



# RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

ALIGNED TO THE UNLV  
TOP TIER 2.0 STRATEGIC PLAN

11.18.2022

# UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

**2030 Goals: 85% first-year retention; 30% four-year and 60% six-year graduation rates.**

## **1. Help to recruit highly qualified students with potential to succeed at UNLV.**

- a. Ensure that information about programs offered by your unit is clear, up-to-date, and readily available to prospective and admitted students. This includes any additional requirements for admission to programs, beyond the minimum admissions standards for the university, especially for programs with limited or competitive admissions.
- b. Work with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the Graduate College to plan communications with prospective and admitted students. Confusion or conflicting messages from different sources can negatively impact yield.
- c. Whenever possible, accelerate the timeline for awarding College scholarships so that it aligns with the timeline for awarding University and federal financial aid. A complete, coherent financial aid package is a powerful recruiting tool.

## **2. Review and consider revising program curricula to support students' progression and completion.**

- a. Encourage departments to review data provided by the Office of Decision Support on curricular complexity, course enrollments, and D/F/W/I rates. These data can help identify bottlenecks, overly complicated pre-requisite pathways, and courses that could benefit from re-design.
- b. Inactivate courses that have not been offered recently so students don't expect to use those courses to fulfill degree requirements.
- c. Review the number of degree audit exceptions and waivers approved by your department each year. If many students need exceptions to graduate, degree requirements should be re-examined.
- d. Revisit program curriculum maps. Determine whether all learning outcomes are being addressed and in which courses. The Office of Academic Assessment can help departments review and revise their maps.
- e. Close the loop on assessment of student learning. Encourage departments to take time each year to reflect on the evidence of student learning they've collected as part of their program assessment activities and to recommend curriculum changes if students are not achieving program learning outcomes.

## **3. Review and enhance College-level co-curricular opportunities to support student engagement.**

- a. Focus on building co-curricular programs and experiences that:
  - i. connect students with faculty, either formally or informally.
  - ii. connect what students are learning in their major course of study to career opportunities.
  - iii. specifically address the needs of historically underserved students (e.g., racial/ethnic minority groups, first-generation students, non-traditional, online, transfer, etc.).
  - iv. are available throughout the student life-cycle.
- b. Consider applying for grants to support initiatives for at-risk students.

## **4. Support dissemination and adoption of instructional practices that best support student learning.**

- a. Examine D/F/W/I rates by course and by section and encourage reflection and discussion among faculty. Disaggregate D/F/W/I rates by race/ethnicity, gender, Pell status, and first generation status.
- b. Encourage and support faculty-driven re-design of "gateway" or "bottleneck" courses, which students must pass to progress in a degree program.
- c. Encourage faculty to participate in teaching workshops and webinars offered by the Faculty Center, and consider hosting college-level events or interest groups to promote best practices.
- d. Discourage norm-referenced grading (i.e., grading on a "curve") at the section level. This is the grading scheme most strongly associated with section-to-section variation in grade distributions. Encourage grading methods that focus on content mastery.

## **5. Provide exceptional support services to students that help them successfully navigate systems and policies and allow them to focus on their academic success.**

- a. Encourage adoption of the REBELS Way service philosophy by all front-line, student-facing staff.
- b. Support faculty awareness of academic support services offered by the Academic Success Center, including supplemental instruction, success coaching, tutoring, and workshops.
- c. Collaborate with central student service units to provide cross-training to College staff so that students get the same answer to a question, regardless of where or to whom they ask it.
- d. Encourage follow-up on referrals to student support services in other units.

# GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

**2030 Goals: 235 research doctorates and 274 professional practice doctorates conferred annually.**

## 1. Increase research and professional doctoral degrees conferred.

- a. Engage strategic recruitment and admissions practices to (re)fill the doctoral enrollment pipeline with the most qualified and best-fit students (in terms of areas of interest, program expectations, career aspirations) for each program.
- b. Support student success to improve retention, progression, and timely completion as measured by enrollment, progression through milestones, and time-to-degree.
- c. Align R2PC (recruitment, retention, progression, completion) targets & program requirements with career placement opportunities, including career pathways outside academia.
- d. Expand GAs and fellowship opportunities to fund a higher percentage of doctoral students; strive for summer awards and 12-month GAs.
- e. If high-demand program and growth is possible, consider deploying more graduate faculty in graduate education and rely more on FIRS and instructional faculty at the undergraduate level.
- f. Hire new research active faculty and encourage their participation in graduate education and student mentorship.
- g. Assess, report, and reward successful doctoral student mentorship in P&T, annual evaluations, etc.

