

2024-2025

ANNUAL — REPORT



At left, PhD candidate Erin Bailey laughs with her faculty advisor during UW–Madison’s spring commencement ceremony held at the Kohl Center in May 2024. Photo by Althea Dotzour / UW–Madison.



Graduate School
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

LETTER

FROM THE DEAN

Dear Colleagues,

Research, teaching, and innovation drive us forward and improve lives in Wisconsin, in the U.S., and around the world. This commitment to working toward the greater good is a deeply held value at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Graduate School contributes to this ideal by helping prepare graduate students to be leaders and innovators in their disciplines and society at large.

The Graduate School is the central campus unit that admits graduate students, supports their academic and professional journeys, and awards their degrees. We aim to provide opportunities for students to fully realize their potential to contribute public service, practice curiosity-driven science, and create moving and innovative scholarship that connects us in our shared humanity.

Graduate level training prepares students to be experts and leaders who can tackle the complex and challenging issues of our time, and there are many of these to tackle. We continue to uphold our mission – to foster excellence in graduate education – recognizing the importance of this mission.

This year, our staff have worked diligently to provide guidance and development opportunities for graduate students, support faculty and staff in graduate programs, and advocate for the importance of graduate education and training. A few of our activities this year include:



- Launching well-utilized individual career consultations for graduate students who do not have access to such services within their schools and colleges
- Supporting students through fellowships, grants for research travel and presenting at conferences, and basic needs resources
- Equipping students to apply for and obtain external fellowships, and highlighting the achievements of those students who receive prestigious awards
- Creating new data reports and dashboards to support data-informed program review and improvement

The following report details these and many more of the Graduate School's activities and contributions to campus over the past year. I invite you to read it and reach out to us to learn more or collaborate. Together, we can continue to strengthen graduate education on campus, setting the stage for our students and, eventually, our graduates to make their mark on the world.

William J. Karpus

Dean of the Graduate School
Vice Provost for Postdoctoral Affairs
Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
University of Wisconsin-Madison

PRIORITIES & INITIATIVES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(A) Advance

innovative graduate education, career development, and professional success

- UW–Madison’s graduate programs ranked highly, supported by improved benchmarking tools for program planning and degree tracking.
- Professional development grew with new badges, career advising, and internships with continued student engagement and communication strategy.

pages 4-7

(B) Foster

access and engagement to recruit and retain a talented graduate student body

- The Graduate School supported recruitment through holistic admissions training, outreach, data tools, a recruitment fair, and research opportunities.
- Fellowships and awards and a new Bridge and Build Community advanced inclusive excellence and student success.

pages 8-10

(C) Establish

and support university-wide expectations for consistent and high-quality graduate student mentorship

- Research Mentor Learning Communities, the Delta program, and CIRTLL Network advanced mentorship.
- A new teaching certificate and digital badges prepared graduate students as reflective educators.
- TA awards honored graduate students’ teaching.

pages 11-12

(D) Strengthen

collaboration among campus partners to support success, wellbeing, and belonging

- Together with the Office of Student Assistance and Support the school supported 199 students in distress.
- Welcome programming fostered connection and belonging for new and continuing students.
- New survey questions addressed inclusion and belonging.

pages 13-14

(E) Facilitate

access to funding, resources, and opportunities

- The school allocated over \$16.6M in fellowships, and the university continued promised increases to assistantship minimum stipends.
- A new Funding Forward initiative empowered and prepared students to apply for external grants.
- The school monitored funding uncertainty and advocated for continued support of grad. education.

pages 15-17

(F) Sustain

the Graduate School as a high performing organization

- The dean’s reporting line transitioned to the Provost to better align with the university’s academic mission.
- The school added an IT office, launched a Director of Graduate Study Handbook, and improved admissions with Slate rollout and training.
- Expanded data tools and dashboards better supported decision-making.

pages 18-19

See appendices for the Graduate School’s strategic plan (pg. 20), organizational chart (pg. 21), and data visualizations on admission, enrollment, demographics, funding, satisfaction, and career outcomes (pgs. 22-28).

ADVANCE

INNOVATIVE GRADUATE EDUCATION,
CAREER DEVELOPMENT, AND
PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

1. Offer high-quality graduate programs that enhance academic and professional success
2. Utilize and enhance data resources to support graduate program quality and student success
3. Sustain resources to help master's and doctoral students develop academic and professional skills, as well as explore and prepare for diverse career pathways
4. Create opportunities for and celebrate student achievements in living the Wisconsin Idea

The Graduate School's national recognition reflects a deep campus commitment to graduate student success. This year, new tools, policy updates, and expanded professional development strengthened programs and support.

UW-Madison graduate programs again **ranked highly** in the annual U.S. News and World Report "Best Graduate Schools" publication, with the School of Education ranked first in the nation. The Educational Psychology, Curriculum and Instruction, and Rehabilitation Counseling programs all ranked first in their respective fields. Nuclear Engineering, Elementary Teacher Education, and Speech-Language Pathology secured third-place rankings.

The Graduate School developed **new tools and data resources** that enhance the ability of campus

partners to support students and improve programs. Notable additions include the Historical Graduate Supplementary Admissions Institutional Data Exporter (IDE), which examines a decade of applicant data - including prior research experience, parent education, and Peace Corps participation - to understand recent trends and recruitment strategies. The Graduate School collaborated with Data, Academic Planning, and Institutional Research (DAPIR) to expand admissions-related data access. (See appendices 3-9 for data visualizations.)



Katie Klimpel (right), a graduate student in genetics and Allison Karnitz, undergraduate researcher, work with samples of Arabidopsis in a growth chamber. Klimpel is one of 10 recipients of the Award for Mentoring Undergraduates in Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities. Photo by Althea Dotzour / UW-Madison.

Graduate Faculty Executive Committee and New Programs Proposals

The Graduate Faculty Executive Committee (GFEC) sustained its commitment to high academic standards for graduate study through numerous actions:

- Established new credentials: 4 doctoral degrees, 7 master's degrees, 2 named options, 1 graduate/professional certificate, and 3 capstone certificates
- Approved 5 proposals to plan new degrees
- Renamed 1 master's degree and 1 doctoral minor
- Substantially redirected 3 named options, including a move from a named option up to the plan level, admitting to non-admitting status, and change in total credit count
- Suspended admissions: 5 doctoral degrees, 6 master's degrees, 8 named options, 3 graduate/professional certificates, 3 capstone certificates, and 2 doctoral minors
- Discontinued 5 doctoral degrees, 6 master's degrees, 8 named options, 3 graduate/professional certificates, 4 capstone certificates, and 1 doctoral minor
- Approved 20 program reviews, 14 program review responses, and 23 three-year check-ins
- Approved extension of active graduate faculty status for 6 professors emeriti
- Approved changes to two Graduate School policies: Application Review (1249) and Annual Written Assessment on Progress to Degree (1250)

“Our array of high-quality graduate programs prepares students as thought leaders and innovators who excel at UW–Madison and in their future careers. I am deeply proud of the dedication and expertise of our graduate faculty and staff.”

– William J. Karpus, Graduate School Dean

New **benchmarking dashboards** from the Graduate School provide doctoral and master's programs with five years of student experience data, allowing for meaningful peer comparisons and insights into areas of strength and concern. In support of evidence-based program improvement and planning, staff released an analytic brief on master's student career interests and redesigned key dashboards, including the Graduate Research Scholars Community Annual Reports and the Graduate School Explorer, to better reflect current program needs and evolving completion patterns. Together, these efforts strengthen data-informed decision-making across campus and support continuous improvement in graduate education.

The Graduate School supported academic program improvement through **Graduate Student Tracking System** enhancements, updating student advisement reports based on recently approved Lumen Programs proposals. Through these proposals, programs are allowed to modify their curriculum each year, and

then requirements on the student advisement reports must be updated. Graduate School staff updated 215 reports (132 master's and education specialists and 83 doctoral) scheduled for fall 2025 and created 18 (13 master's and five doctoral) new reports for fall 2025.

GRAD EDUCATION FAST FACTS

160 Master's and specialist degree progs. offered

110 Research/clinical doct. degree progs. offered

26,117 Graduate applicants

15,950 International graduate applicants

2,807 Master's and specialist degrees awarded

924 Research/clinical doct. degrees awarded

See appendices 3 and 6 for admissions and degree data.



University of Wisconsin–Madison outreach program manager Haddie McLean (left) and graduate student Alicia Mand conduct a science experiment using air cannons as they perform one of two Wonders of Physics shows. Photo by Jeff Miller / UW–Madison.

