

Great Conversations That Matter: Overview of a Strategic Plan for Claremont Graduate University



Great Conversations That Matter

“Great conversations that matter” is a metaphor for something special about teaching and research at Claremont Graduate University.

Our graduate-only education takes place through small classes and seminars and close scholarly relationships between students and faculty. Our research aspires to advance knowledge and also to do something more: to convene leaders and scholars to tackle the most important problems facing our region and our world.

Our teaching and research will reach across the disciplines and out into the world, enabling the very best professors and graduate students to take topics and fields in new and fruitful directions. We will define our research agenda, carry out our research, and consider its implications with diverse partners from government, business, and civil society. In both teaching and research, our trademark will be interchanges of ideas— inclusive of diverse points of view and attentive to evidence—that catalyze new ways to address tomorrow’s challenges.

In other words...great conversations that matter.

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Our Heritage and Calling

Claremont Graduate University possesses many strengths and a wonderful legacy. Founded in 1925, CGU is America's only graduate-only, research-extensive university. Our eight graduate schools provide Ph.D.s and masters degrees to about 2200 students in 22 subjects. The CGU community is characterized by unusual diversity, collegiality, and environmental beauty. CGU is one of the seven Claremont Colleges, a consortium built on the Oxford model that *The Fiske Guide* has called "the most extraordinary assemblage of educational excellence in the nation." Over a hundred professors from the other Claremont Colleges and from the Claremont School of Theology collaborate in our teaching and research. Our location in Southern California, the most ethnically diverse region in the United States, and alongside one of the fastest-growing areas, the Inland Empire, is a living laboratory for the study of important social trends, problems, and possibilities.

Like other graduate institutions, Claremont Graduate University educates scholars, experts, and leaders and creates new knowledge through research. But CGU is nimble and free from many of the constraints faced by huge research universities. CGU can take distinctive approaches that produce an outsized impact on the world. We want people to ask, "How do they do that, they're so small?"

Our tradition says, "Follow the problem." This means that our research and teaching transcend academic boundaries. Our University disregards artificial divides between theory and application. Intellectual audacity has not been beaten out of our faculty and students. We believe that academic rigor and addressing big questions can go together.

CGU's first president, James Blaisdell, once said, "The center of a college is in great conversation, and out of the talk of college life springs everything else." Our tradition values talking and listening across the disciplines, and taking on the big issues of our times. In our seminar rooms and through our research, our University catalyzes **great conversations that matter**.

The expression "great conversations that matter" tries to capture what is special about our vision of graduate education and pathbreaking research.

- We **educate** superb economists and artists, mathematicians and managers—to name a few—who can engage in great conversations that matter. Conversations that are civil and humane, and value diversity in many dimensions. Conversations that aim to foster a better world. We want our graduates to have expertise, to appreciate diverse perspectives, to reframe problems, to be able to work in teams. We hope

they care about more than financial success and social standing.

What we teach, and how, derives from these objectives. Our long-standing model is students-as-apprentices – meaning, really, students-as-colleagues. We have pioneered transdisciplinary doctoral courses and “the Claremont Conversation for the 21st Century,” an online tool for building intellectual community.

- We also want our **research** to create great conversations that matter. Through a combination of bold yet grounded research and the convening of leaders from academia, business, government, and communities, Claremont Graduate University will work with others to generate new thinking on some of the hardest problems facing our region and our world.

Be “Claremont-like.” Follow the problem. Convene great conversations that matter. Each of the eight schools of Claremont Graduate University has developed a strategy that emphasizes these themes.

