

Propelling Recent Alumni to Graduate Studies – PRAGS

Executive Summary: The program fosters graduate student enrollment at Purdue University Fort Wayne (PFW) by offering recent graduates a compelling financial incentive – the waiving of tuition for up to 9 credit hours of graduate coursework. This targeted initiative addresses a critical need to fill under-enrolled programs while unlocking advanced educational opportunities for high-potential alumni. The program leverages existing program structures and offers distinct advantages over the current accelerated degree model, ensuring cost-effectiveness and student commitment.

Rationale:

- **Strategic Enrollment Growth:** PFW graduate programs have significant potential for increased enrollment. The program strategically incentivizes participation, filling seats without costly external recruitment efforts.
- **Alumni Engagement:** Ascend fosters continued connections with PFW, strengthening alumni loyalty and promoting a culture of lifelong learning.
- **Financial Accessibility:** By removing initial financial barriers, the program allows recent graduates to explore graduate studies without significant upfront costs, potentially igniting promising academic and professional trajectories.

Program Details:

- **Eligibility:** Open to PFW bachelor degree graduates within five years of graduation.
- **Benefits:** Up to 3 tuition-waived credit hours per semester, for a maximum of 9 credits (3 semesters). Alumni who applied graduate credits during their PFW undergraduate studies (typically as part of 4+1 programs) will be able to participate in the program. However, those credits will be counted toward the PRAGS program benefits.
- **Application Process:** Standard graduate program admission criteria apply.
- **Enrollment Restrictions:** Students of the program are expected to 1) enroll in a minimum of six credits per semester; and 2) maintain continuous enrollment every fall and spring (the College Dean may waive this condition for students with documented extenuating circumstances).

Program Limitations:

- PRAGS is available ONLY for the following graduate programs:
 - MSE Electrical, Computer and Systems
 - MSE Mechanical Engineering
 - MS Organizational Leadership
 - MS Technology

Financial Considerations:

- While seemingly a revenue loss, PRAGS attracts students not typically recruited, expanding the overall student body and generating future tuition revenue.
- Compared to existing accelerated programs, PRAGS is more cost effective, as fewer tuition waivers are offered over a longer timeframe.

Unique Competitive Advantage:

- Unlike accelerated programs, PRAGS avoids compressing undergraduate and graduate studies, allowing students to focus on each level for optimal learning.
- By requiring full tuition payment after initial tuition waivers, PRAGS fosters greater student investment and program completion.

Conclusion: PRAGS offers a strategic, cost-effective, and student-centric approach to boost graduate enrollment at PFW. By removing early financial hurdles and fostering program

commitment, PRAGS empowers recent graduates to pursue advanced degrees, enriching their educational journeys and enhancing the university's academic vibrancy.