The Graduate School reviewed and approved approximately 307 **Lumen Program Proposals** for inclusion in the *Guide 2025–2026*. This total includes proposals submitted to the GFEC as well as administrative proposals related to tuition status updates. Of these, 249 proposals involved minor revisions, such as deactivated course reconciliation, updates to program-specific policies, and adjustments to curricular or admission requirements.

Graduate School staff delivered **training to school and college academic planners** on preparing program proposals that align with Graduate School standards. The sessions emphasized best practices, formatting guidelines, and timeline expectations, with particular attention to standardizing admissions requirements, curricular structures, and program-specific policies.

The Graduate School continues to partner with academic programs to identify students who are struggling to make academic progress and **proactively intervenes to offer support and guidance**. This has included improved auditing of unsatisfactory and no-report grades. After consulting with students and faculty, the **dissertator enrollment policy was clarified** to allow doctoral candidates, with advisor approval, to enroll in courses beyond just research credits.

The Graduate School continues to lead and coordinate efforts to ensure graduate students have access to a **wide range of academic and professional skill-building opportunities**. In 2024–2025 over 4,100 graduate students and postdocs participated in Graduate School-hosted professional development courses, workshops, and programs. Students from 162 academic programs took part in these offerings, reflecting broad interest and impact across campus.

During 2024–2025, 1,314 learners from UW–Madison accessed Beyond the Professoriate (for doctoral students) and 870 used Beyond Graduate School (for master’s students). These **e-learning career platforms** are available to all members of UW–Madison through the Graduate School’s membership. Both platforms saw approximately an 18% increase in usage from the previous year. Beyond the Professoriate had 8,030 pageviews and 48,733 event counts (clicks, downloads, etc.), and Beyond Graduate School had 5,040 pageviews and 28,613 event counts.

This year, the Graduate School selected and sponsored two students to represent UW–Madison at the **Catalyzing Advocacy in Science and Engineering (CASE)** workshop: Cynthia Feng and Martina Rogers, PhD students in Microbiology and Chemistry, respectively. Led by the American Association for the Advancement of Science and

others, the workshop empowers graduate students to learn about science policy and become advocates for basic research throughout their careers.

In its third year, the **Graduate School Industry Internship Program** provided doctoral students with hands-on experience at employers in Wisconsin and beyond. This initiative expands the Graduate School's professional development offerings through immersive learning in industry settings. Interns benefit from skill development, career exploration, networking, and a summer stipend with fringe benefits. Interest remains strong, with 53 applications in 2024–2025, comparable to the previous year.

The Graduate School launched new **individual career advising** that prepared students for diverse career paths in academia, industry, and the public sector. During its first three months, the individual career advising program saw 69 individual advising sessions, serving 52 unique graduate students. Participants met virtually or in person for individualized 30- or 60-minute sessions. Topics included career exploration, goal setting, résumé and application material review, job search strategies

for academic and non-academic roles, and interview preparation. The program helps students reflect on their experiences, clarify goals, and develop practical strategies for career success.

It was great to meet in-person and discuss... future career options, my research interests, networking at an upcoming conference, and more. I truly felt heard the entire time and received helpful feedback and suggestions for all of the topics we discussed.

-Individual Career Advising Participant

Sixty-one UW–Madison graduate students and postdocs attended an **Industry Career Panel: Explore How to Apply Scientific Research and Academic Skillsets to Industry**. The panel discussion about career goals and transitions beyond academia featured representatives from Thermo Fisher Scientific and Exact Sciences, who shared their experiences navigating the job market and working in industry as PhDs or as professionals who hire PhD candidates. (See appendices 8 and 9 for additional career outcomes data.)

The **GradConnections Weekly** newsletter continued sharing information about professional and career development opportunities, campus updates and deadlines, funding opportunities, wellness information, and the ever-popular Pet of the Week feature. This year, an average of more than 2,300 unique readers opened the newsletter each week. On average, more than 200 of those readers found at least one item in the newsletter of interest and clicked through to learn more.

The Graduate School's **social media** accounts on Facebook, X, and Instagram continued to highlight graduate students and their work, celebrate accomplishments, and share opportunities for professional and career development. Posts celebrating the start of the semester, student award winners, and graduation drew the most engagement.



Mariana Santos, a graduate student in the Department of Plant Pathology, listens to a lecture course during the first day of classes for the fall semester. Photo by Bryce Richter / UW–Madison.

FOSTER

ACCESS AND ENGAGEMENT TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN A TALENTED GRADUATE STUDENT BODY

1. Implement tools and resources to help train admission committees to recruit and evaluate applicants using a holistic perspective
2. Develop coordinated and collaborative pipeline programs for recruitment
3. Assist graduate students in developing awareness of resources and processes to support their success
4. Prepare graduate students to foster environments of inclusive excellence, access, and engagement

The Graduate School facilitates access to graduate education through a variety of initiatives, and retaining graduate students from admission through degree completion remains a top priority.

To advance the use of best practices in graduate admissions, the school offered a **holistic admissions workshop on rubric development**, which drew participation from over 30 graduate programs. Over two years, 109 graduate programs participated with 95% indicating they would use information learned from the session in their practices. The school launched an **Admissions Tracker Dashboard** to monitor application, admission, and enrollment trends with comparisons to prior years. Staff analyzed data from a post-April 15th survey to identify peer institutions UW-Madison most often competes with successfully for incoming students.



From left to right, graduate students Srihari Sridharan, Sahil Naphade and Smit Shah throw W hand signs as they pose for a photo with UW-Madison mascot Bucky Badger during a Terrace chair return party held at the Memorial Union Terrace. Photo by Paige Valley / UW-Madison.

Bridge and Build Community Series

The Graduate School supports students from an array of life experiences and backgrounds in their educational journey and fosters a sense of belonging on campus. The school launched a new Bridge and Build Community series that is open to all UW graduate students and is dedicated to fostering a thriving community of inclusive excellence. The series included more than 15 engagement-focused events attended by over 370 individuals, including:

- Inclusive Horizons Graduate Student Welcome
- Bridge and Build Professional Development Luncheons
- Networking Events
- Heritage Month Sessions
- Wellness & Community Building Activities

The Graduate School's website had more than **1.7 million page views from users across the world**. The top 10 countries of grad.wisc.edu visitors were the U.S., India, China, Nigeria, Ghana, Bangladesh, South Korea, Pakistan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The most popular webpages covered admissions, academic programs, admissions requirements, funding, and graduate assistantships. Visits to the website peaked in early December, the time when many programs' applications are due, showing that prospective graduate students continue to be a main audience for the website.

The second annual **Graduate School Day & Resource Fair** provided prospective students with a comprehensive introduction to UW-Madison and its graduate programs. Over 240 undergraduates from national McNair Scholars Programs and participants in UW-Madison's Summer Research Opportunities Program attended the event, which showcased 63 graduate programs and resources.

UW-Madison's 16 **Summer Research Opportunities Programs** (SROPs) provided research preparation to outstanding undergraduates and support their recruitment into graduate programs at UW-Madison. The Graduate School facilitated over 1,600 applications to the program, from which 168 undergraduates were selected to participate in the 10-week, on-campus SROP experience.



Atisha Cyrill and Neha Chadaga, graduate students in information science and computer science enjoy the warmth of a bonfire during the Winter Carnival. Photo by Althea Dotzour / UW-Madison.

The Graduate School is a member of the **National GEM Consortium** and the **National Name Exchange**, and as a member of the Council of Graduate Schools, receives lists of seniors participating in the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, which it shares with academic programs to identify highly qualified candidates.

The **Advanced Opportunity Fellowship** (AOF) program supported 155 fellows through \$6.3 million in funding in 2024-2025. The Graduate School supplements program state funding with Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation funding.

The **Peer Mentor Awards** and **Student Commitment to Engagement and Activism Awards** recognized exceptional graduate students who demonstrated outstanding mentorship of peers from underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds, as well as leadership in social justice and community engagement. Six awardees were honored at the annual Bucky Awards Ceremony.

The **Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society**, a prestigious national organization, prepares dissertators and postdoctoral researchers for academic careers through recognition, mentorship,

and professional development. The Graduate School welcomed five scholars into the Bouchet Society, marking the UW–Madison chapter’s 15th year, with 75 graduate students and postdocs inducted to date.

The **Wisconsin Sloan Center for Systemic Change**, or WISC², led by the Dean of the Graduate School as Principal Investigator, launched with support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The center aims to remove entrenched barriers to success, improve student outcomes, and create educational environments that are more equitable and effective for all.