- The Drucker School is carrying forward the legacy of Peter Drucker to address what it calls “the managerial equivalent of global warming,” namely the widespread shortfalls in leadership, ethics, and management in the United States and elsewhere.
- The School of Educational Studies emphasizes both social justice and accountability as it educates scholar-activists to transform public education for the next generation.
- The School of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences is a national leader in evaluation, studying issues from education to health care, from individual well-being to civic engagement.
- The School of Religion wants each student to learn what it means to be inside a community of faith and also outside that community. We hope that the insider-outsider perspective can promote religious understanding and tolerance, one of the gravest challenges facing our world.
- The School of Politics and Economics creates unusual synergies across those two fields to bring fresh perspectives to issues such as religion and politics; the “predictive modeling” of crisis points in the world; trust, collaboration, and “moral markets”; and globalization.
- The School of Information Systems and Technology explores the interfaces between people, information technology, and social progress. The Kay Center for E-Health is exploring how technology can improve the quality, reduce the

- risks, and lower the costs of health care, especially for the disabled.
- In “theoretical” work in the humanities, disciplinary silos tend to preclude richer understandings of times and places, which we hope our School of Arts and Humanities’ approach can stimulate. Our world needs the knowledge, sensitivities, and skills of the arts and humanities. Yet, few graduate schools enable their students to engage with problems that reach beyond disciplinary boundaries out to real-world problems and organizations. Ours does.
 - The School of Mathematical Sciences has positioned itself to advance areas of national need: computational biology, computational science, and industrial applied mathematics. It has pioneered “clinics,” where students and professors work for businesses or government agencies on problems of practical importance and theoretical interest. The School spearheads the new Claremont Center for the Mathematical Sciences, which spans all seven of the Claremont Colleges.
 - CGU is creating a new School of Community and Global Health, which will address the behavioral and well-being aspects of some of tomorrow’s most challenging health issues.

In each of these areas, we will focus on distinctive programs of intellectual value and practical importance, rather than generic degrees in the standard disciplines. Fortunately, greater success will not require dramatic departures from our past, but an even greater focus on what makes us special.

Through our strategic planning we have reminded ourselves that we share the audacious goals of providing leadership in graduate education and making a difference on some of the region’s and the world’s most important problems. We have learned that we have the potential to do both. That exciting a potential is on the table.

Our Strategic Goals

Goal 1. Leadership in Graduate Education

CGU will be known as a place that provides leadership in three areas: the Ph.D., management, and graduate study in education. Other universities will emulate our syllabi, seminars, and online presence. Our graduates will be sought as well-prepared thought leaders and creative practitioners, who care more about making a difference than about money and status.

Intimate, Transdisciplinary, and Engaged with the World

Other graduate schools are criticized for being impersonal, narrow, and divorced from the world. In contrast, the CGU experience is intimate, transdisciplinary, and engaged with the world.

Our Ph.D. students often cross disciplinary boundaries and emphasize applications to the world outside the university. All doctoral students are required to take a “transdisciplinary course.” They learn how transdisciplinary approaches can pay off both in the real world and also in advancing knowledge within the disciplines. CGU’s “Preparing Future Faculty” program addresses many critiques of the professional development of Ph.D. students.

CGU’s Peter F. Drucker and Masatoshi Ito School of Management has answers to critiques of business schools. The Drucker School emphasizes what the father of modern management, Peter Drucker, espoused: values, the long term, a focus on the customer, putting people at the center, the social sector, and the knowledge economy. The faculty is distinguished by its research, and much of this research centers on fundamental issues in leadership and the practice of management. True, students at the Drucker School master finance, accounting, marketing, and the usual skills of a first-rate school of management. But at Drucker they take a bigger, longer-term look. Because they learn skills from business and the non-profit sector, even from government, they are prepared to create new institutional arrangements to deal with tomorrow’s challenges.

Our School of Educational Studies combines a passion for social justice with an insistence on accountability. It’s not either-or here, but both-and. Students and faculty work on today and tomorrow’s most important educational issues. They meld disciplines and experience diversity. Most of our Ph.D. students are scholar-practitioners, whose degree programs are tailor-made to their abilities and aspirations. Around the United States, teacher training is criticized for being uninterested in the links between what teachers learn and experience and what the results eventually are for

students. In contrast, CGU's Teacher Education Program focuses on the links between what happens here and what results out there.

