Dear Colleagues,

From raising graduate assistantship stipends to increasing data transparency, this year marked a number of important achievements for the Graduate School and critical improvements for the graduate students whom we serve.

Campus partnerships, stemming from UW–Madison’s shared value of graduate education, made many of these advances possible. Partnering with the Offices of the Chancellor and Provost, we announced a major stipend increase for our graduate student teaching and project assistants, moving rates up 13.3 percent, and further established flexibility for programs to offer higher rates when needed to be competitive in attracting applicants. Graduate student teaching and project assistants not only apply their talents to their own work and research, but also enrich the learning experience on campus by inspiring undergraduate students and organizing innovative programming for their graduate peers. For a university that consistently places among the nation’s top graduate programs according to U.S. News & World Report, and one that is swiftly moving up the ranks in doctorates awarded - now at 2nd in the nation - attracting top graduate students still requires competitive funding packages and caring for the academic, professional, and personal needs of our diverse graduate student body.

The 2017-2018 year also saw advances in data collection and reporting. We launched the interactive Graduate School Explorer, which gives students and programs access to admissions, enrollment, demographic, and funding data to inform decisions. Our university teamed up with nine other institutions in forming the Coalition for Next Generation Life Science to share data and help prospective graduate students and postdoctoral fellows make informed career decisions. The Graduate School was also awarded a subproject as part of a $2 million multi-institutional grant, aimed at studying PhD career pathways. Over 2,200 alumni and 1,000 current graduate students were surveyed, the first-ever effort of its kind for the Graduate School, making a commitment to alumni tracking and informed program improvement into the future. Once our students embark on those career paths, we know that the skills, knowledge, curiosity, and values they developed during their time at UW–Madison will position them as leaders in their fields.

Our staff and faculty worked diligently on operational improvements as well, which are essential as we strive to offer high quality service to our students and programs. We launched the new Applicant Review system, switched more processes from paper to electronic, redesigned our website, and remodeled our Graduate School reception area.

It has been an impactful year, and I have covered only a few of our major efforts here. Keep reading to find out more about the important work of the Graduate School.

William J. Karpus
Dean of the Graduate School
Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
University of Wisconsin–Madison
Executive summary

highlighted accomplishments of 2017-2018

Service

Goal: Advance graduate admissions
• introduced a redesigned suite of admissions tools including Applicant Review, and switched transcript collection and admission offer letters from paper to electronic
Goal: Bolster student funding
• shifted the historical divisional funding competition model to a flexible Graduate Student Support Competition
• advocated for a 13.3 percent increase to TA and PA stipends
Goal: Promote academic excellence
• took strides toward expanding services to graduate students, through a new staff position shared with the Dean of Students Office within the Division of Student Life, to begin work early fall semester
• through Graduate Faculty Executive Committee actions, approved 24 institutional ten- or five-year program reviews, approved 13 new programs, and discontinued seven programs
Goal: Support career success
• continued professional development programming, covering topics like academic and non-academic career development, impostor syndrome, and project management
• took on a national leadership role in hosting the 2018 Graduate Career Consortium conference
• received a $80,000 subproject award as part of a national $2 million multi-institutional grant aimed at studying PhD career pathways
• received a $100,000 subproject award as part of the national Coalition for Next Generation Life Science

Diversity

Goal: Foster inclusive experiences
• completed the first ever review of the Graduate Research Scholars (GRS) communities designed to foster academic success among underrepresented minority (URM) graduate students
• piloted a peer mentoring program and awarded five graduate students the Peer Mentor Award
• continued mixers and luncheons for URM students and students with marginalized identities
• inducted five graduate students into the national Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society
• in partnership with the Delta Program, led university activities within the CIRTL INCLUDES project funded by the National Science Foundation

Engagement

Goal: Build meaningful connections
• led or facilitated presentations across campus for the Visiting International Scholars Program, undergraduates interested in applying to graduate school, and graduate programs on essential procedural topics
• launched a redesigned website to align with campus brand guidelines and improve user experience
• experimented with a new format for Director of Graduate Study meetings, and met individually with 25 graduate programs
• with the Division of Continuing Studies, commissioned focus groups of Advance Your Career program directors and coordinators to understand needs related to enhancing student experiences

Goal: Increase graduate student diversity
• led campus efforts and discussions to reimagine graduate recruitment, admissions, and retention
• doubled the number of National GEM Consortium applications, admits, and enrollments
• graduated eight McNair Scholars, participants in a program that prepares URM undergraduates to apply for graduate study

Goal: Improve data access and transparency
• launched the Graduate School Explorer, a web-based data visualization tool that provides data on graduate admissions, enrollment, funding, degree completion, and time to degree
• worked with the campus data community and data governance bodies to develop standardized data definitions, tools, and reporting conventions

enrolled 5,380 doctoral and 4,038 master’s degree students (fall 2017)
offered 109 doctoral, 156 master’s, and 4 MFA degree programs
reviewed 24 degree programs, created 13 & discontinued 7
The Graduate School introduced the new Applicant Review system and offered both group training and individual guidance to program staff and faculty across campus on use of the new tool.

