

Leading the Change: The UC Santa Cruz Strategic Plan

Envisioning Graduate Education for the Future

Report and Recommendations of the Envisioning Graduate Education for the Future Committee

April 29, 2023

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UCSC remains a place apart. A place that holds somehow inside it the seeds of something: the seeds of something different.

– Jim Clifford

Introduction

The University of California, one of the world's premier public universities, owes much of its reputation to the accomplishments of its graduate programs in research and innovation. UC's graduate students and programs are at the forefront of groundbreaking research, from theoretical and foundational to practical and applied, and they also play a vital role in developing future leaders in their fields of study. In fact, UC confers the most PhDs in the country, with over 4,000 awarded annually. By supporting and maintaining its graduate mission, UCSC can provide exceptional learning opportunities for undergraduate students, who can collaborate with and learn from graduate students in both traditional and online settings, and engage in mentored research. Moreover, graduate students serve as ambassadors for UCSC, connecting the university to regional communities and California at large. Without question, UCSC's graduate programs and students are critical components of the institution's intellectual foundation, generating creative energy, catalyzing paradigm-shifting discoveries, and driving the commitment to creating a more just and equitable world.

UCSC is embarking on a strategic plan and is committed to [leading the change](#) by re-envisioning graduate education for the future at a time when higher education is engaged in a national conversation about how to advance interdisciplinary collaboration and impact in research and how graduate programs can best prepare students to be leaders across a wide range of careers and professions. Graduate education serves as a cornerstone of UCSC's leadership in innovative, interdisciplinary research and creative activities across its academic divisions. UCSC graduate students are leading the change in our labs, classrooms and community, and they are also moving us collectively to rethink graduate education and employment. This rethinking is cutting edge and has already started reshaping and redefining public higher education of the future, not only at UCSC, but across University of California campuses and in the nation.

As we embark on a new strategic plan for UCSC, graduate education must take into account our unique roles as a member of the new [Alliance of Hispanic Serving Research Universities](#). UCSC is also one of only two institutions in the nation recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution, an Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution, and a member of the Association of American Universities. Graduate students are logically and demographically the key to make our campus more representative of the public of California and also well positioned to deliver on our potential to be an engine of social mobility, capable of producing just and sustainable economic progress for all.

Executive Summary of Recommendations

We value graduate education as an integral component of our mission and seek to provide our graduate students with instruction, engage with them in research and provide professional development opportunities to help them prepare for rewarding lives and making important contributions to society. The cross-cutting themes of equity, social justice and academic excellence are central to every aspect of graduate education at UCSC and are meaningfully integrated into all our goals and recommendations.

In addition to the all-encompassing goal of improving **Affordable Housing** for graduate students (and indeed, for the campus community as a whole) and **Elevating and Enhancing Support for Graduate Students (Goal 4)** we identified **Funding and Supporting Graduate Student Success (Goal 1)** and **Fostering Inclusive Excellence (Goal 2)** as key goals. We recognize that the goal of developing **New Graduate Programs (Goal 3)** in strategic areas has to be connected with revising and better supporting existing programs. We will elaborate on these multifaceted goals which are largely reflected in the feedback from the campus survey and stakeholder meetings, and our recommendations for how and within which timeframe to achieve them throughout this report. The ITF report on [Inclusive Excellence in Graduate Education](#) provides a foundation for a strategic plan for Graduate Education for the Future, and we recommend its full implementation.

In this process, we must ensure that our graduate programs are student-centered and faculty-led, and emphasize a holistic view of graduate training. To realize a student-centered experience, faculty members should incorporate the educational, scholarly, and professional goals and potential of individual students into teaching, research, and mentoring. This will include preparing students for an expanded range of career opportunities and providing pathways for interdisciplinary, project-based approaches to solving complex, real-world problems for both doctoral and master's students. The prerequisite of this and any strategic plan is to partner with UCSC's faculty and programs to advance inclusive excellence in graduate education as the guiding principle of the strategic plan, to cultivate a vibrant and diverse student community, and to impact the public good through the scholarship and discoveries of its graduates. The strategic plan is oriented around goals that will advance graduate students' success and well-being by:

- Recruiting outstanding graduate students and providing them with transformative education based on academic program outcomes that prepare them for future success.
- Improving student success and inclusive excellence (retention, time-to-degree, placement) through a more planned and purposeful 5/2 funding model.
- Providing programs and opportunities for professional development so that graduate students can achieve their career aspirations.

- Supporting, developing and enhancing opportunities for graduate research, scholarship and creative expression.
- Building and supporting a welcoming, respectful, strong, diverse and resilient graduate community.
- Fostering innovation in graduate education, especially in supporting existing and in creating new interdisciplinary programs, delivering courses and programs in a wide range of modalities, and extending educational opportunities to non-traditional learners.
- Elevating and enhancing support for graduate students on- and off-campus.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recruiting outstanding graduate students and providing them with transformative education based on academic program outcomes that prepare them for future success.

Improving student success and inclusive excellence (retention, time-to-degree, placement) through a more planned and purposeful funding model.

Providing programs and opportunities for professional development so that graduate students can achieve their career aspirations.

Supporting, developing and enhancing opportunities for graduate research, scholarship and creative expression.

Building and supporting a welcoming, respectful, strong, diverse and resilient graduate community.

Fostering innovation in graduate education, especially in supporting existing and in creating new interdisciplinary programs, delivering courses and programs in a wide range of modalities, and extending educational opportunities to non-traditional learners.

Elevating and enhancing support for graduate students on- and off-campus.

■ Goal 1 ■ Goal 2 ■ Goal 3 ■ Goal 4

The Graduate Division will monitor progress toward achieving the goals laid out in the strategic plan using the metrics defined by the plan. Operational excellence needs to be the guiding organizational principles. Best practices, data and evidence need to inform analysis and actions, and collaborative work with the Graduate Council, the academic divisions and units, as well as partners from outside the university will be the key for its success. The most important outcomes of strategic planning for UCSC graduate education are that graduate students and programs thrive, achieve distinction, and have broad impacts.

Charge

The strategic planning committee for Envisioning Graduate Education for the Future was composed of 19 members (7 faculty, 8 staff, 3 graduate students, and 1 undergraduate student) including the co-chairs and support staff. The committee held bi-weekly one-hour zoom meetings over the fall and winter term and two committee meetings in the spring term.

The Envisioning Graduate Education for the Future [committee charge](#) included:

- Identify potential new graduate programs in areas of strength and emerging areas of opportunity, including PhD and professional Master's programs, as well as post-baccalaureate and credential programs.
- Propose support and resources to recruit the best PhD, MFA and Master's students, while ensuring that student recruitment is aligned with department and program outcomes and capacity, and incorporates strategies to diversify the graduate student community.
- Propose support and resources to significantly improve retention and time to degree within the 5/2 funding model.
- Recommend enhanced support mechanisms, both material and cultural, by which mentors, departments, academic divisions, and the students themselves can prepare for a range of career outcomes, especially careers outside of academia, including opportunities for collaborating in the community, professional development, on-campus employment, and internships on- and off-campus.
- Recommend housing options and new structures and services to support student retention, development, graduation, identity, well-being, sense of belonging, and community. Recommendations should take into consideration the different support needs of graduate students at the Silicon Valley Center.

For campus community outreach and engagement, the committee provided 6 questions for the campus survey - including qualitative/open ended questions - for (1) housing, (2) transportation, (3) barriers, (4) resources, (5) careers, and (6) new graduate programs. Another source of feedback about the strategic goals, actions, and metrics were 18 stakeholder meetings (with constituents ranging from graduate students to staff, faculty, leadership, and alumni). The

feedback is summarized with “[emerging themes](#)” [infographics](#) throughout this report (see also [appendix](#) with all infographics and committee materials). The format of these one-hour Zoom sessions was a short introduction followed by an open discussion guided by [six questions \(different from the survey questions\)](#) provided by the committee. With the exception of the sessions with the graduate students, the stakeholder meetings were well attended and provided important feedback on the five strategic pillars, 1. Funding Student Success, 2. Providing 360-degree Student Services, 3. Fostering Inclusive Excellence in Graduate Education, 4. Increasing Mentoring and Professional Development Programs, 5. Identifying New Grad Programs for the Future that the committee had identified (See [Appendix V](#) for notes, infographics and word clouds from these meetings).

During the work of the committee, these five pillars were developed into the four goals of this strategic plan. This committee’s work benefited from the work of the Implementation Task Force for Inclusive Excellence in Graduate Education (ITF). The [ITF report](#) has recently been transmitted to the campus and will be socialized with the campus community in consultations with academic divisions and senate committees. ITF data and recommendations are also integrated in this final report and provide a foundation for this strategic plan.

Background

Graduate education programs in the United States are respected and emulated worldwide, and are an international magnet for talented students. At a time when American leadership and prosperity depend increasingly on the creation and use of knowledge, graduate education provides our country with an important competitive advantage. Our system of combining graduate education with cutting-edge research strengthens American research, while also producing highly educated individuals who will become the next generation’s scientists, teachers, and leaders in government, business, and industry. – AAU

Recent research ([see references](#)) has shown that there will be both increased societal need for the advanced training that graduate education offers and the career outcomes available to graduate degree recipients will continue to expand – with the notable exception for academic jobs. And most importantly, the diversity of the graduate community will continue to be essential to its excellence, and scholarship and training will continue to be increasingly collaborative and interdisciplinary. At the same time, concerns about the costs of graduate education and public skepticism about its value will persist. Even before the new contract between University of California (UC) and United Auto Workers (UAW) union for graduate student workers and postdocs was signed, there was – and still is – an increasing concern about the [the future of graduate education at public research universities](#) in general, and continuing discussions of

decreasing the number of doctoral students and consequently a reassessment of doctoral programs in particular.

The fact that UC's Graduate Education is a crucial component of the continuity of the University system, and essential to the state's economy and vitality has been pointed out repeatedly in reports such as [Making Discovery Work: Graduate Education at the University of California](#) and in six (SIC!) recent systemwide [task forces](#). Despite all of this thoughtful attention, the core message is straightforward and familiar:

UC must adequately fund and support doctoral education. Without adequate support UC cannot maintain the quality of its research and instruction. If UC is serious about protecting and building on its excellence, and continuing its role as a key contributor to California's economy, it must demonstrate its commitment to academic doctoral education.

