

Shepherd University

Divisions of Graduate Studies & Continuing Education

STRATEGIC PLAN

2012 – 2017

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

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I. INTRODUCTION: GRADUATE SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLANNING

A. History

Shepherd University was founded in 1871 as a normal school and has become a university with graduate studies at the master's level. Since 2003, the Division of Graduate Studies at Shepherd University has provided five graduate programs with the first program enrolling students in the 2003-2004 year, and the newest program enrolling students in the 2007-2008 year. The addition of graduate studies at a university with a long history of undergraduate programs requires a dedication toward creating a graduate culture that is fostered by faculty, staff, and students.

Graduate Studies was granted at Shepherd University because of:

1. The need for graduate education in the Eastern West Virginia Panhandle that was based on a liberal arts education and at a public university price,
2. The need for current professionals in education and business to improve their skills sets,
3. To help improve the economic development in the region with advanced degrees for those in specific professions, and,
4. Provide a graduate level education for those seeking life-long learning and re-certification.

The emphasis of graduate studies at Shepherd has remained focused on those four primary reasons with the development of specific master's degrees in education and business, and graduate level continuing education for those who require re-recertification. Planning for three graduate programs in the future also remain focused on those primary reasons.

The emphasis at Shepherd University remains focused on a liberal arts undergraduate mission as indicated in its recent acceptance into the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC), where traditionally less than 10% of all students at each of the member institutions are graduate students. At Shepherd, graduate students remain less than 5% of the total student population. Therefore, creating a graduate culture throughout the university has and will continue to be a significant transformational process in the structure of the organization that is still predominately undergraduate oriented. New policies and procedures that help guide graduate studies are continuously in development to ensure graduate studies operations run effectively and efficiently within the undergraduate culture.

Graduate Studies were originally administered from what is now the School of Education and Professional Studies since the Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction was the original graduate program. From that first graduate program housed in a specific school, the configuration of graduate degrees and graduate courses for re-certification has grown to include all four schools of the university and supported by 15 disciplines. The new configuration

for graduate studies includes the Division of Graduate Studies for graduate degree programs, and the Division of Continuing Education that includes graduate courses for re-certification. Through the re-organization of an associate vice-president's position, the position Dean of Graduate Studies and Associate Vice-President of Academic Affairs will be implemented in fall 2012. This new position addresses the special requirements of graduate and accredited programs, and oversees articulation agreements with community colleges regarding cooperative degree programs. The leadership for all graduate studies at Shepherd has also grown from a part-time Graduate Director to a full-time Dean of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education (GSCE).

Current graduate programs at Shepherd University are the following in their order of student enrollment and current graduate degree research requirements:

1. The Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction (MA-CI) started enrolling students in 2003-2004. Current research requirements include research papers and fieldwork with a required thesis and written comprehensive exam.
2. The Master of Business Administration (MBA) started in 2005-2006 with research requirements that include research papers and group research projects. A research project or thesis is optional and a capstone course is under consideration by the MBA faculty.
3. The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) was originally a collaborative program with Marshall University until 2005-2006. In 2006-2007, Shepherd started a separate MAT with research requirements in the field, a culminating portfolio project, and required national examinations for teacher certification.
4. The Master of Music in Music Education (MMME) started enrolling students in the summer of 2007. Current research requirements include research papers and major music productions. Students complete a thesis or final project and an oral examination before a faculty committee.
5. The Master of Arts in College Student Development Administration (MA-CSDA) started enrolling students in the summer of 2006 and requires research in the field as well as major comprehensive examinations.

B. Transforming Graduate Studies

During the last five years, the university has developed a solid strategic planning process that seeks to move the university forward in the coming years. Graduate Studies and Continuing Education needs to take a leadership role in helping realize the ambitions of the campus, and adjust and refocus its mission, responsibilities, and organization accordingly. We must develop programs that are appropriate and effective models for collaboration with our undergraduate offerings and with external partners.

The Divisions of GS & CE at Shepherd University are engaged in the national graduate conversation through the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS). This organization is currently focused on broad policy initiatives such as “advancing graduate education as the backbone of American competitiveness and innovation and elaborating the value of graduate education to the U. S. economy and quality of life.”

In response to follow up communications from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) regarding Graduate Studies at Shepherd University, this strategic plan strives to address concerns regarding enrollment, program development and viability, long-range planning and marketing.