Within the first admissions cycle, program coordinators, faculty, and Graduate School admissions staff processed over 18,000 applications* using the system that was built by in-house IT developers.

Included in the revamped suite of admissions tools is Applicant Status Check, which offers easy access for prospective graduate students to view their application progress and admission decisions entered by programs, as well as enter their acceptance of the program’s offer.

The school achieved major milestones in switching several key processes from paper to electronic. Transcripts and international financial documents are now collected electronically, admission offer letters are emailed, and other strategic changes have been made to simplify processing.

*An applicant may apply for up to three programs. The 18,000 figure reflects instances an application to a program was submitted. It is not a count of unique applicants.
The university announced a significant stipend increase for graduate student teaching and project assistants, effective in July 2018. The increase, 13.3 percent to previous stipends, raises the campus minimum from $16,196 to $18,350 for nine-month, 50 percent appointments.

The school shifted from the historical model of divisional funding competitions to a more flexible Graduate Student Support Competition, in response to requests from graduate programs for funding to be used not only for fellowships but for summer support, rotation stipends, or recruitment. The shift also improved procedural consistency in the faculty review process across all programs. Review criteria corresponding to measurements of graduate program excellence were implemented to guide the assessment process and ensure progress in educational excellence.

The Collaborative Training Grant program selected its third award since inception two years ago, funding "Race, Ethnicity, Inequality, and Education", an interdisciplinary initiative from the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Sociology, and Educational Policy Studies graduate programs. Through the cohort-based training grant, graduate students receive close mentoring and learn to tackle complex social problems through interdisciplinary research approaches. The Graduate School will provide four, 12-month fellowships per year for three years to PhD students who participate in this educational effort.

The Graduate School and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education provided institutional support commitments for nine National Institutes of Health institutional training grant applications and three National Science Foundation proposals. These efforts will ensure continuation of outstanding PhD educational and research opportunities for graduate students in a wide variety of biomedical and physical science fields on campus.
Promote academic excellence

The Graduate School Office of Academic Services assists students with a high volume of complex student issues, 53 cases in the 2017-2018 academic year, in addition to processing 2,047 master’s and 859 doctoral degrees during the same period. The school took strides toward expanding services to graduate students, adding a staff position shared with the Dean of Students Office within the Division of Student Life. The full-time role, to begin work early fall semester, will support graduate students as they confront challenges unique to graduate education.

The school worked toward deployment of the Graduate Student Tracking System - a tool for students, staff, and faculty to monitor academic progress - by securing project sponsorship from the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration. The next phase, configuration of each graduate program’s specific academic requirements, is expected to be completed within three years.

Graduate student processes and systems were updated as part of efforts to modernize dissertation requirements, and the school continued ongoing enhancements to the Graduate Student Portal.

The first edition of the Guide to include updated graduate program content was published, marking achievement of university-wide goals to improve navigational experiences for students, extract academic program and course information from a single source for accuracy, and edit content through distributed workflow controls. This resource will provide greater clarity to students on their academic journeys.

Led by the Office of Academic Analysis, Planning and Assessment, in close partnership with the Office of the Registrar and Office of the Provost, publication of the graduate section of the Guide required close coordination with every graduate program, over 160 in total.

The Graduate School continued its commitment to excellence in graduate education by placing academic program review as a top priority. The Graduate Faculty Executive Committee approved 24 institutional five- or ten-year program reviews, approved 13 new programs, and discontinued seven programs. The school facilitated data-informed decisions through comparative reports on student metrics for all review committees.

A new proposal from the Graduate School would ensure that all PhD students receive an annual assessment of progress toward degree. Exit survey data revealed that approximately 50 percent of PhD graduates received regular feedback on their progress towards degree completion. The Graduate School visited governance bodies to discuss the proposal. There is broad support for regular feedback, and future effort will focus on developing an implementation plan.
Support career success

Career success for graduate students remains a top priority for the Graduate School. This year’s initiatives included long-standing, quality professional development programming, as well as new ventures in career outcomes data collection and reporting.

