

The Graduate School Strategic Plan

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Executive Summary

The strategic plan presented in this document provides a framework for strengthening graduate education at Ohio State. The mission and vision statements describe the principal activities of the Graduate School and its commitment to ensuring the high quality of graduate education in support of Ohio State's goal of being the leading public land-grant and research university in the nation. The Graduate School is committed to the seven principal values of Ohio State. Taken together, the mission, vision, and values of the Graduate School are the foundation for its work with the graduate programs and the other parts of the university as well as the world outside Ohio State.

As described in the Context section, the review of Ohio State's doctoral programs carried out by the Graduate School in 2007 and 2008 was a fundamental first step that has led to the goals, strategies, and initiatives presented in the strategic plan. The review identified the strongest graduate programs as well as those in need of restructuring or significant improvement. The enhanced fellowship support awarded to the strongest programs has already led to an increased yield and quality of entering graduate students. The review catalyzed the restructuring of programs in several colleges and led to the formation of task forces for strengthening the interdisciplinary efforts in the environmental sciences and the life sciences, two important areas in which Ohio State has the opportunity to excel by harnessing the full potential of the many programs spanning the campus for research and graduate education. The present strategic plan is the result of these efforts, together with other developments and opportunities that have been identified as part of the planning process.

The main strategies and initiatives in this plan are connected to the six goals of the University – One University, Students First, Faculty and Staff Talent Culture, Research Prominence, Outreach and Collaboration, Operating & Financial Soundness & Simplicity. For the Graduate School, the main strategies are:

- Maximize Ohio State's strengths and enhance its visibility in the life sciences and the environmental sciences
- Increase the national and international visibility of the graduate programs at Ohio State
- Utilize the Summer Research Opportunities Program as a tool to meet our diversity needs
- Provide graduate students with enriching international experiences

- Continue to aggressively implement the recommendations of the Doctoral Review Report
- Enhance Ohio State's visibility and reputation in interdisciplinary research
- Develop a strategic communication plan to convey the importance of graduate education to on-campus, state, and broader audiences
- Streamline all major Graduate School processes

As evidenced by our work over the past several years, the Graduate School already has an impressive list of accomplishments directed toward improving graduate education at Ohio State. We look forward to using the initiatives defined in this strategic plan as our guide to future efforts.

Patrick S. Osmer

Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School

Introduction to the Strategic Plan

The American Heritage Dictionary (1975) defines a university as “an institution of higher learning with teaching and research facilities comprising a graduate school and professional schools that award master’s degrees and doctorates and an undergraduate division that awards bachelor’s degrees.” Graduate education and a graduate school are therefore at the very core of a major research university such as Ohio State.

While graduate education is a core component of research universities, it is also a decentralized activity carried out by faculty working with students at the program level. To be effective, then, graduate education requires a strong, successful, mutually reinforcing partnership between the graduate programs and the Graduate School where the role of the Graduate School is to provide strategic leadership, foster quality, and provide services and support for graduate education across all graduate programs at Ohio State. Our approach to developing this strategic plan has taken into account this decentralized nature of graduate education, and our strategies and initiatives acknowledge our partnerships with other colleges and administrative units of the university.

This strategic plan has evolved from the doctoral review process and other initiatives undertaken by the Graduate School over the past three years. Discussions with graduate faculty and students, department chairs, deans, and others guided our work. These discussions occurred in departmental meetings, the Graduate School’s quarterly meetings with chairs, and in numerous individual conversations. The ongoing work of the Graduate School’s deans and directors provided the base on which to build the specifics of the plan.

The clear goal of the doctoral review was to improve graduate education at Ohio State. That is happening. The Graduate School looks forward to exploring new ways in which to assure that our graduate programs continue to move from excellence to eminence.

Mission

The Graduate School provides strategic leadership for graduate education at The Ohio State University. It fosters quality in graduate education and research by ensuring high standards for graduate degree programs and by providing essential services that support the work of graduate students, faculty, and staff. The Graduate School promotes cultural diversity in the community of graduate faculty and students and is an essential partner with the colleges and graduate programs in leveraging financial resources to recruit and support highly talented graduate students.