C. The Strategic Planning Process

The GSCE strategic plan represents these divisions as independent academic and administrative units that define their goals in relation to the Shepherd University Strategic Plan. Because the current strategic plan is strongly tied to the institutional mission and core values, by providing an emphasis on learning, accessibility, engagement, integrity and community, GSCE will focus on advancing these core values within the context of graduate and continuing education.

The GSCE strategic plan proffers a vision for graduate education followed by broad objectives for realizing the plan. The timeline enumerates specific action steps, stakeholder and proposed time line. The plan was developed through meetings and retreats with graduate program coordinators, the strategic planning group and administrative units on campus such as enrollment management, admissions, financial aid and academic affairs.

II. GRADUATE SCHOOL MISSION, VISION and CORE VALUES

A. Mission & Vision

The current mission and vision statement of GSCE was developed through work with the program coordinators, mission committee, graduate council and executive staff (fall 2011).

Mission

Shepherd University Graduate Studies is a diverse community of educators, scholars and learners committed to promoting accessibility and excellence in higher education, leading to advanced mastery of disciplinary knowledge and skills.

Vision

Shepherd University Graduate Studies aspires to be a responsive and accessible provider of quality educational programs. We are committed to continually broadening the scope

of learning, academic discourse, discovery and innovations, while increasing global connections for scholars, researchers and practitioners.

B. Core Values

Committed to excellence, Shepherd University and GSCE embrace the following five core values:

Learning

Shepherd University creates a community of learners who integrate teaching, scholarship, and learning into their lives. In order to create challenging, relevant experiences, inside and outside of the classroom, the University continually evaluates and assesses student learning. We recognize and accommodate diverse learning styles and perspectives necessary for global understanding.

GSCE cultivates in students a lifelong desire to learn, with respect and understanding at an ever-increasing level for knowledge and cultures of the past, civic engagement, professional and personal ethics, and place in today's global society.

Engagement

Shepherd University fosters environments in which students, faculty, staff, and members of the community engage with each other to form mutually beneficial relationships. We believe that meaningful engagement, with ideas and with people, promotes deep learning and nurtures critical thought.

GSCE is committed to engaging students in creative and scholarly endeavors both inside and outside the classroom. This is exemplified by faculty in the integration of new ideas and alternative approaches in their teaching, innovative learning activities, and continued professional development.

Integrity

Shepherd University strives for an environment of honesty and fairness in its actions. University officials seek input from students, faculty, and staff and make informed and objective decisions. We expect all members of the community to act in accordance with this value.

GSCE fosters a strong commitment to provide programs that allow students to achieve the best education for each individual's particular talents, interests, and goals in an environment that emphasizes service to students.

Accessibility

Shepherd University provides services to all qualified students. Our staff and faculty are available to students and are committed to respecting and meeting individual needs. University governance and budgeting structures reflect our commitment to transparent processes and public access to information.

GSCE will identify and develop opportunities for the financial support of student learning

and opportunities that meet the needs of adult learners, certified professionals, and community members.

Community

Shepherd University comprises a community that includes students, faculty, staff, alumni, and involved citizens. We meet the needs of this community through assessment, development, and implementation of innovative programs and initiatives. We strive to create a safe environment based on mutual respect and acceptance of differences.

GSCCE will identify and develop opportunities for creating community partnerships to enhance the educational experience of our students.

III. OBJECTIVE 1: INSPIRE STUDENT LEARNING & ADVANCING EXCELLENCE IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

A. Ensure Excellence in Graduate & Continuing Education Programs

1. Review Policies (admissions, curricula)
2. Rigor (determine if our curricula, outcomes and standards are similar to those of HEPC and COPLAC peer groups)
3. Research (faculty/student) [emphasize and reward]
4. Accessibility (course rotation, availability of classes)
5. Engagement (Are our students involved in our/their communities?)

Action plan: Graduate Coordinators focus on items 1, 2, & 3. The Dean of GSCCE will focus on items 4 & 5. Enrollment/Admissions 1 & 2.

*University Strategic Plan: Pathway 1; Strategic priorities 8, 11
Core values: integrity, learning, accessibility, engagement*

B. Provide Incentives and Ensure Accountability

1. Provide Incentives for Strategic Excellence

- *Activity 1: GSCCE will identify and disseminate local and national best practices toward the end of improving recruitment/enrollment, graduation rates, and placement, and will develop a incentive mechanism for funding of new initiatives.*

Action Plan: Dean and appropriate program coordinators attend CGS, COPLAC, AAC&U, and HLC conferences for latest information on market trends, regulations, and best practices.

