



**THE GRADUATE COLLEGE
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
2012-2013 ANNUAL UPDATE**

By the Numbers

In Fall of 2012, there were 5120 graduate students enrolled at Western Michigan University or approximately 21% of the entire student population. Of these, 541 were enrolled in either a certificate program or as a non-degree status student, 3736 were in a master's program and 843 were enrolled in a doctoral or specialist program. During the 2011-12 year, 1281 masters degrees were awarded and 117 doctoral degrees, nearly 26 % 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. 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 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 2013

- *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.

- *Began holding regular meetings once a semester with graduate advising directors and office coordinators

- Answer over 100 phone calls /emails weekly regarding questions about graduate education at WMU

- *Grew Facebook friends to over 400

- *Strengthened the relationship with the Graduate Student Advisory Committee

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 227 Thesis or Doctoral Committees

- Approved 212 Theses or Dissertations (signed over 600 approval forms)

Approved over 50 3000/4000 level courses to include in programs of study
Approved over 200 permission to elect master's thesis or doctoral dissertation credits
Approved over 100 extensions for time to degree (approximately 10 not granted)
Approved nearly 20 leaves of absence; worked with the registrar's office so Banner record reflects LOA dates so students are not dismissed
*Approved approximately 50 re-admits (approximately 5 not granted)
*Approved over 100 catalog graduation audit or admission exceptions
Approved approximately 400 faculty for graduate faculty status (approximately 50 not approved)
Tracked over 1300 graduate faculty for eligibility to serve on graduate committees
Reviewed approximately 100 curriculum proposals, approved 79 and recycled/not approved approximately 20

Processing and Awarding

Processed 2350 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 217 applicants for research and travel awards (awarded 106)
Processed, organized and facilitated the review of 160 fellowship/assistantship/scholarship awards (awarded 28; 23 fellowship/assistantship (3 AGEF, 3 KCP, 4 Thurgood Marshall, 4 Dissertation Completion, 9 Doctoral Scholar) and 5 scholarships (3 Frostic (\$3800), 1 Dames (\$900), 1 Fisher (\$1000))
Continued to seek through competitive application, state funding for KCP awards

Student Interactions

Provided training to nearly 300 new graduate assistants each fall semester
*Hosted over 200 students in meetings with the Dean in addition to the regularly scheduled GSAC and GSOC meetings
Hosted approximately 300 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 approximately 500 prospective students at nearly 40 graduate recruitment fairs/venues
Co-hosted yearly Graduate and Professional Fair that brings to campus representatives from over 50 different universities and professional schools to interact with our students and talk about future opportunities
*Institutionalized the dissertation writing retreat and dissertation cafes that served nearly 40 students in the critical writing phase of the dissertation
Sponsored approximately 50 student visits to campus. Over the last 5 years, 75% of those who visit apply and of those admitted, 90% attend

Student Success

*Nominated 7 different students for national awards such as the CGS Proquest Outstanding dissertation award
Worked collaboratively with departments and colleges, Office of Student Conduct, Ombuds, Legal Affairs, Office of Financial Aid, Accounts Receivable, Registrars Office and Admissions to help resolve student concerns and issues



**THE GRADUATE COLLEGE
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
2012-2013 ANNUAL UPDATE**

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 used 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)

- Began conversations about graduate program capacity and growth opportunities with colleges and departments
 - As a result of growth opportunity conversations began marketing campaign for Accelerated Degree Programs to current students through LHC and to incoming students through Gold Pride Events and Medallion competition
 - Also as a result of growth opportunity conversations began marketing to military – conversations with ROTC and Military advocacy office; organized military day at Fort Custer; supported conversations in the Faculty Senate transfer committee (USC, GSC) looking at ACE recommendations for military training/courses
- Began conversations with regional 4 year liberal arts institutions to create pipeline of graduate students
- Work with colleges/departments to expand accelerated degree programs and graduate certificate programs

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

- Built a social media presence. Have daily updates on Facebook 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)
- Working toward 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, Gold Pride 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 40 different fairs and venues.

