
Graduate Division Strategic Plan, May 2016

Our Mission

The UCI Graduate Division mission is to serve as a catalyst for a world-class graduate educational experience, to provide oversight and communication of institutional academic policies, and to foster resources and essential services to promote the diversity and success of the next generation of leaders.

Our Vision

The UCI Graduate Division will foster the education and development of future generations of leaders in a broad spectrum of careers, including academia, business, government and non-profits.

Our Role

The UCI Graduate Division provides leadership on all graduate education matters, working with scholars from all over the world to engage in study, teaching, and research in the pursuit of a master's degree, Ph.D. degree, or postdoctoral training. We promote academic integrity and greater understanding by supplying information, guidance, and support to the campus community and beyond. Our aim is to enhance the educational experience by engaging and leading on all matters related to graduate student life: outreach and engagement, academic progress and advocacy, fellowships, funding and financial support, diversity, employment and professional development.

Strategic Goals

Associated goals in campus strategic plan

Goal 1. To increase enrollment of a diverse doctoral student population.

Goal 2.1: Expand the student body and make UCI a first-choice campus for students

Goal 2.5: Ensure that UCI's educational opportunities are an engine for social mobility, impact, and positive innovation.

Over the past ten years, UCI has greatly increased its undergraduate and master's student populations, and has seen substantial faculty growth, with no increase in doctoral student enrollments. However, recent analyses by the UCI Office of Institutional Research have shown that PhD degrees awarded per faculty member are highly correlated with both faculty scholarly productivity and global research rankings for AAU Public Universities. It is therefore essential that doctoral enrollments and degree completion grow to match that of our undergraduate population.

Furthermore, although UCI has achieved national prominence as a college that enhances social mobility for its undergraduate students, and is achieving the status of a minority serving institution, it is important to ensure that undergraduates who are underrepresented in their academic discipline are

provided pathways to graduate degrees and professional achievement. At present, graduate programs, both at UCI and elsewhere, are not as diverse as their undergraduate counterparts.

Our strategic **Goal 1** is therefore to increase annual PhD degrees awarded to 0.5 per faculty FTE, in order to support the ambitious expansion of UCI's research mission. This will be accomplished both by increasing new Ph.D. student enrollments to 906 by fall 2022, consistent with our Long Range Enrollment Plan and commensurate with faculty growth, and by increasing doctoral degree completion from the current overall 62% campus-wide to >70%. We will also increase the diversity of our incoming graduate students to more closely match that of undergraduate populations.

Strategies to be used include:

- a. *Continue to increase our pool of high-quality, diverse graduate applicants* through use of social media, recruiting at national conferences and graduate school recruitment fairs, visiting historically black colleges and universities, and by partnering with federally funded undergraduate research programs such as the NIH BUILD program at CSU Long Beach.
- b. *Expand recruitment of diverse undergraduate and master's students into the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program*, designed to give underrepresented students a strong research experience and graduate preparation, with the goal of recruiting the best and brightest students to UCI graduate programs.
- c. *Maintain and expand a website and graduate admissions portal* as a key resource for applicants to UCI graduate programs.
- d. *Increase the size and diversity of the Ph.D. applicant pool* by fostering both central and academic unit-based outreach and engagement programs.
- e. *Support doctoral student enrollment growth* by providing national benchmarking data and financial incentives.
- f. *Increase the diversity of incoming doctoral student cohorts* by (i) encouraging faculty to use holistic admissions strategies that emphasize a broad range of factors that can contribute to graduate success, (ii) providing data on national availability of bachelor's degree recipients by demographic category, and (iii) maintaining a strong portfolio of diversity recruitment fellowships.

Goal 2. To promote retention and degree completion of a diverse doctoral student population, and improve professional competencies of both graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.

Goal 2.1: Expand the student body and make UCI a first-choice campus for students

Goal 2.2: Foster excellence in teaching and learning

Goal 2.4: Integrate student life with educational experiences

Whereas the retention and degree completion for both undergraduate and master's students at UCI are quite high, that of doctoral students averages about 62% campus-wide. Furthermore, in some academic units there are wide demographic variances in doctoral degree completion.

In recent years there has also been considerable national discussion of the need to expand the view of the value of a doctoral degree, and to prepare graduate students and postdoctoral scholars for a broad range of careers. According to the National Science Foundation, the 2013 unemployment rate

for those with research doctoral degrees in science, engineering and health fields was 2.1%, one-third of the rate for the general population aged 25 or older. However, a decreasing proportion of those with doctorates obtain tenure-track faculty positions.

Our strategic **Goal 2** is therefore to increase doctoral retention and degree completion to >70% by fall 2022, to eliminate demographic variables therein, and to enhance professional skills that will improve both degree completion and subsequent placement in both academic and non-academic careers.

