



IMPACT OPPORTUNITIES FOR

Advancing Graduate Education at Michigan

Since its inception, Rackham Graduate School has been committed to advancing excellence in graduate education, cultivating a vibrant and diverse student community, and impacting the public good through the scholarship and discoveries of our students and degree recipients. In order to address pressures on the current model of graduate education and continue to lead the national conversation about the future of research-based graduate training—both master’s and doctoral—Rackham has launched our **Strategic Vision for Graduate Education**.

A few of the most pressing dynamics that inform our vision include expanded career pathways for our graduates, public skepticism about the benefits of evidence-based research, and growing concerns about affordability. At the same time, and perhaps most important of all, we see that society has never had a greater need for the advanced training of

research-based graduate education, for evidence-based science, for expertise that cuts across multiple areas, for thinking from the social sciences and the humanities that can help address deep societal problems, and for the understanding that helps us communicate across differences. These are all essential elements of what scholarship for the public good means. We feel that we are particularly well poised to address these pressures at Michigan, given our scope as a world-class research enterprise and our position of leadership in graduate education on a national level.

Rackham’s Strategic Vision seeks to leverage these strengths in shaping a new graduate academic experience. Philanthropic support for our highest priorities is essential to assure that Rackham students are prepared to thrive both in their time at Michigan and beyond.



Program Support

Named Fund for Innovation in Graduate Education \$1 Million endowed/\$50,000 expendable

Endowed, discretionary gifts are extraordinarily important to Rackham's ability to advance graduate education at Michigan. The Named Fund for Innovation will be a transformational gift, allowing Rackham to support one or more significant projects each year. Innovation funds make it possible for the school to meet emerging needs and capitalize on strategic opportunities for cutting-edge research, scholarship, and teaching. The fund can also support conferences, lectures, and seminars with visiting scholars.

How Your Support Helps

Innovative programs are key to the academic vitality of the university and expose graduate students to the world's leading experts and promote intellectual exchange at the faculty level. A donor-supported Fund for Innovation in Graduate Education will have a lasting impact on students and faculty alike.

Rackham Deanship \$5 Million endowed

An endowment to name the deanship of the Horace H. Rackham Graduate School would be used by the dean to advance the mission of the school. A transformational gift for this purpose would establish a discretionary fund that Rackham deans can draw on to fund the school's highest priorities. Naming the deanship would be of tremendous value to students, faculty, and the entire graduate education endeavor at Michigan.

How Your Support Helps

A donor's investment in creating a flexible fund would enable future Rackham deans to invest in scholarship, develop educational programs, and pursue opportunities that will continue to make Rackham a leader in graduate education for generations to come.



International Student Access Grant **\$250,000 endowed/\$10,000 expendable**

For many international students, finances can be a barrier as they strive to access a Rackham education. The International Student Access Grant would cover the international fees for students facing financial hardship, enabling them to focus on their graduate student experience.

How Your Support Helps

Some international students may not be eligible for other kinds of support due to citizenship or visa obstacles. Therefore, philanthropic support ensures these outstanding students can pursue graduate studies in the United States, specifically at the University of Michigan.

Summer Research Opportunity Program Fellowship **\$250,000 endowed/\$10,000 expendable (per student per summer)**

The Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP) at U-M strives to increase the number of diverse students with unique experiences by supporting their preparation for graduate studies. Through intensive mentorship, active learning, and enrichment activities, SROP fosters a community of scholars who increase social and cultural capital and networking while mastering research skills and knowledge. This experience advances their preparation as candidates for successful graduate study at U-M and success in future careers, increasing representation in professional fields. A fellowship for U-M SROP alumni would incentivize programs' participation in SROP and would further recognize these excellent scholars.

How Your Support Helps

Philanthropic support of SROP would enable Rackham to enhance current programming and elevate the visibility of the students participating in the program. Support for this program would also reinforce the commitment that Rackham has to diverse students pursuing doctoral education at the University of Michigan.



Institutional Research Support

Institutional Research supports Rackham's vision for enhancing the experience of the graduate school community by conducting research and providing data to inform practice. This data creates constructive conversations with faculty, programs, and other stakeholders supporting graduate students. Institutional Research works across Rackham to collect and share a comprehensive set of indicators that illuminate the experience of all students and provide ways to enable systematic change.

Michigan Doctoral Student Experience Study (MDES) **\$100,000 endowed/\$10,000 to \$50,000 expendable**

The Michigan Doctoral Student Experience Study (MDES) is an innovative approach to understanding the experience of doctoral students. By examining the experience of students from the first semester of their doctoral program, we are able to establish baseline measures and assess how these measures change over the course of students' studies. The study examines how departmental, institutional, and disciplinary factors shape the scholarly development of students. By highlighting these mechanisms we can better serve students and develop programming that targets their greatest areas of need.

How Your Support Helps

Philanthropic support of this study enables Rackham to effectively recruit future doctoral students for the outstanding graduate programs at Michigan. Funding is needed to administer this study and cover the expenses of engaging the greatest number and widest range of Rackham students to participate in the study.



