Materials for Chancellor’s Retreat from Graduate School

Advance R1 Graduate Student Experience

1. Research 1 (R1) sustainability via growth of awarded research and professional doctorates

UWM earned its first R1 Doctoral Research University designation in 2015 and a renewal in 2018 based substantially on the number of doctoral degrees awarded. The doctorates awarded in the current academic year (fall 2019, spring and summer 2020) will be key contributors to UWM’s classification in the next Carnegie cycle, the results of which will be announced in 2021.

The quality and productivity of UWM doctoral programs earned the university a place among just 130 R1 universities, and just two R1 universities in Wisconsin. The campus research enterprise depends upon graduate degree programs that require creation of new knowledge through original research/scholarship that is defended in the form of doctoral dissertations and master’s theses. These research degrees are fortified by the professional doctoral and master’s programs that train students in the most advanced knowledge in professional settings. Faculty, research staff, and postdoctoral scholars support those graduate students both through academic programs and research centers. Recruiting and retaining talent supports UWM’s R1 classification and enhances the placement opportunities for our graduates.

The Graduate School is implementing a set of initiatives to impact the Carnegie Classification metrics related to doctoral degrees granted. The R1-Sustainability Plan has four graduate education components:

- **R1 finishing dissertator fellowships** to provide financial support to select nominees from PhD programs in their final year of research, analysis, writing and defending their dissertations.
- **New policies for dissertators** to reduce the size of the doctoral committee and extend the time a major advisor can continue to serve upon retirement or relocation.
- **Dissertation Bootcamp** to support dissertation writing and create communities of peers and mentors.
- **Scriptorium** to provide a dedicated space in the Library for doctoral dissertators to work.

We plan to enrich these initiatives based on the recent centralized and school/college plans for an R1 Graduate Outstanding Research Environment, and the results from the first survey of graduate student experiences at R1 doctoral research universities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team members:</th>
<th>Graduate School Leadership and Staff [Dean (Marija Gajdardziska), Associate Dean (Jason Puskar), Assistant Dean (Erin Fox); Director of ITA (Shane Dunlap), Doctoral Retention Advisor (Shane Haensgen) and Doctoral Graduation Examiner (Cristi Bergles)] with School/College Grad Program Directors and Major Advisors.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsible units:</td>
<td>Graduate School, Doctoral Programs in 11 Schools/Colleges</td>
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<td>Goals:</td>
<td>Sustain R1 status and use it to grow UWM’s reputation and graduate enrolment.</td>
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<td>Timelines:</td>
<td>On Carnegie clock (3-years at present; 2019/20 is the year that counts for next result).</td>
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<td>Metrics:</td>
<td>Doctorates granted in Humanities, STEM, Social Sciences and Other (count include Fall, Spring and Summer graduations)</td>
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2. Growing Accelerated Master’s Degrees

Accelerated Master’s Degrees (AMDs) have tremendous potential to benefit both undergraduate and graduate student success. The main benefits of AMDs include: 1) more rapid progress toward a master’s degree; in some cases, students can earn both their bachelor’s and master’s in five years. 2) Significant tuition savings by double counting up to 21 credits toward both the bachelor’s and master’s degree.

These significant savings of time and money can support key campus priorities, including many specifically designed to support undergraduate student success. AMDs are coordinated by the Graduate School and they will benefit campus as a whole. Specifically, AMDs can support **undergraduate recruiting** by attracting students to bachelor’s programs at UWM that compete with AMDs elsewhere; by attracting highly motivated and capable undergraduates to participating AMDs and to the Honors College; and by attracting undergraduates who intend to pursue careers that require master’s degrees. Marketing for AMDs should address both current and prospective undergraduates, and should become part of routine undergraduate marketing.

AMDs support **undergraduate and graduate retention** by reducing the cost of undergraduate and graduate degrees through double counting of graduate level credits; by reducing the cost of some graduate credits completed in an AMD to undergraduate tuition rates; by preserving Pell Grant eligibility for undergraduates attempting graduate level work as part of an AMD; by retaining top UWM undergraduates for graduate study; and by giving undergraduates a low-risk way to explore graduate level work before finishing their undergraduate degrees.

With proper marketing, AMDs also can support **undergraduate transfers** by adding value to UWM bachelor’s degrees. Because AMDs are not available at all system campuses, students have added incentive to transfer to UWM to realize savings of time and tuition. Even if a program at UWM costs more per credit than at a competing university, the cost savings of an AMD available only at UWM can make the overall tuition bill lower. And because students realize the most benefits from an AMD when they carefully sequence their courses from the start, they have an incentive to transfer as early as possible.

UWM first created what were then called “integrated” degrees in 2014, but the rapid changes at the national level necessitated an overhauled policy in 2018 with a redesign into “accelerated” degrees. In addition to those created under the initial policy, eight accelerated degrees have been approved, updated from their original form, or grandfathered under the new policy. Five more are currently working their way through governance approval. And roughly a dozen others are in various stages of design. The Graduate School supports the creation of AMDs with a 33% graduate student project assistant working under the supervision of the Associate Dean.

As UWM creates a fuller slate of AMDs, the Graduate School will begin marketing them more assertively. An integrated marketing strategy that addresses the needs of both prospective undergraduate and graduate students is necessary. Beyond marketing, we are reaching the point where a holistic, university-wide approach to AMDs will yield the best results for both undergraduate and graduate student success.