- *Activity 2:* GSCE will explore the practice of partnering and cost sharing with academic units to attract major federal awards and external fellowships.

Action Plan: Dean and appropriate program coordinators will work with other academic deans and unit heads to develop opportunities for students and faculty.

2. Ensure Accountability

- *Activity 1:* GSCE will work with schools and programs to ensure that appropriate benchmarks for student progress toward degree completion are established and enforced.

Action plan: Coordinators will update course rotations and progression sheets for students and use plan-of-study form for advisees.

- *Activity 2:* GSCE will engage the Graduate Council to create, review, and revise academic policies as needed; according programs *flexibility* while monitoring practices to ensure compliance with university and accrediting body policies and guidelines.

*Action plan: Program coordinators will review policies and procedures and work with the dean to make recommendations. **HLC issue.***

- *Activity 3:* GSCE will take a leadership role in the continued development of Learning Outcomes & Assessment in graduate programs.

*Action plan: Dean of GSCE and Program coordinators will work in cooperation with graduate faculty. **HLC issue.***

University Strategic Plan: Pathway 1, 2; Strategic priority 8

Core values: integrity, learning, accessibility, engagement

C. Develop Student Academic Support Programs

- *Activity 1:* Work with units on campus to develop academic support for graduate students requiring remedial work or additional academic assistance.
- *Activity 2:* Assume a leadership role in activities directed specifically toward improving the writing of graduate students. A Task Force will be formed and charged with providing a brief on best practices for improving writing at the graduate level.

University Strategic Plan: Pathway 1

Core values: integrity, learning, accessibility, engagement

II. OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCING THE GRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

A. Promote and provide a student-centered experience that will uphold a personalized approach to education and campus services

- *Activity 1:* Incorporate graduate student information and policies into the overall student handbook, thereby making graduate students part of the campus culture.
- *Activity 2:* Ensure that campus activities like the Wellness Center and other campus offices provide access to graduate students who are working adults.

HLC issue.

University Strategic Plan: Pathway 1, 3

Core values: integrity, accessibility, engagement

B. Continued Development of Funding and Policies for Graduate Assistantships and Stipends

- GSCE will work with other units on campus, specifically Admissions, Enrollment Management and Financial Aid to further develop the culture of graduate assistantships and stipends, thereby providing not only financial assistance, but also practical professional experience in the student's field of choice. ***HLC issue***

University Strategic Plan: Pathway 1

Core values: integrity, accessibility, engagement

Action plan: Dean of GSCE, Program Coordinators, Students Affairs, VPAA, and other units on campus work on the process for this initiative.

C. Form Dean's Student Advisory Group

A Graduate Dean's Student Advisory Group will be formed with an appointed graduate student representatives from each program. It will meet twice each semester at mutually convenient times in person or electronically. ***HLC issue***

University Strategic Plan: Pathway 1

Core values: integrity, engagement

Action plan: Dean of GSCE, Program Coordinators, and Graduate Faculty work to identify student representatives. Meetings in person or via Skype.

D. Develop Graduate Student Organizations

By working with student affairs, graduate faculty, students, and program coordinators, GSCE will provide mentoring and financial support for the development of Graduate Student Organizations that provide representation or governance [Graduate Student Organization] or relevant graduate professional or honorary organizations. **HLC issue**

University Strategic Plan: Pathway 1

Core values: integrity, engagement

Action: Work with SGA, President, VPAA, and BOG regarding representation of graduate students.

III. OBJECTIVE 3: FUNDING THE GRADUATE ENTERPRISE

A. Oversee Campus Financial Support for Graduate Students

Working with financial aid and enrollment management, GSCE will conduct an ongoing tabulation and analysis of overall campus financial support for graduate students to identify funding trends, best practices, and areas of concern, and will monitor correlations between student support as well as student progress and success.

Action Plan: Review policies and forms for revision. Stricter deadlines, prioritize funds based on enrollment, letter of need.

B. Develop Corporate Partnership for Funding Graduate Students

GSCE will work with the Vice-President for Development and the University Foundation to create a development plan for graduate education, identifying potential donors and donor opportunities for fellowships or programs.