Vision

The Graduate School is committed to ensuring the high quality of graduate programs at The Ohio State University, contributing to its goal of being the leading public land-grant and research university in the nation.

Values

The Graduate School is committed to:

Excellence—in the standards we set, the results we produce, the relationships we are in, and the dedicated service we provide.

Collaborating as One University—our aspirations demand we remove internal boundaries—we must share information, promote teamwork, and think creatively to make this happen.

Acting with integrity and personal accountability—we accept responsibility for our actions, we keep our word, we focus on solutions rather than fault and blame, and we take initiative to make things happen.

Openness and trust—our communication is direct and honest, we promote authenticity and transparency in our relationships and activities, we're open to feedback and coaching, and we give feedback with candor and respect.

Diversity in people and ideas—the health of our environment demands that we respect each other, that we are inclusive, and that we profoundly value who each of us is as a whole person and what each of us uniquely contributes.

Change and innovation—these principles are our heritage and our future—we’re curious, we’re creative, and we embrace positive, constructive conflict.

Simplicity in our work—in the administration and management of our enterprise we are responsive, ethical, and transparent and we strive to make the functioning of this complex institution simple and efficient.

Context

Introduction

The Graduate School has set an aggressive agenda to improve the quality of graduate education at Ohio State. The work began in the summer of 2007 with the doctoral program review process. The Graduate School assessment resulted in several outcomes: 1) the in-depth assessment of the doctoral programs by the colleges; 2) the Graduate School's candid assessment of and classification of Ohio State's doctoral programs by indicators of quality; and 3) the identification of university-wide issues, challenges, and opportunities. The assessment process highlighted a tremendous opportunity for Ohio State to excel in the environmental and life sciences.

It is from the doctoral review process that Provost Alutto established task forces on the life sciences and on the environmental sciences in the summer of 2008 with the charge to identify how Ohio State's graduate level education, especially at the doctoral level, and research in the biological and life sciences and environmental sciences should be optimally configured and to recommend appropriate organizational processes and arrangements to support high-quality doctoral educational and research efforts. The work of both task forces was driven by the recognition of the importance of interdisciplinary research in the modern university and how Ohio State's graduate programs and research agendas could benefit from strategic efforts to increase interdisciplinary initiatives.

The Importance of Interdisciplinary Research and Education

Modern universities often describe their missions as the creation of knowledge and the transmission of knowledge. For generations, research universities have organized around core areas of knowledge that have come to be called "disciplines." Traditionally, knowledge advanced within disciplines, and the curriculum was organized within discipline-based departments. However, we now see knowledge advancing not only within the core of the various disciplines but increasingly on the interface of disciplines

and through new combinations of disciplines. Because of their complexity, current societal, global, and scientific problems frequently require contributions from multiple fields to achieve understanding and solution. In particular, many groundbreaking advances in science and technology are being achieved by combining results from fields once thought to be unrelated: e.g., the discovery of the structure of DNA, medical imaging techniques such as MRI, and satellite-based global positioning system (GPS).

The challenge now for modern universities is to better position themselves to undertake the kinds of research and to develop the kinds of instructional programs that address issues with many dimensions and that require combining knowledge from more than one field. Ohio State is making these changes in order to strengthen its research and educational programs, to address compelling national and global problems, to assume even stronger leadership in higher education in this country, and to continue serving the people of Ohio well. Indeed, the comprehensiveness of Ohio State's academic programs and the quality of Ohio State's faculty provide exceptional opportunities to accomplish here what cannot be attempted at other institutions. In this regard, Ohio State not only has an opportunity but also has the responsibility to fully engage in a next phase of knowledge generation, one that is more interdisciplinary and more cross-disciplinary than has previously been undertaken. Current research in the life and environmental sciences demonstrates that these areas are particularly ripe for this kind of inquiry at this time.

