

**Personal Goals, Personalized Excellence**  
**The University of Northern Iowa**  
**Graduate Education Strategic Plan**

**2006 - 2011**

*The Graduate College provides campus-wide leadership for Graduate Education, with the cooperation and collaboration of the five Academic Colleges and other divisions of the University. This strategic plan is a joint endeavor created and supported by all of the Colleges and those divisions, as well as by the University administration.*

**MISSION:**

**Graduate Education at the University of Northern Iowa provides selected programs of advanced study, research and creative activity grounded in a personalized and diverse graduate community that prepares successful practitioners, scholars and professional leaders.**

***VISION:***

***Graduate Education at the University of Northern Iowa will be a premier choice for students desiring a world-class education in a personalized graduate environment.***

Goal I. To maintain a responsive graduate organization that fosters innovation and excellence, facilitates community and promotes the identity of graduate education.

**Objectives:**

1.1 Articulate and maintain excellence in graduate education.

*Strategies:*

*1.1.1 Establish overarching criteria for excellence in graduate education programs.*

*1.1.2 Implement a mechanism to ensure that existing graduate programs and new graduate program proposals meet defined criteria for excellence.*

*1.1.3 Collect feedback from graduating graduate students and use results as appropriate for continuous program improvement and innovation.*

- 1.1.4 *Establish a Graduate Coordinator leadership team that will meet regularly with the Graduate Dean and other administrators and staff to provide input regarding the ongoing improvement of graduate operations as well as the ongoing implementation of the Graduate Education Strategic Plan.*
  - 1.1.5 *Provide Graduate College staff with regular opportunities for professional development and interaction with their peers in other Graduate Colleges, especially those in the other Iowa Regent and peer institutions.*
- 1.2 Promote an active, diverse and integrated graduate community.

*Strategies:*

- 1.2.1 *Continue and promote the Graduate College Brown Bag Lecture Series as a forum for a diversity of disciplines, ideas, perspectives and backgrounds.*
- 1.2.2 *Continue and support the online journal, UNIVERSITAS (established Fall, 2005) to enhance intellectual discourse in the university community as well as provide a forum for showcasing graduate faculty and graduate student achievements in research, scholarship, and creative activity.*
- 1.2.3 *Continue and support the graduate student newsletter, Graffito (established Fall, 2005), whose purpose is to enhance communication and build community among graduate students.*
- 1.2.4 *Establish a Graduate Student Advisory Council that will provide student leadership for the graduate student community and that will provide the Graduate Dean, Graduate Council, Educational and Student Services and others with regular input regarding all matters related to graduate education and support for graduate students.*
- 1.2.5 *Create a Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in the Graduate College.*
- 1.2.6 *Establish a schedule of social events and activities that enhance community and help create a welcoming academic environment for all graduate faculty and students.*

1.2.7 *Establish new opportunities for international, interdisciplinary study for graduate faculty in conjunction with graduate students.*

1.3 Raise awareness of and commitment to graduate education as an essential endeavor of a comprehensive university.

*Strategies:*

1.3.1 *Publish an annual report on the state of graduate education at UNI.*

1.3.2 *Develop a marketing plan for graduate education that includes public relations strategies designed to raise awareness of and support for graduate education among internal and external constituencies.*

1.3.3 *Assign a graduate assistant in the Graduate College to develop and publish articles on the Graduate College website, in Graffiti and other venues that showcase graduate faculty and graduate student achievements, as well as outstanding graduate programs.*

1.3.4 *Review committee/council membership roles across the university and request graduate representation on those relevant groups that currently lack such representation.*

Goal II. To provide high quality graduate programs that address state, regional, national and/or international needs.

**Objectives:**

2.1 Implement a mechanism to review existing programs and new program proposals to ensure they address state, regional, national and/or international needs.

