



This issue continues the series on how we are moving ahead on the priorities I set as dean, with a focus on **promoting innovation and diverse excellence in graduate education and training.**

It is the Dietrich School's mission to attract outstanding graduate students and educate and support them to become intellectual leaders in their disciplines and in their future careers. As we stay attuned to intellectual shifts in disciplines, as well as to the profound

changes in the demographic, technological, financial, and geo-political contexts of higher education, we need to explore innovative approaches to graduate education. These approaches may include multi- and cross-disciplinary training, enhanced professional and career development, strengthened international experiences, and sustained attention to the conditions furthering diverse and inclusive excellence.

Innovation in Disciplinary and Inter-Disciplinary Graduate Education

To foster innovation in graduate education, we encourage creative partnerships among departments and programs within the Dietrich School and ventures that link our degree programs to those of other schools or institutions. To support the incubation of innovative, interdisciplinary graduate programming, the Office of Graduate Studies, under the leadership of Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research Holger Hoock, will establish the Graduate Programming Incubator (GRAD-PI). GRAD-PI will encourage sustained faculty–student discussion to drive curricular innovation, including cross-cutting courses and interdisciplinary certificate programs, and to develop models for interdisciplinary advising, mentoring, or experiential learning activities. Grad-PI will foster collaborative efforts as an increasingly important component of professional advancement for graduate students aspiring to careers in and beyond the academy. It will provide the tools and policy guidance required to develop, implement, and assess new and dynamic graduate programming. Seed funding will be made available for pilot activities.

We will also be developing selective self-pay professional master's degree programs in disciplinary areas where there is student and employer demand and in collaboration with departments whose faculty are committed to new professional master's degrees that will not reduce the quality of existing doctoral degree programs.

Diverse and Inclusive Excellence

Recognizing that intellectual vitality and diversity are inseparable, we seek to foster a diverse and inclusive environment in which all our graduate students feel welcome and thrive intellectually and

professionally. To support our sustained efforts to recruit, mentor, and retain a graduate student population that is increasingly diverse, we will work with program admissions teams on adopting best practices in graduate admissions, including mitigating implicit bias and holistic file review. We will enhance programming for intercultural understanding and collaboration, as well as anti-bias and micro-aggression training, to support the professional development and pedagogical preparation of all graduate students. In addition, we seek to grow opportunities for international research, study, and other experiences that further the educational growth of all graduate students. Enhanced efforts will be made to better prepare Dietrich School graduate students for research overseas. We will redouble our efforts to maximize the visibility of [existing resources](#) regarding discrimination and bias incidents, including [how to report these incidents](#). We now require Title IX training for all incoming graduate students, and we will partner with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to introduce advanced Title IX training for all graduate students.

Professional Development and Preparation for Diverse Careers

As our graduate programs pursue their core mission of training the future tenure-track professoriate, the School also fosters a culture in which the value of diverse, excellent, and high-impact careers in the academy, government, non-profit, and industry/business is broadly understood and embraced. In line with national best practices, we will increasingly leverage internal and external partnerships, including with our doctoral alumni and with employers, in support of innovative professional and career development programming for our students. We will be working with the University and our graduate programs to implement AAU data transparency standards for doctoral programs: publishing student demographics, attrition, completion rates, time to degree, and funding, as well as comprehensive alumni career path data. We will improve our infrastructure to better track alumni career paths and to scale alumni involvement in professional development programming. A recent CFP for the Graduate Student Professional Development Challenge invites proposals for innovative student-designed and student-led projects that will contribute to the professional development of graduate students. Graduate Council is exploring how to involve graduate students more widely as mentors of undergraduate research experiences, especially in the social sciences and humanities.

The Dean's Office will be supporting these priorities by providing departments and graduate programs with more timely and extensive data on their students, programs, and alums. and by connecting graduate faculty and students with University resources.

If you have any suggestions or questions, please contact Associate Dean Holger Hoock at graddean@pitt.edu