University Strategic Plan: Pathway 1, 4

Core values: engagement, community

C. Develop Tuition Remission Pool

GSCE will work with College Counsel and other appropriate bodies to seek tuition remission for graduate studies in the same forms available for undergraduate education at Shepherd University.

D. Graduate Waiver and Stipend Pools

GSCE will continue to monitor funding pools for graduate student support and advocate for their protection and enhancement.

Action Plan: Dean of GSCE, Financial Aid, Enrollment Management, Admissions, Program Coordinators.

IV. OBJECTIVE 4: BUILDING COMMUNITY

A. Support Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities

Activity 1: Graduate Fellows: The Dean of GSCE and Program Coordinators will work to develop a Fellowship program that emphasizes co-curricular learning and research.

Activity 2: Travel Awards: The Dean of GSCE, Program Coordinators, Faculty, and other units will work to develop travel awards to help defray the expenses incurred by graduate students traveling to scholarly, scientific, or professional conferences to present papers, posters, or other scholarly material.

Activity 3: Examination and Development of Graduate Research: Work to develop writing and presentation skills for graduate students and create opportunities on campus such as a Regional Graduate Research Exchange to foster the development of presentation skills.

HLC issue

University Strategic Plan: Pathway 1

Core values: learning, integrity, engagement

Action plan: Dean of GSCE, Program Coordinators, and Graduate Faculty.

B. Support Faculty Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities

Faculty Graduate Research & Scholarship Award: GSCE will work to develop funding for this award rewarding graduate faculty research. **HLC issue**

Activity 1: Examine teaching load and qualifications for graduate faculty.

Activity 2: Address P & T considerations for graduate faculty.

Activity 3: Faculty Graduate Research & Scholarship Award: GSCE will work to develop funding for this award rewarding graduate faculty research.

HLC issues

University Strategic Plan: Pathway 1, 2

Core values: learning, integrity, engagement

C. Celebrate Student and Faculty Fellowship/Award Recipients

Activity 1: Graduate Banquet: GSCE will continue its annual campus-wide Graduate Banquet to acknowledge the achievements of students and faculty. It will be a major event and will feature student and faculty speakers.

Activity 2: Exhibition of Research/Scholarly/Creative Materials: GSCE will work with other units on campus developing research presentations to also feature the scholarly and creative work of graduate students. **HLC issue**

University Strategic Plan: Pathway 1, 2

Core values: learning, community, integrity, engagement

Action plan: Dean of GSCE, Program Coordinators, and Graduate Faculty.

APPENDIX: TIMELINE, STAKE HOLDERS AND BENCHMARKS

OBJECTIVE 1: INSPIRE STUDENT LEARNING & ADVANCING EXCELLENCE IN GRADUATE EDUCATION			
	Stakeholders	Benchmarks for Success	Timeline
<p>Ensure Excellence in Graduate & Continuing Education Programs</p> <p>1. Review Policies (admissions, curricula)</p> <p>2. Rigor (determine if our curricula, outcomes and standards are similar to those of HEPC and COPLAC peer groups).</p> <p>3. Research (faculty/student) [emphasize and reward]</p> <p>4. Accessibility (course rotation, availability of classes)</p> <p>5. Engagement (Are our students involved in our/their communities?)</p>	<p>GSCE Dean</p> <p>Program Coordinators</p> <p>Academic Affairs</p> <p>Enrollment</p> <p>Student Affairs</p>	<p>Increased enrollment (1.5 % growth annually)</p> <p>Increased retention (75% to 80% over 5 years)</p> <p>Sustained graduation rates (data is not consistent from year-to-year).</p> <p>Publicity/recognition (more press releases and information in local/regional publications)</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>
<p>Provide Incentives and Ensure Accountability</p> <p>Best Practices</p> <p>Partnering/Cost Sharing</p> <p>Degree Completion</p> <p>Policies</p> <p>Assessment</p>	<p>GSCE Dean</p> <p>Program Coordinators</p> <p>Academic Affairs</p> <p>CTL</p> <p>Student Affairs</p>	<p>Students and Faculty Satisfaction (use national survey tool for students; internal survey for faculty).</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Close loop on assessment during the 2012-13 year.</p>
<p>Develop Student Academic Support Programs</p> <p>• <i>Activity 1:</i> Work with units on campus to develop academic support for graduate students requiring remedial work or additional academic assistance.</p> <p>• <i>Activity 2:</i> Assume a leadership role in activities directed specifically toward improving the writing of graduate students. A Task Force will be formed and charged with providing a brief on best practices for improving writing</p>	<p>GSCE Dean</p> <p>Program Coordinators</p> <p>Academic Affairs</p> <p>CTL</p> <p>Student Affairs</p>	<p>Lower rates of students on probation. (determine national %)</p> <p>Rigor in student assignments for HLC pathways. See national best practices.</p> <p>Retention goals met. (See 1.1)</p>	<p>In place by Fall 2013.</p>

OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCING THE GRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

	Stakeholders	Benchmarks for Success	Timeline
<p>Promote and provide a student-centered experience that will uphold a personalized approach to education and campus services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<i>Activity 1:</i> Incorporate graduate student information and policies into the overall student handbook. •<i>Activity 2:</i> Ensure that campus activities like the Wellness Center, and that campus offices provide access to graduate student who are working adults. 	<p>GSCCE Dean</p> <p>Graduate Council</p> <p>Student Affairs</p> <p>Auxiliary Services</p> <p>Finance</p>	<p>Increased enrollment and retention. (See 1.1)</p> <p>Student satisfaction. Assessment Tool: national survey</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>In place for Fall 2012 and beyond.</p>
<p>Continued Development of Funding and Policies for Graduate Assistantships and Stipends</p>	<p>GSCCE Dean</p> <p>Financial Aid</p> <p>Enrollment</p> <p>Academic Affairs</p> <p>Academic units</p>	<p>Increased scholarship and employment opportunities for graduate students.</p> <p>Track through the Office of Career Services.</p>	<p>Fall 2013.</p>
<p>Form Dean’s Student Advisory Group</p>	<p>GSCCE Dean</p> <p>Program Coordinators</p>	<p>Increased incorporation of graduate students into the culture of SU.</p> <p>Student satisfaction.</p>	<p>In place by Spring 2013.</p>
<p>Develop Graduate Student Organizations and representation on bodies such as SGA and BOG.</p>	<p>GSCCE Dean</p> <p>Program Coordinators</p> <p>Faculty</p>	<p>See 2.3</p>	<p>Fall 2013 and ongoing.</p>

OBJECTIVE 3: FUNDING THE GRADUATE ENTERPRISE			
	Stakeholders	Benchmarks for Success	Timeline
Oversee Campus Financial Support for Graduate Students	GSCCE Dean Financial Aid Enrollment	Increased enrollment and retention. (See 1.1.)	Ongoing.
Develop Corporate Partnership for Funding Graduate Students	GSCCE Dean Advancement Financial Aid	Increased scholarship and employment opportunities for graduate students. (Advisory Councils)	Fall 2013.
Develop Tuition Remission Pool	GSCCE Dean Financial Aid College Counsel Academic Affairs	Opportunities for spouses of staff.	2014.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUILDING COMMUNITY			
	Stakeholders	Benchmarks for Success	Timeline
Support Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities Graduate Fellows Travel Awards Graduate Research exchange	GSCCE Dean Graduate Council Program Coordinators Advisory Councils	Increased engagement of graduate students through research endeavors Recognition of programs. Corporate support.	Fellows: 2014. Travel Awards: 2012-13. Research Exchange: Spring 2013.
Support Faculty Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities Graduate teaching loads and qualifications P & T for graduate faculty Graduate Faculty Award for Research & Scholarship	GSCCE Dean Advancement Financial Aid	Increased scholarship and employment opportunities for graduate students. (advisory councils)	Fall 2013.
Celebrate Student and Faculty Fellowship/Award Recipients Graduate Banquet Graduate Research Showcase	GSCCE Dean Graduate Council Graduate Faculty Program Coordinators	Promotion of graduate research and culture.	Spring 2013 and ongoing.

Shepherd University

Divisions of Graduate Studies & Continuing Education

STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

2012 – 2017

Meeting the strategic objectives outlined in the GSCE Strategic Plan will be transformative, changing and further developing Graduate Studies and Continuing Education at Shepherd University.

- Realize the *goals* of the mission, vision, and strategic plan of SU
- Advance, encourage, and ensure excellence in graduate education throughout the campus.
- Enhance the graduate student experience by collaborating with other units on campus and developing graduate student organizations.
- Increase resources for graduate education and students.
- Promote intellectual community through innovative campus initiatives.
- Build a strong culture of graduate education now and into the future.

Approved by the Graduate Council on August 30, 2012