Graduate School Commitment to Graduate and Postdoctoral Scholar Training  
(March 27, 2018)

The Graduate School at Wayne State University is fully committed to providing career development and training to our graduate students and ensuring an outstanding mentoring environment. As one of only a handful of institutions to be awarded both the Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training (BEST) and Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity (BUILD) grants from the NIH, we have been able to create and consistently deliver innovative development initiatives that ensure our graduate students receive a diverse and comprehensive training experience, as well as to prepare students from under-represented backgrounds for careers in research. To complement the university’s outstanding research development initiatives, the Graduate School provides training in a wide variety of career development skills. These include communication skills, (oral, written and visual) to ensure that our students effectively communicate their research findings in all media formats; fellowship and grant writing workshops to develop skills necessary to obtain external funding; Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and career exploration workshops to learn about careers including and beyond academia; job-seeking and interview skills; as well as other transferrable skills essential for success in a wide spectrum of careers. The Graduate School also develops and maintains formal mechanisms to monitor student milestones to ensure that students stay on target in their training timeline (annual review, mentoring compacts, etc.). Finally, we provide training in the Responsible Conduct of Research to ensure our students perform research and scholarship at the highest ethical and intellectual levels. With about 6000 Masters, 1500 Doctoral, and 130 Postdoctoral scholars in our programs, we strive to provide a training and mentoring environment that supports success to all trainees. The specifics of the Graduate School’s functions and offerings are outlined below:

Recruitment and Admissions

The Graduate School oversees graduate recruitment and admissions procedures, policies and initiatives. The Graduate Programs Outreach Specialist works with department chairs and graduate directors to identify recruitment events and opportunities regionally and nationally, with special emphasis on the recruitment of underrepresented students. Wayne State University also holds an annual graduate open house to showcase graduate programs and recruit outstanding students. In addition, the Graduate School runs a Graduate Ambassador Program for enthusiastic master’s students to advocate and recruit students into Wayne State University graduate programs and to assist in developing multimedia recruitment materials. The Graduate Programs Outreach Specialist works closely with the Graduate Admissions office, also housed in The Graduate School. The Graduate Admissions Office processes over 19,500 applications for 54 graduate certificates, 129 master’s programs, and 75 doctoral programs in 12 schools and colleges. The Dean of The Graduate School has been leading discussions with departmental representatives on best practices in portfolio review to ensure that a diverse applicant pool is evaluated on a number of experiences and skills including non-cognitive skills (e.g., persistence, motivation) required for graduate student success. The outcome of these discussions is a portfolio review toolkit that has been created that contains guidance on developing and implementing portfolio review processes and rubrics with which to score application materials in a transparent and consistent manner. This ongoing work is of utmost importance because diversity of thought contributes to scientific and scholarly innovation, health and wellness, and entrepreneurship.

Diversity Efforts and BUILD/IMSD/AGEP Programs

The Graduate School is strongly committed to promoting diversity in all its programs. WSU also has a historical track record in being an institution of access, especially in the areas
of supporting the recruitment and success of underrepresented minority students. The Graduate School has a number of programs aimed to promote diversity and inclusion of the graduate student body. The Graduate School supports recruitment with personnel including a Graduate Programs Outreach Specialist and the Office of Graduate Admissions. Funding is also available including the Dean’s Diversity Fellowship, a four-year award that includes stipend, subsidized health insurance, and tuition scholarship. The Graduate School also runs a stipend competition via the King Chavez Parks (KCP) program, which supports students interested in equity in the classroom. In addition, the Graduate School runs a learning community as part of the NSF Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) for doctoral students who are underrepresented in their disciplines. The learning community provides professional development and psychosocial support to graduate students across campus to promote their academic and professional success and includes discussion of topics such as microaggressions, diversity and equity in the classroom, and writing diversity statements and CVs. The NIH-funded and University supported BUILD promotes diversity in the biomedical researcher pipeline with high quality mentoring and research experiences for undergraduate biomedical science researchers.

Student Support Services
Wayne State University supports the whole student in their educational and personal endeavors through a number of programs. For instance, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers a variety of services including counseling services to registered Wayne State students, therapy groups, support groups, and educational groups, outreach services and events, workshops/educational activities, crisis intervention for students, faculty, and the university community, consultation to faculty and the university community as well as to parents of university students. CAPS has excellent working relationships with other support service offices that can assist graduate students including Campus Health Center, Wayne State University Psychology Clinic (provides therapy and psychoeducational testing), Student Disability Services, Career Services, and the Office of International Students and Scholars.

