OVERALL GRADUATE COLLEGE VISION:
Transforming graduate education through a student-centered approach that prioritizes innovation, excellence and inclusion to advance the public good.

STUDENT SUCCESS – **Goal: Provide a student-centric graduate education experience across the University of Iowa built upon diverse training opportunities that empower students to become leaders in their disciplines while at the University and beyond.**

The Graduate College has demonstrated a well-recognized commitment to student success, championing initiatives that promote graduate student professional development and training for diverse career paths. The college has also worked to bring focus to the entire graduate continuum, transitioning students from the PhD to postdoctoral positions and into the workforce. These efforts have been led by Graduate College leadership, motivated in response to national trends of declining tenure-track career opportunities for doctoral students. Despite the Graduate College's recent efforts, the graduate student experience at the University of Iowa (UI) can be uneven across campus, accentuated by differences in appointment structure, compensation, and quality of mentoring and professional development opportunities available within departments and programs. Altogether, such experience can contribute to chronic stress and mental health issues that are widespread among graduate students."[1]

Based on results from stakeholder engagement sessions, our recommendations below highlight opportunities for the Graduate College to strengthen their commitment to student success initiatives and disseminate best practices for integrating student success and wellness as core elements of graduate degree programs across UI. Effectively communicating desired outcomes - and resources available to achieve them - while encouraging use of student-specific plans by both mentor and mentee will be critical to implementing these core elements.

Strategy: *We can meet our student success goals if we develop, share and facilitate adoption of best practices for graduate training that prioritizes student success, wellness and professional development.*

Collaborative Partners for Strategy Development and Implementation: *Provost's Office, University Counseling Services, Associate Deans for Graduate Education, Directors of Graduate Studies, Graduate Council*

Critical Tasks	Tactics – Action Items	Indicators of Success
1. Create a more uniformly positive graduate student experience at UI through a "best practices" framework that prioritizes student	1. Standardize the use of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) across all graduate programs at UI. 2. Identify critical "touch points" along the degree timeline and additional	1. Develop a model for retention of graduate students at UI. This model should be created in a collaborative effort that engages graduate programs across campus, some of which will have different perspectives on appropriate metrics for retention. Once established,

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[1] Evans, T. M.; Bira, L.; Gastelum, J. B.; Weiss, L. T.; Vanderford, N. L. Evidence for a Mental Health Crisis in Graduate Education. *Nat. Biotechnol.* **2018**, *36* (3), 282–284.; https://www.nature.com/articles/nbt.4089

success, wellness, and professional development.	forms of support that should be provided in times of vulnerability to promote graduate student success and retention. 3. Encourage programs to guarantee 5 years of funding support in offer letters that includes diversified training opportunities for students (RA, TA, Fellowship). 4. Encourage integration of professional development and diverse career pathways as part of graduate degree program requirements and not just "add ons" to current program structure. 5. Require mentor training of all faculty and staff working extensively with graduate students and post-doc researchers. 6. Develop and implement initiatives focused on graduate student wellness and mental health. 7. Incentivize adoption of these best practices by tying Graduate College funding programs (e.g., Fellowships) to program use of this best practices framework. 8. Provide professional development opportunities to advance graduate students to their next phase of development (i.e. obtaining postdoctoral positions or professional positions inside or outside academia).	this model should be used to establish baselines for graduate programs across UI, and to identify those programs that are struggling with retention. Once this baseline is defined, meaningful goals for retention should then be established. 2. Increase partnerships with other units/orgs on campus that are focused on initiatives to improve student health and wellness. 3. Monitor the number of graduate programs currently using IDPs. From this baseline, increase use of IDPs across campus through targeted outreach and sharing of best practices (e.g., templates and/or online interfaces used by current programs that can be adopted by others). 4. Work with the Provost's Office on developing strategic initiatives to improve the quality of graduate student mentoring at the University of Iowa. Ideally, this would involve developing and maintaining a campus wide faculty mentoring program that becomes integrated into all required training for new graduate faculty members at UI.
2. Enhance collaboration with graduate programs and colleges across UI.	1. Better advertise existing services provided by the Graduate College centered on student success. 2. Work with programs on implementing student success initiatives including	1. Continue the practice of using Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) meetings for work sessions and "learning groups", allowing individual programs to contribute to discussion about challenges and future opportunities in graduate education at UI.