In addition, CGU has experimented with exciting, cross-cutting graduate degrees. Here are a few examples:

- Financial Engineering, across the School of Mathematical Sciences and the Drucker School.
- Public Policy and Evaluation, across the School of Politics and Economics and the School of Behavioral and Organizational Studies.
- Arts and Cultural Management, across the Drucker School and the School of Arts and Humanities.
- Ethics and Religion, across the School of Arts and Humanities, the School of Religion, and the Claremont School of Theology.

In areas where graduate education nationally is failing or fragile, CGU is taking approaches that are exactly in the right direction. By deepening and sharing these approaches, we can provide models and inspiration to others. As we move ahead, our educational task is to be *more like us*.

- In our Ph.D. programs, we will emphasize transdisciplinarity and following the problem. We will do more to enable professors and students to work across the customary boundaries of disciplines and Schools. We will organize recruitment, teaching, course requirements, and outreach to bring our distinctiveness to the fore.
- We will focus on "the Drucker difference" in our education of leaders and managers.
- We will enhance scholarship on both social justice and accountability in our School of Educational Studies.

In addition, Claremont Graduate University will be a test site for the application of information and communications technologies designed to enhance intellectual community.

Goal 2. Research on Some of the World's Most Pressing Problems

Claremont Graduate University will be a leader in high-quality, objective research about some of the most important problems facing our region, our country, and our world. We will inspire substantial investment in CGU as a source of transformational, even "game-changing" ideas that offer a substantial return to our society.

Our faculty and graduate students have a history of important research on issues such as combating poverty, fostering community, dealing with immigration, increasing trust, improving understanding across religions and cultures, understanding human well-being, enhancing diversity and inclusion, and more. What we need now is to create major research programs, which can attract large amounts of outside funding to support professors, doctoral students, and research partners.

Our strategic planning has identified four priority areas.

1. Drucker Institute

The Drucker Institute is a new, University-wide endeavor whose mission is to carry forward the legacy of Peter Drucker in new ways to new audiences. It has a full-time director and a full-time assistant director, under the leadership of the Dean of the Drucker School. Among the Institute's activities is a monthly research seminar on leadership. The 25 or so regular participants come from leadership programs at the Drucker School, the School of Educational Studies, and the School of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences—also from other Schools at CGU and from the Claremont Colleges. In this way the Institute is bringing together intellectual resources across the Schools and the Consortium, with the potential for creating new collaboration in research, teaching, and outreach.

The Institute is doing many other things. It awards the Drucker Prize for Nonprofit Innovation. It convenes leaders from business, government, and the nonprofit world to consider major issues. Its distinguished visitors program has already brought to CGU two of the world's most eminent thinkers, Jiro Nonaka and Charles Handy. The Drucker Institute is the hub for a rapidly expanding set of Drucker Societies around the world, which bring international perspectives to the challenges of ethical leadership and effective management.

The Drucker Institute model is worth emulating in other areas at CGU: an endowment, full-time institute leadership; pulling together intellectual resources from across the University and the Claremont Colleges; "converings"; an exciting website; distinguished visitors; and a worldwide network of partners.

2. Transdisciplinary Evaluation Science Center

Also known as the "What Works Institute," this new, university-wide center will leverage the evaluation capabilities of the School of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences and marshal the strengths of the entire University, to provide leaders and managers with proven tools for assessing and sharing "what works where" in dealing with the major challenges of our time.

Evidence matters—and yet so many social programs seem to proceed without effective learning. In a future where partnerships across government, business, and civil society will play ever more central roles in addressing social problems, learning must take place across as well as within the usual organizational boundaries. CGU’s what works initiative will provide new analytical tools, an online clearinghouse, and “convenings” that will help scholars and practitioners extend the reach of reason and evidence in policymaking and social action.