Institutional Financial Support
Wayne State University is committed to providing the financial resources needed to continue and complete graduate degrees. At the master’s level, The Graduate School awarded over 261 master’s scholarships to recruit outstanding master’s students to Wayne State University and over 156 retention and completion scholarships for master’s students in 2017-2018. The Graduate School also holds a workforce development competition each year to support programs in their plans to develop pipelines between employers and graduate studies, often master’s degrees, at Wayne State University. Each year, The Graduate School also awards over 200 Graduate Professional Scholarships to graduate students in master’s and doctoral professional training programs. Research assistantships and fellowships are also offered by The Graduate School; over 95 Rumble Fellowships, which include tuition and stipend are awarded each year. The Graduate School runs a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) competition that awards GRAs to stimulate multidisciplinary training and research grant proposals. Finally, The Graduate School oversees and awards several graduate fellowships to support underrepresented doctoral students including the Dean’s Diversity Fellowship, King-Chavez-Parks Future Faculty Fellowship Program, and the Graduate School Dean Mathur Fellowship.

Responsible Conduct of Research
Wayne State University is committed to maintaining an environment of research integrity at all levels of academic training. The Graduate School has helped facilitate this process by developing a comprehensive program for Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training to
meet the instructional requirements for all graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. Formal
RCR training is delivered in part through GS0900, a faculty delivered course titled: “Essential
Research Practices: Responsible Conduct of Research”. GS0900 has an extensive CITI
training online component to deliver training in 11 specific initiatives relevant to all research
scholars (Introduction to RCR, Authorship, Collaborative Research, Conflicts of Interest, Data
Management, Financial Responsibility, Mentoring, Peer Review, Plagiarism, Research
Misconduct, Research Ethics). Students then attend eight 30-minute lectures from faculty
specialists on RCR concepts general to student training needs (Mentoring and the IDP, Conflict
Resolution, Communication Strategies, Conflict of Interest, Peer Review, Authorship and
Plagiarism, Data Management and Recordkeeping, and Reporting Research Misconduct). The
faculty lectures are then followed by four hours of postdoctoral scholar driven student
discussions on four cases of RCR conflict as a means to promote discussion of these often
uncomfortable topics. Students then receive training in RCR concepts specific to their field of
interest by participating in either a departmental RCR training program or through extensive
discussion on RCR topics with their mentor, or both. Finally, the course ends with a four-page
essay prepared by each student that discusses what they learned in the class, the RCR specific
requirements for their field of interest, and how they plan to utilize what they learned in the class
in their future. The total time commitment for the course, spread out over an entire semester, is
16 total hours, shared evenly between online, faculty lecture and student discussion initiatives,
and training must be repeated every four years. Completion of GS0900 is mandatory for all
doctoral and postdoctoral scholar students.

Graduate Professional Development

Competency-based professional development is delivered through seminars and
workshops offered throughout the academic year to support graduate students’ professional,
career and personal development. This programming is built as a framework for developing
skills in five nationally recognized core competency areas: communication, career development,
ethics, teamwork & collaboration, and leadership & professionalism. In tandem with these
seminars, the Graduate School has implemented a micro-credentialing program to recognize
trainees’ achievement in these competency areas. A micro-credential, also called a digital
badge, is a tool for showcasing the skills and experience that may not be readily apparent by
reading an academic transcript, resume or CV. Students attend professional development
seminars and submit work to be evaluated by faculty presenters and earn the corresponding
micro-credential. These badges are shareable via social media (e.g., LinkedIn, Twitter,
Facebook, Mozilla Backpack). They can also be embedded on a personal or professional
website or added to an email signature to demonstrate skills and experience to prospective
employers, colleagues and peers.

Individual seminar topics have included multiple role management (work-life balance,
multiple work role balance), versatile career pathways in cooperation with BEST (see below)
programming, abstract writing for conferences, oral and poster presentation skills, individualized
development plans (IDPs; see below), and job search tips. To maximize the relevance to
students across campus, presenters included faculty of diverse backgrounds from a variety of
graduate programs. Seminars are often held as panels with ample time for questions and
discussion among the participants and the panel members. Surveys are administered upon
completion of the seminar to identify interest, satisfaction, and ideas for future seminars.