## 2. Grow graduate headcount while maintaining/improving quality and increase diversity

- a. Work with Graduate College on strategic recruitment and holistic admissions. For recruitment and holistic admissions best practices, information, guidelines, and resources, please contact the Graduate College.

## 3. Raise graduate FTE/enrollment.

- a. Engage strategic recruitment and admissions practices to (re)fill the doctoral enrollment pipeline with the most qualified and best-fit students (in terms of areas of interest, program expectations, career aspirations) for each program.
- b. Support student success through deployment of best practices: program to career alignment; strong, consistent advisement; constructive and regular student feedback; strong supportive mentorship; well-run graduate program with a well-informed graduate coordinator; offer classes in a predictable schedule to support student degree planning; etc.
- c. Fully utilize the mandatory Annual Graduate Student evaluation as an opportunity to assess the student's progress and accomplishments in the last year & establish goals for the next.
- d. Encourage full-time enrollment and summer program engagement.
- e. Cultivate a pro-student climate; be sure that your program's climate is inclusive, supportive of diversity, and reflects an egalitarian approach to treatment of students.
- f. Expand GAs and fellowship opportunities to fund a higher percentage of students.

- g. If high-demand program and growth is possible, consider deploying more graduate faculty in your graduate programs to support program enrollment growth, and rely more on FIRS and instructional faculty at the undergraduate level.
- h. Hire new faculty and encourage their participation in graduate education and student mentorship.
- i. Look at your data and identify program weak spots where students get stuck, slowed-down, or leave the program; work to fix them.
- j. Engage the Graduate College's commitment to continuing and enhancing our commitment to "100% Solutions."

## 4. Improve graduate student completion rates and time to degree (TTD).

- a. Fulfill mandatory annual Individual Development Plan (IDP) & student review process to keep students on-track. Use academic probation as a constructive & supportive process.
- b. Ensure graduate faculty are appropriately trained and supported to be strong mentors; new graduate faculty & graduate coordinator training coming soon.
- c. Ask: "If we were designing our program today, would it be what we have now?" If not, work with the Grad College to make changes to the program, curriculum, etc. to remove barriers, update your program, and support student success.
- d. Develop strategic interventions to actively identify and support at-risk graduate students.
- e. Provide "just in time" information across the graduate student lifecycle.
- f. Offer onboarding support, program (re)orientations, peer-mentorship, learning community experiences, and actively work on inclusion and just outcomes.
- g. Keep your website, Catalog, your Program Handbook, and Degree Directory info clear, consistent, and up-to-date.
- h. Utilize [gradrebel@unlv.edu](mailto:gradrebel@unlv.edu) for non-academic advisement and support.
- i. Be sure faculty and PTIs have Grad Faculty Status; ensure that leaving faculty complete the Grad Faculty Leaving form before departure.
- j. Recommend students for Emergency Retention Grants and quickly review these requests from students.
- k. Encourage co-curricular engagement through The Grad Academy.

## 5. Increase graduate assistantships.

- a. Increase external funding with more grants, and write in more GAs. When possible, fund GAs for 12-months.
- b. Advocate for GA stipend increases and seek new ways to financially support more graduate students. Increase doctoral fellowships, too.
- c. Use GC state funded GAs to incentivize faculty grant funding of GAs.
- d. Work with development directors and the Graduate College to create [CIGA](#) & [CGRA](#) positions ([Community Graduate Assistantships](#)).