3. Redesigning Public Education

Education has emerged as a priority area in our strategic planning. We believe that America’s system of public education is broken. We contemplate a University-wide effort catalyzed by the School of Educational Studies that will focus CGU’s intellectual resources on the challenges of redesigning public education—from classroom to school system, including public-private partnerships and the radical possibilities enabled by the information and communications revolutions.

4. Community and Global Health

Many of today’s and tomorrow’s health challenges stem from lifestyle choices, including obesity, diabetes, and diseases related to tobacco, alcohol, and drug abuse. Our vision is to help people and communities care for their health in the same way we are coming to care for our environment—something we protect and enhance through individual commitment, community action, and public policy.

With a focus on social, economic, and environmental factors contributing to chronic diseases and the epidemics of the 21st century, our research and training will lead to deeper understandings of health and well-being and to more effective health interventions and societal investments in health.

The new School of Community and Global Health will become the hub of a Claremont-wide effort to improve health and well-being. It will draw on the health-related work at the School of Information Systems and Technology, the evaluation and social science expertise of the School of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences, the policy expertise of the School of Politics and Economics, the capabilities of the School of Educational Studies, the managerial capabilities of the Drucker School, and the biotech savvy of the Keck Graduate Institute of Applied Life Sciences. The result will be nothing less than a new kind of school of public health, which exemplifies CGU’s goals of leadership in graduate education and taking on the most important problems facing our region and our world.

Other Research

Of course there are many other important research endeavors and centers at CGU, and individual professors are always free to pursue their intellectual passions in the ways they see fit. When our strategic planning process has talked of cross-cutting programs, it is never in an exclusive fashion.

A Place to Convene

Our research will not remain only in books, journals, and conference papers. CGU will become known as the convener of leaders from business, government, and civil society. Our “convenings” will have these features:

1. *They will enable hands-on learning and problem-solving ...*
 - Using interactive and experiential learning, including case studies, appreciative inquiry, scenarios, gaming, and simulations.
 - Enabling people to think together in new ways about problems and solutions.
 - Creating the basis for new, action-oriented partnerships.
2. *... among leaders from many sectors ...*
 - Government, business, civil society, and education, including voices not often invited to the table.
3. *... emphasizing new approaches ...*
 - Based on the latest research about “what works where.”
 - Taking into account diversity of many kinds.
 - Considering new designs for policies and institutions, metrics and incentives, from networks of expertise and governance systems.
4. *... with a focus on effective action.*
 - The convenings are not conceived as a one-off activity, but the beginning of learning and problem-solving networks among the participants, eventually extending to a wider universe through virtual communities.

CGU needs a purpose-built venue for convening these great conversations that matter with leaders from government, business, and civil society. Such a structure deserves priority in the University’s strategy for the future.

Structural Challenges

In pursuing these initiatives, Claremont Graduate University faces distinctive challenges.

- Being “graduate-only” means that our economics are more precarious than at universities where graduate schools receive cross-subsidies from undergraduate education.
- We are small, with few faculty members compared with other graduate departments and schools, and this creates challenges of coverage and reputation.
- In the past our metrics have focused on generic inputs and not on distinctive outcomes.
- The status of graduate education within the Claremont Colleges is in flux.

As we move our strategic plan into action, we will address these challenges creatively and practically.

Graduate-Only

In contrast with other research universities, CGU does not have its own undergraduates. Our professors teach only graduate students; faculty at most research universities teach at least half time at the undergraduate level. This means that our faculty can specialize in graduate teaching and at research. But it also means that we do not benefit from the favorable economics of undergraduate instruction. At most universities the revenues generated from college students subsidize graduate teaching and research.

At CGU about three-fifths of our students are studying for the Ph.D. CGU emphasizes the most costly segment of the higher education—the one where no one makes money.

To meet these challenges, most Schools will increase the size of distinctive, high-value masters programs and reduce the size of Ph.D. enrollments, enabling better funding and higher quality.

We will continue to improve recruitment and retention through better enrollment management, a better website, improved marketing, enhanced research and teaching opportunities for graduate students, better financial aid policies, and continuation of the Claremont National Scholarships.