- Began holding office hours prior to each semester and session for WMU employees interested in entering graduate school
- Created Graduate Student Ambassador positions
 - 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
- In collaboration with the Office of Business and Finance developed a deferred payment plan option for individuals with employer reimbursements. This plan is open to both graduate and undergraduate students
- Developing 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
- Considered participating in Name and GRE exchange lists and cost benefit of such participation
- Investigated through University Relations use of “Search Engine Marketing Campaign and Landing Pages for programs/inquiries”

Application/Admission Process

- Organized and chaired the Project Action Team charged with review of current application process for admission to graduate programs and provided recommendations for moving forward (including use of external vendor for online application system and CRM)
- Spearheaded increase in application fee to help pay for new application system
- Worked 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

- Sponsored visitation from underrepresented minority (URM) applicants from HBCUs

- Sponsored visits by McNair Fellows from regional institutions
- Sponsored 10 new competitive doctoral associateships to attract top students
- Began conversations regarding common decision deadline for new students offered graduate appointments
- Proposed centralizing graduate tuition payment to cover out of state tuition for appointees

Strategies to Foster Enrollment

- Sent emails to admitted students encouraging their enrollment at WMU
- Developed an e-welcome letter for new matriculating students
- In collaboration with the Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GSAC), hosted the Resource Fair and Welcome Celebration (Sept. 5) as a single event for all (new and returning) graduate students
- Working with the Haenicke Institute to ensure recruitment strategies target international students for programs with capacity

Retention Activities

- Met with over 10 different 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
- Working with the Office of Faculty Development to expand workshops and resources for students who teach
- Continued offering professional development workshops including the migration of a few to an online format (e.g. stats workshops rolling out in collaboration with Statistics Department on e-learning in Fall)
- 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 proposed to investigate mentoring models and learning communities for underrepresented graduate students in STEM/SBE

- In partnership with Career Services, increased career development workshop opportunities for graduate students including applying for a post doc, grant writing and interviewing skills
- Sponsoring, along with Career Services, the College of Arts and Sciences and GSAC access to the Versatile PhD for Fall 2013-2014
- In collaboration with a faculty member from business, submitted (but not funded) a proposal to Council of Graduate Schools to develop financial literacy tools for graduate students which has begun a conversation with financial aid about how to specifically help this student population
- Planning/offering workshops for new faculty on advising graduate students
- Developing an online orientation for new graduate 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
- 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
- Expanded new graduate assistant training to include a session on cultural competence offered by Student Affairs

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 18 different university committees- from Faculty Senate Councils to Strategic Planning Committees, to Research Advisory Teams to Enrollment Forecasting
- Visited regional sites to meet with administration and students (Grand Rapids, Battle Creek and Lansing)

- Developed Faculty Fellow positions to assist in spearheading a number of initiatives important for moving graduate education forward (e.g. Developing online orientation and recruitment material)
- Maximizing efficiencies by developing online submission of documents
- Holding regular meetings with graduate directors and coordinators to enhance communication amongst stakeholders
- Beginning data collection for evaluation and assessment of effectiveness of activities as well as to maximize efficiencies
- Developing a strategic plan for graduate education
 - Began SWOT analysis with various groups

Graduate Policies and Procedures (7; 5.1, 5.3)

- Along with the Graduate Studies Council assembled a committee to review Graduate Advisors Handbook and graduate policies- incorporated aspects of handbook into revamped Fall 2013 graduate catalog
- Working with Institutional Research and Office of the Registrar to establish better processes for data collection to monitor progress
- Along with Graduate Studies Council, assembled a committee to look at annual review of graduate students procedures
- Implementing annual report from departments/programs
- 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
- Expanded new graduate assistant training to include 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)

- Implementing graduate candidacy requirement in graduation audit
- Implementing 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)

- Streamlined research and travel award submission process and offered workshops on application process
- Translating statistical workshops into e-learning platform
- Offering webinar format for some professional development workshops
- Expanded new graduate assistant training to include a teaching session offered by Office of Faculty Development
- Worked with Office of Service Learning for inclusion of service learning opportunities for graduate students
- Moving toward electronic submission of all theses and dissertations
- Offering mentoring workshops for graduate faculty
- Developed a guide for writing a professional email

Alumni Relations and Development (8.1; 4.3)

- Beginning to reach 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

Graduate College Faculty Fellows

Dr. Jon Adams, Associate Professor of English

Dr. Louann Bierlein-Palmer, Professor of Educational, Leadership, Research and Technology