Indeed, in several parts of Ohio State's campus there is movement in these directions. The Comprehensive Cancer Center, the Mathematical Biosciences Institute, and the Center for Microbial Interface Biology are examples of forefront interdisciplinary research in the life sciences. In response to the call from the Ohio Board of Regents for each of the state's 13 public universities to identify its centers of excellence, Ohio State named five areas of particular institutional strength: climate, energy, and the environment; health and well-being, human behavior, and bioinformatics; state, regional, and urban development; food production, supply, and safety; materials, manufacturing technologies, and nanotechnology. Excellence in each of these areas currently requires

the participation of programs across several fields, and continued strength will depend on successful interdisciplinary research and education.

Moving Forward

Even with these positive examples, there are many challenges at the institutional level. The existing departmental and college structures and the historical concentration on discipline-based programs provide, on the one hand, important structures for on-going research in foundational areas but also potentially significant barriers to establishing new ways of doing research and instruction that cross traditional boundaries.

The university's strategic roadmap addresses these challenges and notes that Ohio State "will continually adapt to the ever-changing dynamics of the higher education environment." The Graduate School stands as a full partner in this process as evidenced by its leadership in the following initiatives:

- The continuing efforts directed toward the strengthening of the life and environmental sciences at Ohio State. A Program Council composed of college deans is now in place and efforts are underway to identify faculty partners, name an executive director, and identify viable office space.
- The impetus in developing new master's programs, particularly professional master's programs, as a catalyst for economic growth at the state level and for increasing graduate enrollment.
- New initiatives to attract high quality international students to Ohio State. Working with the Office of International Affairs and the English as a Second Language/American Language Program (ESL/ALP), the Graduate School is formulating a new policy that will allow for the admission of these students conditional upon their completion of an intensive English language program held on campus.
- Our work with culturally diverse students to assure their success in graduate programs across the university. The Graduate School is an

acknowledged leader in structuring recruitment efforts both on and off campus to attract a diverse pool of graduate students.

- The strategic use of financial resources to assure that university goals are met. The Graduate School's fellowship competitions and tuition and fee support program provide assistance to both individual graduate students in pursuit of their degrees and to graduate programs in pursuit of external funding.
- Simplifying Graduate School processes to benefit graduate students and graduate programs. Many forms and processes are being modified to allow for on-line submission/management, and new databases will assist in tracking important student and faculty information.

The Graduate School's strategic plan puts our mission statement into action. It specifies how the Graduate School contributes to the university's goals and objectives. It shows how the Graduate School partners with other units to assist them in achieving better results in their work. It details the many initiatives that the Graduate School has put into place to recruit and retain the highest quality domestic and international graduate students. It makes clear that the Graduate School is doing its part to move Ohio State from excellence to eminence in graduate education.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Initiatives

I. Goal: One University

We will adopt a 'One University' perspective in all decision making to create a culture where everyone is driven by a shared common vision and supports trans-institutional execution.

1.2 Objective:

Optimize the organizational structure, processes, and infrastructure for pursuit of common goals

1.2. A College/unit strategy:

Maximize Ohio State's strengths and enhance its visibility in the life sciences and the environmental sciences

Primary University strategy cross-reference: 1.2.1

Strategy Description

Following from the Graduate School's 2008 Doctoral Review Report, task forces for the life sciences and environmental sciences were formed to build upon the findings and recommendations of that report. The overall goal is to compete for significant external funding and to attract the best graduate students and faculty, which will strengthen the graduate programs.

To achieve this goal, an action plan detailing attention to organizational structure and processes was developed. A Program Council of deans of colleges with significant involvement in the life and environmental sciences is currently developing a governance structure that will lead to further enhancements of the university's strengths in these fields of research and graduate study.

1.2. A.1 College/unit initiative:

Aggressively implement major components of the action plan developed by the task forces on the life and environmental sciences

Primary University cross reference: 1.2.1

Secondary University cross-reference: 1.2.1.1

Initiative Description

The major components of the action plan include the formation of the Program Council (completed), involvement of forward-looking graduate faculty to help identify current strengths and most promising research and funding opportunities for the future, selection of executive directors to lead the activities of the life sciences and environmental programs, the formation of an operations support group, and identification of appropriate space to carry out the main activities of the action plan.