*Strategies:*

2.1.1 *Work with the Graduate College Curriculum Committee to require all new graduate program proposals to include an in-depth analysis of state, regional, national and/or international need with the understanding that program approval is contingent upon establishing such need.*

2.1.2 *Develop effective strategies to analyze existing graduate programs in terms of their relevance to state, regional, national and/or international needs.*

- 2.2 Create and implement new graduate programs that align with state, regional, national and/or international needs.

*Strategies:*

2.2.1 *Implement Professional Science Masters (PSM) programs in applied areas of biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics.*

2.2.2 *Utilize discussions at appropriate college and department faculty meetings to encourage the creation of additional graduate programs (certificates, masters and doctoral) that meet state, regional, national and/or international needs.*

- 2.3 Develop mechanisms as deemed appropriate to deliver off-campus graduate programs that address state, regional, national and/or international needs.

*Strategies:*

2.3.1 *Analyze needs and opportunities for offering graduate programs via distance education, with a particular focus on using innovative technology.*

2.3.2 *Provide an “open house” opportunity or other event to allow interested graduate faculty to see a broad range of distance education technologies in action and to discuss needs and opportunities for offering graduate programs via distance education.*

Goal III. To recruit and maintain a distinguished graduate faculty.

**Objectives:**

- 3.1 Include graduate education perspectives in the faculty recruitment process for prospective faculty who will be involved with graduate education.

*Strategies:*

3.1.1 *Provide a copy of the Graduate Education Strategic Plan and other appropriate graduate materials to departments for use in faculty search processes.*

3.1.2 *Communicate a request to Department Heads that for any search for faculty who will be involved with graduate education that a search committee member who is an active participant in graduate education be designated to specifically address graduate education issues as the search proceeds.*

3.1.3 *Communicate a request to all academic departments that finalists for faculty positions that will primarily serve a graduate program be scheduled to meet with a member of the Graduate Leadership Team (Dean, Associate Dean, Graduate Council Chair or Graduate Faculty Chair) during their campus visit.*

3.2 Establish criteria for graduate faculty membership.

*Strategy:*

3.2.1 *A task force of the Graduate Council will report on and make recommendations to the Council on a study of criteria for graduate faculty status, including a review of peer institution policies and an analysis of the impact of any proposed changes in established criteria.*

3.3 Provide research and professional development opportunities for graduate faculty.

*Strategies:*

3.3.1 *Continue implementation of the Carver-funded “Enhancing the Quality of Graduate Education” professional development program in the Graduate College (Fall, 2005 – Spring, 2008).*

3.3.2 *Use the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in the Graduate College (1.2.5) as a catalyst for providing new research opportunities for graduate faculty.*

3.4 Recognize and reward faculty contributions to graduate education.

*Strategies:*

3.4.1 *Award a certificate of membership for individual faculty members upon appointment by the Graduate Dean to graduate faculty status. This will be retroactive to include all current members of the graduate faculty.*

- 3.4.2 *A task force of the Graduate Council will report on and make recommendations regarding recognition of faculty contributions to graduate education as those contributions relate to faculty load, merit distribution, and the recognition of graduate education activities as teaching, research and/or service to the department.*
- 3.4.3 *Utilize the Graduate College website and other methods of communication to recognize graduate faculty achievement.*
- 3.4.4 *Promote existing Graduate College awards and establish new awards as deemed appropriate to recognize excellence in teaching, research and other activities associated with graduate education.*

Goal IV. To recruit and retain high quality graduate students.

**Objectives:**

- 4.1 Increase the number, quality and diversity of applicants for graduate programs.

*Strategies:*

- 4.1.1 *Work with the Offices of Admissions, University Marketing and Public Relations (UM&PR), and graduate programs to develop an overall graduate education recruitment plan.*
- 4.1.2 *Work with graduate programs, Admissions and UM&PR to develop appropriate recruitment materials.*
- 4.1.3 *Develop an inservice program for graduate faculty on student recruitment including an opportunity for departments to share recruitment strategies with each other.*
- 4.1.4 *Implement a process to reallocate a designated number of graduate assistantships to support recruitment of highly qualified graduate students to graduate programs that serve state, regional, national and/or international needs.*
- 4.1.5 *Reduce by 50% the number of assistantships allocated to graduate students admitted on a probationary basis.*

- 4.2 Increase the number of graduate students from groups under-represented in graduate education, out-of-state students and international students.

