record reflects LOA dates and students are not dismissed
Approved 26 re-admits
Approved over 50 catalog graduation audit or admission exceptions
Approved 355 faculty for graduate faculty status, 198 renewals and 157 new applications

Tracked over 1300 graduate faculty for eligibility to serve on graduate committees
Reviewed 207 curriculum proposals, 195 approved / 12 recycled

Processing and Awarding

Processed 2067 (summer I 2014 to summer I 2015) 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
Processed, organized and facilitated the review of 164 applicants for research and travel awards (awarded 66)
Processed, organized and facilitated the review of 148 fellowship/assistantship/scholarship awards- awarded 28; 19 fellowship/assistantship (3 AGEP, 4 KCP, 7 Thurgood Marshall, 3 Dissertation Completion, 3 Doctoral Scholar) and 9 scholarships (5 Frostit, 4 Dames, 0 Thompson, 0 Fisher)
Continued to seek, through competitive application, state funding for KCP awards

Student Interactions

Provided training to 337 new graduate appointees in fall semester
Hosted over 150 students in meetings with the Dean in addition to the regularly scheduled GSA meetings
Hosted 332 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 prospective students at 57 graduate recruitment fairs/venues
Co-hosted yearly Graduate and Professional School Fair that brought to campus representatives from 59 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 served nearly 20 students in the critical writing phase of the dissertation

Student Success

*Nominated 3 students for national awards, one each for CGS/Proquest Outstanding Dissertation Award, K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award, and MAGS Distinguished Master’s Thesis Competition
Worked collaboratively with departments and colleges, Office of Student Conduct, Ombuds, Legal Affairs, Office of Financial Aid, Accounts Receivable, Registrar’s Office, Admissions and GSA 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 this past academic year, the Graduate College continued to use this action plan as a template to guide and move a number of initiatives forward.

Next to each subheading of the Graduate Strategic Action Plan is listed in parentheses the number of the goals and strategies to which they align for 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 including capturing capacity information from Academic Program Review and Planning
  - Increased marketing for Accelerated Degree Programs to current students through LHC and to incoming students through Admitted Student Events and Medallion 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 pipeline of graduate students

- Developed a collaborative agreement for a 3+2 program in counseling psychology with Dillard University; assisted in the development of 3+2 and 1+1 agreements with several international universities

- Worked with the Lee Honors College, Enrollment Management and Development to draft policy to use the 4th year of the Medallion Scholarship for graduate study

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)

Advertiseement/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 world wide.
  - Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In (in process), YouTube (featured student videos), e-news (Graduate Standard and Grad Word- a grad student blog)

- Updated all recruitment and advertising materials
• Worked with University Relations for a Billboard Spot which ran for two weeks, one in Fall 2014 and one in Spring 2015

• Worked to get Grad College website ready for CMS migration and identified inconsistencies in program webpages so that webpage is more attractive for recruiting

• Expanded attendance at recruitment fairs including WMU Open Houses, Admitted Student Events and Medallion 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 57 different fairs and venues

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

• Provided training to Graduate Student Ambassadors to better help them 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

• Continued to offer a deferred payment plan option for individuals with employer reimbursements. This plan is open to both graduate and undergraduate students

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

• Participated for first time in three virtual graduate fairs

Application/Admission Process
• Oversaw the implementation of the first year of ApplyYourself for graduate admissions and assisted with the use of AY for undergraduate admissions

• Continue 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

• Developed guidelines for giving tours to prospective graduate students- rolling out the protocols for Fall 2015

• Starting visitation programs with students from MIAA schools
• Sponsored a third cohort of 3 new competitive doctoral associateships to attract top students

• Began conversations regarding common decision deadline for new students offered graduate appointments

• Oversaw centralization of graduate assistantship tuition budget to aid in recruitment of best candidates; monitored, tracked and balanced the book on expenditures

**Strategies to Foster Enrollment**

• Developed a communication plan that reaches out to all graduate inquiries, applicants and admits

• Developed a communication plan for and tracking of all graduate non-degree status 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

• Working with CELCIS on strategies to help enroll current non-admitted CELCIS students

• Initiated and received approval for a university interdisciplinary doctorate

**Retention Activities**

• Met with various graduate student groups organized by 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, access to the Versatile PhD for Fall 2015-16

• Rolled out GradSense, an online financial education resource developed through the Council of Graduate Schools as well as other programming aimed at increasing financial literacy

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

• Offering workshops for new faculty on advising graduate students; expanding to the use of the Epigeum modules for Fall 2015

• Developed in collaboration with Transfer Student Services an online orientation for new graduate students through e-learning. To date over 1000 students have accessed and used the online orientation

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

**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 and the What’s Behind the W Series

• 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

• Continue 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
  - 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)
- Brought on board 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
  - Began SWOT analysis with various groups
  - 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 and working on time to degree documents
- Continue to look at annual review of graduate students procedures
- Reviewing policies and procedures to ensure currency
External Funding and Graduate Research (4.2; 3.2)
- Helping to make funded researchers aware of supplement 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 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 third 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)
- Continue to streamline research and travel award submission process and offered workshops on application process
- Offering webinar format for some professional development workshops
- Began offering workshops on personal development
- Worked with OVPR to customize ethics/research compliance training modules obtained through Epigeum- set to require the modules for all new graduate appointees to pass with 80% beginning Fall 2015
- Expanded new graduate assistant training to include a teaching session offered by Office of Faculty Development and cultural competence sessions by Student Affairs
- Continue to advocate for service learning opportunities for graduate students
- Advocate for international experiences for graduate students
- Continued discussion on moving toward electronic submission of all theses and dissertations
- Customizing the Epigeum mentoring modules for new faculty working with graduate students and will be rolling out the use of these modules in collaboration with OFD for new faculty orientation
- Developing a grant tool kit for students and faculty
Alumni Relations and Development (8.1; 4.3)

- Reaching out to alumni through newsletter
- Beginning to work with development, alumni and emeriti council for graduate student support

Graduate College Staff
Dr. Susan R. Stapleton, Dean
Dr. Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Associate Dean
Ms. Virginia Bowlby, Program Manager Graduate Appointments
Ms. Linda Comrie, Executive Assistant
Mr. Tony Dennis, Director, Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention
Dr. Marianne DiPierro, Program Manager Graduate Research and Retention
Ms. Jennifer Holm, Dissertation Specialist
Mr. James Kison, Webmaster
Ms. Carson Leftwich, Administrative Assistant II
Ms. Angie Phelps, Budget Analyst
Ms. Jodi Ward, Systems Specialist Senior

Graduate College Faculty Fellows
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Dr. Christine Browning, Professor of Mathematics