

**Graduate Student Association
Strategic Plan Draft
January 21 2015 Edit**

Mission: The Graduate Student Association shall act as a financial, informational, and social liaison for Cullowhee, Biltmore Park, and online graduate students in pursuit of their academic success at Western Carolina University.

Core Values:

- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Reliability
- Respect
- Responsiveness
- Service
- Teamwork

Vision Statement: To support and advocate for the academic, social, and professional goals of graduate students at Western Carolina University.

Strategic Direction #1: Fulfill the educational needs of our state and region.

Goal 1.1 Increase and encourage research opportunities

- Initiative 1.1.1: Help connect students who desire research opportunities with faculty members who can provide research mentoring
- Initiative 1.1.2: Partner with WCU Graduate School in Undergraduate Student Success / Graduate Student Career Mentoring Program
- Initiative 1.1.3: Advertise, review, and award travel and research grants from GSA to Graduate Students

Strategic Direction #2: Enrich the total student experience

Goal 2.1 Increase the sense of community between Cullowhee, Biltmore Park, and online graduate students

- Initiative 2.1.1: Increase Graduate Student Association presence at Biltmore Park
- Initiative 2.1.2: Identify and invite a GSA Representative and alternate from each graduate program to all GSA meetings
- Initiative 2.1.3: Create online access to all GSA monthly meetings

Goal 2.2 Expand student services for graduate students at Cullowhee, Biltmore Park, and online

- Initiative 2.2.1: Increase access to counseling services for all Graduate Students
- Initiative 2.2.2: Provide more academic support services for all Graduate Students
- Initiative 2.2.3: Establish a designated meeting and study space on Cullowhee campus for all Graduate Students use

- Initiative 2.2.4: Increase marketing of current space and trainings available to Graduate Students (Sandbox Area at Coulter Faculty Center at Hunter Library in Cullowhee)
- Initiative 2.2.5: Work with Student Housing to encourage better graduate housing options and arrangements in Cullowhee
- Initiative 2.2.6: Establish vehicle shuttle to and from Cullowhee and Biltmore Park
- Initiative 2.2.7: Work with Graduate School to provide virtual tours for online, distance, and incoming students

Goal 2.3 Create additional opportunities for growth

- Initiative 2.3.1: Encourage development of mentorship program for incoming graduate students
- Initiative 2.3.2: Establish consistent GSA presence in the Student Government Association at WCU.
- Initiative 2.3.3: Re-evaluate Graduate School Orientation process and encourage development of program specific orientations
- Initiative 2.3.4: Further develop information packet for first-year students
- Initiative 2.3.5: Promote Three Minute Thesis (3MT) participation and competition to further develop professional speaking skills
- Initiative 2.3.6: Establish and fund Academic Graduate Student online journal

Strategic Direction #3: Enhance our external partnerships

Goal 3.1 Establish Graduate Student alumni association

- Initiative 3.1.1: Promote internship and externship opportunities between Graduate Students and WCU alumni
- Initiative 3.1.2 Develop Alumni Speaker Series to build linkages between WCU alumni and current WCU graduate students
- Initiative 3.1.3 Build relationships between grad alumni and current Graduate Students

Strategic Direction #4: Invest in our Graduate Students

Goal 4.1 Increase and Improve Assistantships

- Initiative 4.1.1: Increase benefits for Graduate Assistants
- Initiative 4.1.2: Develop training for GA/TA Supervisors so that positions are consistent and accurately reflect job descriptions

Goal 4.2 Increase financial assistance

- Initiative 4.2.1: Assist in promotion of and/or provide scholarships for graduate students
- Initiative 4.2.2: Support an increase in the number of tuition waivers
- Initiative 4.2.3: Increase funding for travel and research grants

Goal 4.3 Expand opportunities for supplemental training and education Graduate Students

- Initiative 4.3.1: Increase awareness of Institutional Review Board (IRB) Training for students who incorporate human subjects in their research.
- Initiative 4.3.2: Increase information and education about the thesis process and thesis formatting for students and faculty
- Initiative 4.3.3: Create informational seminar for graduating Graduate Students
- Initiative 4.3.4: Graduate Student Leadership Academy to foster professional development and leadership skills

Strategic Direction #5: Invest in our core resources

Goal 5.1 Increase presence of Graduate Student Association at Western Carolina University

- Initiative 5.1.1 Appoint a First-Year and Second-Year Representative from each graduate program so representation is continuous and self-sustaining
- Initiative 5.1.2 Increase graduate student involvement on University committees

Goal 5.2 Increase Graduate Student Association web presence

- Initiative 5.2.1 Further Develop GSA website with additional materials and documents
- Initiative 5.2.2 Increase ease of access to the GSA website

Goal 5.3 Ensure implementation of long-term strategic plan for Graduate Student Association

- Initiative 5.3.1 Compile documents to pass to subsequent GSA leaders
- Initiative 5.3.2 Nominate and elect all GSA Officers in Spring semester to promote training for the following academic year
- Initiative 5.3.3 Archive and continuously update important documents for future sustainability

Strategic Direction #6: Garner support for the vision

Goal 6.1 Encourage all Graduate Students to read and review the Graduate Student Association strategic plan each academic year

Goal 6.2 Executive Board should revise and edit the Graduate Student Association strategic plan each academic year