

The purpose of the initial proposal is to identify a problem or opportunity as it relates to one of the strategic framework priorities. It is not intended to outline a specific plan or solution.

Title (*Brief working title that captures the essence of the problem or opportunity.*)

* Graduate Student Funding

Problem/Opportunity Statement (*One or two sentence description of the problem or opportunity. Should focus on specific, observable indicators. Should not infer cause and should not include solutions.*)

* The University lacks funding to draw and support graduate students in existing programs.

Proposal Themes (*Select one quality initiative theme for the proposal*)

- * Expand Learner Success Opportunities and Pathways
- Enhance our Environment to Learn, Work, and Thrive
- Accelerate Collaborative Partnerships to Grow the Community

(For more on Washburn's Strategic Framework, see the [Strategic Framework](#))

Description of how the problem or opportunity relates to the identified theme

* As of Fall 2023, Washburn University had enrolled 365 Masters students and 60 Doctoral students in graduate programs, comprising 7.5% of enrollment. Despite accounting for a significant proportion of enrollment, funding for graduate students is severely limited, which in turn limits graduate students' success opportunities and pathways. For example, the Psychology Department is able to offer \$29,417 in the form of stipends and hourly wages (for 3-10 hours per week) to graduate students across 62 positions (31 for spring and 31 for fall). On average, the graduate students in the funded positions earn funded by this money earn \$992.93 per year. Although individual graduate students may earn more than this average, as they fulfill multiple positions, other graduate students earn less or nothing. Conversely, traditional graduate courses cost anywhere from \$485-\$925 per credit hour, depending on program and residency status. Clearly, the funding available is poor compared to the costs incurred. Continuing to use Psychology as an example, graduate students in the Masters Program are required to present their capstone (an empirical thesis or case study) to audiences external to the university. This communication is a basic component of the scientific method. However, presenting at even regional conferences is cost-prohibitive, with even just registration costs in the range of hundreds of dollars. Given these deficits in funding, graduate students are often challenged with either managing full-time course loads, funded positions (often accepted to boost their professional development and make them more desirable candidates for doctoral programs), and off-campus employment AND/OR incurring immense student loan debt. Since FY2018 until suddenly this year, graduate students were able to apply for \$1000 grants through the Washburn Transformational Experience program (e.g., to pay participants, for conference travel); however, that program cut this funding this year.

Benefits (*Description of desired outcomes, both tangible, such as decreased costs or increased revenue, and intangible, that is those improvements that are important to control, protect or enhance but are difficult to quantify. Benefits should be realistic and measurable.*)

* Benefits of university-sponsored, graduate student-dedicated funding include

1. improved recruitment of high-quality students to graduate programs.
2. improved recruitment of diverse students to graduate programs.
3. increased recognition of the University through
4. improved production of excellent student-led research.
5. enhancement of the University environment to learn, work, and thrive by facilitating students' implementation of good health practices rather than just teaching about them.

Scope (*Description of the scope or impact on the institution as a whole. Specify if the scope is focused on specific areas, units or departments.*)

* This project should impact the University as a whole by bringing recognition--both for the University's efforts in supporting students and for student outcomes from that support. It should especially impact the programs that currently offer graduate programs, such as Psychology, Nursing, and Business.

Stake Holders (*Identify all persons/groups that have an interest or position in the issue – both internal and external to the University.*)

* Stake holders include faculty and staff in the graduate programs who mentor and supervise graduate students; current and future graduate students in these programs; and current and future employers of graduates from the graduate programs.

Team Members (*Individuals who will work on development of full proposal and/or may work towards project implementation.*)

* Faculty in the Departments of Psychology, Nursing, Business; CAS administrators; Graduate Council representatives; possibly WTE administrators

Submitter Name: * Jericho Hockett

Submitter Email: * jericho.hockett@washburn.edu

Submitter Department: * Psychology

Submitter Phone: (785) 670-1964

Name and contact information of others involved in submission:

Cindy Turk, cindy.turk@washburn.edu

...3530343032

Jericho Hockett

10/31/2024

Submitter Signature

Date

After signing, click Submit Form below. Submitters will be contacted after committee review in late November 2024.