We will create more short courses and executive programs, perhaps with a centralized

place and administration. It is also possible that CGU will provide some courses for undergraduates in Claremont.

We will redefine the role of deans, giving them more help with administrative matters and more time to provide intellectual leadership and fundraising.

We will continue to expand and professionalize CGU's research office and advancement office.

Size

Compared with other research universities, Claremont Graduate University is small. This creates advantages of intimacy and agility. At the same time, it creates challenges of scale and scope. We have to design our strategy to take advantage of our size. Over the medium term we will consider ways to enhance collaboration across our Schools and across the Consortium, grow through expansion or acquisition, and create partnerships where these can enhance our ability to advance knowledge and make a difference in the world.

Our "every-tub-on-its-own-bottom" financial system creates challenges for our small Schools. Most of our Schools are subject to diseconomies of administrative scale and to destabilizing fluctuations ("the law of small numbers"). CGU lacks a consistent policy of providing central services to Schools, leading some Schools to duplicate central services and others to suffer without them. It is opportune now to rethink how our financial and administrative services could better align with the strategies of the Schools and the University.

CGU will expand programs where the prospects are bright for leadership in graduate education and doing important research (and perhaps restructure or eliminate programs without such prospects). In some cases, expansion will require prior investment (as well as fundraising), and CGU's economic system will include investment budgets based on strategic plans.

CGU will consider ways to get scale through collaboration across Schools. Through better academic planning, better advising, and new incentives, we should expand courses where demand is strong and create courses that might serve the needs of many Schools simultaneously.

Thus, we will reexamine "CGU economics" to insure optimal levels of collaboration, scale, services, and innovation. We will accompany this with strategic planning in each of our central services.

Transdisciplinary Work in a Disciplinary Environment

Our goal is to enable graduate students and faculty to transcend the constraints of disciplines and departments and schools, while still recognizing the value of expertise within a traditional field. This is not easy, even with the best of wills.

We need to identify opportunities for curricular innovations that will pay off across the various Schools and departments. It may be desirable to have more University Professors, who epitomize our transdisciplinary aspirations and work fluidly across the Schools. And as mentioned earlier, we aspire to university-wide research institutes and centers. We need to think carefully about the administrative models for these various initiatives. Some might be led by particular Schools, as the Drucker Institute. Others may better be placed under the Provost's office.

From Inputs to Outcomes

We want to make sure we measure our progress in appropriate ways, supplementing the usual generic measures of educational inputs to track our longer-term outcomes and contributions. Of course, we will continue with our current scorecards, which measure inputs such as the quality of entering students, research funding, budgets, faculty workloads, and so forth. By adding new metrics for long-term, distinctively CGU-like outcomes, we will insure that our attention is focused on what makes our University great.

Seven categories of measures have emerged from a faculty study group led by the Provost.

Our alumni's contributions to society. How many of our alumni are in leadership positions in academia, public or private sectors, and non-profit organizations? How has their work changed the world?

The impact of our research. What publications by CGU faculty have changed the academic fields with groundbreaking theories or findings? What projects by CGU faculty have contributed to society—ethically, politically, economically, aesthetically, financially or technologically?

Our distinctive transdisciplinary education. What have our students learned that transcend the traditional fields? How do CGU faculty members get involved in educating our students in the transdisciplinary context, by participation in teaching transdisciplinary courses, service on dissertation committees of other fields, and conducting joint research with students outside of the departmental origin? How are our courses and delivery techniques influencing graduate education at other universities?

The effectiveness of conversations that matter. Because of our inherent structure of being small and interactive, “great conversations” are central to our learning process. How do our conversations lead to intellectual community and better learning and research? How satisfied are students and faculty with the intellectual community at CGU?

Collective wellbeing characterized by diversity, inclusion, and professionalism. How diverse are, with reference to our strategic objectives of reaching out to our society and the world? How professional are we with each other and at our work? Would students, faculty, and staff recommend CGU to their friends?

