

UTC Graduate School Strategic Plan 2017-20

 THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
CHATTANOOGA

Introduction

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is an engaged metropolitan campus located near the riverfront and within walking distance of downtown, the Bluff view Arts district, and the growing north shore and south side districts. Chattanooga's economy reflects a diverse mix of manufacturing, technology, and service industries. In recent years, technology startups have been increasing due in part to a fiber optic networking grid that allows for gigabit internet access across the city and surrounding area (1).

As Chattanooga has evolved, so has the University's Graduate School. Theology was the first advanced degree offered in 1886 when The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga was known as Chattanooga University. Advanced degrees in medicine and law followed until, in 1910, advanced degrees were discontinued at the institution. This was relatively unchanged until 1942 when a post baccalaureate degree was again offered. The master's degree in music was approved in 1942 and was followed in 1948 by a master's degree in education. Over time, the University has added four or five graduate programs each decade. UTC awarded its first doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in Computational Engineering in December 2004.

To serve the diverse needs of Chattanooga and the surrounding region, the UTC Graduate School offers a variety of accredited liberal arts and professional programs: 15 graduate certificates, 20 master's degrees, one education specialist, and five doctoral degree programs. The programs are housed within four colleges across campus: Arts and Sciences, Business, Engineering and Computer Science, and Health, Education, and Professional Studies. UTC offers the following doctoral degree programs: a clinical doctorate (D. P. T.) in Physical Therapy, a clinical doctorate (D.N.P) in Nursing Practice, an applied doctorate (Ed. D.) and new research doctorate (Ph. D) in Learning and Leadership, a clinical entry-level doctorate (O.T.D) in Occupational Therapy and a research doctorate (Ph. D.) in Computational Sciences with an associated Mathematics concentration (Ph. D.) in Computational Science. These programs would not be possible without the dedication and contributions of our outstanding graduate faculty. Students interact with faculty on a one-to-one basis to gain the most from their educational, research, and creative experiences.

Over time, as the needs of Chattanooga and surrounding regions change, UTC strives to meet those changes by developing alongside our host city. As such, UTC establishes new strategic plans to meet the current needs and future goals of the University with input from campus and community members.

Strategic Plan Guidance

The Graduate School at the University of Tennessee fosters the development of highly trained and educated individuals who will ultimately contribute to the local, regional, national and international needs. The Graduate School supports all of the broad strategic initiatives of the University's strategic plan. The Graduate School's strategic plan is guided by the University's strategic plan and the graduate school mission statement:

“to provide rigorous advanced instruction, applied research opportunities, financial support, and other support services for graduate students. The Graduate School upholds high program and academic standards in serving the needs of the region, state, and nation. The Graduate School also takes into account the increasing availability of information and the resultant creation of knowledge made possible by advances in technology.”

Through the following strategic plan, the Graduate School outlines specific goals and assessment strategies that align with the University strategic plan for the years 2017 through 2022.

Our Goals:

- **Increase enrollment in the graduate school to exceed 1,500 students.**
- **Enhance diversity and increase international student participation in graduate education at UTC.**
- **Prepare graduate students to be successful within their fields while also maximizing their ability to compete in a complex, diverse and increasingly global work environment.**

This Strategic plan is organized around the four University strategic goals (USGs), each with Activities, Action items, Assessment, Responsible groups, and date of achievements.