Tory Ash, doctoral candidate in educational psychology, Kellie Collins, PhD student in clinical investigation, and Veronika Kobrinsky, PhD student in psychology, were recognized for their exhibit stellar mentorship qualities and awarded Graduate Peer Mentor Awards.

ESTABLISH

CONSISTENT AND HIGH-QUALITY GRADUATE STUDENT MENTORSHIP

1. Promote use of evidence-based mentorship best practices, such as compacts and goal setting
2. Advocate for expanded participation in mentorship training for faculty and directors of graduate study
3. Offer training for graduate students to work effectively with faculty mentors
4. Ensure graduate students have access to teaching- and mentoring-related professional development

The Graduate School advances evidence-based mentorship by ensuring graduate students and postdocs have access to high-quality mentor training.

Central to this priority is the **Delta Program in Research, Teaching, and Learning** in the Graduate School. Its Research Mentor Learning Communities use a nationally recognized curriculum to build effective, inclusive mentoring skills and support both mentors and mentees. In 2024-2025 178 individuals participated in a Research Mentor Learning Community. The program

also offered workshops on topics such as navigating disability in STEM classrooms and research settings and navigating mentorship relationships.

The Delta Program launched the **Graduate/ Professional Certificate in Higher Education Teaching and Learning**. Informed by research on



Psychology graduate student Ellie Breitfeld (left) interacts with undergraduate mentee Howard Owens in the Waisman Center's Infant Learning Lab. Breitfeld is one of 10 recipients of a 2024 Mentoring Undergraduates in Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities award. Photo by Jeff Miller / UW-Madison.

effective pedagogy and inclusive practices, the certificate equips participants with the tools to become reflective, skilled educators in a variety of settings - in the college classroom, in undergraduate research mentoring, in the community, and beyond. Interest in the certificate has surpassed expectations: over 40 graduate students from across all divisions have already added the certificate to their programs.

The Graduate School introduced new **digital micro-credential badges** to help graduate students showcase their professional skills. Badges offer a portable, verifiable way for students to highlight their achievements to employers and professional networks. One hundred and fifty-nine Research Mentor badges, four Mentorship Seminar Facilitator badges, and 28 Delta Teaching and Learning Practitioner badges have been awarded.

The Graduate School sponsors UW–Madison’s membership in the national **Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning** (CIRTL), which delivers online workshops and

courses on topics such as mentoring across differences, aligning expectations, and supporting mentee development. In 2024–2025, 185 UW–Madison participants engaged in 38 CIRTL courses, workshops, and panels, for a total of 290 participations.

This course was one of the best I have ever taken. I am so glad I chose to formalize my training as a mentor, because I now feel that I can put into words some concepts which previously felt very nebulous and unspoken. In particular, it was vital to do this in a community of mentors, because I learned so much more from other people’s experiences than I would have doing this alone as an online course/ seminar type of situation.

-Research Mentor Learning Community Participant



Emma Libersky (center), a graduate student in communication sciences and disorders, speaks with Maggie Thomas (left), undergraduate, and Grace Whelan Tweedt (right), graduate student. Libersky won the Award for Mentoring Undergraduates In Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities. Photo by Althea Dotzour / UW–Madison.

The Graduate School supported the 2024–2025 **Campus-Wide Teaching Assistant Awards**, in partnership with the College of Letters and Science, which recognize the vital role graduate students play in teaching at UW–Madison. This celebration highlights their impact in the classroom and affirms the value of their contributions to undergraduate education.

The new **Annual Written Assessment on Progress to Degree policy** is an important step in supporting PhD student success at UW–Madison. Through this policy, which was approved by GFEC this year, faculty provide individualized, written feedback to PhD students each year, fostering transparency, goal-setting, and open communication between students and advisors. Regular reflection on academic milestones and research progress helps students stay on track toward degree completion while supporting their well-being through clear expectations and structured guidance.

STRENGTHEN

COLLABORATION AMONG CAMPUS PARTNERS
TO SUPPORT SUCCESS, WELLBEING,
AND BELONGING OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

1. Strengthen processes and resources to train and support graduate coordinators
2. Grow current partnership with the Office of Student Assistance and Support to focus on assistance and support for graduate students
3. Ensure that all graduate students have access to career services
4. Support and offer programming that promotes a sense of belonging

Together with faculty and staff colleagues from across campus, the Graduate School holistically supports student wellbeing throughout their graduate careers.

Through a position shared between the Graduate School and Office of Student Assistance and Support, staff met with 199 **graduate students facing difficulties** and worked with 116 faculty and staff - numbers nearly identical to last year. About 70% of those served were PhD students and 42% were international students, up from 37% the previous year. Students most often sought help with general information, academic concerns, and mental health.

In partnership with University Health Services, staff held **Let's Talk** sessions specifically for graduate students. More than half of **Badger FARE** emergency support requests came from graduate students, underscoring the importance of basic needs support. Staff also participated in the campus **Basic Needs Workgroup** and delivered presentations to over 1,400 graduate students throughout the year.

Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) Finals judges included Alisa King-Klemperer, Communications Manager at the Wisconsin IceCube Particle Astrophysics Center; Cecily Brose, Innovation and Commercialization Specialist at Discovery to Product; and Cheryl Loschko, Graduate Program Manager in the English Department. 3MT® is an international research communication competition.



Graduate Student Welcome Week helps students start the semester strong by offering early opportunities to connect with peers and access resources that support time management, productivity, wellness, and a sense of community before classes begin. Welcome Week events included:

- Communicating Effectively for Graduate School Success
- Enhancing Your Graduate Degree with a Certificate
- Flourishing in Graduate School: How to Manage Stress and Maintain Your Mental Health
- Time Management for Graduate Students
- Cool Tools: Apps and More to Increase Productivity
- Graduate School Dash & Bash
- Inclusive Horizons: Graduate Welcome Gathering



Graduate students connect over lunch while honing their skills to communicate complex research in clear, engaging ways. The event offered a chance to network across disciplines and prepare for UW–Madison’s Three-Minute Thesis (3MT®) competition.

The Graduate School also hosts the **New Graduate Student Welcome** for newly enrolled graduate students. In fall 2024, 853 new master’s and doctoral students participated in the event, which is designed to help new students connect with peers from across disciplines, explore a wide range of campus and community resources, hear from current graduate students about their transition experiences, and begin to feel a sense of belonging within the broader university community.

Collaborating units from across campus – including the Writing Center, DoIT’s Software Training for Students, Libraries, the Office of Postdoctoral Studies, and many more – worked with the Graduate School to enter their programming into the central events calendar. Through this collaboration, the Graduate School amplified **591 professional development opportunities** through its newsletter, calendar, and social media accounts.

Over 60 graduate students participated in the fall semifinals of UW–Madison’s **Three Minute Thesis (3MT®)** competition, with eight advancing to the February finals. Judges selected three winners, and the audience voted for the People’s Choice Award. The UW–Madison first place winner participated in the regional 3MT® competition during the Midwest Association of Graduate Schools meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana. This campus-wide event is coordinated by a dedicated planning committee of graduate program coordinators and managers.

To better understand and support graduate student wellbeing, the school developed **new survey questions focused on experiences of inclusion and exclusion**. Informed by prior qualitative analysis, these questions allow for more accurate and nuanced tracking of student experiences across contexts, informing future efforts to create a more inclusive and supportive environment.

FACILITATE

ACCESS TO FUNDING, RESOURCES,
AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. Incentivize and increase extramural graduate funding
2. Set competitive stipend levels that take into consideration student needs and cost of living
3. Collaborate with programs to offer multi-year funding guarantees and address gaps in student funding
4. Advocate with campus partners to promote attention to providing opportunities
5. Cultivate philanthropic partners to increase grants and opportunities

Through skill-building workshops, targeted programming, financial support initiatives, and advocacy, the Graduate School helps students navigate the funding landscape and invests in their academic and professional growth.

This year, the Graduate School launched **Funding Forward**, a major initiative designed to equip graduate students with the skills and support needed to successfully pursue external funding. Recognizing that applying for fellowships and grants is a critical part of graduate education and future career success, Funding Forward empowers students to take ownership of their funding journey. Funding Forward offered a suite of targeted resources and programming

Prestigious graduate student fellowships



Photo by Victor Idrogo

Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies PhD student [Gabriela C. Yepes-Rossel](#) (pictured) received a Dissertation Innovation Fellowship from the Mellon Foundation and the American Council of Learned Societies. Her scholarship focuses on women theater and dance performers from the Southern Peruvian Andes who infuse their cultural traditions with new values and purposes to challenge normalized practices of intersectional inequity and violence.