The school partnered with units across campus to host a comprehensive offering of professional development and skill building programming. Special emphasis was given to training and resource gaps identified by the DiscoverPD framework.

National speakers included Jorge Cham, creator of the popular PhD Comics, who addressed using humor to deal with the challenges of graduate student life; Anne Krook, who led two intensive non-academic career development workshops; and Valerie Young, a nationally renowned writer and speaker on the impostor syndrome. Campus experts were tapped for a day-long workshop on project management, and a For Future Faculty series that covered topics from institutional fit to interviewing.

The school took on a national leadership role by hosting the 2018 Graduate Career Consortium conference. The over 200 attendees included career counselors, deans, program directors, and program managers who work in career centers or in graduate schools.

The Graduate School continued its involvement as a subproject awardee in a $2 million multi-institutional grant, aimed at studying PhD career outcomes across all disciplines. Understanding PhD Career Pathways for Program Improvement, led by the Council of Graduate Schools and funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the National Science Foundation, will inform program efforts to expand and improve skills training and professional development programs. The project included large scale surveys of current PhD students and alumni to collect data on career plans and employment outcomes.

The Graduate School published interactive data profiles of life science graduate students and postdoctoral researchers, in collaboration with the Office of Postdoctoral Studies, as part of a larger extramurally-funded effort of the Coalition for Next Generation Life Science to provide accessible data on admissions, degree completion, and career trajectories. More data profiles will be published in the coming year, including information about jobs held by graduate alumni and postdoctoral researchers.

Quantity and quality of student and alumni feature stories on the school’s website as well as social media engagement from the school increased significantly in early 2018, aimed at showcasing career success and elevating the impact of graduate education on the state, nation, and world.
Foster inclusive experiences

The Multicultural Graduate Network, housed in the Graduate School, piloted a peer mentoring program and continued its mixer luncheon series for underrepresented minority (URM) students and students with marginalized identities. Twenty-one graduate students participated in the pilot, half domestic targeted minorities and half international. Faculty and administrators from targeted identities were invited to attend mixers to network with graduate students and engage in informal mentoring. The Graduate School and the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement co-sponsored the mixer and luncheon initiative, and various offices, committees, and student organizations also participated.

Five graduate students received the Peer Mentor Award for stellar mentorship, awarded again at the Bucky’s Awards event sponsored by the Center for Leadership and Involvement. This year, recipient selection emphasized mentoring aimed at underrepresented or marginalized populations.

The school inducted five new graduate student members into the national Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society, raising the total number of UW–Madison inductees to 40 since the chapter was founded in 2010. The chapter launched the Bouchet Seminar Series with presentations by current members. A new partnership with the Postdoctoral Association helped Bouchet members and others explore postdoctoral opportunities.

The Graduate School, in partnership with the Delta Program, led university activities within CIRTL INCLUDES, a national alliance funded by the National Science Foundation with the goal of increasing STEM talent from all sectors and groups in society. Activities included surveying women and underrepresented minority graduate students to understand their interest in faculty careers, as well as holding panels featuring diverse faculty from UW–Madison, Edgewood College, and UW–Whitewater.

In partnership with the College of Letters and Science, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, the School of Medicine and Public Health, the School of Pharmacy, the School of Veterinary Medicine, the School of Education, the College of Engineering, the School of Human Ecology, the Wisconsin Business School, the School of Nursing and the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, the Graduate School undertook the first ever review of the Graduate Research Scholar (GRS) communities. The eight communities are designed to foster an inclusive learning and research environment for URM graduate students to aid in their success. The schools and colleges identified faculty reviewers and the Graduate School assembled committees that performed the reviews culminating in recommendations for improvements. These were communicated to the deans and will be implemented in the coming year.
Increase graduate student diversity

The Graduate School is leading campus efforts to reimagine graduate recruitment, admissions, and retention. Progress in this area included beginning ongoing campus discussions by hosting Professor Keivan Stassun of Vanderbilt University, who developed and led the Fisk-Vanderbilt Masters-to-PhD Bridge program.