	integration of best practices, development of learning objectives, and "right sizing" of graduate programs. 3. Better utilize DGSs as ambassadors for the Graduate College in each program.	2. Develop and implement a Graduate College "Road Show", in which staff can interact directly with programs across campus (via seminars, faculty meetings) to answer questions, share resources, and receive feedback on Graduate College operations and performance.
3. Improve communication with graduate students at the University of Iowa	1. Better advertise existing services provided by the Graduate College centered on student success. 2. Create more opportunities for Graduate College to hear directly from graduate students on emerging concerns and needs. 3. Create and codify clear guidelines for reporting misalignment of workload and/or graduate or post-doctoral job duties with appointment structure	1. Increase the use of more targeted messaging to students that is guided by data on when they are most vulnerable or likely to be struggling (e.g., so-called "right on time" communications). 2. Complete and formalize the employment grievance process that is currently under development. Raise awareness through marketing of this new grievance policy to students, and create an established workflow that streamlines the process for students filing an employment grievance. 3. As the Graduate Colleges improves outreach to graduate programs (through DGS meetings and departmental "road shows"), content should be integrated that specifically addresses the employment grievance policy and addresses the topic of retaliation, fear of which often deters students from reporting such grievances.

RESEARCH & DISCOVERY -- Goal: Establish the Graduate College as a hub for original, interdisciplinary, and highly collaborative graduate and postdoctoral research, discovery, and translation at the University of Iowa.

The Graduate College has direct bearing on the success and productivity of the university's research enterprise. The university's ability to recruit and retain a faculty of distinction depends critically on its ability to recruit and support high-quality graduate students. The Graduate College impacts the research mission at every stage of the research pipeline, through its key roles in providing promising undergraduate students (especially underrepresented students) with formative in-depth research experiences, promoting graduate student success in research, supporting a professional environment for postdoctoral scholars to perform research, and incubating faculty-led interdisciplinary research programs.

Our recommendations below are aimed at enhancing and expanding the Graduate College's efforts to foster a culture of research, collaboration and creativity.

Strategy: We can meet our research & discovery goal if we embrace a role for the Graduate College as a home for innovative, collaborative, and interdisciplinary research and scholarship at UI, and provide financial support for the diverse participants in and products of research, scholarship and discovery at UI.	
Collaborative Partners for Strategy Development and Implementation: *Office of Vice President for Research, Office of the Provost, Associate Deans for Graduate Education, Associate Deans for Research, Information Technology Services, University Libraries.*	

Critical Tasks	Tactics – Action Items	Indicators of Success
1. Incentivize programs to pursue externally funded opportunities for graduate student support, particularly institutional training grants	1. Maintain the Graduate College's longstanding history of commitment of resources to graduate student training grants. 2. Develop and share best practices leveraging past and current UI training grant recipients. 3. Aggressively develop, support, and maintain data solutions relevant to graduate programs and training grant applications. 4. Incentivize faculty leadership for development of training grant proposals and management of training grant awards. 5. Coordinate and collaborate with other key institutional partners (other Colleges, OVPR, Provost, ITS) to support a centralized Core for logistical support, including required data and tables, for training grant applications.	1. Establish a formal partnership with appropriate units across campus (e.g., OVPR, Colleges) to assist faculty in the development of training grant applications.