It is a unique opportunity, especially now, when funding sources are becoming increasingly scarce and difficult to obtain. It is truly a gift.

-Gabriela Yepes-Rossel

on applying for funding from the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Mellon/American Council of Learned Societies, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Highlighted skill development sessions included:

- Funding Forward: Equipping and Empowering Graduate Students to Apply for Fellowships
- Funding Resources for International Graduate Students
- Proposal Writing Workshop for Graduate Students
- Mini Grant-Writing Retreat at the Writing Center
- Humanities Grant Writing Camp

In 2024-2025, the Graduate School allocated over **\$16.6 million in fellowship and support funding**, shown below, to advance graduate education across all academic divisions, providing critical resources that help students thrive, persist, and excel in their programs.

Allocation Total **\$16,653,405**

Advanced Opportunity Fellowship	\$3,371,822	Advanced Opportunity Program (State of Wisconsin)
	\$3,574,327	Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation
Graduate Student Support Allocation	\$2,546,524	Social Sciences
	\$1,651,965	Physical Sciences
	\$1,920,492	Biological Sciences
	\$3,588,275	Arts & Humanities (Includes Chancellor's Fund dollars)

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When preparing her application, Yepes-Rossel said she found it helpful to read research summaries of past fellowship recipients' work, including those posted on the Graduate School's website and the Mellon/ACLS website. She also participated in Funding Forward workshops and visited the Writing Center, where a writing instructor reviewed her application.

Nineteen graduate students and eight undergraduates received the [National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship](#) in spring. The 2025 graduate student awardees and their proposed areas of study are:

- **Ali Al-Tamimi**, Computationally Intensive Research
- **Tayt Armitage**, Astronomy and Astrophysics
- **Ann Bigelow**, Applied Mathematics
- **Allison Fisher**, Environmental Biology
- **Madison Fortier**, Archaeology
- **Emeline Hanna**, Biomedical Engineering
- **Shawn Im**, Machine Learning
- **Katie Lund**, Genetics
- **Eleanor McFarlan**, Hydrology
- **Alissia Milani**, Environmental and/or Ecological Engineering
- **William Minnette**, Nuclear Engineering
- **Erin Motherway**, Astronomy and Astrophysics
- **Talia O'Shea**, Astronomy and Astrophysics
- **Seth Ockerman**, Computer Systems
- **Smeet Patel**, Nuclear Engineering
- **Jalinet Román Matías**, Chemistry of Materials
- **Georgia Sands**, Chemical Structure, Dynamics, and Mechanism
- **Cara Scalpone**, Atmospheric Chemistry
- **Trey Standiford**, Biological Systems Engineering

In fall 2024, the university announced an **increase in minimum graduate assistant stipends** for 2025-2026, raising the annualized stipends for 50% appointments to \$35,636. This adjustment is part of a multi-year commitment to enhance graduate student support. In addition to competitive stipends, graduate assistantships include tuition remission; health and dental insurance; paid sick, vacation, and parental leave; and mentorship training.

The Graduate School resumed the annual **Student Research Grants Competition** and allocated \$541,500 from the Vilas Trust. Through this popular competition, graduate students receive funding for travel expenses to present research at a conference or complete research for a thesis or final exhibition.

Continuing its connection with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (OVCR), the Graduate School highlighted the stories of graduate students who have received funding from the **Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation** (WARF), many of whom later secured additional funding support from sources outside the university. WARF-funded student profiles featured students' impactful work across science, technology, humanities, and social science, and showed their contributions to faculty research projects through the OVCR's Research Forward initiative.

(See appendix 5 for additional funding data.)

PhD student [Emma Hammond](#) (pictured below) and professor Catherine Marler received the Gilliam Fellowship from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. Marler's lab in the Department of Psychology studies the endocrinology of the California mouse, and Hammond's research focuses on the relationship between oxytocin, immune function, and social behavior.



PhD alumna [Hongyan \(May\) Mei](#) (pictured below) was awarded a 2025 Schmidt Science Fellowship, a highly competitive and prestigious national program that supports "brilliant minds" who pursue innovative, interdisciplinary science.

As a PhD student, Mei developed a new method for characterizing different materials using infrared spectroscopy. She played a leading role in a large, multi-university team that led to shattering the word record for optical birefringence in a crystal. The phenomenon she discovered results in the speed of light inside a certain crystal being different by a factor of two depending on the polarization of light.

When asked what led her to study these materials and their optical properties, Mei said it was "all out of curiosity."



SUSTAIN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AS A HIGH PERFORMING ORGANIZATION

1. Use equity and accessibility as a lens for all activities that Graduate School touches
2. Increase transparency regarding goals, processes, and budgets
3. Embrace continuous process improvement and invest strategically in technology and infrastructure
4. Prioritize the professional and personal development of staff with a focus on equity

Effective July 1, 2024, the **Graduate School transitioned from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research to the Office of the Provost**. This administrative restructuring enables the Graduate School to be more agile, adaptable, and better aligned with the academic enterprise of the university. The move strengthens its ability to drive innovation in graduate education and reinforces UW–Madison’s role as a national leader in graduate education.

The school established its own **Office of Information Technology**, following the restructuring. This included

hiring an IT systems manager to lead the office and the transfer of a software engineer/developer position from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (OVCR). Creating a dedicated IT office marks a key step not just in building the infrastructure needed to advance the Graduate School’s strategic priorities but also in maintaining the existing infrastructure and systems that support graduate students, graduate programs, faculty, and staff across campus.

The office is committed to pioneering innovative solutions that meet the evolving software, data, and



Daniel Pearce (right), graduate student in the Biomedical Engineering Department, works on a testing sample with undergraduates Shreya Sreedhar and Rhea Nagori. Pearce is a recipient of a 2024 Mentoring Undergraduates in Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities Award. Photo by Bryce Richter / UW–Madison.

infrastructure needs of the Graduate School. Its mission is to develop, implement, and support cutting-edge systems that empower students worldwide to apply to graduate programs and enable university staff to track and support student progress throughout their academic journey.

The Graduate School developed the **Director of Graduate Study Handbook**, a centralized resource to support DGSs in their leadership roles. The guide outlines key responsibilities, offers practical tools, and provides links to essential policies and data systems. It serves as an onboarding resource for both new and experienced DGSes.

In its first year of implementation, the **Slate system for graduate admissions** successfully launched on time for fall 2024 admissions. The implementation included the development of over 250 supplemental applications, over 75 custom queries, and multiple software integrations. Extensive training included synchronous sessions, webinars, and asynchronous courses, with over 400 program managers and faculty registrants. Additionally, more than 40 KnowledgeBase documents were created, contributing to over 44,000 views in the first half of 2025. The school built a training registration portal and a tracking data dashboard, demonstrating a strong commitment to meeting program needs and enhancing user experience through iteration.

To support the Graduate School's goal of operating as a high-performing organization, staff **sustained and expanded data infrastructure and analytics capacity** this year. This included ongoing maintenance and enhancement of critical data tools such as the Graduate School Explorer, public data visualizations, program profiles, admissions competitor landscape visualizations, student funding and employment dashboards, and national benchmarking tools. These resources enable data-informed decision-making for Graduate School leadership and campus partners. The school's data webpage received more than 16,400 views, peaking in late November and early December, coinciding with admissions deadlines.

Staff responded to over 20 **ad-hoc data requests and submitted key data to national surveys**,

including those conducted by Council of Graduate Schools and the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health, ensuring UW-Madison is accurately represented in national graduate education datasets. Participation in campus data communities and national working groups further positions the Graduate School as a data leader and thought partner. Notably, staff contributed to strategic efforts like the UW-Madison Race/Ethnicity Task Force and the National Center for Education Statistics Data Institute review process.

The Graduate School recruited Directors of Graduate Study for a **Graduate School Data Advisory Group** focused on improving data dashboards and reports. The group provided feedback on new benchmarking dashboards, ensuring these tools meet program needs. The Graduate School supported campus use of its data resources by creating video tutorials for the Graduate School Explorer and data webpage.

The Graduate School **refined assessment tools and performance metrics** to track institutional progress and inform decision-making, including a new data report with program metrics in admissions, retention, and completion to support funding allocations.

The Graduate School continued cultivating a **welcoming environment where all members feel heard and supported**. Efforts led by the Graduate School Engagement, Equity, and Diversity Committee (EEDC) included culturally relevant experiences, unit-led community building events, and monitoring work climate. Highlights from the past year were a discussion of UW-Madison's Go Big Read, *Sitting Pretty: The View from My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body* by Rachel Taussig, a student panel, team trivia, a tour of an exhibition, and an improv class designed to improve leadership and collaboration skills.