Metrics, Milestones and Resources

- **Metrics** –identification of graduate faculty and funding opportunities where Ohio State can have an impact, naming of executive director(s), identification of space
- **Milestones** – identification of faculty by autumn 2010; identification of funding opportunities starting in 2011, naming of executive director(s) by 2011
- **Resources** – decisions are in process regarding support for hiring of executive directors and possible renovation of suitable space. It is anticipated that each participating unit will contribute a proportional share to support the new administrative structure.

Description of support outside primary objective

Initiative 1.2.A.1 is directly related to University Initiative 1.2.1.1: Complete the restructuring of the Arts and Sciences. Much of the university's efforts in the life and environmental sciences are under the purview of the College of the Arts and Sciences and as such, any structural changes made by the college have a direct impact on these graduate programs and areas of research. Similarly, any changes that will impact how the life and environmental sciences are broadly supported by the university must engage the Arts and Sciences. Dean Joseph Steinmetz serves on the executive committee of the Program Council.

2. Goal: Students First

We will place Students First with access to academic excellence to ensure that the needs of students receive the highest priority as we continue to seek excellence in all phases of our operations.

2.1. Objective:

Enroll the best through active recruitment and access

2.1. A College/unit strategy:

Increase the national and international visibility of the graduate programs at Ohio State University

Primary University strategy cross-reference: 2.1.1

Secondary University cross-reference: 4.1

Strategy Description

Enrolling the best graduate students requires a multi-pronged recruitment approach. It is not sufficient to offer excellent programs and assume that students will find their way. Outstanding students that the university hopes to attract have numerous opportunities available to them, particularly at the graduate level. Graduate programs must actively develop new academic programs and services that will attract high quality students. The Graduate School's role is to provide strategic leadership and counsel in this process.

2.1. A.1 College/unit initiative:

Partner with the Office of the Vice Provost for Global Strategies and International Affairs and the offices of ESL/ALP in initiating conditional admissions for select graduate students.

Primary University cross-reference: 2.1

Initiative Description

A major stumbling block for many high quality prospective international graduate students is the verification of a sufficiently high level of English language ability necessary to pursue graduate work. For most non-native English speakers this verification is provided by scoring at an appropriate level on the TOEFL examination. Unlike many international institutions (for example, all British universities), Ohio

State does not allow students to be admitted conditionally, i.e. until they have come to the US for intensive English language study, with the guarantee of admission to a graduate program when the proficiency condition has been completed. (Students must otherwise meet the admission requirements of their graduate program.)

This policy is currently under review and the Graduate School is an important partner, with International Affairs, ESL/ALP, and the individual graduate programs in structuring a new policy. Such a change would significantly increase the profile of Ohio State's graduate programs among high quality international applicants.

Metrics, Milestones and Resources

- **Metrics**—Development of an English language study program under the auspices of ESL/ALP
- **Milestones**—English language program structure in place by 2011; first students admitted to program for 2012
- **Resources**—This initiative requires a wide-ranging approach to language study beyond classroom work. It is anticipated that the program will be fully funded by international students or their sponsors.

2.1. A.2 College/unit initiative:

Provide leadership to academic departments in developing new master's programs, with an emphasis on professional master's

Primary University cross-reference: 2.1_____

Initiative Description

The Graduate Enrollment Subcommittee of the Enrollment Management Committee has been charged with examining the opportunities for graduate student enrollment growth over the next five years. The focus of the subcommittee's work centers on potential growth in master's programs and professional doctorates as a way to attract high quality (including international) graduate student applicants.

The Graduate School is not an academic department and as such does not develop new programs of its own accord. The role of the Graduate School is in working with academic departments in providing data, information and support that will be assistive to the departments as they determine how to expand program opportunities.

Metrics, Milestones and Resources

- **Metrics**—Number of new master’s programs developed by academic departments
- **Milestones**—200 new graduate students enrolled at Ohio State by autumn 2015
- **Resources**—Start-up loans to programs may be available from OAA; see funding models provided by OAA

2.2 Objective:

Increase cultural and economic diversity of the student body

2.2. A College/unit strategy:

Increase national visibility of graduate programs

Primary University strategy cross-reference: [2.2.1](#)

Strategy Description:

Excellence in graduate education is intimately connected to diversity of peoples, ideas, and disciplines. As the catalyst, the Graduate School must provide access, information, and expertise to lead the way for the individual graduate programs.