– UC Academic Planning Council Graduate Education Workgroup 2019

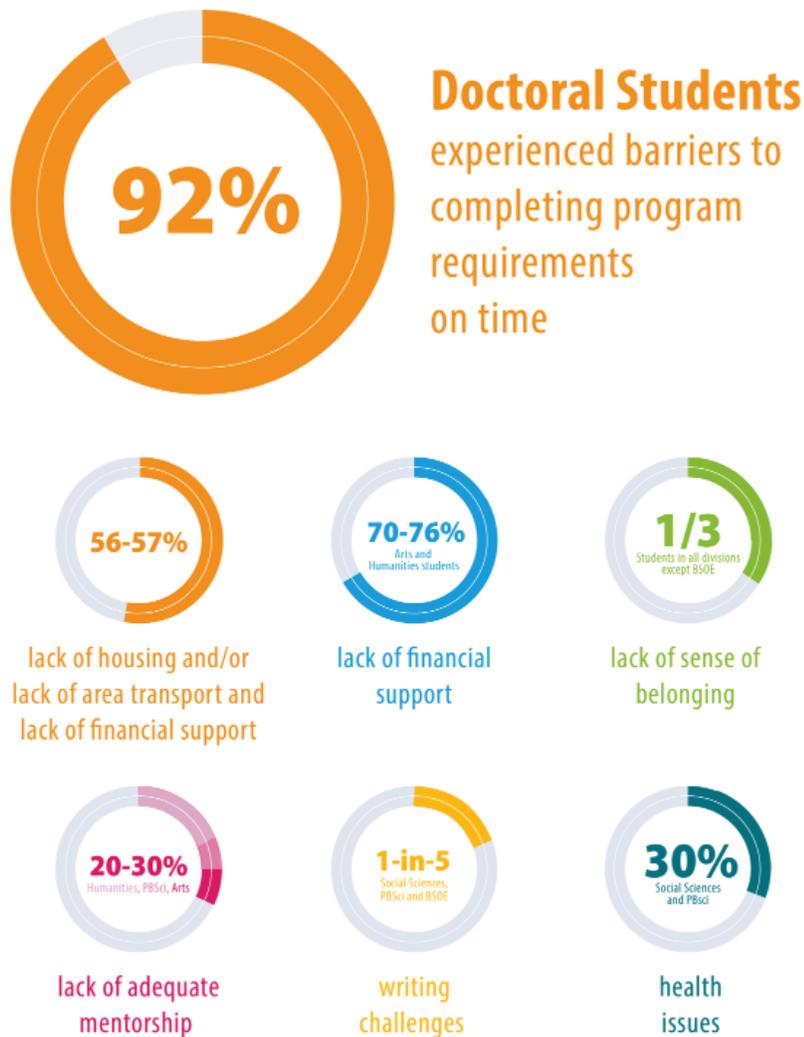
At UCSC, we have recognized this limitation and have started to address the issues with creating new, [enhanced graduate student support programs](#). In addition, a [Joint Senate-Administration Working Group](#) was constituted and provided a substantive report with powerful recommendations. In 2022, an [Implementation Task Force \(ITF\)](#) was formed to both extend and implement the recommendations. The 2023 [ITF Report](#) provides an operational foundation for student success and inclusive excellence in the form of a significant increase in (1) the proportion of students that graduate within their program's normative time; (2) the number of matriculated students that graduate; (3) the retention and graduation rates for underrepresented minority (URM) students so that they are retained and graduated at the same rates as non-URM students; and (4) post-graduation success in career paths within and outside of academia. "More broadly, improving graduate student success will also strengthen undergraduate education and UCSC's service mission, and thus the campus and regional communities as a whole...and will demonstrate how robust graduate programs contribute to economic growth, creative discovery, and enhanced representation in essential professions" (ITF report, page 9).

Due to this work of the ITF, the strategic planning committee focused on research literature on graduate education and on strategic plans on graduate education of other R1 universities and formulated substantive questions for the campus survey as well as created opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to discuss how the campus should approach graduate education over the next decade. Based on the research, survey responses and forum feedback, the committee identified strategic goals which were listed in the preliminary draft report that was distributed to senate faculty committees for informal feedback. The senate and other feedback we received helped us to prioritize the various goals, recommendations and assessment metrics so that the strategic plan would reflect a consensus of the UCSC community's priorities. We believe that

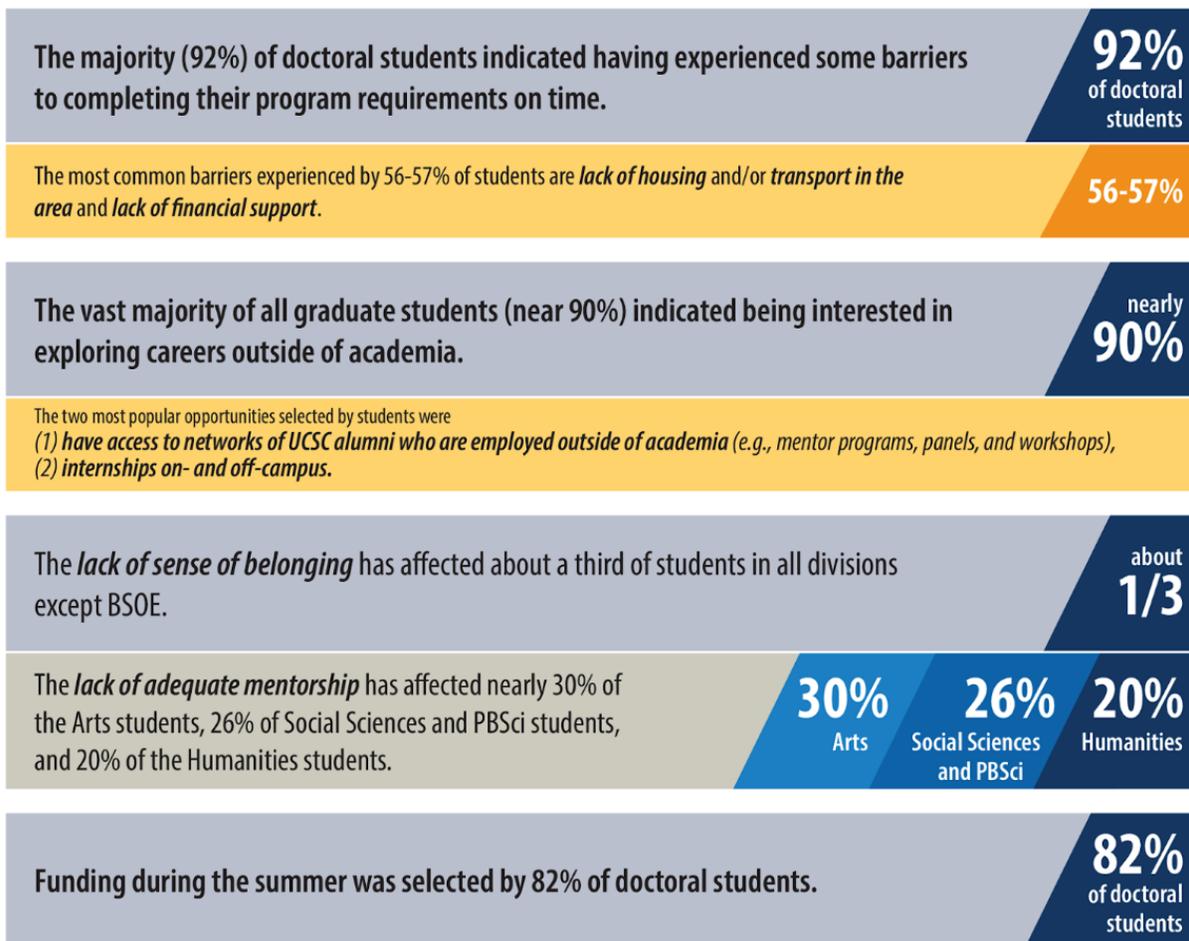
this strategic plan will substantially improve graduate education on campus and elevate the stature of our graduate programs nationally and internationally.

Findings and Recommendations

According to the [Leading the Change Survey - Brief summary of findings for the Committee on Envisioning Graduate Education for the Future](#), the majority (92%) of doctoral students indicated having experienced some barriers to completing their program requirements on time. Graduate students experienced barriers ranging from lack of affordable housing and financial support to completing program requirements on time and lack of sense of belonging and mentorship and writing challenges and health issues.



The most common barriers experienced by 56-57% of students are *lack of housing and/or transport in the area and lack of financial support*. The *lack of financial support* was a barrier for the majority (70-76%) of doctoral students in the Arts and Humanities. The vast majority of all graduate students (nearly 90%) indicated being interested in exploring careers outside of academia. The two most popular opportunities selected by students were (1) have access to networks of UCSC alumni who are employed outside of academia (e.g., mentor programs, panels, and workshops), and (2) internships on- and off-campus. 40% of doctoral students and 52% of Master's students were interested in opportunities for collaborating in the community. A third of doctoral students and nearly 60% of Master's students were interested in career fairs.



The *lack of sense of belonging* has affected about a third of students in all divisions except BSOE, and the *lack of adequate mentorship* has affected nearly 30% of the Arts students, 26% of Social Sciences and PBSci students, and 20% of the Humanities students. About 1 in 5 students in Social Sciences, PBSci and BSOE has faced *writing challenges* that affected their completion of program requirements on time. Health issues have affected nearly 30% of students in Social Sciences and PBSci. Doctoral and Master's students also selected the following priorities: *Funding during the summer* was selected by 82% of doctoral students. About half of doctoral

students selected *funding in the first year to allow graduate students not to work as TAs*, and *funding to allow graduate students to go to conferences and other professional events without being a presenter*. Of note, 64% of Social Sciences students selected *funding not to work as TAs in the first year*; 65% of Arts students selected *funding to go to conferences/professional events without being a presenter*. Half of doctoral students selected *financial support for international students* (56-59% of Arts and Social Sciences students). *Healthcare and childcare for dependents* was an important priority for 38% of doctoral students. 30% of doctoral students selected *professional development for jobs outside of academia* (38% in PBSci). *Increased support for professional development of faculty as mentors of graduate students* was selected by 31% of PBSci students, 26% of BSOE students, and 18-20% of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences students. 61% of Master's students selected *funding for Master's students that don't receive any*.