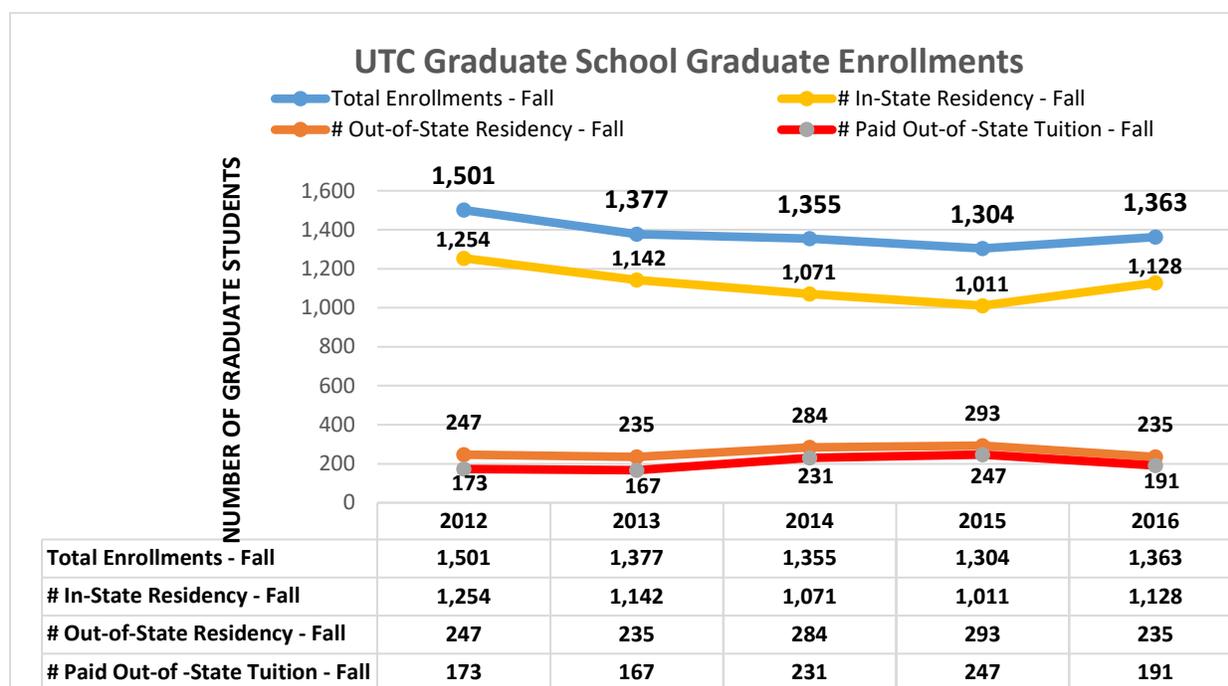


Enrollment

Graduate School Goal 1: Increase enrollment in the graduate school to exceed 1,500 students.

After a number of years of steady enrollment growth, graduate enrollment began dropping to a low of 1304 students in the fall 2015 semester. This was due, in part, to the loss of students in a few specific programs. These programs, although academically strong, were negatively impacted due to legislation that negated the benefit of this degree in terms of salary increases. New programs have become available and increases have been seen for enrollment in the fall 2016 semester. However, bolstering existing programs is another area to for increased enrollment. Also, our out of state students have been a relatively small portion of our overall student populations historically. Last year we proposed an out of state tuition decrease that will start in Fall 2018.

Our first goal is structured according to the University strategic goals 1c, 1e, and 3f.



*data from UTC 2016 factbook.

The Graduate School will use a variety of strategies in order to meet the goal of increasing graduate student enrollment to at least 1,500 students over the next 3 years.

Strategies:

1: Develop and expand marketing campaigns that target the recruitment of competitive graduate students. Engage programs, and colleges to develop pro-active strategies for recruiting students.

2: Work with faculty and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research to increase externally funded assistantships.

3: Addition of new graduate programs that are regionally relevant and will attract students both locally and nationally.

4: Evaluate distribution of graduate assistantships and implement a plan to assign assistantships more strategically across all programs on campus.

Outcomes:

By increasing enrollment in the graduate school we will bolster and strengthen our existing programs and position ourselves expand our graduate program offerings. By aligning our out-of-state tuition costs with our peers, we will be more competitive and will increase enrollment of that student population. Coordination of graduate assistantships will allow us to better understand the needs of our programs and will help with recruitment and retention of competitive graduate students.

Assessments:

Increase in number of assistantships and their distribution; recruitment strategies implemented; tuition reduction implemented and marketed. All leading to increases in graduate student enrollment and retention.

Diversity

Goal 2: Enhance diversity and increase international student participation in graduate education at UTC.

Based on the graduate student population from Fall 2016, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Graduate School enrollment is 58% female and 42% male. Also, UTC students are 73.4% “white” as defined in the survey. The graduate school believes that a diverse student population serves the interests of Chattanooga, Tennessee and nationally. By properly reflecting our population, in relationship to educational opportunities, the Graduate School seeks to increase graduate enrollment of underrepresented and disadvantaged students. This goal aligns with the following University strategic goals; 1c, 3f, 4a, b, c.

Graduate Students	Male	Female	Grand Total
Fall 2016			
American Indian		1	1
Asian	18	33	51
Black	53	78	131
Hispanic	16	22	38
Native Hawaiian	1	1	2
Two or More Races	34	41	75
Unknown	33	31	64
White	417	584	1001
Graduate Total	572	791	1363
International Graduate Total			48**

*data from UTC 2016 factbook.

**The 48 international students are included in the 1363 total.

The Graduate school plans to enhance diversity as well as increase international student participation in graduate education with the following strategies.

Strategies:

1: Implement marketing to better recruit underrepresented and disadvantaged students across all graduate programs. As part of this, we will work with programs and colleges to include this element in their marketing campaigns.

2: Increase recruitment efforts for students from regional colleges that are Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs such as Lane College and Fisk University) as well as international Universities.

3: Work with faculty and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research to increase external grant applications to support programmatic funding for underrepresented graduate students.

4: Establish supplemental financial resources to support international graduate students in association with the Office of International Student Services (ISS).

