

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 1.0 Summary Report

As demonstrated in Rackham Graduate School's annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) [Strategic Plans and update reports](#), over the course of the last five years (2017-2022), Rackham successfully instituted an extensive array of more than 60 action items in order to advance DEI within the graduate education community at the University of Michigan (U-M).

In partnership with the graduate faculty and graduate program leadership, Rackham was also able to implement a comprehensive set of DEI recruitment, retention, and student success strategies, resulting in noteworthy increases in the number and percentage of domestic underrepresented minority (URM) students enrolled in both doctoral (19.1% to 22.1%) and master's degree (16.6% to 18.4%) programs. These same strategies, which were reviewed by the U-M Office of General Counsel (OGC), also led to increases in the number and percentage of domestic women enrolled in doctoral (32.5% to 33.6%) and master's (23.1% to 29.0%) degree programs, as well.

Beyond the DEI 1.0 process, "inclusive excellence" is one of Rackham's core values as articulated in its [Strategic Vision](#). DEI concepts and frameworks are embedded and woven throughout the graduate school's Strategic Vision; and, "Strengthened Diversity" is named as one of four (4) strategic goals, bolstered by five (5) strategic objectives, which will help to sustain Rackham's efforts to continue to advance DEI for many years to come.

Rackham remains committed to advancing DEI and accessibility for all of its constituencies, including graduate students, graduate school staff, graduate faculty, and Rackham alumni. This can be seen in the way its annual DEI strategic plans have introduced actions to support each of these constituency groups, consistent with Rackham's [mission and values](#).

Students Success Initiatives

Rackham's success in advancing DEI stems from its ability to employ inclusive practices that engage and empower all constituencies of the graduate education community--students, staff, faculty, and alumni--in all phases of planning and implementation.

Through various standing bodies established during DEI 1.0, such as the Rackham Diversity Advisory Council (RACDAC) and the Strategic Action Leadership Team (SALT), this approach has elevated the voices of the entire community and leveraged their collective knowledge and expertise to crowd-source creativity and innovation, leading to a number important new programs implemented over the past five (5) years, including the Rackham [Minority Serving Institutions \(MSI\)](#) initiative, which offered MSI Outreach and Collaboration Grants to graduate programs seeking to build relationships with MSIs across the country.

During the same period, Rackham created the [Professional Development DEI Certificate](#) program for graduate students, impacting graduate students across various disciplines at U-M. It was one of the first DEI Certificates on campus and the first to serve graduate students. By

2021, 374 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows had successfully completed the program, with a growing number of participants enrolling each year.

Similarly, Rackham also led the creation of “[Engendering Respectful Communities: Sexual Misconduct Prevention for Graduate Students](#)” workshop, in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC), Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT), the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA), and the Educational Theatre Company (ETC). This important effort is now being sustained through SAPAC’s [Graduate Research, Outreach, Workshops, and Evaluation \(GROWE\) Volunteer Program](#).

In collaboration with ADVANCE and a research team comprised of graduate students and faculty focusing on disabilities studies, Rackham published the first-in-the-nation study, entitled “[Rackham Graduate Students with Disabilities Needs Assessment Study](#)” (U-M IRB HUM00176376), resulting in the subsequent publication of “Graduate Students with Disabilities: A Case Study” in *A Practitioner’s Guide to Supporting Graduate and Professional Students* (Routledge Press, 2022).

Additionally, Rackham partnered with the National Center for Institutional Diversity (NCID) to fund [Anti-Racism Research Fellowships for Graduate Students](#). In its first year, 21 anti-racism graduate student research fellows were awarded. Now in its second year, the fellowship program has grown through an additional partnership with the Ford School’s Center for Racial Justice.

Finally, motivated by Rackham’s ongoing commitment to holistic admissions practices in order to recruit, admit, and foster the success of students in Ph.D. programs at U-M, [Rackham announced that it will discontinue the use of the Graduate Record Examination \(GRE\)](#) general test in doctoral admissions, beginning with the 2022–2023 admissions cycle.