Since the UW-Madison 2022 Staff Climate Survey, the EEDC has been spearheading a multiyear effort to monitor and improve the work climate in the Graduate School. In the past year, the committee prepared another annual report, highlighting where the Graduate School has made strides and where improvements can be made. The EEDC met with Graduate School leadership to discuss this report and plan a larger, all-staff meeting to further bolster a welcoming and supportive workplace environment.

GRADUATE SCHOOL

GRADUATE SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR GRADUATE EDUCATION AT UW-MADISON 2023-2028

PRIORITIES & INITIATIVES

(A) Advance innovative graduate education, career development, and professional success

1. Offer high-quality graduate programs that enhance student academic and professional success
2. Utilize and enhance data resources within the Graduate School to support graduate program quality and student success
3. Sustain resources to help master's and doctoral students develop academic and professional skills, as well as explore and prepare for diverse career pathways
4. Create opportunities for and celebrate student achievements in living the Wisconsin Idea

(B) Foster access and engagement to recruit and retain a talented graduate student body

1. Implement tools and resources to help train admission committees to recruit and evaluate applicants using a holistic perspective
2. Develop coordinated and collaborative pipeline programs for recruitment
3. Assist graduate students in developing awareness of resources and processes to support their success
4. Prepare graduate students to foster environments of inclusive excellence, access, and engagement

(C) Establish and support university-wide expectations for consistent and high-quality graduate student mentorship

1. Promote use of evidence-based mentorship best practices, such as compacts and goal setting
2. Advocate for expanded participation in mentorship training for faculty and directors of graduate study
3. Offer training for graduate students to work effectively with faculty mentors
4. Ensure graduate students have access to teaching- and mentoring-related professional development

(D) Strengthen collaboration among campus partners to support the success, wellbeing, and belonging of graduate students

1. Strengthen processes and resources to train and support graduate coordinators
2. Grow current partnership with the Office of Student Assistance and Support to focus on assistance and support for graduate students
3. Ensure that all graduate students have access to career services
4. Support and offer programming that promotes a sense of belonging among graduate students

(E) Facilitate access to funding, resources, and opportunities

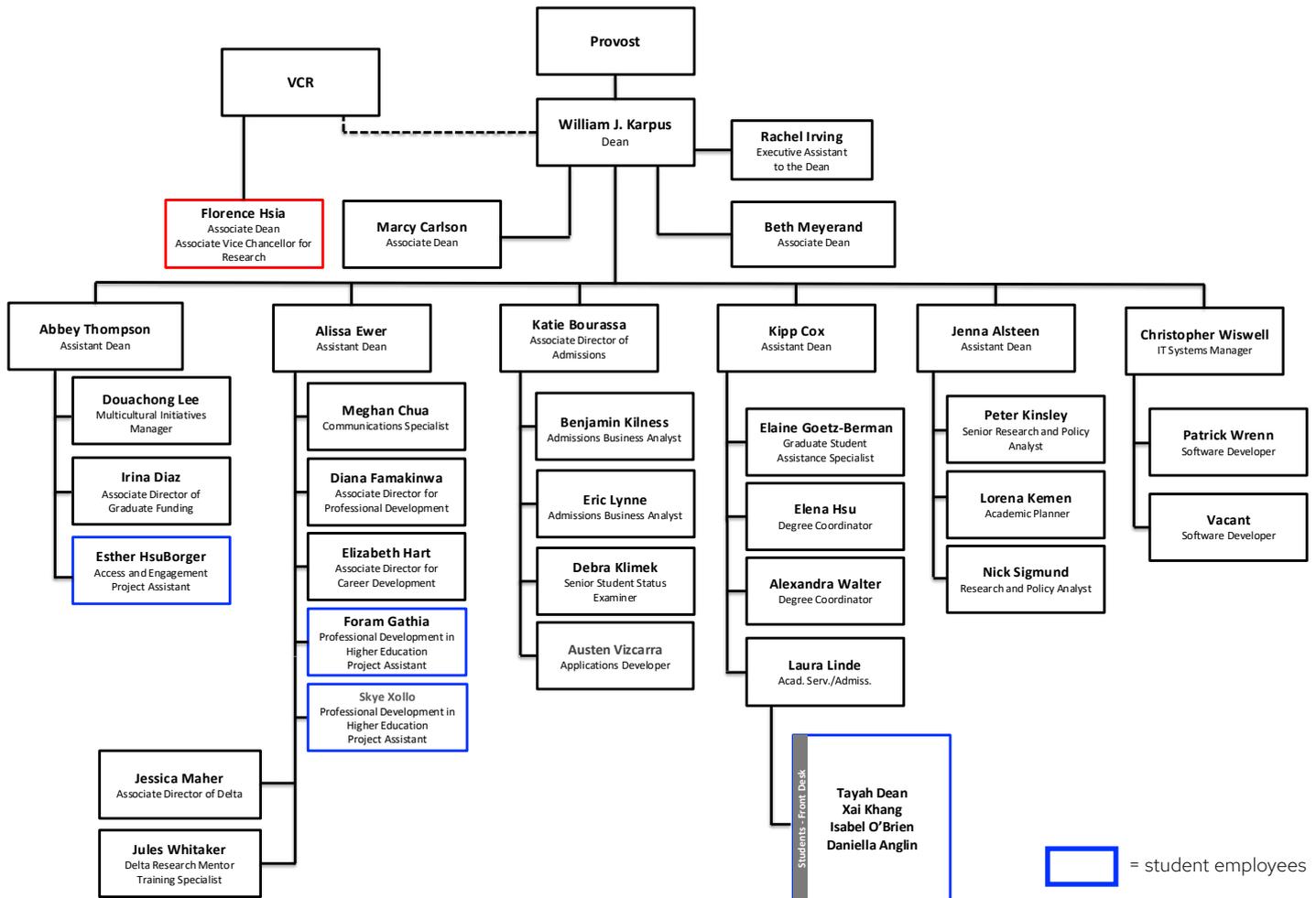
1. Incentivize and increase extramural graduate funding, such as creating and maintaining a repository of extramural funding sources and providing workshops about pursuing external funding
2. Set competitive stipend levels that take into consideration student needs and cost of attendance
3. Collaborate with programs to offer multi-year funding guarantees and address gaps in student funding as needs arise
4. Advocate with campus partners to promote attention to providing opportunities such as conference funding and professional development
5. Cultivate philanthropic partners to increase grants and opportunities

(F) Sustain the Graduate School as a high performing organization

1. Use equity and accessibility as a lens for all activities that Graduate School touches, e.g., recruiting, admissions, funding, advising, career development.
2. Increase transparency regarding goals, processes, and budgets
3. Embrace continuous process improvement and invest strategically in technology and infrastructure
4. Prioritize the professional and personal development of staff with a focus on equity

Note: The version of the Graduate School Strategic Plan shown here reflects priorities and initiatives for the 2024-2025 reporting period. Effective July 1, 2025, the mission of the school will expand to include supporting the success of postdocs, and future iterations of the Strategic Plan will be updated accordingly.

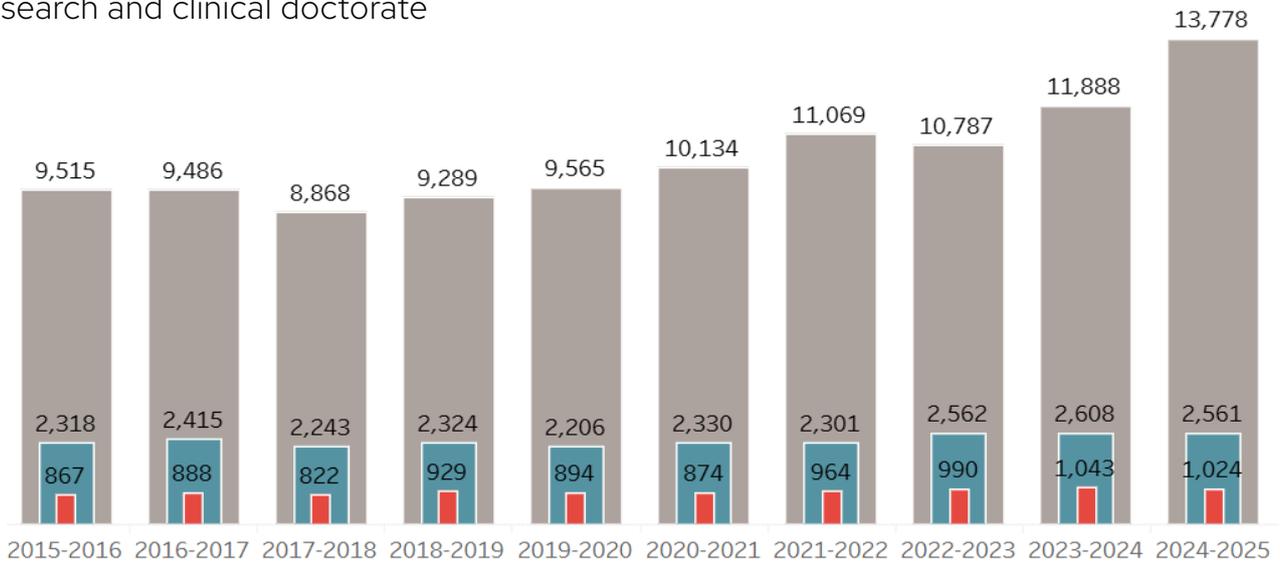
GRADUATE SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



