

**Graduate School and Research
Graduate School
Strategic Plan 2020-2025**

Our Vision

To serve as a model unit of support, service, and stewardship of excellence in graduate education to meet the intellectual, academic, and vocational needs of students in the region and beyond.

Our Mission

To provide leadership, resources, and support for academically rigorous graduate study

Goal 1: Promote and foster assimilation of graduate education into Western Carolina University's academic identity (2020 Vision 4.1, 4.2)

Initiative 1.1 Build additional partnerships with academic and support units across campus

Initiative 1.2 Increase all activities with and outreach to graduate alumni

Initiative 1.3 Advocate with WCU External Relations Director and local, state, and federal elected officials for graduate education and research at Graduate Education Day

Initiative 1.4 Increase support and recognition of graduate faculty and programs (e.g. Graduate Program of Excellence Award, Graduate Faculty Mentoring Award, Graduate Program Director Award)

Goal 2: Foster steady and growing graduate enrollment (2020 Vision 1.7)

Initiative 2.1 Develop a strategic enrollment plan that includes Cullowhee Campus, Biltmore Park campus, and distance learning enrollment targets

Initiative 2.2 Grow and develop Graduate School marketing and recruiting plans to increase submitted applications

Initiative 2.3 Develop innovative data-driven digital and social media marketing initiatives

Initiative 2.4 Provide support for graduate program directors

Goal 3: Incentivize and support research opportunities for graduate students (2020 Vision 2.2)

Initiative 3.1 Increase numbers and representation of programs at WCU's Graduate Research events

Initiative 3.2 Increase visibility of ongoing graduate student applied research activities.

Initiative 3.3 Promote intra/inter-institutional collaborations.

Initiative 3.4 Maintain a sustainable Summer Graduate Research Assistantship program.

Goal 4: Increase financial assistance for graduate students (2020 Vision 7.3)

Initiative 4.1 Work with Office of Development to secure additional sources of funding for graduate program and graduate student financial assistance.

Initiative 4.2 Advocate for graduate student financial resources on scholarship committees in Financial Aid Office

Goal 5: Increase graduate student diversity and inclusiveness at WCU (2020 Vision 3.1)

Initiative 5.1 Collaborate with Chief Diversity Officer, International Programs and Services and Office of Educational Outreach to recruit, enroll, and support diverse high-quality graduate students

Initiative 5.2 Grow Graduate Student Association membership, activities, and outreach

Goal 6: Improve Graduate School Operations and systems (2020 Vision 6.5)

Initiative 6.1 Continuously review and revise all Graduate School processes and policies to ensure they are efficient, relevant, and actionable

Initiative 6.2 Increase cross-training of staff to fully utilize system software and processes to improve the recruiting, admissions, and graduation completion processes for graduate students

Initiative 6.3 Provide technical expertise and training to Graduate Program Directors and key staff for effective use of prospect, application, and applicant review software systems

Appendix A. Goals to partner with academic colleges

Goal A: Ensure academic rigor and consistent quality of all graduate programs and graduate student experiences (2020 Vision 1.1)

Initiative A.1: Expand research opportunities for graduate students

- Promote integration of research and responsible research conduct in all graduate curriculum
- Promote and support faculty grant activities that include research opportunities and support for graduate students

Initiative A.2: Endorse program or college initiatives for maintaining or increasing professional accreditations.

Goal B: Advocate for parity among Graduate Program Directors across academic colleges