Career Planning, Individual Development Plans (IDP), BEST [Broadening Experiences in
Scientific Training] Internship

The WSU Graduate School is deeply committed to the career development of our
doctoral students and our postdoctoral trainees. In 2014, WSU made Individual Development
Plans (IDPs) mandatory for all doctoral students and encouraged for postdoctoral trainees.
These documents, completed by the end of their first year of graduate school and updated annually, provide a framework for conversations between the student or postdoctoral trainee and their dissertation advisor. Such communication ensures that students get timely advice on career planning and bring career mentoring out of the closet and into full view. Through the IDP process, faculty advisors have the ability to direct students toward career-building activities available on campus and through industry and community partners.

Wayne State was one of 17 institutions nationwide to receive a $1.8 million BEST (Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training) grant for 2013-18 from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to help doctoral trainees explore the multiple career pathways open to them outside of academia. While completing their doctorate, participants in the BEST Program can take advantage of additional training that focuses on how their scientific skills, problem-solving abilities and analytical acumen are transferable to other domains, such as the biotech and pharmaceutical industries, patent and intellectual property law, state and federal government, science communication, and undergraduate college teaching. Our goal is to help prepare doctoral trainees and postdoctoral scientists to meet the needs of the 21st-century economy in a dynamic and evolving job market.

The BEST program supports career exploration through a year-long three-phase career exploration process along multiple tracks. Phase I introduces students to professional domains and related career options and trajectories through panel discussions with faculty, industry professionals and field experience partners. Phase II includes hand-on workshops with more in-depth training in a specific career area. The experience culminates with Phase 3 in-service placements with our partners where students work as part of one of their teams for up to 12 weeks. While internships were once the domain of high school and undergraduate experiences, career exploration opportunities are now become more commonplace in advanced degree programs. Through the WSU BEST program, Wayne State has positioned itself as a leader in this area. Our students take advantage of these opportunities to enhance their training while still in graduate school and to make more informed decisions about career tracks they wish to pursue upon graduation. In this way, we can help students not fall back on a postdoctoral fellowship if such positions are not developmental with respect to their long-term career goals.

Alumni Career Tracking
Wayne State University was amongst the first institutions to conduct longitudinal tracking of their alumni to provide detailed understanding of the value a graduate degree provides in terms of career advancement. In 2014, the WSU Graduate School initiated a program for detailed career tracking of doctoral alumni. The initial year-long project sought to contact as many doctoral alumni as possible over the 15-year window from 1999-2014. We successfully connected with nearly 90% of our approximately 3,000 doctoral recipients from this period. We now use an annual census to track the career outcomes of our doctoral alumni, generating data that we use to inform our programs on the career success of their students. In addition to its utility in the regular adjustments of our graduate programs to match career outcomes, the effort has helped bring alumni back to campus to provide career mentoring to our current students. Data are also made transparent to prospective students through the Graduate School Data Dashboard.

Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
Wayne State University has a thriving academic community of over 130 Postdoctoral Scholars, and the University takes pride in the development and training of these scholars in preparation for their future careers in academia and elsewhere. The Graduate School’s Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) is committed to postdoctoral scholar training and mentoring initiatives associated with their professional development. In addition to the professional development initiatives outlined above, the OPA, working with the Department of Human
Resources at the University, provides Career Development training workshops in interviewing skills, resume and CV development, and submitting position application packets. The OPA provides onboarding and offboarding mechanisms to help facilitate postdoc arrival/departure. The OPA provides resources for postdoc scholarship funding initiatives and the development of their job application materials and interviewing practices. The OPA directs the development and yearly evaluation of postdoctoral scholar IDPs and Mentoring Compacts, and provides and pays for the mandatory Responsible Conduct of Research training outlined above. All initiatives for training and internships associated with the university's BEST program are also offered to postdoctoral scholars. Finally, the OPA serves as the Graduate School liaison for the Postdoctoral Association, a postdoctoral scholar directed organization that promotes professional development and social well-being for the postdoctoral community at Wayne State University.

**Postdoc to Faculty Transition Program**

As part of the Graduate School's broad effort to support and enhance career development of postdoctoral trainees, the university has established a Postdoc-to-Faculty Transition program designed to promote the development of promising postdoctoral scholars from under-represented backgrounds and to shepherd their transition into productive and well-funded faculty positions within the University. The program provides financial support for fellows and extensive training in grant writing and career management skills. The initial cohort of six postdoctoral fellows across the disciplines of Social Work, Family Medicine, Psychology, Neuroscience, Immunology, and Physics began the program in September of 2017.