**Team members:** Graduate School Leadership and Staff [Dean (Marija Gajdardziska), **Associate Dean (Jason Puskar)**], Governance Specialist (Alex Gillen), PA (Renee Scampini), Assistant Dean (Erin Fox), Marketing (Steve Strehlow), Recruitment (Elizabeth Farrow), Master Retention Advisor (Kate Negri), Entrance and Graduation Examiners.
**Responsible units:** Graduate School, Masters Programs in 12 Schools/Colleges.

**Goals:** Accelerate at least half of the masters programs to impact undergraduate enrollment.

**Timelines:** Support and move about 10 AMD programs per year through governance.

**Metrics:** Number of AMD programs. Impact on bachelors freshman and transfer enrollment and masters enrollment.

3. Assessing and responding to results of R1 graduate student experiences survey (gradSERU)

In 2018 UWM joined a consortium of R1 and AAU universities in administering the Graduate Student Experience at the Research University, or gradSERU, designed at the University of California Berkeley and administered by the University of Minnesota. This was the most comprehensive survey of UWM graduate students ever undertaken. It includes responses from more than 1,400 UWM Graduate Students, which can be benchmarked against responses at other participating universities. gradSERU collected data on student experience in areas including teaching, research, climate, obstacles to completion, health and well-being, and professional development, among others. Data can be broken down by school or college, program, and degree type, as well as by detailed demographic data, such as race, gender, citizenship, TA status, and much more.

UWM has never had such detailed data about graduate student experiences before. With it, administrators at all levels can better assess areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. Especially in our current environment of restricted budgets, administrators at all levels need clear data to guide the investment of limited resources. As we all work to retain R1 status, gradSERU data can help individual programs identify opportunities for quality improvements.

The Graduate School has begun reviewing gradSERU results at the top level and working to connect them with the campus strategic priorities on R1-Graduate Outstanding Learning environment. For example, our recruitment efforts will benefit from the data about reasons why students select UWM, and communications about their high level of satisfaction with academic aspects and with climate in their programs. Our retention efforts will benefit from increased understanding about obstacles to degree completion and about student health and wellbeing. Knowledge about post-completion plans will support placement efforts. An outstanding learning environment is a hallmark of an R1 status.

The sheer volume of data requires schools and colleges and programs to analyze their own results in more detail. To facilitate that, the Graduate School distributed the full UWM data set to all deans and associate deans, along with the free Tableau data visualization software needed to access it. The Graduate School also has offered to help others at UWM access the benchmark data from other universities by using our small number of online licenses. The Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate School have presented overviews of gradSERU at meetings of the Academic Leadership Council, the Associate Deans, the Graduate Faculty Committee and the Research Policy and Advisory Committee. In the new year we also will reach out to individual programs through their chairs and graduate representatives.

Our goal is to use gradSERU to prioritize the Graduate School’s own ongoing efforts in support of R1 status and R1-GOLE strategic planning, and to help both schools and colleges as well as individual programs improve their own students’ success.

**Team members:** Graduate School Leadership and Staff [Dean (Marija Gajdardziska), Associate Dean (Jason Puskar), Assistant Dean (Erin Fox), ITA (Shane Dunlap), Marketing (Steve Strehlow)] and School/College Leadership [Deans, Associate Dean, Graduate Program Directors and Chairs].
4. Big Data Affinity Profiles to Recruit Adult Learners

As a campus home of the graduate components of the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan, the Graduate School leadership and staff continues to work strategically with our many partners to grow the Graduate Enrollment Management (GEM) funnel. In partnership with the Provost’s online programs office, the Graduate School worked with EAB to create the High Affinity Graduate Marketing Initiative, which will run from fall 2018 to spring 2021. The High Affinity Marketing Initiative uses big data and digital marketing approaches to grow the GEM funnel. The Graduate School embodies the Chancellor’s vision for graduate education: to be a top-tier doctoral research university that is the best place to learn and work for graduate students, postdoctoral scholars and graduate faculty.

The High Affinity Marketing Initiative matches our historical enrollment data with consumer affinity profiles. According to EAB, this gives us a better sense of the kinds of people likely to apply to UWM’s on-campus and online graduate programs, so that we can reach them more effectively through a variety of marketing channels. The main goals of the project are to maintain or increase the quality of applicants and enrolled students, to reach suspect and prospective students across a wider geographical area, and to grow enrollment for on-campus and online graduate degree programs. The ultimate goal is to generate 115,000 additional graduate prospects per year, for the next three years, for all graduate programs, leading to significantly increased applications and enrollment. This new campus-level GEM initiative builds on the increases in graduate enrollment that were achieved by the introduction of Panthera, by promoting GRE name buying, and through our on-going active recruitment at graduate fairs and in the Graduate School’s annual Open House.

The core team meets with EAB bi-weekly to discuss analytics, view dashboards showing results of the ongoing marketing campaigns, and revise strategies as needed. The dashboards show overall campaign performance broken down by factors such as audience, geography, source data, and advertising content. EAB designs and revises its marketing efforts continuously in response to the data aggregated on these dashboards. The Graduate School also uses it to improve its own recruitment efforts, shares the data across campus where appropriate, and makes recommendations to schools and colleges and individual programs about their own recruiting strategies.

Team members: Graduate School Leadership and staff (Marija Gajdardziska-Josifovska, Jason Puskar, Erin Fox, Steve Strehlow, Elizabeth Farrow, Shane Dunlap, Ellen Daly); UWM Online Programs Executive Director Laura Pedrick.

Responsible units: Graduate School, Online Programs, UWM Central IT.

Goals: to generate 115,000 additional graduate prospects per year for all graduate programs, leading to significantly increased applications and enrollment.

Timelines: fall 2018 to spring 2021

Metrics: Graduate applications, admissions and new enrollments.