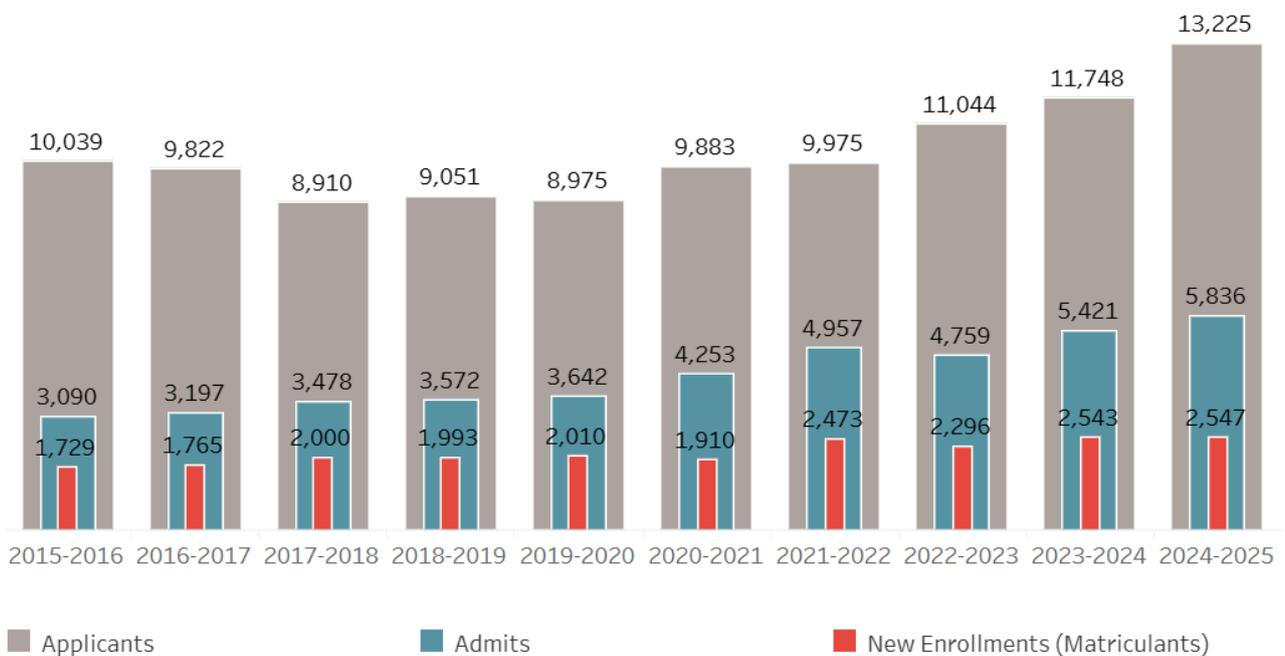
DATA

APPLICATION, ADMISSION AND NEW ENROLLMENT

Research and clinical doctorate



Master's and specialist



Data visualizations retrieved 8/7/25. See grad.wisc.edu/data for up-to-date data.

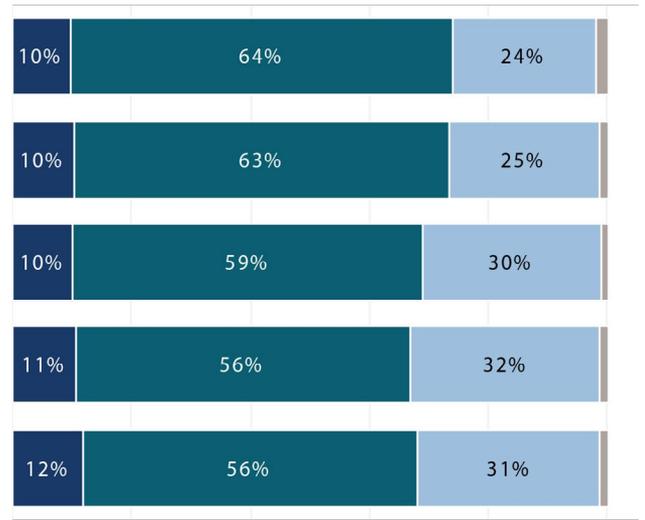
DATA

ENROLLMENT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

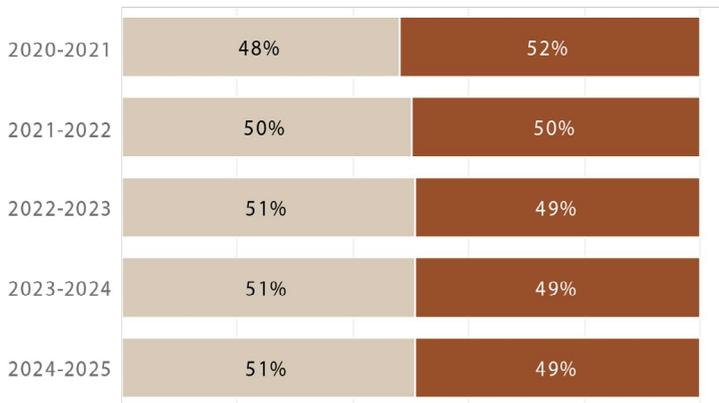
Research and clinical doctorate
Enrollment by demographic group



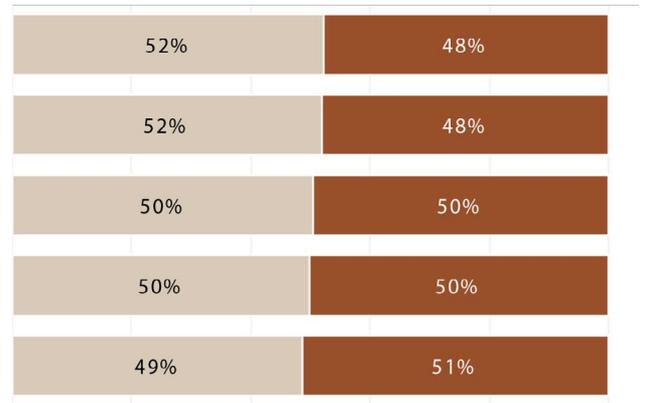
Master's and specialist
Enrollment by demographic group



Research and clinical doctorate
Enrollment by gender



Master's and specialist
Enrollment by gender



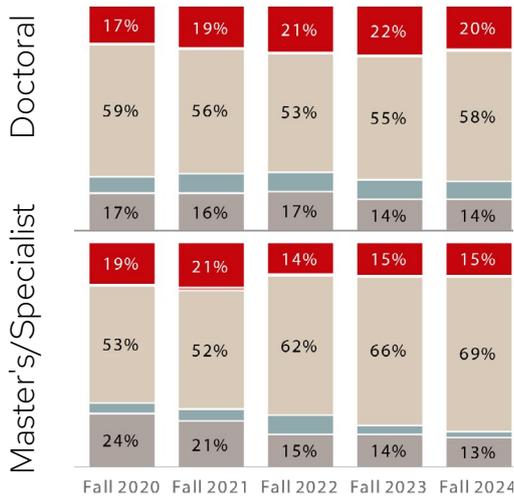
■ Underrep. Stud. of Color (Domestic)
 ■ Not Underrepresented (Domestic)
 ■ International
 ■ Unknown (Domestic)
 ■ Female
 ■ Male

Data visualizations retrieved 6/24/25. See grad.wisc.edu/data for up-to-date data.