Faculty responses about the five priorities for improving graduate education were mostly consistent with the student responses. The most frequently selected priorities by faculty were *funding during the summer* and *funding in the first year so that students don't work as TAs*. Faculty as a group “ranked” higher such priorities as *healthcare and childcare for dependents* and *professional development for jobs outside of academia* (half of faculty selected them). Overall, a similar proportion (22-24%) of faculty and doctoral students selected as a priority *increasing support for professional development of faculty as mentors of graduate students*. A quarter of faculty (25-27%) thought that *professional development about teaching and more writing support resources for graduate students* should be among the priorities, a somewhat higher percentage than among graduate students.

Among different ways to improve transportation to and from campus, two-thirds of graduate students indicated *increasing frequency of shuttle and bus services*, and nearly half – *free electric bike-share programs*. About a third (31%) named *expanding carpooling programs* for students. A quarter indicated that *expanding the routes of shuttles and buses* could be helpful. Only 3% selected *relocation of classes to off-campus sites*.

Number One Barrier - Affordable Housing

The lack of affordable housing is clearly the [number one barrier](#) for graduate students (and indeed, for the campus community as a whole) and the committee felt strongly to include it as an all-encompassing goal.

The high cost of living in Santa Cruz and the Bay Area, combined with the limited availability of affordable housing, has left many students struggling to make ends meet. While efforts have been made to provide [additional support](#) to graduate students to help alleviate gaps around housing, the issue of affordability and access for graduate students remains unresolved. Santa Cruz has one of the [highest median rents](#) in the country, and the limited availability of housing exacerbates the issue. According to the [No Place Like Home report \(2021\)](#), around 80% of graduate student respondents spent over 30% of their income on rent, which is the threshold for affordability recommended by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The

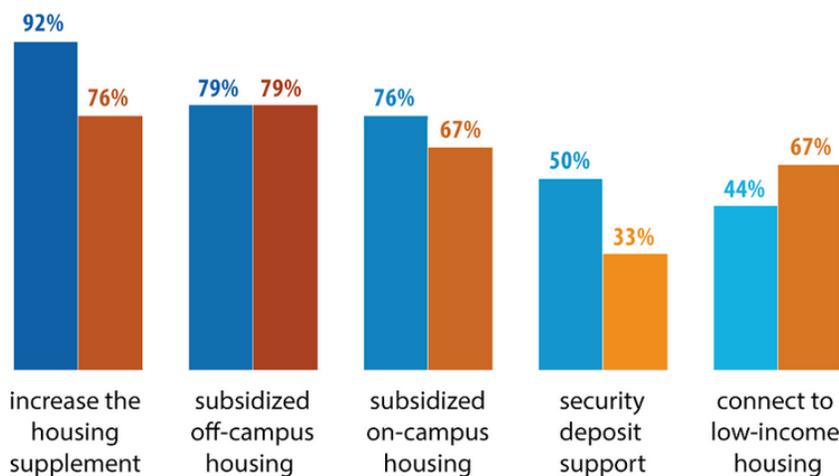
same survey found that 49% percent of graduate students paid more than 50% percent, and 27% of students spent over 70% of their income on housing. This makes it difficult for students to cover basic living expenses such as food, healthcare, and transportation, and has a significant impact on their academic performance and mental health. The challenge of securing affordable off-campus housing can be further exacerbated for graduate students who have dependents or children. This issue is evident from the firsthand accounts of graduate students who seek emergency assistance through support programs such as [Slug Support](#). The cost of housing, coupled with the high cost of childcare creates significant financial barriers for parenting students.

The issue of housing affordability also intersects with issues of equity and inclusion. International graduate students face additional challenges in finding affordable housing due to their status as non-citizens. They often have limited access to financial aid and are ineligible for many forms of housing assistance, leaving them particularly vulnerable to the high cost of living in Santa Cruz. The lack of affordable housing also affects students from historically underrepresented communities, who may face additional financial and social barriers to accessing affordable housing.

According to the [Leading the Change Survey](#), 92% of doctoral students want an increase in the housing supplement, while 76% of masters students noted they want an increase in the housing supplement.

Doctoral Students / Master's Students

Meeting the housing needs of graduate students in the future



79% of Doctoral and Master's student want subsidized off-campus housing, 76% of Doctoral students and 67% of Master's students want subsidized on-campus housing, 50% of Doctoral students and 33% of Master's students noted wanting support with their security deposits, and 44% of Doctoral students and 67% of Master's students indicated they wanted referral and access to low-income housing.

To address the lack of affordable housing in the community, the university should advocate within the city for the production of new housing, preservation of existing affordable housing, and tenant protections. Additionally, investing in political awareness on campus and stimulating students to vote can help influence housing policy in the county and facilitate the development of high-density, affordable housing, tenant protections, as well as transportation initiatives.

Additionally, the campus should continue the Graduate Student Housing [Hotel Program](#) initiative and extend the [University Town Center Guest Housing](#) as a short-term housing option for incoming students, especially international graduate students. To help lower the barrier to securing off-campus housing for international graduate students, the campus can consider co-signing for off-campus rental leases either through the university or partnering with a third party co-signer service.

Per the Associate Director of Affiliated Residential Community Housing (ARCH), at present, the university provides on-campus housing for graduate students comprising 82 single-occupancy beds in designated on-campus graduate housing and 60 beds in the hotel program. In total, this can accommodate ~7.5 % of the graduate student population. Both of these accommodations are not suitable for students with dependents. [Family Student Housing](#) (FSH) offers approximately 190 apartments, of which 122 graduate students are currently listed as primary contract holders. Graduate students have to compete with undergraduates for these units, leading to a notoriously long waiting list. Students have reported waiting for several months to secure a place in FSH. Furthermore, FSH prioritizes families with children, which can be a barrier for partnered students without children. In total, on campus housing currently accommodates roughly 14% of the [graduate student population](#), thereby necessitating the majority of students to procure off-campus alternatives. Aside from the constrained availability of campus housing, graduate students have expressed concerns regarding the affordability of on-campus accommodations, relative to their income and other [essential living expenses](#). In certain cases, the cost of housing can be over half of students' take-home pay.

To help mitigate on-campus housing scarcity, the university needs to reassess [Campus West Student Housing](#) regarding the number of beds for graduate students, repurpose unused spaces on-campus for housing purposes, explore development of both on-campus and off-campus complexes, and coordinate with complexes in adjacent communities. To allow students to explore housing options in adjacent communities, it's imperative to provide and improve transportation options through shuttles/buses between campuses and adjacent communities, and provide more parking spaces at affordable rates.

Besides advocating for housing options in the city of Santa Cruz, the campus should also consider housing coupled with transportation options and improved parking availability which would allow housing in adjacent communities including the Bay Area and south Santa Cruz county. While commuting is not ideal, a large number of graduate students already commute from these areas which have larger supplies of rental properties and typically lower cost. After taking into account the aforementioned concerns, along with the added factor that the availability of Academic Student Employee (ASE) positions and funding for graduate students are limited during the summer months and the reality that graduate students are obligated to bear year-round living expenses, including housing costs, it becomes apparent that there exists a significant gap between the take-home pay of graduate students and the fundamental costs of meeting their basic needs.

Perceptions

- **Guaranteed housing for their first year graduate students**
- UCSC controls grad housing costs - **UCSC itself creates rent burden** to grads for campus housing - new housing on campus needs to not reinforce rent burden
- UCSC should not be exploitative landlord to graduate students
- UCLA advocated UCOP Basic needs center for graduate students.
- Faculty have a hard time affording to live here. Staff should be included. Departments are understaffed.
- Long-term housing goals; chancellor suggested we cannot admit more students unless we can provide housing.
- **Top-ups** to housing stipend in some departments (typically not provided in social sciences, humanities), but amount is inconsistent across departments. Address disparity in funding across divisions - other divisions able to receive "top ups" like they receive in STEM fields - more funding for arts, hum, social sciences (earn at least 40k per year as grads in STEM fields do)

- Housing continues to be a challenge.



"Band-Aid" Solutions

- **UCSC has tried:** 5 days temporary in downtown and hotel accommodations.
- Hotel space was implemented back in the late 1990s
- Tight timeline to find housing while using hostel:
 - Jump start summer programs immediately; time to live in dorm on campus, then get housing
 - Bridge programs like GANAS Bridge Scholars Program incoming grads of color - support for finding housing, a buffer for finding housing - expand to more grads
 - We can welcome the next graduate student class with an easier transition.
- UC Santa Barbara **band-aid solution**, grad division became the guarantors to help grads as a co-signer to find housing. Landlords then feel much more comfortable since they have university insurance.

International Students

- University needs to create a mechanism to fund relocation/housing stipends **earlier**, especially for international/out of state students
- Guaranteed temporary housing for international students for a while once they arrive in the US until they are able to find a place off-campus
- Question about adequate space for international / out of state students; timing of emergency housing v. access to long term housing

Building

- Need larger scale solutions around building and transparency.
- Build more on-campus housing as the cost is comparatively lower than off-campus housing which can have exploitative pricing due to lack of options.
- A "pie in the sky" idea: Long term the UC could leverage capital assets. Commercial and educational spaces below and resident space for students and postdocs on the upper levels.
- Westside industrial buildings could be **converted to commercial retail space or educational spaces**. The high-level housing concept would be to acquire commercial structures and convert/build out the 2nd+ stories into 1br and/or studio apartments for graduate students and postdocs. The bottom floor would remain commercial, retail, etc. and the income generated from those commercial tenants would aid in offsetting the cost of housing for students/postdocs.
- There are a number of state and federal programs we could take advantage of, one being TechClean CA (<https://techcleanca.com/>). The funds obtained here could offset (completely in some cases) costs associated with making the units high efficiency and solar, with additional programs available related to water including sub-metering of units; greywater capture; rainwater capture; and more.