UW–Madison experienced large growth in the number of National GEM Consortium applications, admits, and enrollments this year. GEM is a network of universities and employers committed to achieving greater diversity in the STEM fields. Applications nearly doubled from 2017 to 2018 (33 to 59) and the number of admitted students almost tripled (13 to 36). Six incoming GEM Fellows will start UW–Madison graduate programs in the fall, up from three in Fall 2017.

The Graduate School’s McNair Scholars Program, which prepares URM undergraduates to apply for graduate study, had eight graduates, one of whom received a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, and another of whom participated in the UW System’s Research in the Rotunda event to share her research with state legislators and UW System leaders. The McNair Scholars Program is extramurally funded through the U.S. Department of Education’s TRIO portfolio and matching funds from the Graduate School, with the dean serving as the principal investigator.

Targeted minority doctoral students by funding type (Fall 2017)

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fellows</th>
<th>Trainees</th>
<th>Research assistants</th>
<th>Teaching assistants</th>
<th>Project Assistants</th>
<th>No/few/other funding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>90</td>
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*Includes students with outside funding (external fellowships not payrolled through the university, scholarships, international government funding, corporate funding, etc.) and students with <33% appointments.

Graduate student enrollment by race/ethnicity (Fall 2017)

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social sciences</th>
<th>Physical sciences</th>
<th>Biological sciences</th>
<th>Arts and humanities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targeted minority</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-minority</td>
<td>2,339</td>
<td>1,347</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>731</td>
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<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>1,273</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Admissions experts in the Graduate School engaged campus colleagues in various ways, including presentations to the Visiting International Scholars Program and to UW–Madison undergraduates about applying to graduate school. They hosted training for staff in graduate programs on essential topics like admissions systems, international processing, and e-transcripts.

The school bolstered already strong campus partnerships to offer training for graduate program coordinators. The variety of topics included supporting graduate students in distress hosted jointly with the Dean of Students and University Health Services, career development training aimed at improving graduate students’ access to career expertise, and international student enrollment and legal requirements led by International Student Services.

In spring, 117 students attended Last Steps to Completing the PhD, the highest-ever attendance for the presentation that covers dissertation deposit and PhD completion processes. The school started offering a version of the session for master’s degree students.

Graduate School staff contributed to campus adoption of Lumen, which standardizes course and program creation and modification and will be used for all governance actions. Lumen provides integrated workflow, tracks approval stages, and maximizes accuracy and efficiency through integration with Guide and the Student Information System.

The school launched a redesigned website to align with campus brand guidelines and improve user experience. It also transitioned to a streamlined and re-branded KnowledgeBase for operations.

Historically, Director of Graduate Study meetings were held each semester but offered limited interaction. In the spring, associate deans experimented with a new format and invited DGSes to smaller divisional meetings focused on division-specific concerns with greater interaction.

In an effort to directly engage faculty, the Graduate School associate deans met with 25 graduate programs at faculty meetings, graduate program committee meetings, or other settings. These visits provided an opportunity to explain the role of the Graduate School and the division of labor with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education. They also gave insight into the challenges facing programs, like the ability to make multiyear funding guarantees.

Driven by the Chancellor’s strategic priorities, there has been considerable growth in Advance Your Career graduate programs. To understand the services and resources needed to enhance student experience in these programs, the Graduate School and the Division of Continuing Studies commissioned focus groups of AYC program directors and coordinators and will address the issues identified in the coming year.
Early 2018 marked the launch of the Graduate School Explorer, a Tableau-based data visualization tool that provides access to data on graduate admissions, enrollment, funding, degree completion, and time to degree. The interactive tool allows users to apply their own filters for year, program, degree level, and demographics.

The Office of Academic Planning and Assessment in the Graduate School redesigned the Graduate Program Profiles as one-page, online statistical overviews of admission, enrollment, and degree completion data for each graduate program. Additionally, they distributed over 100 customized reports of Graduate School Exit Survey data to master’s and doctoral programs, marking the first year that master’s reports were available.

Staff presented tools and resources for continuous improvement efforts to graduate program coordinators and the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee, in addition to providing custom data reporting and analysis services to individual graduate programs.

Graduate School representatives worked with key members of the campus data community and data governance bodies to develop standardized data definitions, tools, and reporting conventions. These communities and governance groups include the Tableau User Group, Tableau Developer Community, Business Intelligence Community of Experts, the Data Integrity Group, and the UW–Madison Reporting and Analytics Project.

**Time to degree (in years) 2008-2017**

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<tr>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>PhD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 or less</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1+ to 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2+ to 3</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3+ to 4</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4+</td>
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<tr>
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