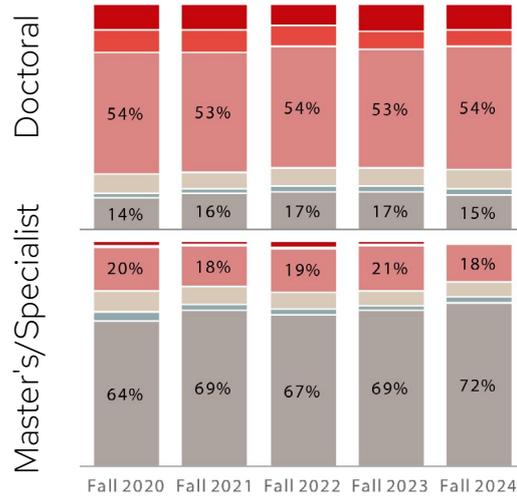
DATA

STUDENT FUNDING BY DIVISION

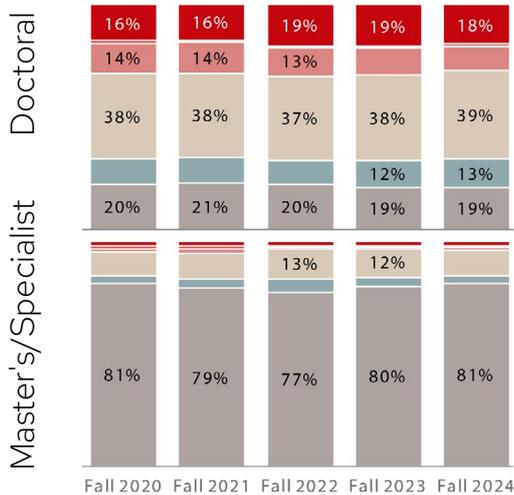
Arts & Humanities



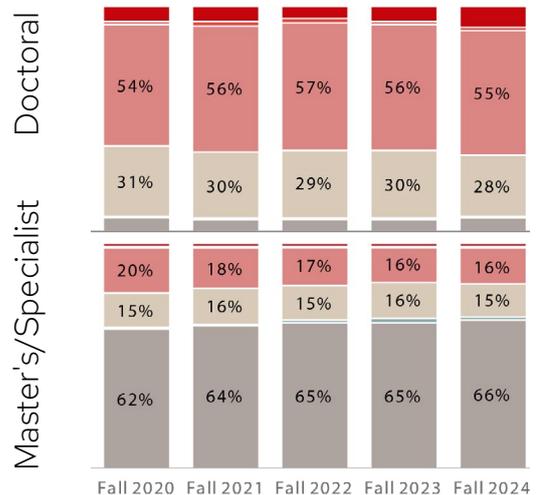
Biological Sciences



Social Sciences



Physical Sciences



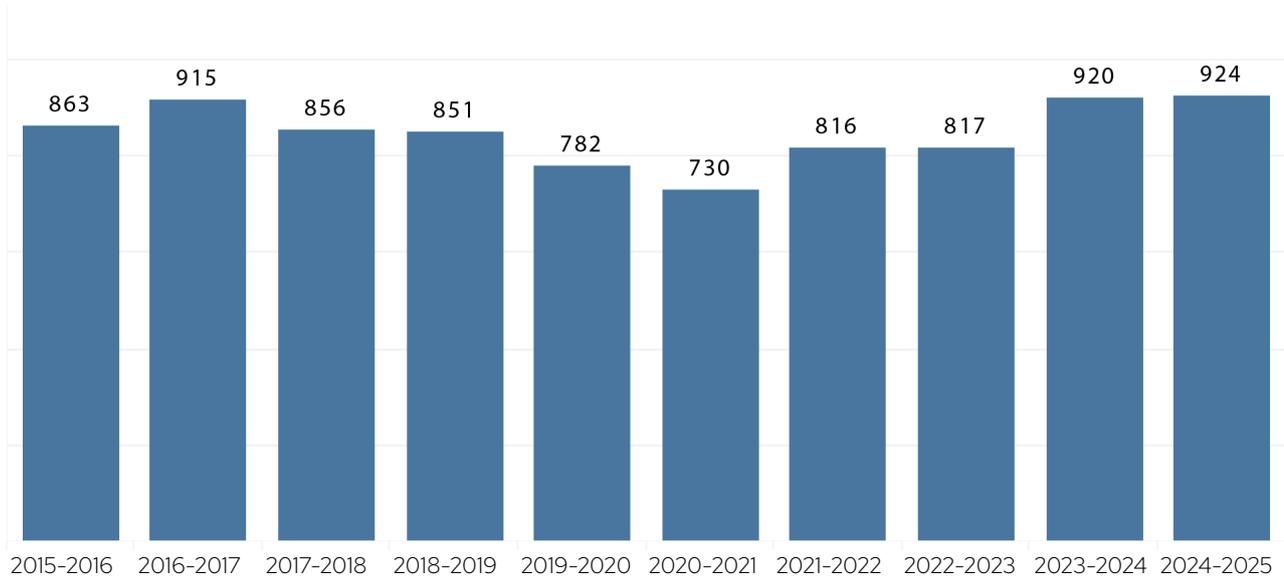
■ Fellows
 ■ Research Assistants
 ■ Project Assistants
■ Trainees
 ■ Teaching Assistants
 ■ Other Funding

Data visualizations retrieved 6/24/25. See grad.wisc.edu/data for up-to-date data.

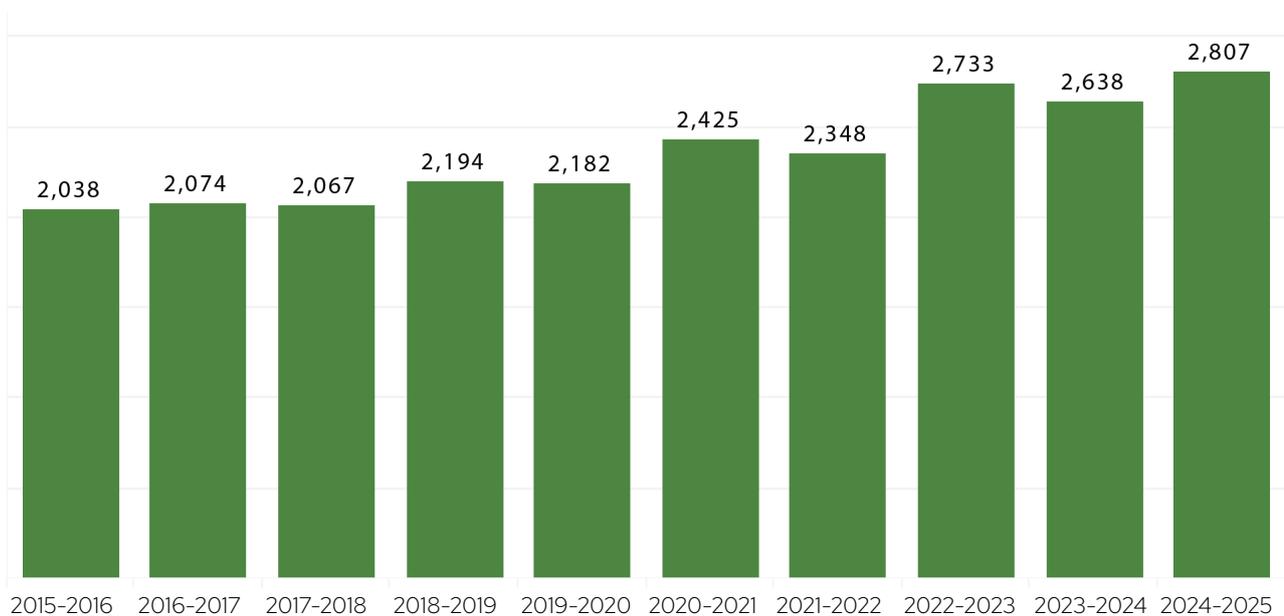
DATA

DEGREES AWARDED

Doctoral Degrees by Graduation Year



Master's and Specialist Degrees by Graduation Year



Data visualizations retrieved 7/29/25. See grad.wisc.edu/data for up-to-date data.