Suggestions

- Complete separate Basic needs center. Rent and security deposits.
- Expand housing stipend to meaningfully address housing crisis and provide clarity on housing stipend for all graduate students so it doesn't end unexpectedly.
- Reduce the cost of grad housing to max 30% of our paycheck. Cost of off campus housing is affected by costs on campus.
- Complete separate Basic needs center. Rent and security deposits.
- Guaranteed housing for their first year graduate students
- Paying incentives to the homeowners to provide housing to students and postdocs.

Goals and Metrics

The committee made its recommendations after much deliberation and research. We used: feedback from the campus survey; feedback from the stakeholder meetings; feedback from the Academic Senate and campus leadership; notes from comprehensive discussions during the committee meetings; research about graduate education in general, and of other R1 universities'

strategic plans in particular. Using this data, the committee has identified four main goals. One of these goals is housing, which the committee felt strongly about including. Below, we will elaborate on the four goals, subgoals and potential actions, projects and initiatives along with a timeline to achieve them, and metrics for their assessment.

Goal 1: Funding and Supporting Graduate Student Success

- Goal 1A: Increase Institutional Commitment to Graduate Student Success Through Increased Fellowship Support
- Goal 1B: Increase Extramurally and Intramurally-Funded Research Support
- Goal 1C: Providing 360-degree Student Services

Goal 2: Fostering Inclusive Excellence in Graduate Education

- Goal 2A: Improve DEI in Graduate Studies which benefits the broader UCSC community
- Goal 2B: Enhance Diversity and Equity to move us closer to Social Justice and better representation of the people of California
- Goal 2B1: Fostering California-based Inclusive Excellence - Diversity 1
- Goal 2B2: Strengthen Graduate Services Counselors and Doctoral Summer Bridge
- Goal 2C: Fostering International Inclusive Excellence - Diversity 2
- Goal 2D: Strengthen Graduate Studies Organizational Focus on Inclusive Excellence
- Goal 2E: Strengthen DEI Support Programming to Enhance Student Diversity and Success

Goal 3: Revising Existing and Developing New Graduate Programs in Strategic Areas

- Goal 3A: Identifying and removing barriers for interdisciplinary programs
- Goal 3B: Identifying new graduate programs and modality options (in-person, online, hybrid, low-residency)
- Goal 3C: Exploring Alternative Doctoral Degrees
- Goal 3D: Exploring Credentialing for Graduate Students

Goal 4: Elevating and Enhancing Support for Graduate Students

- Goal 4A: Provide Affordable Housing for Graduate Students
- Goal 4B: Provide Affordable and Accessible Transportation
- Goal 4C: Securing Basic Needs and Increasing Slug Support for Graduate Students

Outlined below in the infographic, our 4 goals are mapped out in achievable and on-going timelines, that outline short term, midterm and longer term goals.



Strategic Plan Timeline

Leading the Change: The UC Strategic Plan
Envisioning Graduate Education for the Future
2023-2033

Goal 1: Funding and Supporting Graduate Student Success

Securing and sustaining financial resources for graduate students is our top priority. Dedicated resources are vital to the overall success of graduate education, as graduate education can't be managed successfully when it is considered to be incidental or an add-on to other parts of the campus mission. Success will require making graduate programs and students a priority and directing resources specifically for this purpose.

Following the findings of the [Implementation Task Force for Inclusive Excellence in Graduate Education](#) (ITF, 2023), the goals and metrics for “Goal 2: Funding and Supporting Student Success” align with the “shift in strategic emphasis from graduate growth to a focus on graduate student success and well-being” at UCSC. It is essential to provide graduate students with the necessary resources and support to enable them to thrive academically, professionally, and personally. With the recommendations of the ITF as a foundation this goal and the attendant recommendations seek to address the “lack of dedicated support of graduate student success,” such as evidenced by the allocation of only 28% of core graduate enrollment revenue dollars spent on direct support of graduate students ([ITF Final Report](#), p. 1).

The recommendations associated with this goal align with graduate student success metrics related to time-to-degree and graduation rates, which are linked with types, amount, and duration of financial support received. They will significantly improve retention and time to degree and require work with programs to calibrate doctoral program size to funding capacity relative to within normative time to degree and the 5/2 funding model. A consideration to keep in mind here is that reducing ASE support by increasing fellowship and GSR support during the academic year and summer months should not be interpreted as a need to reduce opportunities for graduate students to gain holistic professional development beyond their research development. For example, strategic planning campus survey and focus groups with graduate student and staff stakeholders, along with IRAPS survey data ([IRAPS Graduate Survey 2019](#)), expose the need for creating more opportunities for graduate students to pursue professional development in areas like teaching development and writing development through professional development more deeply embedded in the graduate curriculum, including before taking on teaching roles and during times of fellowship support (i.e. not while concurrently serving in an ASE role). But Goal 1 does not only focus on funding graduate students, but also support them during their whole time as graduate students including providing them with 360-degree student services.

Goal 1A: Increase Institutional Commitment to Graduate Student Success Through Increased Fellowship Support

The Implementation Task Force for Inclusive Excellence in Graduate Education has found through their research that there are several factors that are positively and negatively associated with student success (as indicated by time-to-degree [TTD] and graduation rates), related to sources and levels of financial support ([ITF Final Report](#), p. 4).

- The factors that are positively associated with student success include: fully supported students with a greater proportion of support coming from Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs) (in STEM fields) or fellowships (in Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities fields),

as opposed to Teaching Assistants (TAs), have shorter time-to-degree; summer support is associated with shorter time-to-degree.

- The factors negatively associated with student success (i.e. longer TTD and lower graduation rates) include: fully supported students who primarily work as Academic Student Employees (ASEs) (and as GSRs in non-STEM fields) have longer TTD; lower support levels over a student's career, such as not being fully supported or being supported for 4 years or less, are associated with lower levels of success.

These data suggest that full 5-year support packages including increased fellowship support and committed summer support are an essential component of funding graduate student success.

The following are potential actions, projects, and initiatives to achieve this goal:

- Increase the number of quarters of GSR and fellowship support with particular focus on non-STEM graduate students:
 - GSR and fellowship support is particularly important for graduate student success in non-STEM fields, as measured by time-to-degree and graduation rates. One central recommendation is to increase the number of quarters of committed fellowship support.
- Provide graduate student summer support across disciplines, to be included in funding commitment packages:
 - Summer support will enable graduate students to continue their research during the summer months without having to worry about financial constraints.
- Prioritize fundraising for graduate student fellowships, particularly for URM students:
 - To increase the number of fellowships available to graduate students, there is a need to prioritize fellowship support and summer commitment for underrepresented and minoritized students (URM). This will help ensure that our institution is accountable to meeting equity goals related to graduate student success and to providing an equitable graduate education.
- Increase coordination of graduate student support to positively impact planning for graduate student success:
 - Per the ITF Final Report, there is a need to reduce structural barriers to the coordinated planning for graduate student success across stakeholders. As a primary example, ASE appointments currently constitute a significant source of support for doctoral students, and yet ASE allocations to divisions are driven by undergraduate instructional needs and not by planning for recruitment and retention of graduate students (ITF Final Report, p. 5).

Goal 1B: Increase Extramurally and Intramurally-Funded Research Support

Research support is crucial for graduate student success as well as to the reputation of our public research university. "Research support" correlates with financial support and is intertwined with the graduate success factors identified in Goal 1A. It is also connected with broader cultures of mentorship and professional development at the department and divisional level, which dovetail

with recommendations in Goal 1C in this report. The following are potential actions, projects, and initiatives to achieve this goal:

- Enhanced mentorship and training for graduate students writing proposals for extramural research support:
 - Graduate students will be provided with enhanced mentorship and training to enable them to write successful research proposals for external funding. These efforts can be achieved through divisional curricular interventions (academic divisions creating proposal and grant-writing courses); enhanced faculty mentorship professional development in these areas (see also: Goal 3); and increased staffing support at divisional or Office of Research levels, to support more graduate students across disciplines.
- Financial support for scholarly travel for conferences, meetings, and professional development activities for all graduate students:
 - By providing guaranteed financial support for scholarly travel, graduate students will have the opportunity to attend conferences, meetings, and professional development activities that are essential for their academic and professional development.
- Incentivize and increase external GSR support:
 - Graduate student research positions provide essential research support to faculty members and provide graduate students with funding for their own research pursuits, particularly in the STEM fields. Incentivizing external GSR support will help increase the number of research opportunities available to graduate students.
- Reduce time to degree through increased research support via fellowships, GSR positions, and summer support rather than relying on ASE positions:
 - By increasing research support via fellowships, GSR positions, and summer support, graduate students can focus on their research and complete their degree requirements more efficiently, reducing the time to degree. Based on graduate student success data and current institutional structures, GSR positions are more useful for STEM graduate students and academic-year and summer fellowship support is more useful for reducing time to degree for non-STEM graduate students.

Metrics:

- Financial Support Metrics: Five-Year Funding Commitment and ASE, GSR, and GSI support; Number and percentage of students receiving multi-year fellowships, number and percentage of students receiving financial aid/loans; Number and percentage of enhanced graduate student support programs.
- Admission Metrics: Number of inquiries for each future class, percentage of applications started but not completed (application melt), number of applications completed, demographics of students submitting applications, yield rate.

- Academic Metrics: Degree completion, time to degree, graduate student enrollment and degrees awarded, student placement; student and faculty headcount; student-faculty ratio.