2. Develop a postdoctoral fellowship program to support efforts to recruit, develop and place postdoctoral scholars.	1. Explore successful models in Florida, UNC and UC System/Cornell that blend research training with teaching expertise and professional development. 2. Assess current graduate programs at UI based on student success to identify best options for successful homes/placement of postdoctoral fellows. 3. In partnership with other relevant institutional units (e.g., OVPR, Provost, other Colleges), identify resources to develop and maintain a centralized postdoctoral recruitment and development program, and link it to faculty recruitment.	1. Work with the Provost's Office to finalize plans to establish and adequately resource a program (or office) dedicated to research success, professional development, and career placement of postdoctoral scholars at the University of Iowa.
3. Expand support for student applications for external research support, including graduate and postdoctoral applications for external individual training grants and research development awards (e.g., NIH Fs and Ks, NSF-GRFP)	1. Maintain commitment to Fellowship Incentive Program (i.e., the monetary incentive for current students who apply for external fellowship programs). 2. Encourage and support more applications by tying application development into training activities and examination processes (e.g., using an NRSA-style approach to the comprehensive or PhD qualifying exam). 3. Develop and foster a culture and training framework that support fellowship recipients beyond the duration of their fellowship (i.e., for the remainder of their time at UI) in partnership with their programs of study.	1. Increased numbers of students participating in the Incentive program, and therefore, also the number applications for external graduate fellowships. 2. Work with the Provost's Office to ensure that any program established for postdoctoral scholars offers assistance in preparing and submitting postdoctoral individual training grants (e.g., Fs, Ks, GRFPs)
4. Create opportunities for exchange of research ideas across disciplines; be responsive to and a nurturing incubator for emerging research, educational themes, and best practices.	1. Evolve the format and outcomes of Jakobsen conference to include professional development, communication, themes centered on society's grand challenges. 2. Maintain and expand the Innovation in Graduate Education Challenge Grant program. 3. Create forums to share research with diverse audiences (e.g., local, regional, national	1. Re-envision the format of the Jakobsen conference so that it is responsive to the needs of current and future UI graduate students. 2. Sustain and increase participation in Innovation in Graduate Education Challenge Grant program.

	audiences of educators, policy makers, elected leaders).	
5. Continue the work of building capacity on campus, including with students, to consider and implement the range of products suitable for masters and doctoral thesis and dissertation research and discovery (e.g., peer-reviewed publications, books, digital projects, exhibits, recordings, capstone projects, etc.).	1. Using Iowa Research Online institutional repository (IRO), provide campus with a curated collection of theses and dissertations with non-monographic and innovative elements. 2. Lead best practice conversations to create non-monographic and innovative theses and dissertations guidelines related to scholarship development, product evaluation and submission, publication, and preservation of new-form work. 3. Consult with graduate programs at UI to identify alternative, discipline-specific, new form options for masters and doctoral scholarship. Provide continued advice to students regarding technical options and scholarship/publication-related considerations for non-monographic and innovative, new-form work. 4. Continue the nationally-renowned partnership between the UI Graduate College and Libraries (Institutional Repository) to develop and disseminate promising practices, e.g., DOI (digital objective identifiers), for submission, publication, and preservation of non-monographic, innovative, student scholarship.	1. Increased campus capacity for and acceptance of a range of types and formats for thesis products for masters and doctoral students. 2. Provide students and campus with scalable guidelines for the creation, submission, publication, and preservation of non-monographic and innovative, new-form scholarship.

ENGAGEMENT -- Goal: Build and foster strong relationships with all Graduate College stakeholders.

The Graduate College touches a broad group of stakeholders, including University of Iowa students, faculty, staff and Administrators, alumni of graduate programs, the Regents and legislators in Des Moines, and the communities across Iowa and around the globe that shape and are shaped by research and scholarship conducted within the Graduate College. A successful engagement plan should cultivate meaningful, reciprocal relationships with each of these stakeholder groups built on a shared appreciation for the role of the Graduate College at UI and the need for strong stakeholder support to help the Graduate College achieve its goals in research and discovery, student success, and recruitment and retention.

As strengths, the Graduate College has a stellar reputation on campus and among its peer institutions, attributable to Graduate College leadership. The Graduate College also has demonstrated a commitment to engagement using strategic communication efforts that are centered on student and postdoctoral scholars' success. Such efforts communicate the wide array of talent across campus and to diverse audiences, both through efforts coordinated by the College's external relations team (e.g. regularly published web and print media promoting recipients of fellowships and research awards, among other prestigious accolades) and through student professional development activities focused on communication (e.g., the 3 Minute Thesis competition). The College is also home to several highly regarded graduate programs with strong, publicly facing research and scholarship efforts (e.g., the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities through Urban and Regional Planning).