[Staff Climate & Culture Initiatives](#)

Rackham is committed to creating a workplace where all of its staff feel valued, included, and a strong sense of belonging. To achieve this goal, the graduate school cultivates a culture of trust, integrity, transparency, accountability, and respect.

Prior to the launch of the U-M Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’s (ODEI) DEI 1.0, Rackham partnered with the ADVANCE Program on campus to conduct a staff climate assessment in 2016. This early climate survey helped inform many of the staff DEI initiatives implemented between 2017 and 2022.

Rackham again partnered with the ADVANCE Program to conduct a second climate assessment during Fall 2020 in order to assess improvements in the way that graduate school staff experienced their workplace climate and culture, by comparing survey results of 2016 with the results of the 2020 survey when identical items were asked in both surveys.

According to the ADVANCE report, on the whole, Rackham saw significant improvements in the way staff experienced their workplace climate.

One action contributing to the improved climate was the creation of the Rackham Inclusive Spaces Committee, which was instituted to promote inclusive and universal design principles in order to establish more welcoming and inclusive physical spaces and environments to enhance accessibility, team-building, and collaboration across Rackham units.

Similarly, many of the DEI action items implemented over the course of DEI 1.0 were developed and initiated by Rackham's SALT team, including efforts to formalize the annual campus wide celebration of Juneteenth.

Beginning with a presentation by SALT during Rackham's monthly Staff Forum in 2020, designed to educate graduate school staff about the history of Juneteenth, Rackham enhanced its previous celebration by partnering with various campus units and the Ann Arbor Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to establish the first campus wide observation of [Juneteenth](#) in 2021.

Subsequently, the U-M Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI) within ODEI has now begun to lead the planning for this important annual celebration for the campus and border Ann Arbor communities.

Faculty Engagement & Partnership Initiatives

Rackham understands the importance of the graduate faculty for cultivating and maintaining diverse and inclusive climates and cultures within graduate programs.

However, traditional tenure-track faculty do not have their tenure homes within Rackham; as a result, the graduate school has limited opportunities to directly support faculty scholarship, teaching, and research. Nevertheless, Rackham has developed programs which support inclusive pedagogy and mentoring, such as Rackham's [Faculty Committee on Mentoring \(MORE\)](#) as well as the [Faculty Allies for Diversity in Education](#) program.

Faculty Allies serve as key contacts for DEI issues in graduate education within their respective departments—participating in DEI workshops, mentoring graduate students, and playing a vital role in raising awareness and marshaling resources to address issues of inclusion and climate within their programs.

Rackham successfully expanded the Faculty Allies program over the course of DEI 1.0. Since 2017, the graduate school has increased the number of departments and graduate programs participating from 81 to 107. In addition, the number of faculty members serving as allies from 89 to 139. This represents an increase of more than 50% over the last five (5) years.

Finally, during the final three years of DEI 1.0, Rackham provided a total of \$992,043 for Faculty Allies grants and \$306,650 for complementary Student Allies grants to 113 Rackham and non-Rackham graduate programs.

Alumni Engagement & Partnership Initiatives

In an effort to engage and empower all of its constituencies, Rackham has intentionally partnered with its alumni to advance DEI and accessibility efforts through the graduate education community on campus.

Beginning with the creation of RACDAC in 2018, Rackham has learned a great deal from its alumni members about the historical trajectory of efforts to increase diversity and promote inclusion at U-M, leading to the establishment of online Rackham alumni communities and efforts to provide alumni mentoring to current Rackham students.

In addition, the growth in interest on behalf of our alumni has led to the recent creation of the [Rackham Alumni Diversity Council \(RADC\)](#), which brings together alumni and friends of the graduate school to share their knowledge, perspective, and connections to develop, promote, and sustain DEI efforts across Rackham's local, national, and global communities through strategic action.

For example, in 2021, the [Alumni M-Pact Certificate Program](#) welcomed its inaugural cohort of 61 U-M alumni participants, who received their degrees in years spanning from 1969 to 2021. Program participants engaged in readings, videos, and discussions around race and other areas of diversity. Additionally, cohort members developed their own DEI projects with support and guidance through small group conversations and individually matched coaches.