Goal 1C: Providing 360-degree Student Services

Beyond housing and funding, UCSC must provide comprehensive support to students throughout their academic journey, ensuring that they receive the guidance and resources they need to succeed. Enrollment management services help students navigate the admissions process, providing assistance with applications, financial aid, and recruitment. Mentoring programs provide one-on-one guidance from experienced faculty or staff members, helping students to develop academic and professional skills, and offering guidance on career paths and opportunities. Finally, professional development services offer workshops, seminars, travel for professional development and other resources to help students develop the skills and knowledge they need to excel in their chosen fields. Together, these services provide a holistic approach to supporting graduate students, helping them to achieve their academic and career goals. The following are potential actions, projects, and initiatives to achieve this goal:

- Strategic Enrollment Management for Graduate Students
 - Revamp all admissions and enrollment management including professional recruitment, holistic admissions, and improve SLATE customer relations management.
- On-Boarding of Graduate Students:
 - Develop boot camps and summer orientations especially for international students. The first week orientation for graduate students should focus on cohort building. Offer field trips to Santa Cruz and the nearby regions.
- Increasing Mentoring Programs:
 - Develop a Mandatory Mentoring Plan; Student Academic Progress Tracking Resources (see UC Davis). Scale up the Graduate Student Commons (GSC) graduate student peer mentoring program and provide permanent funding for Mentor Collective or alternative mentoring platforms, stipends for lead mentors and program catering expenses that support the graduate student peer mentoring workshops. Develop a faculty/postdoc mentor training program. Develop a graduate mentoring program to help graduate students train undergraduate students. Develop a mentoring program or platform where graduate students have access to connect with postdocs and/or graduate alumni.
- Increasing Professional and Career Development Programs:
 - Develop a continuing and sequenced Professional and Career Development Program within the five-year funding commitment. Establish a Professional Entrepreneurship Program. Create a campuswide portal for internships for graduate students. Offer grant writing for training and internship programs beyond



the professoriate; e.g. extend A2I (Accelerate to Industry) to A2NGOs. Increase travel support for professional meetings, workshops and conferences.

- **Building Alumni Relations for Graduate Students:**
 - Prioritize fundraising for graduate student fellowships, particularly for URM and undocumented students, potentially through endowments similar to other R1 universities. Develop a UCSC graduate student alumni engagement process to enhance career awareness and development for our current graduate students. Establish regional chapters and engagement programming for international graduate students. Build a mentorship network with graduate alumni.

Metrics:

- **Student Life and Well-Being Metrics:** Number and percentage of students utilizing services in Student Life, Graduate Division, SLUG Support, number and percentage of

students attending events and special initiatives, number and goal-achievement of new events/initiatives focused on well-being, open/click rates on student email campaigns, web analytics for student web campaigns.

- Communication/Awareness Metrics: Open/click rates on email campaigns, web analytics for website campaigns
- Participation Metrics: Number and percentage of participants (across affiliations) communicating with Student Services, response time, success rate, satisfaction rate;
- Services Support Metrics: Number and percentage of initiatives, number of policies co-written and supported, program support initiatives and meetings developed and sponsored.

Obstacles to Finishing

- Admin acknowledges the University is a major source of the housing crisis. Constantly pushing for more growth, more tuition dollars. This significantly takes a toll on student wellbeing and mental crisis.
- **Proactive housing** lowers the cost of housing on campus. UCSC sets the standard of housing in this town. Lowering the cost of housing would have a significant impact on the housing costs in town. Provide housing at a lower rate and increase salary so grads can afford to live and work here.
- Tuition costs so much more for international students seems unjust.
- Family student housing struggles with kids, partners from another country can't work here.
- Regents making decisions, the root of the problems are the incentive structure. We get more funding if we take in more students. Quantity and quality of the education should be a priority and advocate for this.
- Administration needs to advocate for our needs at UC level.
- We need to give UCSC time to build more housing to provide growth. Growth is over. Bringing in more funding to student success.
- One method fits all for funding departments across divisions.
- **Concerns about Fresh Air funding pegged to undergrad enrollment to gradv departments can end grad programs.**
- Some grad students TA and have second fellowships that are at a level at which students do not need second jobs to do their research.

Suggestions

- Competitive financial offers (see University of VA, University of Michigan Ann Arbor, other R1s)
- Ensure funding to support Student Programming
- Challenge for funding eligibility regarding fellowships as international students
- Better advocating at University of California level
- Defund police on campus to shift funding towards staff and students, as campus police do not serve campus goals (feeling is shared by majority of psych grads and likely other departments)
 - Be a national leader in abolishing the police on campus (abolition = investing in campus programs that would better serve campus community, e.g. graduate funding, staff funding).
 - Be a leader in supporting marginalized graduate students who are over-policed by abolishing police on campus, avoid tragedy and police violence that escalated in the past and injured/harmed students.
 - Focus on supporting international students whose timeline is stricter and labor is exploitative given the precarity of their situation.
- COLA: TA and GSR Salaries

Raises from Contract

- Decisions have been pushed to departments rather than getting support at university-level
- New funding ideas proposed by faculty: Do we not guarantee funding at all for first year (when in classes), enforce shorter time periods (e.g. fund for only 4 years) which limits the scope of what research can be done/ the quality of research (smaller, less ambitious work)
- The departments will either sink or swim on their own. Departments may be forced to make those decisions.
- Enforce short time periods of funding, finish their thesis that can be completed in 4 years. Scope of research that can be done in that timeframe is a fundamental change of how grads experience their PhD.

Questions & Perceptions

- What are graduate students at the university?
 - Feels like low-paid labor that generates money from the state
 - Would like to believe that we're here because we want to do cool research
 - What do students get out of it? What do employers want to see on a resume after graduation? What are our learning outcomes?
- Funding from UC system is tied to number of students rather than quality of education, DEI, etc. That creates an incentive to expand, rather than improve quality.
- We have increasing costs (e.g. raises) but one of the ways we get more money is by taking more students, which would exacerbate most problems.
- How do we answer the question why grads are enrolling 5-7 years?



- Ensure funding for time to degree 6-7 years normative time. Normative time to completion is usually longer than the expected 5 years. Financial support should be offered for the extent of the degree program.
- Competitive financial offers (see University of VA, University of Michigan Ann Arbor, other R1s)
- Ensure funding to support Student Programming
- Challenge for funding eligibility regarding fellowships as international students
- Better advocating at University of California level
- Need institutional support for the Graduate Student Services Coordinator for HSI
- Writing support through the Writing Center, specific to their academic division
- All of the RCs have grad student interns who put on programs for graduate students. They want to spread awareness about these programs such as weekly writing circles for women identified students, meditation circles, one-on-one editing circles by a consultant that the RCs hired. Feedback from students is that there is a need for community spaces that they feel represented in are culturally relevant and they found these programs very helpful, Latinx welcome was something new they tried this year to help connect them to community and resources.

Goal 2: Fostering Inclusive Excellence in Graduate Education

UCSC strives to achieve a graduate student population that is inclusive of all groups traditionally underrepresented: socioeconomic levels, physical abilities, ages, national origins, and sexual orientations. UCSC encourages applications from students who have overcome economic or social disadvantage in pursuing their academic objectives and those who bring unique perspectives, research topics, or career interests that advance the University's mission as well as excellence and diversity. Early identification of, and personal communication with, all competitive applicants is essential in attracting them to UCSC. Studies have shown that students who have had personal contact with faculty are much more likely to accept offers of admission at institutions where the faculty has been active in the recruitment process. Wherever possible the Graduate Representative and individual faculty are encouraged to take an active role and contact prospective students.

- [UCSC Graduate Division Handbook](#)

Defining Equity and Excellence

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines social equity as “the absence of avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people.” UC Davis defines it as: “The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all students, faculty and staff, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.”

Thus, a good educational definition of equity work in graduate education involves:

- Removing the predictability of success or failure that currently correlates with any social or cultural factor such as class, race or gender.
- Ensuring equally high outcomes for all participants in our educational system.
- Interrupting inequitable practices, examining biases, and creating inclusive multicultural school environments for adults and children.
- Discovering and cultivating the unique gifts, talents and interests that every human possesses.

In order to make “the search for excellence” operational at the level of selection/admission of graduate students to the campus, we propose to break it down into four components:

1. Excellence as **traditionally defined** (prizes, grants, fellowships, publications in prestigious journals, festivals, museums, etc.).
2. Excellence as **potential** in the field and at UCSC.
3. Excellence as **capacity to bring benefits to our specific student body and our institutional needs.**

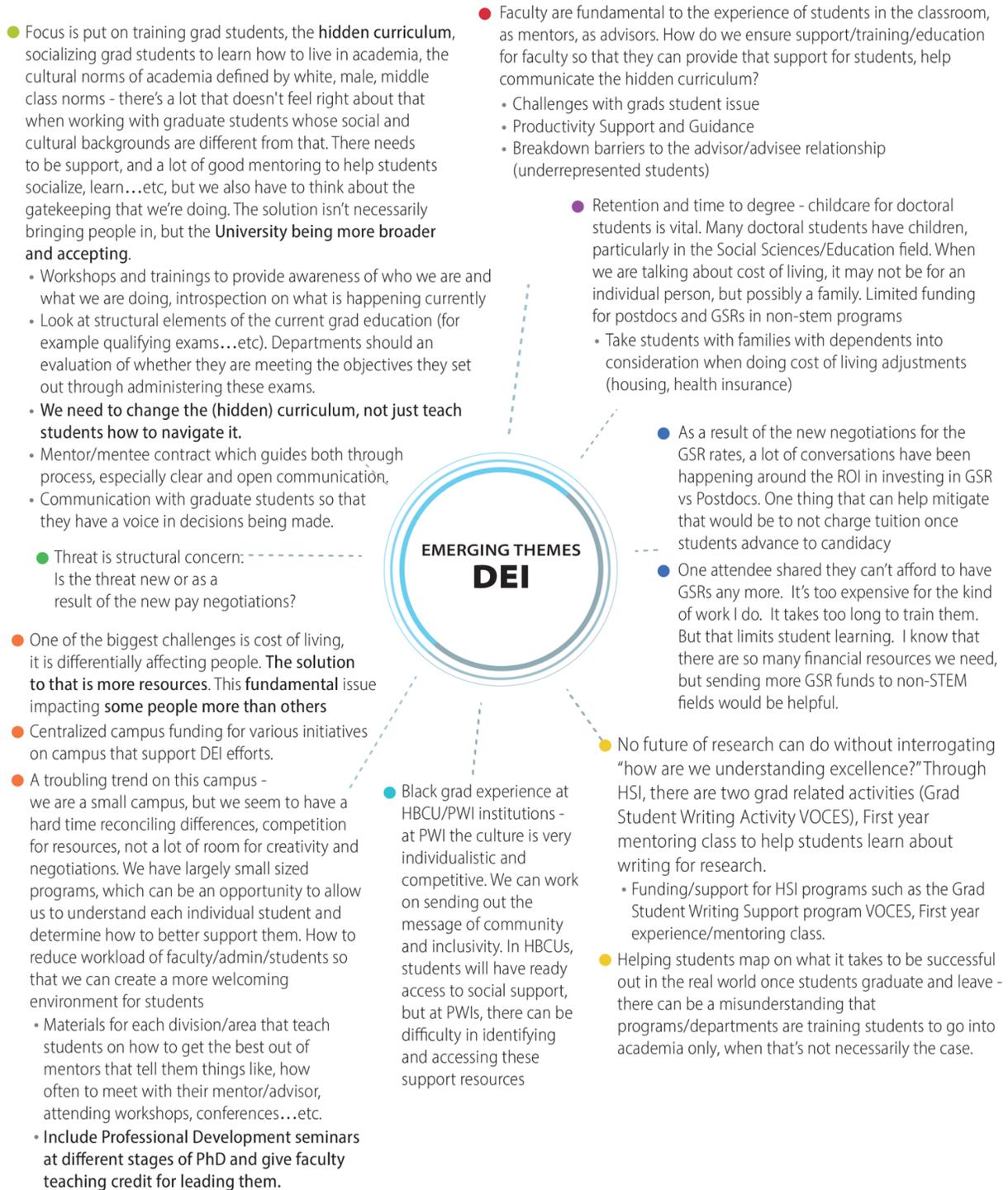
4. Excellence as **trajectory, both past, present and future** (i.e., accomplishments in the context of opportunities and future orientation of career).