5: Establish pipeline programs to recruit underrepresented undergraduate students, at UTC and surrounding schools, into our graduate programs.

Outcomes:

Increased visibility of UTC graduate opportunities on the campuses of regional HBCUs and an increased global reputation; increased financial aid opportunities for international and underrepresented students; increased number of student enrollment in the Graduate School from these populations.

Assessments:

Establish interactions and better relationship with regional HBCUs for recruitment of graduate students. Initiation of outreach programs and activities; increased in enrollment of international students and underrepresented students across all graduate programs.

Enhance Global Readiness

Goal 3: Prepare graduate students to be successful within their fields while also maximizing their ability to compete in a complex, diverse and increasingly global work environment.

As the Chattanooga regions becomes more diverse and global, there has been an influx of international companies such as Volkswagen (2). These companies bring job opportunities, expand exports and contribute to the local and regional economy. As local companies seek to grow, they target regional, national, and international markets for expansion (2, 3, 4). This necessitates working individuals that can adapt to changing environment and have a willingness to continually learn (5). The Graduate school has solid academic programs (focused on academic skills) in place. As the marketplace increases in complexity, there is a need to equip students with “professional competencies” that will help them achieve their goals in a globalized marketplace (5). Creativity, communication, time management, leadership and other skills are important in the overall success of our students, and are not directly addressed within all programs.

This goal aligns with the following University strategic goals; 1c, 1e, 2 a, b, c, d, 3d and 3f.

The better prepare our students beyond just the academic or hard skill set offered as the degree, the Graduate School proposes the following strategies to develop these skills.

Strategies:

- 1: Develop new graduate degrees to complement the University strategic plan. (This strategy is present in our first goal to increase enrollment.)
- 2: Investigate and develop graduate study abroad opportunities in association with the Office of International Student Services (ISS).
- 3: Increase graduate student participation in university job fairs, resume building workshops, and other professional competency workshops in association with the University Career Services.
- 4: Interact with programs that offer classes, or have expertise in different types of professional competencies, and establish new and enhance existing programmatic offerings for graduate students from all programs.

Outcomes:

Allow graduate students to be prepared for employment both academically and with skills that will enhance their employment options. Increase global perspectives of graduate students by encouraging study abroad opportunities.

Assessments:

Increased number of graduate students participating in study abroad opportunities. Increased

graduate student participation in job fairs and workshops. Establishment of an in-house certificate in professional competencies as a tangible recognition of involvement and completion of a minimum number of workshops

Goal 1: Increase enrollment in the graduate school to exceed 1,500 students.

Strategy	Potential Action Items	Assessment	Responsible Group or Individual	Link to University Strategic plan
1: Develop and expand marketing campaigns that target the recruitment of competitive graduate students. Engage programs, and colleges to develop pro-active strategies for recruiting students.	Increase marketing budgets. Collaborate with colleges and programs	Increased web traffic, formal inquiries, and applications to graduate programs	Graduate school Deans Program coordinators	1c
2: Work with faculty and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research to increase externally funded assistantships.	Increase opportunities for graduate students to have a directed assistantship	Increased number of grant submissions with assistantships	Graduate school VC-R Grant writers	3f
3: Addition of new graduate programs that are regionally relevant and will attract students both locally and nationally.	Increase programmatic offerings relevant to our area as needed	Are new programs being offered that meet regional needs and approved through THEC	Graduate school Academic Affairs Deans Programs	1c
4: Evaluate distribution of graduate assistantships and implement a plan to assign assistantships more strategically across all programs on campus.	Evaluate GA distributions	Establish GA distributions based on program needs, growth, justification and assess the effectiveness	Graduate School Deans Program coordinators	1c 3d

Goal 2: Enhance diversity and increase international student participation in graduate education at UTC.

Strategy	Potential Action Items	Assessment	Responsible Group or Individual	Link to University Strategic plan
1: Implement marketing to better recruit underrepresented and disadvantaged students across all graduate programs.	Increase marketing budgets. Collaborate with colleges and programs	Increased web traffic, formal inquiries, and applications to graduate programs by these students	Graduate school Deans ISS office	1c,
2: Increase recruitment efforts for students from regional colleges that are Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs such as Lane College and Fisk University) as well as international Universities.	Increased travel and recruitment to these specific groups Collaborate with colleges and programs	Increased, formal inquiries, and applications to graduate programs by these students	Graduate school Program Coordinators Office of Equity and Diversity	1c 4a 4b
3: Work with faculty and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research to increase external grant applications to support programmatic funding for underrepresented graduate students.	Increase grant workshops and encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration on grant writing	Increased number of targeted grant submissions	Graduate school VC-R Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Grant writers	1c 1f
4: Establish supplemental financial resources to support international graduate students in association with the Office of International Student Services (ISS).	Provide international graduate students with financial incentives for attendance		Graduate school ISS Office of Finance, Operations, and Information Technology	1c 4a 4c
5: Establish pipeline programs to recruit underrepresented undergraduate students, at UTC and surrounding schools, into our graduate programs.	Interactions with universities, establishment of recruitment programs	Increased, formal inquiries, and applications to graduate programs by these students	Graduate school Program Coordinators Office of Equity and Diversity	1c 4a 4b

Goal 3: Prepare graduate students to be successful within their fields while also maximizing their ability to compete in a complex, diverse and increasingly global work environment.

