



IMPACT OPPORTUNITIES FOR

# Help and Well-Being: Critical Support to an Advanced Degree

Graduate school is full of challenges, both academically and personally. Graduate students are often working to navigate studies, research, funding, and relationships with peers and advisors. Rackham seeks to continually expand the assistance and support available to students whenever and however they need it. From onsite counseling to conflict resolution support to accommodations to remove barriers to success, Rackham stands ready to help. At a macro level, Rackham Institutional Research

works across the graduate school to collect and share a comprehensive set of indicators that illuminate the experience of all students and provide ways to enable systematic change. Our goal is a community of graduate students who thrive within a healthy culture. Philanthropic support can transform the student experience at Rackham by investing in programs and initiatives that address the overall well-being of those pursuing advanced degrees at Michigan.



## Program Support

### Graduate Student Lounge

**\$500,000 endowed**

Rackham was originally created to provide a space where students could come together to exchange ideas, socialize, and build community. In an effort to return more fully to that mission, we propose dedicating space in the Rackham building for a graduate student lounge. This space would allow graduate students the opportunity to connect both within and across academic disciplines and would serve as a location where students can de-stress and build connections. In addition, the lounge would serve as the Office for Graduate Student Engagement and function as an area where interactive programs could be held.

### How Your Support Helps

The Graduate Student Lounge, formally the East Study Lounge, would provide graduate students with an innovative space located in the historic Rackham Building. Having a named student lounge would provide greater visibility for the programming and community development happening in Rackham, thus creating greater affinity to Rackham for all graduate students.

### Veterans Wall

**\$300,000 endowed/\$15,000 expendable**

At Rackham we honor and cherish the service of our veterans and active duty students. We seek a wall/space where the names of Rackham students who have served in the armed forces are displayed.

### How Your Support Helps

Support for this initiative would enable Rackham to recognize our students who have served their country in a tangible way within the building.



## **Graduate Student Mental Health Initiative** **\$2 Million endowed/\$100,000 expendable**

Recent studies on mental health and graduate students indicate that half of all graduate students experience psychological distress. College campuses report a significant increase in the number of graduate students who report experiencing moderate to severe symptoms of depression and/or anxiety during their graduate studies. These mental-health challenges impact productivity and academic performance. Our vision is a community of graduate students who thrive within a healthy culture framework. In order to better support the mental health of all graduate students at the University of Michigan, Rackham has established a task force on graduate-student mental health. The task force is solutions-based, focused on identifying and implementing specific changes that can be made to better support graduate-student mental health, especially in the academic space. Possible initiatives include training, workshops, and programs to mitigate factors that negatively influence graduate-student mental health and well-being.

### **How Your Support Helps**

Donor funding would provide Rackham with the resources to invest in programming and develop initiatives to support and improve the mental health of graduate students across campus.

## **Debt Management Fund** **\$250,000 endowed/\$10,000 expendable**

The University of Michigan has a long standing commitment to an “uncommon education for the common man.” Rackham alumni exemplify how graduate education makes a major difference, not only for the student scholar, but also for society. As the costs of providing a world-class education rise, and government support for education lags behind, more and more students are faced with significant loan debt along with the demands of their graduate studies.

### **How Your Support Helps**

A donor-established debt management fund would lighten the financial burden for students with sizable loan debt who are pursuing a graduate degree.



## **Emergency Funding** **\$75,000 endowed/\$5,000 expendable**

Graduate students have dedicated additional years of education to the betterment of society. During this time, unforeseen expenses—family emergencies, medical bills, personal setbacks—could be detrimental to their academic progress. Emergency funding aims to help students overcome financial burdens that might otherwise delay the completion of their degree.

### **How Your Support Helps**

As a donor, you help meet the financial needs of graduate students who encounter an emergency situation or one-time, unusual, or unforeseen expense during their degree program. Gifts to this fund are critical to ensuring graduate students are able to overcome these obstacles and make the impact they came to U-M to make.



## 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. 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 initiatives 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.

## **Strategic Support**

### **Rackham Annual Strategic Funds**

**\$50,000 endowed/\$10,000 to \$50,000 annually**

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 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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