MISSION
The Graduate College, the institution’s primary advocate for graduate study, promotes academic excellence by providing leadership in shaping graduate policy, assisting faculty in guiding and mentoring graduate students, and integrating services that help to recruit, retain, support, and graduate a diverse population of students who are becoming accomplished and ethical scholars, researchers, and professionals within and across disciplines.

VISION
The Graduate College strives to be the primary resource for graduate education at WMU, serving students, faculty, and staff. We endeavor to foster intellectual and scholarly advancement and professional development in a welcoming and inclusive environment and aspire to be a recognized and respected global leader in best practices for graduate education.

VALUES
Diversity
Integrity
Leadership
Scholarship
Community
Excellence
Professionalism
Respect
Innovation
Creativity
The University and Academic Affairs strategic plans support graduate education through the following goals.

**UNIVERSITY GOALS**

**Goal #1:** Ensure a distinctive and supportive learning experience that fosters success.

**Goal #2:** Promote innovative learning, discovery, and service.

**Goal #3:** Progress as a Carnegie-classified higher research doctoral university that advances new knowledge and value-added discovery.

**Goal #4:** Promote a diverse, equitable, and inclusive University culture to ensure social sustainability and accessibility.

**Goal #5:** Advance economic and environmental sustainability practices and policies.

**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS GOALS**

**Goal #3:** Offer distinctive graduate programs that prepare students to be successful in their lives and careers, and position WMU as a leader in graduate education.

**Goal #4:** Recruit and retain outstanding graduate students that reflect the diversity of our society.

**Goal #5:** Produce outstanding research and creative works that enhance society.

**Goal #7:** Flourish as an academic community that shares common purpose and pride in accomplishing our goals.
GRADUATE COLLEGE GOALS

To provide leadership and advocacy in support of graduate education at Western Michigan University, the Graduate College has developed the major goals of this strategic plan. This plan aligns with the University and Academic Affairs strategic plans and guides our day-to-day operations.

Goal #1: Develop and Improve the Environment for Graduate Education at WMU

Goal #2: Assist Graduate Programs with Enrollment Management

Goal #3: Support and Promote Graduate Student Success in Teaching, Learning, and Scholarly Activities

Goal #4: Provide Quality Control and Maintain Equitable and Consistent Standards for Graduate Education
**Goal #1: Develop and Improve the Environment for Graduate Education at WMU**

**Objective 1.1** Raise the visibility of graduate education at WMU to internal and external constituents

**Actions:**
1.1.1 Move GC to more visible, welcoming, and accessible location
1.1.2 Continue and expand graduate ambassadors as conduit to both university and Kalamazoo communities
1.1.3 Participate in marketing/branding discussions

**Objective 1.2** Enhance and promote effective advising, mentoring, and supervision of graduate students

**Actions:**
1.2.1 Begin offering training sessions for new graduate directors
1.2.2 Establish tools for mentor training, such as online modules, best practices documents, and workshops
1.2.3 Participate in new faculty orientation and offer mentoring resources
1.2.4 Create learning communities to teach faculty and students the value of mentoring
1.2.5 Continue to make semiannual graduate directors/graduate coordinators meetings informative and valuable
1.2.6 Recognize graduate faculty with exemplary records in mentorship and dissertation/thesis advising
1.2.7 Recognize graduate directors and graduate coordinators with exemplary records in service to graduate students

**Objective 1.3** Advocate for graduate student housing and dedicated gathering space for community building

**Actions:**
1.3.1 Continue to work with Student Affairs to acquire exclusive graduate student housing options
1.3.2 Pursue funding opportunities for acquisition of new space for a graduate student lounge, study/meeting rooms, GSA office, etc.
1.3.3 Work with other units (e.g. libraries) on campus for use of space for graduate student success

**Objective 1.4** Increase regular communication with internal and external constituents

**Actions:**
1.4.1 Coordinate communication from GC staff to increase effectiveness

1.4.2 Refine welcome emails, informational emails, and newsletter from GC in an environmentally sustainable manner

1.4.3 Continue to improve GA orientation and online orientation

1.4.4 Grow participation in Resource Fair and GSA welcome reception

1.4.5 Establish “Meet and Greet with the Dean” sessions for students and faculty

**Objective 1.5** Continue to diversify and improve effectiveness of student services

**Actions:**
1.5.1 Increase breadth of professional development workshops offered by the GC (including financial literacy, health and wellbeing, and career preparation)

1.5.2 Broadly promote and distribute informational materials about services for graduate students and university policies

1.5.3 Advocate for improved services for graduate students

**Objective 1.6** Promote a climate and culture of inclusion for the graduate community

**Actions:**
1.6.1 Continue to provide training or professional development opportunities for staff in regard to cultural competence and providing an inclusive climate