# RESEARCH

## 2030 Goal: \$250M in research expenditures per year

### 1. Work as a team with Division of Research to lower obstacles in grant preparation and execution.

- a. Help strengthen research administration operations.
  - i. Constructively engage with the Division of Research regarding pre-proposal development issues and opportunities for improvement, and post-award needs.
  - ii. Support the Division of Research in deployment of Cayuse, the new electronic research administration tool that will help shepherd a proposal from inception to grant award to closeout.
  - iii. Be responsive to requests for help in dry-running new research administration resources for grant proposal preparation in the spring of 2022, including an emergent Research Resource Repository (R3) and a “bullpen” of part time resources for grant proposal writing and graphic design.
- b. Help inform the Division of Research on research computing needs and opportunities for this campus. Near term, this means actively supporting your faculty participation in a campus-wide computing discussion this winter and spring.
- c. Identify IRB needs that must be met to support a rapidly increasing medical research enterprise that includes clinical trials.
- d. Seriously consider offering release time for research intensive faculty to be “detailed” to the Research Office to help establish new strategic directions and broadly enabling capabilities.

### 2. Identify grant opportunities: search for them and establish a strategic framework to inform priorities.

- a. Work as a VPR/ADR/dean/government affairs team in partnership with Van Scoyoc to identify federal funding opportunities that align with UNLV’s strategic interests. New programs in the \$T infrastructure bill and, likely, a new “Build Back Better” bill will yield opportunities.
- b. Identify MSI/HSI/AANAPISI and training grant opportunities, using emergent enhanced capacity in the Division of Research (spring ‘22).
- c. Encourage participation with the Division of Research from strategically minded, research intensive faculty in strategic planning discussions. This entails discussions aimed at identifying great challenges that require devotion from across the disciplines. Such challenges can form a framework that will inform decisions on where to invest in grant proposal development, and hiring of research-intensive faculty, building on the present cluster hire activity.

### 3. Identify and nurture partnering opportunities for research-intensive faculty in strategically important areas, especially interdisciplinary ones.

- a. Build explicit rewards into tenure and promotion guidelines criteria for:
  - i. Pursuing sponsored research.
  - ii. Succeeding in capturing sponsored research.
  - iii. Rewarding faculty for team building that includes hiring of postdocs from grants.

- iv. Partnering across departments and colleges.
- v. While recognizing the need for disciplinary excellence, appropriately reward junior faculty for reaching across departmental and college lines.

#### *The Importance of Partnering*

- This is not about supporting partnering for its own sake. Rather, it is about supporting partnering to enable putting faculty and students at the leading edge of research domains that are strategically important to UNLV and the nation.
  - Modifying tenure and promotion guidelines to promote partnering, securing grants, and interdisciplinary research even for junior faculty is about more than developing a new set of practices. It requires a long-term commitment to changing culture and expectations. It may require partnership between the provost, VPR, deans, and ADRs.
  - It is recognized that partnering across colleges and departments requires an examination of financial incentives and disincentives to the colleges and departments associated with sharing of leadership responsibilities for sponsored research.
- b. Learn how to use *Academic Analytics* to identify partnering opportunities within and external to UNLV so as to create world-class research teams.
  - c. Reward faculty for partnering with other institutions, including UNR and national labs. This is especially important for problems that are identified by the White House and national funding agencies as national needs.
  - d. Monitor national directions by the National Academies, OSTP, and the federal agencies and their advisory committees.
  - e. Inform national directions by nominating your faculty for advisory committee service.

### 4. Cross-cutting infrastructure.

- a. Encourage participation by your research-intensive faculty with Libraries and Division of Research in planning aimed to strengthen open research, scholarship culture, and infrastructure.
  - i. The digital, connected age has irretrievably altered how research and scholarship are conducted, and what it means to be part of a research and scholarship community. An institutional effort to catch a national and global wave in open research and scholarship will yield great benefits in facilitating a culture of data sharing and discourse, essential if UNLV is to lead in bringing previously siloed and separated units together in confronting problems that demand attention from across the disciplines.

## NON-FACULTY RESEARCHERS AND POSTDOCS

### 2030 Goal: 170

### 1. Increase the numbers of non-faculty researchers and postdocs.

- a. No postdocs on LOAs. Departments should be aware of the job classification in order to properly identify non-faculty researchers and postdocs at the department level.
- b. Faculty should include graduate students and [postdoctoral scholars](#) in grant funding requests.
- c. Departments should identify if/how non-faculty researchers and postdocs may effectively contribute to their research productivity/operations.
- d. [The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs](#) provides support for postdocs.