Defining Diversity

California is by far one of the most diverse states in the country. There is a world within California that needs to be represented in the composition of the University of California. That world within is the public of California that pays for the institution and can reasonably expect to get a return on their investment by way of research that is capable of addressing some of their most salient needs and issues. We can call this **diversity 1**. There is also, however, a world outside of California whose potential contribution to the success of the UC is crucial as it multiplies the perspectives on many issues that are global or international by nature and benefit from such multiplicity of backgrounds. Let us call this **diversity 2**. Diversity 1 and 2 are required if the UC is going to deliver on its full transformational and creative potential. However, they should not be confused or blended together since the needs they respond to are different.

Diversity is a defining feature of the University of California and we embrace it as a source of strength. Our differences — of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, socioeconomic status, abilities, experience and more — enhance our ability to achieve the university's core missions of public service, teaching and research. We welcome faculty, staff and students from all backgrounds and want everyone at UC to feel respected and valued.

The Graduate Division is committed to recruiting, enrolling, supporting, and matriculating a diverse student body reflecting the cultural and ethnic complexity of our state and nation. The Graduate Division oversees recruitment and retention efforts to welcome excellent graduate students into the university community.



Goal 2A: Improve DEI in Graduate Studies which benefits the broader UCSC community

- Graduate programs need to improve representation among (a) faculty and researchers, (b) staff, and (c) graduate students.
- Improved representation requires an increased emphasis on recruiting, training, incentives, and recognition of extra (often unpaid) work done by many campus colleagues in pursuit of DEI objectives.
- DEI in graduate programs support the DEI initiative in undergraduate programs, as there are well-known, positive benefits from increased representation at every level, and helping our undergraduate colleagues to thrive, get research experience, and see examples of successful graduate students can be life-changing and provide important practical opportunities.

Metrics:

- Demographics of graduate student admissions and degrees awarded.
- Demographics of applicants, interviewees and hiring of faculty and researchers.
- Demographic changes in student population statistics including gender, race, ethnicity, country of origin, age, etc.
- The proportion of the student body who participate in courses and programs offered through international partnerships.
- Number of courses and programs, including online, offered internationally.

Goal 2B: Enhance Diversity and Equity to Move us Closer to Social Justice and Better Representation of the People of California

A more diverse student body, including graduate students, along with a more diverse faculty, staff and management are, within a public university, in a better position to deliver on the full mission of the University of California: including teaching, research, and public service.

A campus that is more representative of the public of California is also better positioned to deliver on UC's potential to be an engine of social mobility and an institution capable of producing just and sustainable economic progress for all the people of the state. In that context, graduate students are a key component connecting the world of tertiary education at the undergraduate level with the higher levels of such formation (the professional and academic worlds). The work of diversifying our campus to follow the educational and demographic trends in the state has been most successful at the undergraduate student level, less so at the graduate student level and in significant need of improvement at the faculty and managerial staff levels. Logically and demographically, then graduate students are the key to the further democratization of our campus in its search for excellence. That is the challenge the present report is seeking to meet.

Goal 2B1: Fostering California-based Inclusive Excellence - Diversity 1

To foster a culture of staff development and DEI ongoing cultural competency development across graduate student services, we propose developing and implementing a series of professional development sessions that address bias and microaggressions in graduate student services. Service areas potentially include areas such as: recruitment, admissions, advising, and mentoring. This intervention will be based on the [Multicultural Advising Conference](#) series that took place at the undergraduate-serving level (although graduate advisers also participated) in 2018 and 2019 and that continues to live on as an eCourse in the UC Learning Center. It is recommended that interactive theater once again be used as the primary method of delivery, alongside reflection and small and large group dialogue. Timeline: 2023-24 seek appropriate support on and/or off campus for development of the intervention. Analyze existing data and supplement with additional data (focus groups?) to inform the development of the interactive theater scripts; 2024-2025: Finalize development and pilot a few training sessions; 2025-2026: Full implementation of the series.

The series will result in participants being able to:

- Utilize interpersonal tools and strategies to create a productive and collegial learning environment for all.
- Take ownership for their words and behaviors in creating a welcoming and strong learning climate.
- Commit to on-going, life-long learning as part of cultural humility and their role as academic professionals.
- Develop new habits, behaviors, and patterns of micro-affirmations as a tool in their work.

Metrics:

- To assess the effectiveness of this intervention, we will track the number of faculty and staff who participate. We propose that all existing faculty and staff participate, and anyone who is new.
- There will be pre and post surveys administered to assess cultural humility.
- The intention is that there will also be a reduced number of hate, bias, and microaggression incidents and that this would be reflected in the campus bias reporting, and in measures of belonging and validation within the biennial graduate student survey.
- Plans and Interventions
- “Multicultural Advising Conference”
 - Existing description and outcomes
 - Can cite the book chapter
 - New scripts
 - Could have multiple tracks/themes: recruitment, admissions, advising, mentoring
 - Addressing bias and microaggressions
 - Cultural humility vs. cultural competency

Goal 2B2: Strengthen Graduate Services Counselors & Doctoral Summer Bridge

Establish support and resources to develop programming to support DEI efforts at the program (divisional) level. We propose the creation of [Graduate Services Counselors](#) (GSC) per division and [Doctoral Summer Bridge](#) tracks per division also. Both of these follow in the model initiated by the [HSI GANAS Graduate](#) grant.

Description (Graduate Services Counselor)

Graduate Services Counselors (GSC) will serve as an immediate resource for underrepresented, first-generation, and low-income graduate students to address non-academic challenges that impede transition and degree completion. Services are designed to provide a safe space for holistic counseling including addressing topics such as how to navigate graduate school as a first-generation and/or BIPOC student and being connected to the myriad of resources available to graduate students on campus.

Metrics:

- Participation numbers
- Validation and sense of belonging
- Retention, graduation, time to degree, advancement to candidacy, and degree completion

Description (Doctoral Summer Bridge)

A one-week residential Doctoral Summer Bridge Program focusing on preparing incoming BIPOC, first-gen, and low-income background students' transition to the graduate school environment. The Doctoral Summer Bridge program aims to provide students with opportunities to:

- Build community
- Prepare for their new academic setting and research
- Familiarize themselves with campus resources
- Get introduced to faculty, staff, and resources on campus

Doctoral Summer Bridge Program provides a week-long program focused on best practices, campus resources, and student strategies to be utilized during their time with UCSC.

During the course of the week, students will be in community with Doctoral Summer Bridge Mentors, as well as the Graduate Services Counselors.

Students will engage with various presentations and workshops highlighting the vast array of resources available to them as incoming graduate students. Students will also be given an introduction to various campus spaces and points of contact throughout the week in order to create a grounding sense of familiarity with their new environment. In addition to the collaborative experiences, we propose having breakout tracks per division of and expanding the total number of students that can participate.

Metrics:

- Participation numbers
- Validation and sense of belonging
- Retention, graduation, time to degree, advancement to candidacy, and degree completion

To support Goal 3B1, to establish programming to support DEI efforts at the program (divisional) level, we also propose moving forward with the [Cota Robles and Doris Duke Support Pilot](#). Timeframe and Metrics are included within the linked logic model.

Goal 2C: Fostering International Inclusive Excellence - Diversity 2

The non-resident tuition that is charged to international graduate students until advancement to candidacy dissuades faculty and departments from choosing to admit excellent international graduate student candidates because of the higher cost. This impedes our ability to achieve a truly global university community whose potential contribution to the success of the UC is crucial as it multiplies the perspectives on many issues that are global or international by nature and benefit from such multiplicity of backgrounds.

Potential actions, projects and initiatives

- Eliminate the non-resident tuition for international PhD and MFA students to increase the number of admitted international graduate students, which would allow us to achieve diversity 2

Metrics:

- Number of international graduate students admitted and graduated
- Number of international research collaborations

Graduate Preparation Program (GPP) has been offered to admitted graduate students. GPP is a four-week intensive non-credit course offered in person on the main campus prior to the fall quarter, which is open to all current and newly admitted international graduate students. It focuses on English for Academic Purposes (EAP), academic skills, and cultural orientation. The program also provides a foundation for transitioning into the Teaching Assistant role. The program was initially created because only 26% of incoming international graduate students with a teaching assistantship were passing the English Proficiency test required to assume a TA ship fall quarter. Students not passing the English test were required to postpone their TA ship until winter quarter and take an academic English course offered by LAAL fall quarter. The number of students needing the course increased dramatically so that 2 sections of the course had to be offered and the departments were having to adjust the teaching schedules. At the request of and in collaboration with the Graduate Division, Global Engagement launched the program in 2017. This has been a highly successful program with 80 students enrolled prior to the pandemic. The program not only helps students prepare for their TA ships, but it builds community among the students and a sense of belonging to campus prior to the start of the fall quarter. Students enrolled in GPP tend to participate in ongoing programming offered to international graduate students throughout the year offered by Global Programming.