2.2. A.1 College/unit initiative:

Participate in national recruiting events including but not limited to the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS), the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), the Annual BioMedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS), and McNair Conferences, while engaging our graduate programs with faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions as well as with our CIC colleagues.

Primary University cross-reference: [2.2.1](#)

Initiative Description:

Through increasing participation and nurturing relationships with external organizations and partnerships with our own graduate programs, we will create and sustain pathways for students into graduate study.

Metrics, Milestones and Resources

- **Metrics**—Number of students requesting application fee waivers; number of students applying, accepting, enrolling; number of nominations for Fellowships; request from faculty for letters of support in grant applications
- **Milestones**—percentage increases of students applying, accepting admission and enrolling at Ohio State over 3 years, 5 years and 10 years; excellence in fellowship competitions, credentials for nominations and winning nominations; Increased program and faculty involvement in recruitment
- **Resources**—support of recruitment related costs for venues and travel; increasingly effect web presences for gathering as well as disseminating information. Graduate School resources will be used for the base program, with participating academic units paying their share of costs for additional efforts.

2.2. B College/unit strategy

Utilize the Summer Research Opportunities Program as a tool to meet our diversity needs

Primary University strategy cross-reference: [2.2.1](#)

Strategy Description:

Structured undergraduate research experiences bridging all aspects of the graduate school experience have been shown to be highly effective tools for increasing representation and success in enrolling more students in graduate programs.

2.2. B.1 College/unit initiative:

Attracting highly qualified student scholars as participants in our SROP program and matching them with talented, engaged faculty. Provide recruitment support to the graduate program through the use of multi-year collaborative funding packages to yield our SROP participants.

Primary University cross-reference:2.2.1

Initiative Description:

The SROP program can be a significant conduit for culturally and economically diverse undergraduates to become interested in graduate education at Ohio State.

Metrics, Milestones and Resources

- **Metrics**—Number of applications for SROP at Ohio State through the CIC site; monitoring average GPA at time of application, distribution across the institution and evaluation data; number of applications to the Graduate School via application fee waivers, and SROP participation at all CIC institutions to Ohio State; enrollment data; nominations for the SROP Fellowships and nominations for Graduate School and college Fellowships competitions; matriculation data
- **Milestones**—Average GPA of SROP participants at 3.5; yielding 40% of our participants into our graduate programs (3-5 years); increasing the our cohort to 75 students inclusive of other REUs and other funded undergraduate research programs; increasing number of students receiving funding other than Enrichment Awards; annually awarding all 10 SROP Fellowships and yielding those students.
- **Resources**—we will use existing resources provided by the Graduate School and OAA for the base program. Expanded program efforts will be supported by academic units and additional backing will be sought from grants from external agencies and funding sources.

2.3 Objective:

Provide an exceptional undergraduate, graduate and professional student experience, and graduate students positioned for success as professionals and citizens

2.3. A College/unit strategy:

Provide graduate students with enriching international experiences

Primary University strategy cross-reference:2.3.1

Strategy Description:

Graduate education is increasingly becoming an international experience, with students and faculty traveling not only to conduct research but to participate in academic experiences at universities around the world. Ohio State graduate students must have the opportunity to engage in these experiences.

2.3. A.1 College/unit initiative:

In partnership with academic units and the Office of Global Strategies and International Affairs, aggressively explore opportunities for dual/joint degree programs and academic research exchanges with high quality international colleges and universities.

Primary University cross-reference: 2.3.1.1

Initiative Description:

Ohio State must be creative in exploring international academic and research opportunities for its graduate students. New degree options are being utilized at other high quality institutions, and we must be aggressive in seeking out partnership opportunities. The Graduate School can provide leadership to the academic departments in developing such linkages.

Metrics, Milestones and Resources

- **Metrics**—number of international agreements reached by Ohio State graduate programs; number of students participating in new exchange program opportunities
- **Milestones**—Two new partnerships initiated, with student participation, by 2012
- **Resources**—Start-up funding may be necessary to carry out negotiations as well as to fund student travel and research. These resources will be provided from Graduate School resources, including development funds.

