

PRESIDENTIAL PRIORITY: TIGERWAY GRADUATE ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

Towson University will increase the enrollment and support the retention of talented graduate students to meet the growing workforce needs for people with advanced degrees who are prepared to be ethically and globally minded professionals and leaders in their fields.

WHY IS INCREASING GRADUATE ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION CRITICAL

Since 2012, Towson University has experienced a 24% decrease in the total headcount of students enrolled in graduate programs. Except for those bolstered by an increase in international graduate enrollments, other universities in the United States also are experiencing graduate student enrollment decline. Factors fueling this decline are: the reduction/elimination of financial support from school districts and industry to fund employee graduate education, the increase in debt incurred by students as part of their undergraduate education, and competition resulting from an increase in the number of graduate programs and the number of universities offering graduate degrees.

In spite of these challenges, Towson is well positioned within the Baltimore region to address the growing need for people with advanced degrees to meet the workforce needs. Currently, 10% of working adults hold master's degrees (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2017). Six million more people with graduate degrees are needed to meet the workforce expectations in the United States within the next few years (Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce, 2012). Much of this growth is in areas that align with the existing focus at Towson University in science, health, business, and education. Towson University's long history with designing program options that cater to both full time and part time student enrollment, its cadre of faculty with blended expertise in teaching and scholarship, its developing infrastructure within the OAI to design on line and blended delivery opportunities, and its initiatives to create interdisciplinary learning options position it to meet this growing demand.

HOW WILL WE INCREASE GRADUATE ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

The TIGER Way Task Force conducted a comprehensive examination of graduate programs and administrative operations with the goal of increasing enrollment and retention of talented graduate students. Recommendations are based on internal data, state and national employment projections, competitor benchmarks, best practices, and capacity identified in each college.

1. Expand the number of and access to graduate programs that are responsive to workforce needs and learning needs of potential students

Goals and Actions. Create pathways for conversion of face-to-face to blended and online delivery options for select courses and programs. Develop and implement new graduate programs/expansion of existing programs that align with market projections and emerging workforce needs.

Milestones

- Convert 50 face-face courses to online/blended format
- Submit LOI and proposal for 25 new programs; revise and expand 10 existing programs

2. Develop supports to retain graduate students

Goals and Actions. Expand number of and increase stipends for graduate assistantships that support students' professional and scholarly development. Promote student retention and progression. Expand and

promote graduate alumni mentor systems. Implement learning supports that align with graduate student needs.

Milestones

- Fund 125 additional graduate assistantships and Increase current graduate assistantship stipends by \$3000 to be competitive with peer institutions
- Implement integrated software system for advising and tracking of student progress from prospect to employment status. Institute student- advisor early warning, semester based retention system that aligns with PeopleSoft
- Institute cross-disciplinary professional writing courses for returning adult and international graduate students
- Host career mentoring and inter cultural, financial literacy and career preparation networks and workshops

3. Strengthen systems to attract, recruit, retain, and successfully graduate students

Goals and Actions Develop and fund strategic marketing and recruitment priorities for select programs. Recruit, admit, and retain students from diverse populations.

Milestones

- Hire 2 recruiters and one additional enrollment marketer
- Purchase graduate lead generation software
- Develop and fund program specific holistic recruitment initiatives and establish database of scholarships to support students from diverse and underrepresented populations.
- Launch cross unit collaborations to intentionally recruit Towson University undergraduate students
- Launch University Admissions -DIAR collaborations to cultivate recruitment partnerships with industry, community colleges, other institutions

Funding Requirements

AY 18 \$1,514,282 to fund marketing and recruitment staff (3 FTE), support materials, and diversity recruitment; 25 graduate assistantships and stipend increases; 12 course conversions; 9 program LOI and 5 program proposals; 2 new faculty (2 FTE) for 5 newly launched program; mentoring networks; and proposal staff writer

AY 19 \$958,932 to fund 30 additional graduate assistantships; 13 course conversions, 11 program LOI and 14 new and ongoing program proposals; new faculty (2FTE) for expansion/launching of 5 programs

AY20 \$1,545,998 to fund 30 additional graduate assistantships 20 course conversions, 2 program LOI, 2 new program and 10 ongoing program proposals; new faculty hires (9 FTE) for 13 newly launched programs); new administrative staff (3 FTE), and library supports

AY 21 \$2,199,906 to fund 30 additional graduate assistantships; 7 course conversions, and 3 program proposals; new faculty hires (12.5 FTE) for 14 newly launched/revised programs; new administrative staff (5 FTE), and library supports

Revenue generated from SCH production- \$24,335,520 (46090 SCH) per year after each program is operational for 3 years; projected increase in graduate student headcount = 1,110