The departments pay the tuition on behalf of the students, which is about the same cost as the course that the students used to take prior to the GPP program was established. However the students have to cover housing and meals for the 4 weeks prior to the start of fall quarter, and this has become an obstacle and last year less than 30 students enrolled, even though 70 students were recommended for the program based on their TOEFL scores.

Potential actions, projects and initiatives

- Cover the cost of housing and meals for the 4 week program for all international graduate students recommended for the GPP to provide a bridge and to build community and sense of belonging for these students.

Metrics:

- Number of students participating
- Increased sense of community and belonging
- Retention and time to degree completion

The goals and plans listed below are part of the Graduate Division's own way of contributing to this Equity and Excellence in Diversity Strategy.

Goal 2D: Strengthen Graduate Studies Organizational Focus on Inclusive Excellence

Potential actions, projects and initiatives

- Foster a culture of staff development and DEI training across Graduate Studies.
- Ensure that staff are well-trained in both management skills and cultural competency.
- Provide training in holistic admissions and create DEI Recruitment Advisory Committees to ensure diverse perspectives/voices in the assessment of applicants and bringing diversity and inclusion excellence into recruitment practices.
- Lead internal staff development efforts that foster an environment where every person feels responsible for advancing diversity and inclusion excellence.

Goal 2E: Strengthen DEI Support Programming to Enhance Student Diversity and Success

Potential actions, projects and initiatives

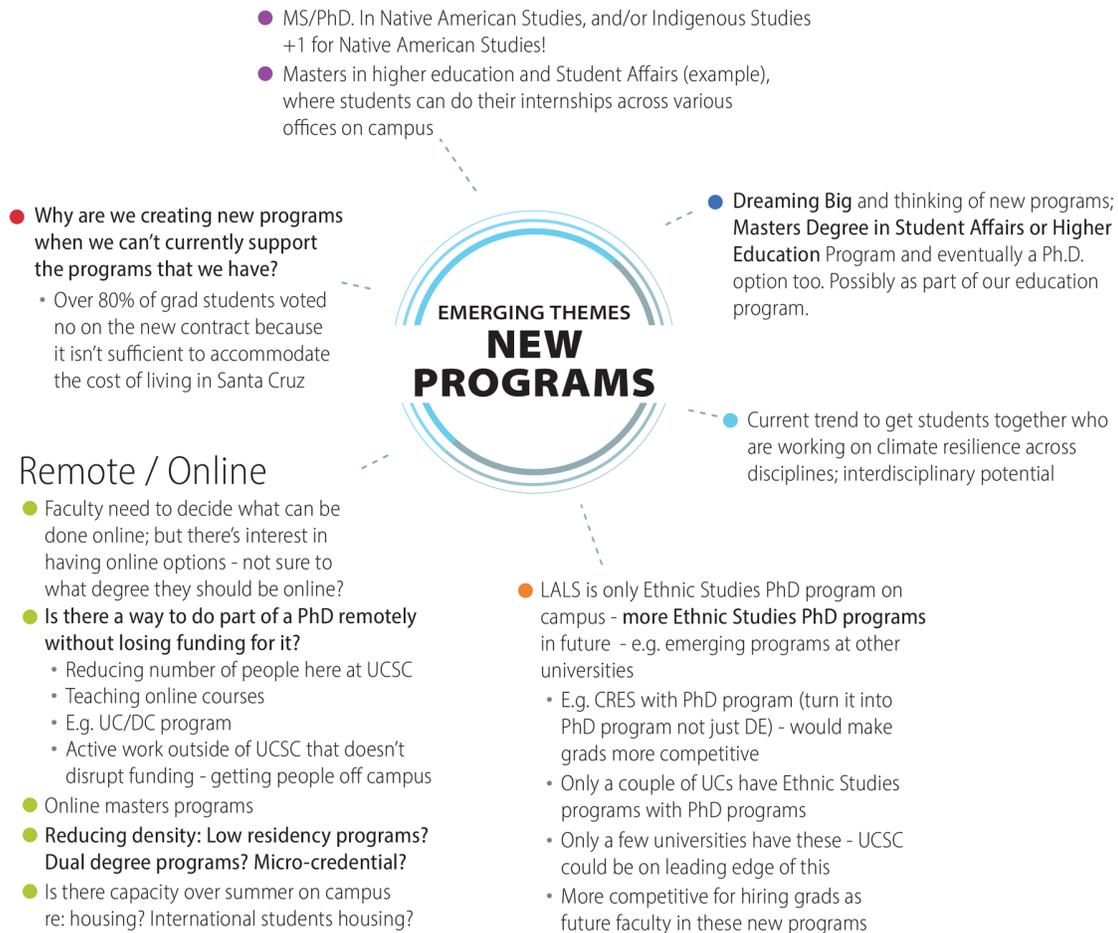
- Establish programming to support DEI efforts at the program level.
- Establish a DEI Innovation Fund to enhance DEI programming and support for faculty/programs supporting and mentoring underrepresented students.

Metrics:

- DEI Impact Metrics: URM Graduate students fellowship support and time to degree, retention and attrition correlation data; career outcomes numbers and percentages (via Academic Analytics), mentoring and graduate student experience survey results.

- DEI Grant Writing Metrics: Number of grants submitted and percentages of funding support; collaboration across campus, UC and beyond.
- Staff Support Metrics: Staff hiring, staff training participation rates, rates of advancement, campus climate and satisfaction rates.

Goal 3: Revise Existing and Develop New Graduate Programs in Strategic Areas



There are two distinct, but important options: (a) reenvisioning/redeveloping existing graduate programs, and (b) creating new graduate programs. UCSC should look hard at option (a) - if there are programs that are not working as intended, how might they be modified for success? The need for redeveloping an existing graduate program could arise from changes in fields, student interest, external funding, and other factors outside UCSC's control, and/or could result from internal conflicts/dysfunction or other issues.

UCSC has an existing review process for graduate programs and this should be leveraged to help identify how changing existing programs could help them be more successful. Options for

changing existing programs include: redefining scope and goals or combining with other programs, in some cases making programs broader or more interdisciplinary.

In addition, UCSC should consider if existing programs should add or remove degrees or modify degree modalities. All of this falls under the general heading of repurposing what we already have, making creative use of existing personnel, expertise, and other resources, rather than starting from scratch. There is an additional option for creating completely new programs, and these should be carefully targeted.

It is disheartening for many faculty and students to read about aspirations for developing shiny new programs, especially when these are not identified and therefore are just "something new," while many existing programs suffer from a lack of attention and resources. While graduate education at UCSC is not a zero-sum game, and improvements/changes can help to secure new resources, we must be clear about short-term and longer-term impacts on existing programs and students when scarce resources are directed away from current obligations towards something new and unproven. One approach that could prove useful is focused external fundraising for the explicit purpose of launching a new program, bringing new resources to the effort from the beginning. Whether for existing programs or new programs, degree modalities must be selected in the context of what makes the most sense in terms of degree and programmatic goals.

The primary obstacle to graduate education at UCSC remains, beyond a shadow of any doubt, the prohibitively high cost of housing. Most graduate students simply cannot afford to live here. Any vision for the creation of new degree-granting programs, if it is not to be uselessly idealistic, must take this into account. The second most present challenge that graduate education faces, not just at UCSC but everywhere, is that the traditional pathways from graduate school into professionalism in the academy have decayed tremendously. Therefore, appetite is growing for graduate education that re-envision the kind of training that students receive will equip them realistically to work in professions that are not academia. However, as we are a professionalization academy rather than a vocational school, we must not identify the goals of expansion of our graduate offerings exclusively with the demands of the market. Walking this tightrope will be a signature challenge as we move forward.

Our meetings with constituencies of those affected by graduate education (faculty, staff, and students) generated fairly clear evidence that there is little enthusiasm for creating new degree-granting programs. There is a wide recognition that resources, including staff time, faculty capacity, and funding, are already stretched so thin that they are not supporting extant programs well. It is also worth restating that affordable housing was repeatedly and regularly cited as the main obstacle to graduate education success at UCSC. How can future graduate programs respond to this pressing issue, while at the same time be responsive to the need for students to have training that opens opportunities for professionalization outside the academy?

The signs appear to be pointing towards the development of masters' programs, specifically professional master's degrees, that can be completed online wholly or in part; and the evolution of PhD programs towards whole or partial completion online. This plan obviously will impact different disciplines in different ways — not all disciplines can offer graduate programs that can be completely wholly or partially online. However, the generation of more professional master's

programs online will have the dual effect of reducing the density of graduate students in Santa Cruz, while simultaneously generating income that could be used to offset housing costs for resident students, particularly those studying in those disciplines that, for whatever reason, cannot be completed wholly or partially online.

We propose that the University look into the viability of offering more hybrid or fully-online professional master's programs, and more half-time/low residency programs. We are aware that CITL and Online Education are joining forces, so perhaps one strategic direction would be to offer some small grants to faculty to invest in hybrid or fully online methods for teaching professional development programs. However, we must also be certain that we continue to invest in expanded programs, online and in person, and not treat them as "cash cows;" that is to say, programs that are not invested in because they are considered to be generating income.

One example proposed was a Masters in Higher Education and Student Affairs ([example](#)).

A second, but related, key area of interest was the consideration of paths out of academia for students who discover other options for career fields. New programs that have an option to bow out early at the master's level should be supported and celebrated.

Another key area of interest that the constituencies brought to our attention is a desire to support more Ethnic Studies PhDs at UCSC, in the model of LALS. This would make students more competitive for academic jobs in today's environment. There is particular interest in the formation of an Indigenous Studies PhD.

We wish to recognize the interdisciplinary potential for developing programs that enable students working on climate resilience across the disciplines to dialogue and collaborate.

Finally, we wish to call attention to the inordinate amount of time that is required at this time to process new program applications. In the interest of expanding UCSC's graduate offerings, the new program development process should be streamlined and resources dedicated to assist program designers, including course buyouts and guidance from CITL, as an example.