3. Goal: Faculty and Staff Talent & Culture

We will further develop our highly diverse faculty, staff talent and create a high performance culture driven by common principles of excellence in accountability and achievement.

3.1. Objective:

Enhance academic reputation and rankings

3.1. A College/unit strategy:

Continue to aggressively implement the recommendations of the Doctoral Review Report

Primary University strategy cross-reference:3.1

Strategy Description:

One of the premises of the doctoral program review conducted in 2007-08 was that “high quality doctoral programs are required for Ohio State to reach the top ranks of public research universities.” The Graduate School continues to address graduate program quality, most specifically in the continuing efforts in strengthening and enhancing the life and environmental sciences. These efforts will impact the university’s academic reputation and rankings.

3.1. A.1 College/unit initiative:

In collaboration with Institutional Research and Planning and using anticipated NRC data, develop measurements and metrics for continued enhancement of individual graduate programs

Primary University cross-reference:3.1

Initiative Description:

For its review of individual doctoral programs, the Graduate School relied, in part, on various data sets and measures that had been gathered by Institutional Research and Planning. These data were immensely helpful in identifying areas of strength as well as areas of concern for the academic programs. Continued attention to graduate program quality requires updating these data and, with the expected NRC report data, the Graduate School will be able to further assist graduate programs in assessing strengths.

Metrics, Milestones and Resources

- **Metrics**—Development of an updated data set to share with academic programs;
- **Milestones**—Updated information shared with academic programs by 2011 (dependent upon release of NRC data); follow-ups with individual programs by 2012
- **Resources**—Time of IRP staff to gather relevant information

4. Goal: Research Prominence

We will achieve world class research prominence by supporting innovative, cutting edge, within and across discipline research that will be the basis for achieving excellence in all that we do.

4.1. Objective:

Foster preeminence in research

4.1. A College/unit strategy:

Enhance Ohio State's visibility and reputation in interdisciplinary research in the life and environmental sciences

Primary University cross-reference: 4.1.1

Strategy Description:

The highest priority finding to emerge from the doctoral review process was that Ohio State has enormous potential to be a world leader in the life and environmental sciences. Much of the research done in these fields is interdisciplinary in nature.

By optimizing organizational and administrative arrangements to enable faculty and students to work at their full potential, the university can realize significant long-term benefits.

4.1. A.1 College/unit initiative:

Working with the Program Council for the Life and Environmental Sciences, increase interdisciplinary research efforts in these academic areas

Primary University cross-reference: 4.1.1

Initiative Description:

One task of the Program Council is to assist in identifying strategic research subject areas and frontier research problems that can be expected to generate strong external funding over the next decade and that Ohio State should focus on in the life and environmental sciences. Vice President for Research Caroline Whitacre is a member of the Program Council and its Executive Committee, providing a strong link between the Office of Research and research efforts in these areas.

It is anticipated that an expected result of the interdisciplinary approach will be to strengthen the support of the interdisciplinary graduate programs in life and environmental sciences.

Metrics, Milestones and Resources

- **Metrics**—hiring of executive director(s) to lead and coordinate research efforts; number of major funding proposals submitted; development of a faculty hiring plan that will support strengthening of interdisciplinary research and graduate education.
- **Milestones**—executive director(s) hired by 2011; five-year hiring plan completed within six months of executive director’s hire; two major funding proposals with interdisciplinary perspective submitted to NIH, NSF, or other appropriate funding sources by 2012
- **Resources**—Program Council will need to work with Provost to identify sources of funding needed to cover salaries and operating costs for executive director and supporting staff, to develop major funding proposals, and to provide start-up funds for new faculty hires over first five-year period.

4.1. A.2 College/unit initiative:

Review use of Graduate School matching tuition/fee program to align with strategic goals for interdisciplinary research

Primary University cross-reference: 4.1.1

Initiative Description:

The Graduate School strategically manages \$3 million in tuition and fee support to award to outstanding graduate students across disciplines. These dollars are used to leverage external research funding to the individual graduate programs. It is appropriate to review the awarding of these funds to assure that they are targeted to academic initiatives which the university wishes to enhance and highlight. The Graduate School would propose to target graduate students in interdisciplinary fields, particularly in the life and environmental sciences for receipt of these funds.