*Strategies:*

- 4.2.1 *Re-establish a position in the Graduate College with part-time responsibility for minority recruitment and retention.*
- 4.2.2 *Continue to allocate specified assistantships to support the recruitment of graduate students from groups under-represented in graduate education; particularly for programs that meet state, regional, national and/or international needs.*
- 4.2.3 *Allocate specified assistantships to support the recruitment of international graduate students for initiatives that support specific global initiatives and institutional partnerships.*
- 4.2.4 *Establish a mechanism to identify highly-qualified UNI juniors and seniors who are from groups under-represented in graduate education or who are international students and encourage their investigation of UNI graduate programs.*
- 4.2.5 *Expand disciplinary-specific diversity initiatives (such as Project Affirm in Communicative Disorders and the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate [AGEP] in Mathematics) to include more programs and students.*
- 4.3 Establish a mechanism to monitor students' progress from admission through graduation.

*Strategies:*

- 4.3.1 *Implement an electronic academic record system for graduate students.*
- 4.3.2 *With graduate coordinators, identify best practices in advising and develop a mechanism to better utilize advising to enhance student progress and retention and to enhance the overall graduate experience.*

4.4 Provide a supportive campus environment for graduate students.

*Strategies:*

4.4.1 *Establish a Graduate Student Opportunity Fund to provide support for graduate students for participation in academic conferences and for expenses for research and projects.*

4.4.2 *Provide a campus-wide Graduate Student Orientation each semester to assist new and returning graduate students in becoming familiar with the graduate community and opportunities available to them.*

4.4.3 *Work with the Division of Educational and Student Services to survey current graduate students to determine support services priorities and needs; then develop ways to maximize student services for graduate students.*

4.4.4 *Work with the Division of Educational and Student Services to benchmark graduate student support services against services offered by other graduate institutions, especially peer institutions.*

4.4.5 *Establish mechanisms to recognize and reward graduate student achievement including annual awards, an annual Graduate Student Research Symposium and an annual Celebration Reception to honor graduating graduate students.*

Goal V. To acquire and direct the resources necessary to advance the strategic plan for graduate education.

**Objectives:**

5.1 Implement a budget process that links allocations to the strategic plan for graduate education.

*Strategies:*

5.1.1 *During yearly budget development, define budget priorities and requests within the framework of strategic planning priorities.*

5.1.2 *Allocate Graduate College resources to support strategic planning objectives.*

5.1.3 *Advocate for appropriate budgetary support for graduate education at all levels and within all units of the university including academic departments, colleges and other divisions of the institution.*

5.2 Organize and direct human resources in the Graduate College and in association with related divisions to best support ongoing implementation of the strategic plan.

*Strategies:*

5.2.1 *Identify key participants whose contributions will be necessary to achieve each objective in the strategic plan.*

5.2.2 *Reorganize as necessary the roles and responsibilities of Graduate College staff to best support ongoing implementation of the strategic plan.*

5.3 Increase support for graduate education from external sources.

*Strategies:*

5.3.1 *In cooperation with the UNI Foundation and the Alumni Association, increase the number of graduate alumni who contribute to graduate initiatives.*

5.3.2 *Increase by 50% the number of sponsored funding proposals that include funding for graduate students.*

5.3.3 *Increase the number of strategic partnerships with industry, businesses and other institutions to support graduate education.*

5.3.4 *Designate a task force charged to examine the concept of tuition surcharges as a way to bring additional resources to selected graduate programs.*

5.3.5 *In cooperation with the Office of Governmental Relations, increase the number of federal and state appropriations requests that support graduate education.*