Better Understanding of Alumni Career Outcomes **\$100,000 endowed/\$10,000 to \$50,000 expendable**

Rackham hosts one of the largest datasets in the country, tracking the career outcomes of doctoral graduates since 1999. This dataset provides insights into the changing patterns of initial career choices and the eventual trajectories followed by graduates as they settle into long-term careers. This resource has shown us the early changes in patterns of tenure-track faculty careers, provided insights about the expansion of postdoctoral fellowships within the social sciences and the humanities, and allowed us to see the unique careers outside of academia pursued by a variety of graduates across all disciplines. This work requires partnerships with departments and external organizations. As the scope expands to include all graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, we hope to streamline and automate data collection while continuing to provide critical insights about the changing landscapes of careers after graduate school.

How Your Support Helps

Support for this program would help Rackham build the next generation of systems that will support the work of collecting career outcome data. The administration of this program at Rackham assists the departments on campus by removing the burden of maintaining such data and allows them to concentrate on serving the needs of the students in their units.

Future Research - Early Career Scholars **\$100,000 endowed/\$10,000 to \$50,000 expendable**

The Michigan Doctoral Student Experience Study (MDES) allows us to examine the trajectory of doctoral students as they move through their programs of study. A natural extension of this work would follow these graduates into their early careers to examine the impact of their graduate school experience. This study would also align and leverage existing efforts to collect career outcomes data on our graduates while expanding our understanding of the factors that shape early-career choices.

How Your Support Helps

Donor support for this research would help break new ground in understanding how the experiences of doctoral students shape their early career choices and outlook. It would launch new lines of academic research that would have tremendous practical implications for the way Rackham supports students and the ways students think about the array of career choices available to them.



Future Research - Master's Students

\$100,000 endowed/\$10,000 to \$50,000 expendable

While we currently focus on doctoral students in the Michigan Doctoral Student Experience Study (MDES), we recognize that a major blind spot in our understanding of graduate students is the experience of master's students. By comparison, master's students spend a relatively short amount of time in graduate school, and their experience in both length of time and intensity is much different than that of doctoral students. We wish to take a similar approach to studying the experience of these students to better understand their needs, challenges, and successes. By systematically understanding these experiences, we hope to develop the kinds of programs and experiences that will benefit these students both while in graduate school and as they pursue future career and educational endeavors.

How Your Support Helps

A gift of support for this research would allow Rackham to begin to recruit master's students for participation in the study. Expanding the student experience study to include master's students will enhance the power of the research. Support for this research will make it possible for Rackham to more fully understand and adapt the educational experience through a broader research initiative.



Student Support

Graduate education is crucial to Michigan’s excellence as a research university. However, creation of knowledge and the discovery of global solutions require significant resources. Philanthropic gifts for graduate students make a Rackham degree accessible for many talented students who might otherwise not be able to afford to attend the country’s number-one public research institution. Your generosity plays a critical role in allowing these students to thrive not only during their time here on campus, but for years after they have graduated.

Summer Research/Field Work Funding

\$250,000 endowed/\$10,000 expendable (per student per summer)

A key component of exploration and discovery is catalyzing innovative ideas across the university. Research grant funds enable students to extend and accelerate robust research projects. Funding for graduate student research initiatives will ensure the most promising ideas, addressing pressing problems from poverty to global climate change, move forward to make an impact.

How Your Support Helps

Philanthropic support for research grants allows Rackham students to carry out research that advances their progress toward their degree. These awards defray costs of conducting research projects domestically and abroad for doctoral and master’s students, including travel and living expenses, hiring temporary research assistants or transcribers, or purchasing fieldwork equipment, archival materials, and other research-related expenses.



Master's Student Fellowships **\$1 Million endowed/\$50,000 expendable**

Graduate students play an essential role at the University of Michigan, working closely with faculty to provide outstanding teaching to our undergraduates, conducting research with our faculty, and carrying out their own independent research. Fellowship funding provides crucial support for graduate students, reducing their need to seek outside employment while they are learning and conducting research. Second, it lowers the amount of debt they incur, particularly for master's degree students. Third, donor supported fellowships allow the university to attract and recruit the best graduate students in the country to Michigan.

How Your Support Helps

Donor-established endowments for fellowships provide financial support to master's students while they are pursuing graduate studies without associated teaching or research responsibilities. Fellowships are generally merit-based internal or external awards to support a student in a full-time course of study.

Strategic Support

Rackham Annual Strategic Funds **\$50,000 endowed/\$10,000 to \$50,000 expendable**

Expendable, undesignated gifts are extraordinarily important to transforming the graduate student experience at Michigan. Contributions to one of Rackham's annual strategic funds make it possible to meet a variety of needs and challenges, including academic scholarship, research, equitable access, and experiential learning for Rackham graduate students at the master's or doctoral level and help them prepare for careers of quality and impact.



Ways to Fund Your Gift

Your gifts of cash, pledges, appreciated securities, qualified charitable contributions, or gifts from donor advised funds change lives. Wills, estate, and planned gifts allow you to create a lasting legacy that will make it possible for the best and brightest minds to complete a graduate degree, solve problems in a changing world, and yield ideas and innovations that will make a difference in Michigan and around the globe.

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