1.6.2 Work with university facilities to secure a gender-neutral restroom facility in Walwood Hall

1.6.3 Continue to work with the Registrar’s Office on the Preferred Name Policy and advocate for inclusion of Preferred Pronoun in university documents

**Objective 1.7-6** Increase development efforts and promote fiscal contributions from donors

**Actions:**
1.7.1 Cultivate relationships with alumni and potential donors
1.7.2 Develop an alumni board for the GC

1.7.3 Advocate for inclusion of graduate students in awarding of Legacy Scholarships

1.7.4 Work with Development and Alumni Relations to create proposals for how donor funds would be used for graduate education

1.7.5 Distribute promotional materials to alumni and potential donors

**Objective 1.8** Enhance customer service experiences of graduate students interacting with Graduate College staff

**Actions:**
1.8.1 Provide professional development training for Graduate College staff and student assistants in interacting with graduate students and potential graduate students

1.8.2 Provide training opportunities to enhance multi-cultural awareness of Graduate College staff

**Goal #2:** Assist Graduate Programs with Enrollment Management

**Objective 2.1** Facilitate retention of graduate students and degree completion

**Actions:**
2.1.1 Track students in academic difficulty and programs with high attrition

2.1.2 Work with IR to develop regular reporting to monitor student success measures

2.1.3 Engage in discussions with programs having significant numbers of students in academic difficulty and offer assistance

2.1.4 Provide national data and trends to academic departments for reference

**Objective 2.2** Develop and implement a graduate enrollment management plan

**Actions:**
2.2.1 Work with departments/ programs and use data from program review to determine capacity and optimal enrollment for all graduate programs

2.2.2 Identify areas for growth/reduction

2.2.3 Work to develop a marketing and recruitment strategy to promote programs

2.2.4 Work with CELCIS and HIGE to recruit international students into graduate programs
2.2.5 Continue to work towards increasing the diversity of admitted graduate students

**Objective 2.3** Enhance effectiveness of recruitment efforts

**Actions:**
2.3.1 Track prospects and inquiries in Radius; analyze funnel metrics (prospects to inquiries, inquiries to applications, applications to admits)

2.3.2 Develop regular reporting by program on inquiries, applicants and admits

2.3.3 Work toward a university-wide CRM

2.3.4 Develop communication plan for prospects, applicants, and admits and evaluate effectiveness

2.3.5 Expand recruitment venues, including virtual fairs and partnerships with minority serving institutions

2.3.6 Track applications in AY and work with departments to help convert partial apps to completed apps

2.3.7 Work with departments to advertise AGDPs to current and potential undergraduates

**Objective 2.4** Improve yield of admitted students

**Actions:**
2.4.1 Develop a communication plan for students after admission

2.4.2 Encourage programs to communicate with newly admitted students

2.4.3 Pursue funding opportunities for recruitment of highly qualified admitted students

2.4.4 Increase engagement of newly admitted students with the university by encouraging use of online orientation

**Objective 2.5** Assist international students with strategies for their success in academic programs

**Actions:**
2.5.1 Work with HIGE to track international students in academic difficulty and determine support services needed

2.5.2 Engage in discussions with programs having significant numbers of international students in academic difficulty and offer assistance to develop mentoring plans
Objective 2.6 Diversify funding for graduate education

**Actions:**
2.6.1 Advocate for increased funding for graduate assistantships

2.6.2 Encourage faculty to include graduate students on funding applications

2.6.3 Work with OVPR to investigate cost of providing out-of-state tuition differential for non-resident students funded on grants

2.6.3 Encourage graduate students to pursue external funding by promoting grant/award opportunities and providing writing support to develop competitive proposals

Objective 2.7 Improve writing support for graduate students

**Actions:**
2.7.1 Lead discussions on campus about writing support for graduate students

2.7.2 Consider reorganizing aspects of student success initiatives within the GC around academic and professional writing

Objective 2.8 Broaden graduate education opportunities with collaborative degree programs, new certificate programs and potential stackable micro-credentials, and expansion of accelerated graduate degree programs (AGDPs)

**Actions:**
2.8.1 Work with departments to identify areas for 3+2 or 1+1 programs with other domestic/international institutions

2.8.2 Examine institutional data on graduate certificate program enrollment and analyze certificate programs and micro-credentials at peer institutions

2.8.3 Evaluate university policies for certificate programs

2.8.4 Work with departments/programs to assess need and opportunities for new certificate programs

2.8.5 Examine and disseminate data on WMU undergraduates pursuing graduate degrees

2.8.6 Work with departments/programs to develop and offer AGDPs, where appropriate

2.8.7 Monitor enrollment in AGDPs

Goal #3: Support and Promote Graduate Student Success in Teaching, Learning, and Scholarly Activities
**Objective 3.1** Enhance the reputation of our graduate programs

**Actions:**
- 3.1.1 Promote nationally ranked graduate programs within campus and beyond
- 3.1.2 Encourage programs to examine ranking criteria and use this information in their program development
- 3.1.3 Identify obstacles to success within graduate programs and offer assistance