Goal 3A: Identifying and removing barriers for interdisciplinary programs

Potential actions, projects and initiatives

- Identify administrative barrier for interdisciplinary program proposals
- Develop best practices to streamline program proposal process
- Incentivise faculty to create new interdisciplinary programs
- Provide market analysis for new programs (especially professional Master's Programs)

Metrics:

- Survey for qualitative data that outlines barriers

Goal 3B: Identifying new graduate programs and modality options (in-person, online, hybrid, low-residency)

- Doctoral Programs
- Master's Programs
- Professional Master's Programs
- Pathway Programs (4+1 etc.)

Metrics:

- Total number of programs submitted for planning or approval
- The proportion of student body who participate in courses
- Number of courses and programs being offered in various modalities (in- person, online, hybrid, low residency)
- Number of innovative programs and courses involving non-traditional course delivery method
- Number of students enrolled in courses
- Number of faculty teaching courses

Goal 3C: Exploring Alternative Doctoral Degrees

- Dual and Joint Degrees with domestic universities (e.g. CSU)
- Cotutelle Degrees with international universities
- Collaborative Degrees

Metrics:

- Participation numbers
- Student attendance percentages
- Graduate rates in dual/joint/cotutelle degrees and collaborative degrees
- Retention, graduation, time to degree, advancement to candidacy, degree completion, placement

Goal 3D: Exploring Credentialing for Graduate Students

- Designated Emphasis Programs
- Certificate Programs
- Batches and other micro-credentials

Metrics:

- Participation numbers
- Student attendance percentages
- Credential completion rates
- Retention, completion, time to completion, placement

Goal 4: Elevating and Enhancing Support for Graduate Students

Goal 4A: Provide Affordable Housing for Graduate Students

In terms of support geared towards alleviating financial and housing-related burdens faced by graduate students, there are [several initiatives](#) that have been undertaken in recent years, including the annual housing supplement for MFA and PhD students, relocation supplements for incoming PhD and MFA students, temporary Housing Assistance Fund (award matching program with Slug Support) through the Graduate Division, partial [childcare reimbursement program](#) for ASEs, and [back up child/elder care subsidy](#). UCSC students have access to free [legal consultation](#) through a San Jose-based law firm for support with off-campus tenancy related legal concerns.

In order to address the current gap between take-home pay and costs of basic needs, as well as to assist in data-driven planning, the [Graduate Cost of Attendance and Living Calculator \(GCOAL\)](#) should be institutionalized, updated annually, and used as the basis for decision-making.

Similarly, indexing the annual housing supplement for MFA and PhD students to the GCOAL, and indexing rent charged at Graduate Student and Family Housing to 30% of graduate student household income can help with the lack of affordable housing for graduate students.

These initiatives are commendable steps in the right direction in alleviating the housing-related financial burden faced by our graduate students that we need to expand upon in order ensure that every graduate student is able to meet their basic needs. Through implementations of the recommendations listed below, the university can continue to build on these efforts to help reduce financial burden and stress that graduate students face, and improve student wellbeing and graduate experience, facilitate sense of belonging, and create an environment that fosters academic excellence.

Potential actions, projects, and initiatives:

- Institutionalize, update annually, and use for decision-making the [Graduate Cost of Attendance and Living Calculator \(GCOAL\)](#).
- Index housing subsidy to GCOAL.
- Index rent at Graduate Student and Family Housing to 30% of household income.
- Advocate for both on-campus and within the city for the production of new housing, preservation of existing affordable housing, and tenant protections.
 - Production: build with public-private partnerships while also pursuing increased state funding and donor funds for affordable student housing,
 - Preservation: explore opportunities to purchase existing buildings to create affordable student housing
 - Protection: increase support for rent regulation, tenant rights training and legal support for student tenants, and eviction protections

- Invest in political awareness on campus and stimulate students to vote. They can majorly influence Santa Cruz high-density, affordable housing developments, tenant protections, as well as transportation initiatives. Set up voting registration booths at each college.
- Consider both on-campus, near campus off-campus off-campus complexes (e.g. Delaware).
- Coordinate with complexes in adjacent communities (e.g. Santa Clara).
- Reassess Campus West Student Housing regarding number of beds for graduate students.
- Re-assess current graduate student housing on need-base, with time limits (e.g. up to ATC status).
- Continue Hotel project as landing-pad especially for international graduate students.
- Producing and/or preserving student run co-ops or exploring this option.
- Explore options for co-signing off-campus rental leases either through the university or partnering with a third party co-signer service, especially for international students.
- Establish guaranteed summer funding for graduate students to ensure continued access to secure housing over the summer months.

Metrics:

- Graduate Student Survey
- Feedback survey of available university graduate student housing options
- Occupation analysis of on-campus graduate student housing

Goal 4B: Provide Affordable and Accessible Transportation

In order to achieve the transportation goals for graduate students, it is essential to incorporate a range of transportation options and leverage data to ensure that the transportation system is meeting the unique needs of graduate students. We should involve collaboration between the university, local government, and private partners to identify and implement sustainable transportation solutions that are affordable, accessible, and reliable. By conducting a thorough analysis of the current transportation system and assessing the transportation needs of graduate students, we can develop targeted interventions that address specific gaps and challenges. Furthermore, by incorporating feedback mechanisms and regularly assessing the effectiveness of transportation initiatives, we can make data-driven decisions to continuously improve the transportation system for graduate students. By adopting a strategic approach, we can create a transportation system that not only meets the needs of graduate students but also supports their academic success and contributes to the overall sustainability of the community.

Potential actions, projects and initiatives:

- Commuter shuttle/bus transportation for students and/or staff from areas around Santa Cruz County and San Jose (ex. Scotts Valley, Watsonville, East Side of Santa Cruz/Capitola, Ben Lomond/SLV)
- Shuttles between all campuses (coastal, main, SVC).
- More direct routes to UCSC

- Recognize UCSC as a commuter campus (more parking at reduced rates).
- Reduce the [parking permit rate](#) for graduate students. \$760+ for 1 year is ~ 1/3 of 1 month's pay.

Metrics:

- Graduate Student Survey
- Feedback survey of available transport options
- Participation analysis

Goal 4C: Securing Basic Needs and Increase Slug Support for Graduate Students

The UC defines [basic needs](#) as the minimum resources necessary to holistically support all students in their daily lives. It is an ecosystem that supports financial stability by ensuring equitable access to nutritious and sufficient food; safe, secure and adequate housing (to sleep, study, cook and shower); healthcare to promote sustained mental and physical well-being; affordable transportation; resources for personal hygiene care; and emergency needs for students with dependents.

[Slug Support](#) provides emergency/hardship funding for graduate students, support with immediate basic needs gaps, including temporary emergency housing, access to grocery gift cards and meal swipes. In AY 2021/22, Slug Support case managed 561 graduate student cases, of which 399 were unique students. This was a growth of 58% compared to the previous academic year 2020/21, where 253 unique graduate students were served. A large portion of the emergency funding was allocated towards gaps for housing costs. Funding for Slug Support emergency awards is nonpermanent funding and is established by donation, which impacts and limits the capacity for the program to provide support for students.

Historically, graduate students have faced difficulty accessing CalFresh due to a lack of nuanced understanding of graduate student income by the County. Over Summer 2021, the UCSC Basic Needs team worked extensively with UCSC graduate departments and the local California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to apply for [exemption](#) on behalf of graduate programs whose degree requirements met CDSS requirements so that an increased number of graduate students could benefit from CalFresh. Additionally, the [Redwood Free Market](#) (food pantry) has increased distribution days to 5 days a week, with a dedicated distribution date for graduate students.

Potential actions, projects and initiatives:

- Seek out funding to restart the Graduate Division Housing Assistance award matching program that enhances the Slug Support funding, which assists students with unforeseen gaps for housing or moving costs. To account for the year over year growth of unique graduate students seeking emergency/hardship assistance through Slug Support for housing related needs, an increase of funding is needed.
- Provide more access to CalFresh.
- Sustain all week access to the [Redwood Free Market](#) (food pantry).

Metrics:

- Slug Support Feedback survey, solicit feedback from graduate students to see if unforeseen emergency needs are being met. Survey will provide qualitative feedback from students.
- Financial data from Slug Support and Graduate Division to highlight how many graduate students were assisted during the academic year.
- Include questions related to Slug Support and Basic needs in the Graduate Student Survey, to access quantitative and qualitative data.

Conclusion

Funding graduate student success is critical for the success of any academic institution. This strategic plan focuses on increasing fellowship support and external and internal research support for graduate students. By tracking the metrics outlined above, we will be able to measure the effectiveness of the strategic plan and make adjustments as needed to ensure that graduate students receive the support they need to succeed.

We are committed to achieving our strategic goals in the special ways articulated in the plan, and we will measure our progress with multiple metrics knowing that no single metric should ever become a focus, especially for an operation as complex as Graduate Education. Like any good strategic plan, we have been mindful to propose something that is both ambitious and achievable. And we suggest that the Graduate Division assess and continually improve programs and policies designed to achieve these goals as completely and efficiently as possible.

The Graduate Division will monitor progress toward achieving the goals laid out in the strategic plan using the metrics defined by the plan. Operational excellence needs to be the guiding organizational principles. Best practices, data and evidence need to inform analysis and actions, and collaborative work with the Graduate Council, the academic divisions and units, as well as partners from outside the university will be the key for its success. The most important outcomes of strategic planning for UCSC graduate education are that graduate students and programs thrive, achieve distinction, and have broad impacts.

Appendix

- I. [Committee Membership List](#)
- II. [Results from Envisioning Graduate Education for the Future](#)
- III. [UCSC 2021 Graduate Student Survey: Financial Situation and Support, Food Security, Residence During the Pandemic, and Support for Families \(2022\)](#)
- IV. [Stakeholder meeting: agendas, notes, word clouds and emerging themes](#)
- V. [Emerging Themes Infographics](#)
- VI. [Survey Results Infographics](#)
- VII. [Fall Quarter 2022 Committee agendas and meeting notes](#)
- VIII. [Winter Quarter 2023 Committee agenda and meeting notes](#)
- IX. [Spring Quarter 2023 Committee agenda and meeting notes](#)
- X. [References](#)