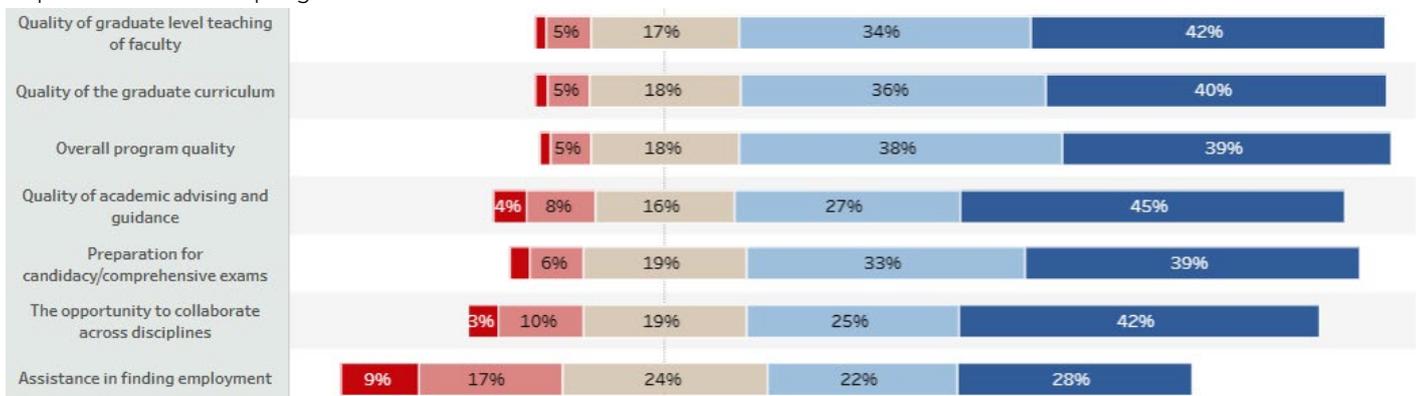
DATA

STUDENT SATISFACTION

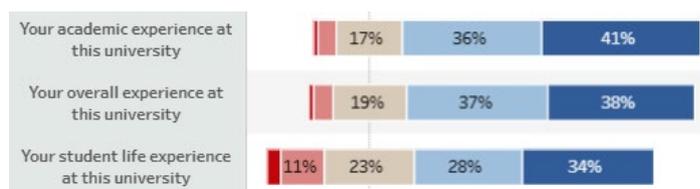
Doctoral Exit Survey
Overall satisfaction:



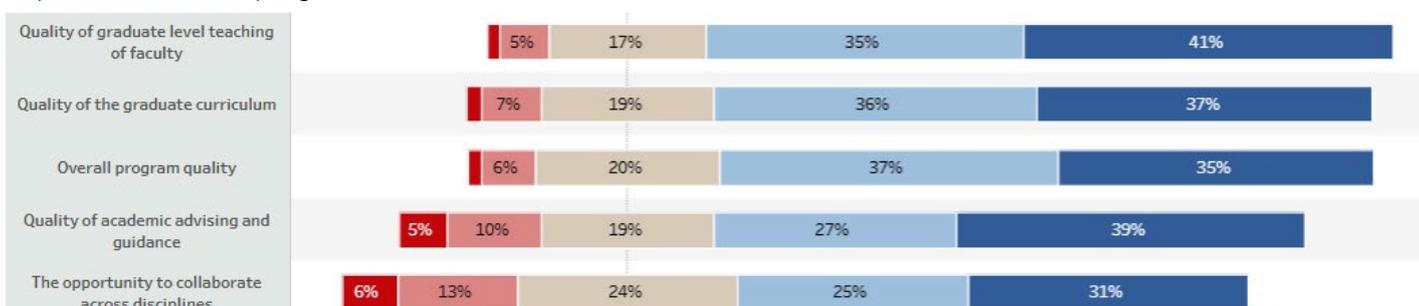
Aspects of doctoral program:



Master's Exit Survey
Overall satisfaction:



Aspects of master's program:

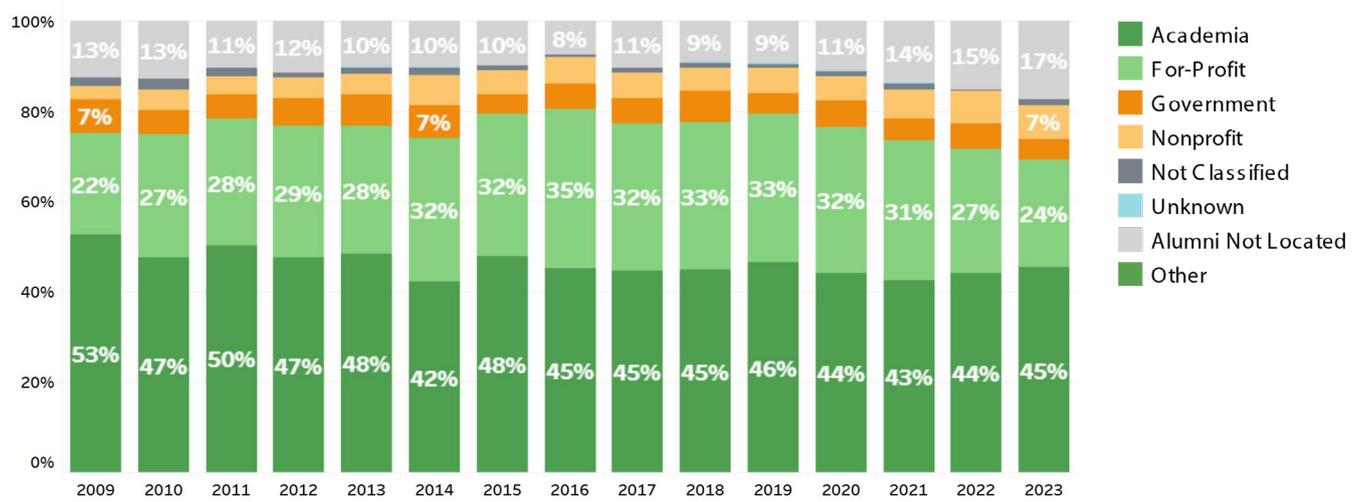


Data visualizations retrieved 8/5/25. See grad.wisc.edu/data for up-to-date data.

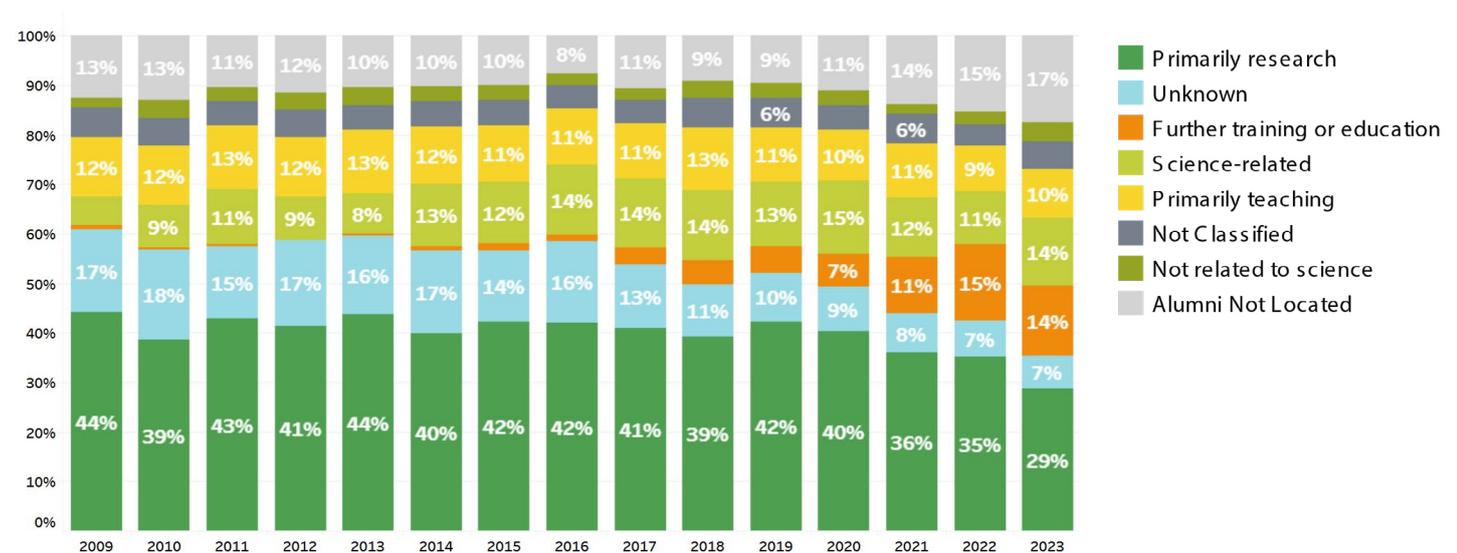
DATA

DOCTORAL CAREER OUTCOMES

Industry, stratified by departure year
 Classification: Coalition for the Next Generation of Life Sciences



Occupation, stratified by departure year
 Classification: Coalition for the Next Generation of Life Sciences



Academic Analytics data visualizations retrieved from portal.academicanalytics.com/alumni 6/30/25.