Strategy	Potential Action Items	Assessment	Responsible Group or Individual	Link to University Strategic plan
1: Develop new graduate degrees to complement the University strategic plan.	Increase programmatic offerings relevant to our area as needed	Are new programs being offered that meet regional needs and approved through THEC	Graduate school Academic Affairs Deans Programs	1c
2: Investigate and develop graduate study abroad opportunities in association with the Office of International Student Services (ISS).	Investigate graduate study abroad opportunities for programs	Establish program for graduate study abroad and have participation	Graduate school Deans ISS office Graduate Programs	1c 4a 4c
3: Increase graduate student participation in university job fairs, resume building workshops, and other professional competency workshops.	Communicate and encourage attendance by graduate students	Increased participation by graduate students	Graduate school Graduate programs	1e 1f
4: Interact with programs that offer classes, or have expertise in different types of professional competencies, and establish new and enhance existing programmatic offerings for graduate students from all programs.	Encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration and introduce professional competencies to graduate students	Participation and positive evaluation by graduate student participation	Graduate school Graduate programs	1e 1f

REFERENCES

- 1) <http://fortune.com/2017/05/08/tech-startup-innovation-chattanooga-tennessee/>
- 2) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/deborah-j-levine/international-business-tr_b_9771680.html
- 3) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/deborah-j-levine/globalization-on-campus-a_b_9352308.html
- 4) <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/business/diary/story/2017/apr/12/tranco-goes-global8230logistics-company-opens/422431/>
- 5) <https://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/college-admissions-playbook/2014/05/12/hone-the-top-5-soft-skills-every-college-student-needs>

UTC Strategic Plan goals

Goal 1: Transform lives through meaningful learning experiences.

- a. All undergraduates will complete an internship, practica, service project, research project, senior capstone, honors thesis, or international experience.
- b. Increase student participation in the Honors College and in Honors College programs.
- c. Expand the number of graduates from graduate programs in areas that align with workforce needs in our region and the state.
- d. Expand, integrate and assess virtual course delivery methods as a part of the overall educational experience.
- e. Provide exemplary student support services.
- f. Ensure engagement in learning connected to academics, athletics, extracurricular activities and student development programs through coordination and integration of these experiences.
- g. Create an environment that encourages intellectual and cultural engagement through the liberal and fine arts.

Goal 2: Inspire, nurture and empower scholarship, creativity, discovery, innovation and entrepreneurial initiatives.

- a. Increase participation by students, faculty and staff in scholarship and creative activities that impact the community through partnerships with business and industry, government and non-profit agencies.
- b. Establish mechanisms to encourage, implement and assess faculty, staff and student entrepreneurial activities.
- c. Identify, develop and evaluate community-based programs and courses to connect all outreach programming, continuing education, work-based training and executive education opportunities with University resources.
- d. Create, adopt and incorporate new learning technologies into the academic experience.

Goal 3: Ensure stewardship of resources through strategic alignment and investments.

- a. Fully implement, assess, and align resources with the Complete College Strategic Plan finalized in April 2014.
- b. Implement and assess tools and processes to track students through enrollment, graduation and professional achievement to better communicate and build a loyal alumni base.
- c. Ensure facilities, technology and college/unit based plans align with the strategic plan.
- d. Align all resources with high priority programs and endeavors.
- e. Develop and implement a strategic enrollment management plan that includes a robust assessment plan.
- f. Expand revenue streams beyond traditional tuition and state funding.
- g. Develop and build an institutional culture of assessment with the Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness Committee's assistance.
- h. Develop and implement a faculty and staff compensation plan to reward meritorious performance.

Goal 4: Embrace diversity and inclusion as a path to excellence and societal change.

- a. Develop, implement and assess an institutional diversity plan that defines and sets clear metrics for diversity of faculty, staff and students.
- b. Improve the cultural inclusion of and physical and technological access for students, faculty and staff with disabilities.
- c. Enhance and expand international partnerships that lead to more international students and faculty at UTC and increased opportunities for UTC students, faculty and staff to have international experiences.
- d. Build advisory boards and support groups that reflect a diversity of occupations, abilities and cultures.