Metrics, Milestones and Resources

- **Metrics**—track the number of graduate students in interdisciplinary life and environmental science programs who are receiving matching tuition/fees.
- **Milestones**—increased percentage of students in interdisciplinary areas of study receiving matching tuition/fees by 2012, with particular focus on students in life and environmental sciences
- **Resources**—No additional resources required

5. Goal: Outreach and Collaboration

We will increase outreach and collaboration through public and public-private partnerships that will enhance our impact on the quality of life for citizens of the state, country and world.

5.3. Objective:

Align outreach and engagement activities with non-academic needs

5.3. A College/unit strategy:

Develop a strategic communication plan to convey importance of graduate education to state, on-campus, and broader community audiences

Primary University cross-reference:5.3.1_____

Strategy Description:

The Graduate School has not historically taken an activist role in communicating the value of graduate education to a wide audience. Its focus has primarily been centered on campus, representing the interests of graduate students and faculty and advocating for support of graduate education.

With higher education's increasingly international focus, it is important for the Graduate School to become an active participant in the dialogue concerning the importance and future of graduate education. This strategy will include the development of broader strategic communications efforts to support and advance other initiatives as presented in this plan.

5.3. A.1 College/unit initiative:

Utilize Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School to educate and advocate for the importance of graduate education

Primary University cross-reference:5.3.1

Initiative Description:

Over the past four years, Patrick Osmer, vice provost and dean, has become a recognized advocate and spokesperson for the importance of graduate education. He currently serves on the Board and Executive Committee of the Council of Graduate Schools, the “only national organization in the United States that is dedicated solely to the advancement of graduate education and research.” Dean Osmer also serves on the CGS/ETS sponsored Commission on the Future of Graduate Education in the United States. His experience on these boards and commissions as well as his work in national and international astronomy endeavors should be more broadly utilized to represent the interests of graduate education to a wide audience.

Metrics, Milestones and Resources

- **Metrics**—number of talks, invited presentations by dean
- **Milestones**— TBD
- **Resources**—no additional resources required

6. Goal: Operating and Financial Soundness & Simplicity

We will establish operational and financial soundness along with simplicity in processes to ultimately be known for our robust financial position using transparent, simple, and flexible systems.

6.2. Objective:

Improve our operating efficiency

6.2. A College/unit strategy:

Streamline all major Graduate School processes

Primary University cross-reference:6.2.1

Strategy Description:

One of the primary missions of the Graduate School is to provide essential administrative services to academic departments, graduate programs, and graduate students. These services range from collecting data that is shared with graduate programs to processing graduate students' petitions and forms related to their academic work. Some of these processes require paper forms, multiple signatures, and personal visits to the Graduate School offices.

6.2. A.1 College/unit initiative:**Continue streamlining initiatives to increase faculty, staff, and graduate student satisfaction with Graduate School services**

Primary University cross-reference: 6.2.1.2

Initiative Description:

The Graduate School staff have worked to simplify many of the academic processes required of graduate students as well as to provide better support service to the academic programs and departments. In the past two years, examination forms for both master's and doctoral candidates have been moved to an electronic format and most communication with students has moved from mailed letters to email, including information and details concerning preparation for commencement ceremonies. A graduate faculty data base has also been developed and shared with graduate programs.

As part of this streamlining project, the Graduate School is working to simplify and better organize information presented on its web site. This effort is anticipated to improve service to prospective and current graduate students as well as to graduate programs and individual faculty members.

Metrics, Milestones and Resources

- **Metrics**—Development of an awards management database, finalization of a new Graduate School web site, implementation of a computerized exit survey for graduating students, enhancement of the Graduate Faculty portal, implementation of document imaging, development of a database to track academic milestones of university fellows.
- **Milestones**—The web site will be rolled out by September 2010; document imaging will be implemented by 2012; all other initiatives will occur during 2011
- **Resources**—No additional resources required