Strategies to be used include:

- a. *Enhance doctoral degree completion* by (i) expanding the Competitive Edge doctoral pre-entry program, (ii) working through DECADE and other resources to ensure a supportive academic climate, (iii) encouraging students with academic or personal difficulties to use the services of the Graduate Division academic counselor, and other campus resources, and (iv) tracking School efforts to enhance degree completion and share best practices with the campus.
- b. *Provide annual academic dashboards to doctoral programs* to enable faculty to evaluate progress.
- c. *Lead the effort to develop and implement Program Learning Outcomes* to ensure that student and faculty expectations and deliverables are clear.
- d. *Track employment outcomes of doctoral students* for ten years after graduation, and highlight successful career paths of alumni.
- e. *Regularly survey trainees to assess the development of academic and professional skills and progress towards career goals.*
- f. *Evaluate and refine Graduate Professional Success programming to support development of key competencies for successful career outcomes*, including leadership positions in academia, industry, business, government and non-profits.
- g. *Enhance pedagogical training* of those targeting a future career in academia, (i) through collaboration with the Center for Engaged Instruction, (ii) by providing additional teaching opportunities through the California Community College Internship Program and partnership with CSU Long Beach, and (iii) by providing guidance in how to obtain an academic position and complete a successful transition to a faculty career.
- h. *Increase alumni and community engagement*, showcasing their accomplishments and providing opportunities for mentoring and networking support for current graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.

Goal 3. To promote development of new graduate programs.

Goal 1.4: Create appropriate programs and structures to facilitate interdisciplinary, problem-based scholarship and teaching, especially for convergence science.

Goal 4.1: Develop a sustainable financial plan

One strategy for doctoral enrollment growth is to establish new programs in emerging disciplines or interdisciplinary areas. New self-supporting master's programs not only provide a critical approach to revenue generation but also offer important opportunities for life-long learning for working

professionals. Over the last few years, we have been particularly successful in establishing new graduate programs at both doctoral and master's levels.

Our strategic **Goal 3** is therefore to continue to provide effective support for new program development.

Strategies to be used include:

- a. *Continue to encourage and facilitate creation of new, responsive self-supporting professional master's programs* that open access to graduate education, enhance workforce development, and generate revenues to support Ph.D. students
- b. *Assist faculty in developing new graduate programs* by (i) continuing to offer Graduate Growth Incentive Awards for initial assessment and proposal development, and (ii) coordinating access to all resources needed to establish new programs, including Academic Senate policies and procedures and, where appropriate, market analysis and budget.
- c. *Reduce barriers to the establishment of new interdisciplinary programs* by providing administrative support and academic oversight, where appropriate, and by identifying and resolving issues that are critical for their success.
- d. *Track implementation of new graduate programs to ensure successful academic outcomes.*

Goal 4. To enhance financial support for doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars.

Goal 4.1: Develop a sustainable financial plan

Doctoral enrollment growth will be expensive, and will not be covered fully by State support or tuition. A broad array of strategies must therefore be used to increase extramural support of doctoral programs, in addition to the establishment of new self-supporting programs outlined in **Goal 3**. Increased support for postdoctoral scholars will also enhance our stature as a research university.

Our strategic **Goal 4** is therefore to support faculty and trainees in obtaining extramural fellowship support, maintaining their support on research grants, and establishing fellowship endowments through philanthropy.

Strategies to be used include:

- a. *Provide Schools with annual reports of graduate financial support and evaluate effective use of funds.*
- b. *Assist faculty in developing successful training grant proposals* by (i) providing Graduate Growth Incentive funds for proposal development, (ii) providing a 25% cost-share of agency awarded stipend and cost of education, (iii) providing doctoral student and postdoctoral data for NIH training grant tables and annual reports, (iv) working with PIs to create strong and compelling outreach and professional development statements and training plans for proposals, and (v) effectively communicating Graduate Division resources available to faculty for training grant development.
- c. *Assist graduate students and postdoctoral scholars in obtaining extramural fellowship support* by providing resources in the form of (i) workshops, (ii) writing consultants, (iii) one-on-one fellowship advising sessions, and (iv) a library of awardee applications.
- d. *Maintain bridge funding program to ensure continued graduate student support for faculty with temporary interruptions in grant funding.*

e. *Expand philanthropic support for graduate fellowships and professional development programming.*

Goal 5. To increase the visibility and impact of graduate education in the community.

Goal 3.2: Create a powerful Anteater-for-life ethos that promotes ideal and sustained student and alumni participation

Goal 3.5: More broadly communicate and translate UCI's discoveries and innovations

The Graduate Division is a leader in highlighting not only the strong role that graduate students play in UCI's research mission, but in demonstrating to donors, the community, and policy makers in State and federal governments, the positive impacts that graduate research brings. Given the substantial national focus on the costs of undergraduate education, it is increasingly important to showcase the value added by graduate education, both to the individual and to society.

Our strategic **Goal 5** is therefore to expand strategic efforts to showcase our students and postdoctoral scholars, and our graduate program initiatives, and to identify and adopt best practices for graduate education.

Strategies to be used include:

- a. *Build out our alumni relations engagement efforts* to host local and regional events, to partner successful alumni with current graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, and to encourage them to share their expertise and to give in other ways, including philanthropic support.
- b. *Continue to publicize and share the importance and impact of graduate education through advocacy programs*, including Grad Slam, Graduate Research Advocacy Day, and the Public Impact and Chancellor's Club Fellowships.
- c. *Expand membership and diversity of the Dean's Leadership Council* to provide critical community input into the development of graduate education resources, programs and goals.
- d. *Use website, social media and brochures to showcase graduate education initiatives and their impact.*
- e. *Partner with graduate deans across the UC system to assess system-wide educational needs, develop programs and share best practices.*
- f. *Participate in national graduate education meetings*, including the AAU Association of Graduate Schools, Council of Graduate Schools, and Association of Public Land-grant Universities, to showcase achievements and learn best practices.
- g. *Meet with local and national government and policy leaders* to showcase graduate initiatives and student success, and to advocate for graduate education.