**Objective 3.2** Publicize scholarly activity and accomplishments of our graduate students

**Actions:**
- 3.2.1 Collect information and feature student achievements in research/creative works on our website, Facebook page, newsletter, and blog
- 3.2.2 Continue GC involvement in planning and promoting Research Day
- 3.2.3 Organize Three-minute Thesis competition at WMU in collaboration with GSA
- 3.2.4 Nominate graduate students for regional, national and international awards and competitions
- 3.2.4 Encourage students to use professional networking services such as LinkedIn and Research Gate

**Objective 3.3** Provide opportunities for professional development and career success for all graduate students

**Actions:**
- 3.3.1 Develop and encourage use of Individual Development Plans and mentoring networks by all graduate students
- 3.3.2 Increase awareness and encourage use of Versatile PhD website for career planning
- 3.3.3 In collaboration with Career Services increase career-specific forums for graduate students
- 3.3.3 Continue to expand professional development workshops offered by the GC (including financial literacy, health and wellbeing, and career preparation)

**Objective 3.4** Encourage graduate student involvement in research and creative work
Actions:
3.4.1 Increase participation in GC research and travel grant opportunities by advertising more effectively through traditional and social media venues and offering feedback

3.4.2 Develop additional internal funding opportunities for graduate students to engage them in research and creative work

3.4.3 Encourage faculty to include graduate students on external grant applications

Objective 3.5 Recognize students for outstanding scholarly performance

Actions:
3.5.1 Continue to expand honors convocation

3.5.2 Collect information and feature graduate student achievements on our website, Facebook page, newsletter, and blog

Objective 3.6 Increase formal and informal study abroad programs and other globally focused learning opportunities for graduate students

Actions:
3.6.1 Encourage departments to include graduate students in study abroad programs

3.6.2 Create additional opportunities for research/travel awards for research performed abroad

Objective 3.7 Help develop formal and informal learning communities for students and faculty

Actions:
3.7.1 Promote free technology that can be used for discussion groups and make information available to graduate community

3.7.2 Set up e-learning shell for specific topics of interest to graduate students (preparing dissertation proposal, dissertation/thesis writing, conducting interdisciplinary research, etc.); advertise availability and facilitate use

3.7.3 Further develop the Graduate Student Teaching Intensive in partnership with Office of Faculty Development

3.7.4 Develop a Graduate Leadership Academy in partnership with Student Affairs

3.7.5 Develop a Mentoring Graduate Student Community for faculty
Objective 3.8 Develop the university-wide Interdisciplinary Studies Doctorate

**Actions:**
3.8.1 Advertise program to faculty across the university
3.8.2 Recruit students to ISDD
3.8.3 Develop policies and track annual review process, learning outcomes, and measures of student success
3.8.4 Foster relationships with potential donors for funding of ISDD students

Goal #4: Provide Quality Control and Maintain Equitable and Consistent Standards for Graduate Education

Objective 4.1 Ensure that university policies regarding graduate education are current, complete, and consistently applied

**Action:**
4.1.1 Regularly review all graduate policies and bring concerns to Graduate Studies Council for evaluation
4.1.2 Develop and regularly disseminate best practices in graduate processes and services to graduate students, to graduate directors/graduate coordinators, to Graduate Studies Council and others
4.1.3 Streamline graduate policies and procedures to encourage compliance

Objective 4.2 Maintain quality of graduate faculty

**Actions:**
4.2.1 Review criteria for graduate faculty status with Graduate Studies Council and evaluate process for awarding graduate faculty status in particular to align with HLC requirements
4.2.2 Streamline system for graduate faculty appointment nomination
4.2.3 Develop online database of graduate faculty

Objective 4.3 Promote integrity of annual review of graduate students

**Actions:**
4.3.1 Collect data on compliance with annual review requirement
4.3.2 Assist non-compliant programs with implementation of annual review process
4.3.3 Provide examples for annual review format and offer advice to programs on implementation of their annual review procedures

**Objective 4.4** Review graduate programs for consistency and quality control

**Actions:**
4.4.1 Examine information provided in Academic Program Review self-study templates

4.4.2 Meet with departments having issues and offer assistance for best practices

4.4.3 Support assessment of student learning outcomes in graduate programs

4.4.4 Encourage use of curriculum mapping to program level outcomes

**Objective 4.5** Promote ethics training for all graduate students and graduate faculty

**Actions:**
4.5.1 Require online ethics course for all first year graduate students

4.5.2 Include information on ethics course in online orientation for all graduate students

4.5.3 In collaboration with OVPR, encourage all graduate faculty to take online ethics course

4.5.4 Encourage departments to include discussion of ethics in orientation or in research courses

4.5.5 Provide materials for ethics training to chairs and graduate directors, in collaboration with OVPR