And while these engagement efforts can be viewed as an exemplary model in terms of the scope and diversity of content and activities featured, the reach of these coordinated efforts is not readily understood and has missed opportunities for broader impact. In programs across UI, the value of and need for the Graduate College is often questioned, while undergraduate initiatives have historically been the primary focus of University administration and the Board of Regents. The Graduate College can also do more to engage and leverage the success of its alumni, both to promote student success and support fundraising efforts specifically intended for graduate training activities.

Our recommendations below are intended to increase visibility for the Graduate College's role on campus, improve its fundraising efforts specifically dedicated to graduate student success at UI, and maintain its efforts to support publicly facing, community engaged research.

Strategy: *We can meet our engagement goal if we better market the existing strengths and reputation of the Graduate College, leverage and grow ongoing efforts in publicly-engaged research, and increase interactions with alumni that value the Graduate College's role in promoting student success at UI.*		
Collaborative Partners for Strategy Development and Implementation: *Office of Strategic Communications, University of Iowa Center for Advancement (UICA), Graduate College External Advisory Board*		
Critical Tasks	Tactics – Action Items	Indicators of Success

1. Better market Graduate College successes and its various roles on campus	1. Create "fellows" program that allows stakeholders (including alumni) to learn about the Graduate College's activities and benefit to campus while also sharing their expertise with the UI campus community 2. Work with the UI Office of Strategic Communications to more aggressively promote and defend the graduate enterprise, particularly messaging around the strength of UI graduate student research. 3. Better disseminate successes and roles through DGSs and Associate Deans of Colleges 4. Hire intern/practicum student to assist with GC communication programs (pay or possibly credit only) 5. Work with UI leadership (cabinet, deans, etc.) to incorporate graduate education talking points into major presentations	1. Develop and implement an external relations strategic plan for the Graduate College. 2. Increase nomination for faculty and staff for national awards to increase Graduate College visibility nationwide. 3. Establish baseline data related to marketing of the Graduate College (e.g., story "placement" rates) and make this information available to graduate programs and Colleges across UI. 4. Working with UI leadership, increase references to Graduate College accomplishments in leadership presentation materials.
2. Target fundraising efforts specifically for graduate student success initiatives	1. In partnership with UICA, establish a Graduate Student Success Fund that can be dedicated to supporting graduate student training and professional development at UI. 2. Use UICA data analytics to identify key GC prospects 3. Leverage advisory board for fundraising efforts—create a "development committee" 4. Build additional, dedicated capacity for fundraising for graduate student success at UICA. 5. Work with Colleges and Departments to make sure graduate education is incorporated in their capital campaigns	1. Additional staff person at UICA focused on fundraising for graduate student success initiatives. 2. Create BGI codes for all of the services provided by the Graduate College, and use this effort to increase content for alumni regarding professional development opportunities, student success initiatives, academic affairs, and event participation. 3. Track fundraising totals for graduate education across campus 4. Leverage the travel of Graduate College leadership team to conduct more outreach and engagement with alumni and other key stakeholders.

3. Better integrate Graduate College alumni and their experiences at UI into the training and development of current UI graduate students.	1. Identify strategic opportunities to host alumni and have them engage with current students, faculty and staff at UI. 2. Partner with departments to establish an Alumni Speaker's Bureau, supporting the return of departmental alumni to speak in colloquiums.	1. Establish mechanism to track number of alumni visits to campus and related opportunities for them to engage with current students, faculty and staff at UI. 2. Track alumni speakers that visit departments across UI, and work with departments to integrate more graduate student experiences/informal mentoring into those visits. 3. Conduct a survey of alumni to determine what services and information they want from the graduate college, as well as what opportunities they are willing to support for giving back to the Graduate College.
4. Maintain and expand support for community engaged research and teaching	1. Continue to support ongoing efforts on campus (e.g., Obermann Center for Advanced Studies, Humanities for the Public Good, Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Sustainable Development, etc.) that integrate community engagement into graduate student research and training.	1. Explore opportunities to integrate more engaged research opportunities including internships and service learning in graduate programs across campus.