Financial vitality. How successful are we in building a financial base that guarantees our independence?

Collaboration with the Claremont Colleges. How well are we forging a Claremont-wide intellectual community that makes important contributions to teaching, research, and service?

The Claremont Colleges

For many years, Claremont Graduate University (or in an earlier guise, the Claremont Graduate School) was the only institution in the Consortium offering graduate education. In 1997, the Keck Graduate Institute for the Applied Life Sciences became the seventh Claremont College. It, too, is graduate-only, specializing in masters degrees for the biotechnology industry. At the same time CGU split off administratively from the Claremont University Consortium, becoming one of the seven Claremont Colleges instead of the combined administrative hub and graduate school.

In 2007, Claremont McKenna College announced the creation of a masters program in finance, the first graduate endeavor by one of the undergraduate colleges. This led to considerable reflection and rethinking. It was eventually accepted that CGU does not possess a monopoly on graduate education in Claremont. Now the Claremont Colleges are rethinking collaboration in graduate education. A study led by the seven presidents is examining where collaboration has been most successful—and why. One goal is to exploit new opportunities for high-value collaboration in graduate education.

Collaboration in other areas is crucial. One example is the library. CGU is working with the other colleges to redesign our shared library system, making Honnold-Mudd Library a vibrant place for intellectual collaboration and a portal to a world of digital and other knowledge.

Another example of collaboration is the new Consortium-wide Claremont Center for the Mathematical Sciences, created in January 2008 under the leadership of CGU’s School of

Mathematical Sciences.

It is hoped that the rethinking of collaboration will lead to a new fundraising possibilities on behalf of all the Claremont Colleges.

First Cut on Fundraising Needs

Focus, Structures, Fundraising

Claremont Graduate University is a small, graduate-only university with a transdisciplinary, applied flavor, with strong but perhaps insufficiently developed “brand names,” part of a unique educational consortium, and located in a region that is a living laboratory for the study of broad social trends and possibilities.

CGU has the potential to

1. provide leadership in graduate education and
2. do cutting-edge research on some of the world’s most important problems.

We have to be “more like us,” but with even loftier goals, even greater collaboration, and many more resources. We need to focus on what we do distinctively well—on our transdisciplinary education and on research that addresses the big issues facing our society. Each of our Schools has a strong case to make in both of these dimensions.

With these strategic goals in mind, CGU can move forward to focusing our programs, improving our administrative and economic structures, and raising the funds necessary for a world-class, world-changing endeavor.

Here is a first cut at fundraising priorities.

University-wide Endeavors

A place to convene. A preliminary, conceptual plan posits a unique conference center, a dining area, and “studios” for meetings and group work.

Graduate student housing naming gift. The new housing complex will be ready for occupancy for the fall semester of 2008.

Other aspects of the physical plan. Includes expanded and improved buildings, green areas, and underground parking.

Greater support for transdisciplinary education.

Four priority areas for research.

1. Drucker Institute. Research and teaching that carries forward the Drucker legacy to new audiences in new ways. Linking Drucker Societies around the world.
2. What Works Center. Advancing evaluation science through research, an information clearinghouse, and networks of academics and practitioners.

3. Redesigning Public Education. Applying the capabilities of the School of Educational Studies and many other parts of CGU to the challenges of transforming public education.
4. Community and Global Health. Using the new School of Community and Global Health to focus Claremont-wide attention on the chronic diseases of lifestyle.

School-level Endeavors

Four chairs in religion (Catholic, Coptic, Indic, Jewish).

Endowment for an expanded program in public policy (School of Politics and Economics).

Naming gifts for the School of Educational Studies, the School of Religion, the School of Arts and Humanities, the School of Politics and Economics, the Claremont Center for the Mathematical Sciences, the School of Information Systems and Technology, and the School of Community and Global Health.

Expanded endowment for the Drucker School of Management.