



rnl national conference
leading ai innovation
empowering higher education



Building Graduate Pathways Through Bachelor-to-Master's Agreements

Malia Roberts, PhD, Senior Director, Graduate College Enrollment
Western Michigan University



Topics for Discussion

1. Hello! My Name is Malia Roberts! 🙌
2. About WMU
3. About 4+1 bachelor-to master's degrees & pathways
4. Steps for developing 4+1 agreements & examples
5. Issues we encountered
6. Resources & expectations
7. Future of 4+1 pathways & lessons learned



Western Michigan University

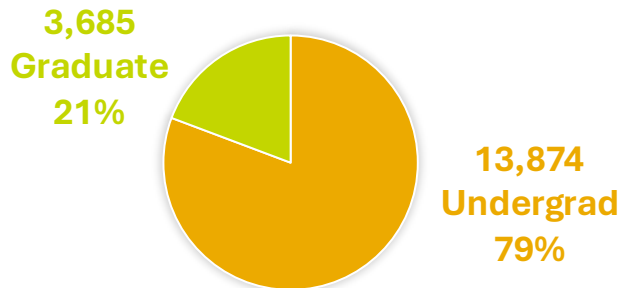


- **Location**
Kalamazoo, Michigan
- **Carnegie Classification**
Doctoral Universities-High Research Activity
- **Accreditation**
Higher Learning Commission
- **Enrollment Fall 2023**

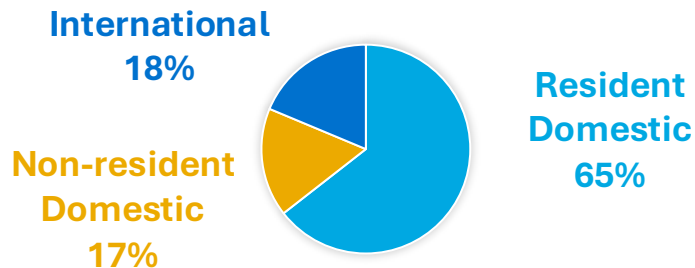
Total	17,559
Graduate	3,685

Western Michigan University Demographics

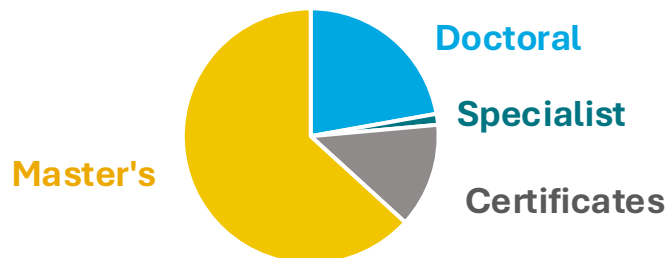
WMU STUDENTS 17,559



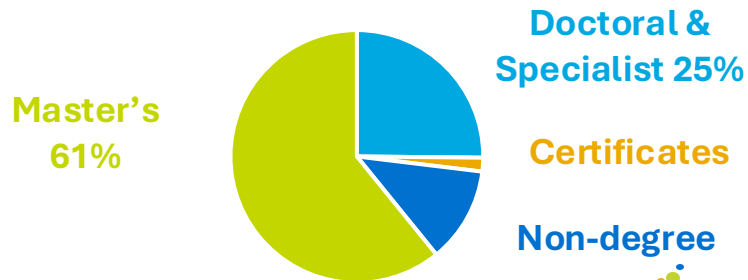
GRAD ENROLLMENT BY
RESIDENCY



+150 GRADUATE PROGRAMS



ENROLLMENT BY DEGREE TYPE



Benefits 4+1 Bachelor-to-Master's Degrees



Graduate Pathway

Promotes entry into graduate education



Affordability

Reduces cost of earning a graduate degree



Time

Reduces time to degree



Budget-neutral

Relies on existing resources

WMU 4+1 Liberal Arts College Partners

- Albion College
- Aquinas College
- Hope College
- Kalamazoo College



WMU 4+1 Pathways

Albion College

Comparative
Religion
Political
Science

Aquinas College

Applied Econ.
Chemistry
History
Political Science

Hope College

Communications

Kalamazoo College

Applied Econ.
Comparative Religion
Edu. Foundations
Political Science



Steps for Developing 4+1 Agreement

PREPARE

- Review reports to understand where your grad students earned their bachelor's degree
- Establish support for 4+1 partnerships, including buy-in from Provost, shared governance partners

1

REVIEW LIBERAL ARTS INSTITUTIONS' ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO

- Review undergrad & grad programs (do not compete with their grad offerings)
- Search for undergrad programs that would naturally feed into your master-level programs
- Utilize existing relationships

2

DISCUSS POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH WMU GRAD DIRECTOR

- Discuss benefits of developing 4+1 pathway, including establishing a pipeline with a respected liberal arts institution
- Ask that they review the liberal arts program website to determine feasibility of a partnership

Steps for Developing 4+1 Agreement

PREPARE

- Review reports to understand where your grad students earned their bachelor's degree
- Establish support for 4+1 partnerships, including buy-in from Provost, shared governance partners

1

REVIEW LIBERAL ARTS INSTITUTIONS' ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO

- Review undergrad & grad programs (do not compete with their grad offerings)
- Search for undergrad programs that would naturally feed into your master-level programs
- Utilize existing relationships

2

DISCUSS POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH WMU GRAD DIRECTOR

- Discuss benefits of developing 4+1 pathway, including establishing a pipeline with a respected liberal arts institution
- Ask that they review the liberal arts program website to determine feasibility of a partnership

Steps for Developing 4+1 Agreement

PREPARE

- Review reports to understand where your grad students earned their bachelor's degree
- Establish support for 4+1 partnerships, including buy-in from Provost, shared governance partners

1

REVIEW LIBERAL ARTS INSTITUTIONS' ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO

- Review undergrad & grad programs (do not compete with their grad offerings)
- Search for undergrad programs that would naturally feed into your master-level programs
- Utilize existing relationships

2

DISCUSS POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH WMU GRAD DIRECTOR

- Discuss benefits of developing 4+1 pathway, including establishing a pipeline with a respected liberal arts institution
- Ask that they review the liberal arts program website to determine feasibility of a partnership

Steps for Developing 4+1 Agreement

PREPARE

- Review reports to understand where your grad students earned their bachelor's degree
- Establish support for 4+1 partnerships, including buy-in from Provost, shared governance partners

1

REVIEW LIBERAL ARTS INSTITUTIONS' ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO

- Review undergrad & grad programs (do not compete with their grad offerings)
- Search for undergrad programs that would naturally feed into your master-level programs
- Utilize existing relationships

2

DISCUSS POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH WMU GRAD DIRECTOR

- Discuss benefits of developing 4+1 pathway, including establishing a pipeline with a respected liberal arts institution
- Ask that they review the liberal arts program website to determine feasibility of a partnership

Steps for Developing 4+1 Agreement

3

OFFER TO HOST AN EXPLORATORY MEETING

- Share benefits for partnership
 - Saves students time & money
 - Promotes grad ed
- Discuss how grad ed can complement undergrad programs
- Identify next steps

4

CREATE 4+1 PROGRAM PATHWAY AGREEMENT

- Faculty determine class list to satisfy 6 transfer credits + 6 credits-by-exam
- Create dept. MOU to accommodate future curriculum changes
- Include signatures from academic college, academic dept., grad dean

5

CREATE 4+1 INSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT

- Seek guidance of general counsel to develop institutional MOU
- Include signatures from both institution's president and provost, and grad dean
- Celebrate with signing ceremony at liberal arts college

Steps for Developing 4+1 Agreement

3

OFFER TO HOST AN EXPLORATORY MEETING

- Share benefits for partnership
 - Saves students time & money
 - Promotes grad ed
- Discuss how grad ed can complement undergrad programs
- Identify next steps

4

CREATE 4+1 PROGRAM PATHWAY AGREEMENT

- Faculty determine class list to satisfy 6 transfer credits + 6 credits-by-exam
- Create dept. MOU to accommodate future curriculum changes
- Include signatures from academic college, academic dept., grad dean

5

CREATE 4+1 INSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT

- Seek guidance of general counsel to develop institutional MOU
- Include signatures from both institution's president and provost, and grad dean
- Celebrate with signing ceremony at liberal arts college

Steps for Developing 4+1 Agreement

3

OFFER TO HOST AN EXPLORATORY MEETING

- Share benefits for partnership
 - Saves students time & money
 - Promotes grad ed
- Discuss how grad ed can complement undergrad programs
- Identify next steps

4

CREATE 4+1 PROGRAM PATHWAY AGREEMENT

- Faculty determine class list to satisfy 6 transfer credits + 6 credits-by-exam
- Create dept. MOU to accommodate future curriculum changes
- Include signatures from academic college, academic dept., grad dean

5

CREATE 4+1 INSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT

- Seek guidance of general counsel to develop institutional MOU
- Include signatures from both institution's president and provost, and grad dean
- Celebrate with signing ceremony at liberal arts college

6 Transferable Credits



Eligible Hope College Courses

Transferable Credits

Up to 6 credits, B grade or better

- COMM 320 – Family Communication
- COMM 330 – Organizational Communication
- COMM 335 – Leadership Skills & Perspectives
- COMM 360 – The Art & Science of Persuasion
- COMM 371 – Intercultural Communication
- COMM 372 – Gender Communication

6 Credits-by-Examination

H Eligible Hope College Courses

Credits-by-Examination

Up to 6 credits, based on evaluation of final deliverable(s) by faculty

- COMM 399 – Communication Internship
- COMM 460 – Communication Theory
- COMM 463 – Rhetorical Theory
- COMM 470 – Cultural Communication Theory

Assessment of Credit-by-Examination



Eligible Hope College Courses

Examples of deliverable(s) include final writing project(s) from:

- Senior thesis
- Research projects/experiences
- Internship
- Upper-level subject courses

4+1 Admission Requirements



Hope College 4+1 Admission Requirements

- WMU graduate application;
- Undergraduate minimum GPA of 3.0;
- Undergraduate transcript;
- Resume or curriculum vitae (CV); and
- Written statement of academic & personal interest

Graduate admission requirements are the same for all prospective grad students, regardless of a 4+1 pathway

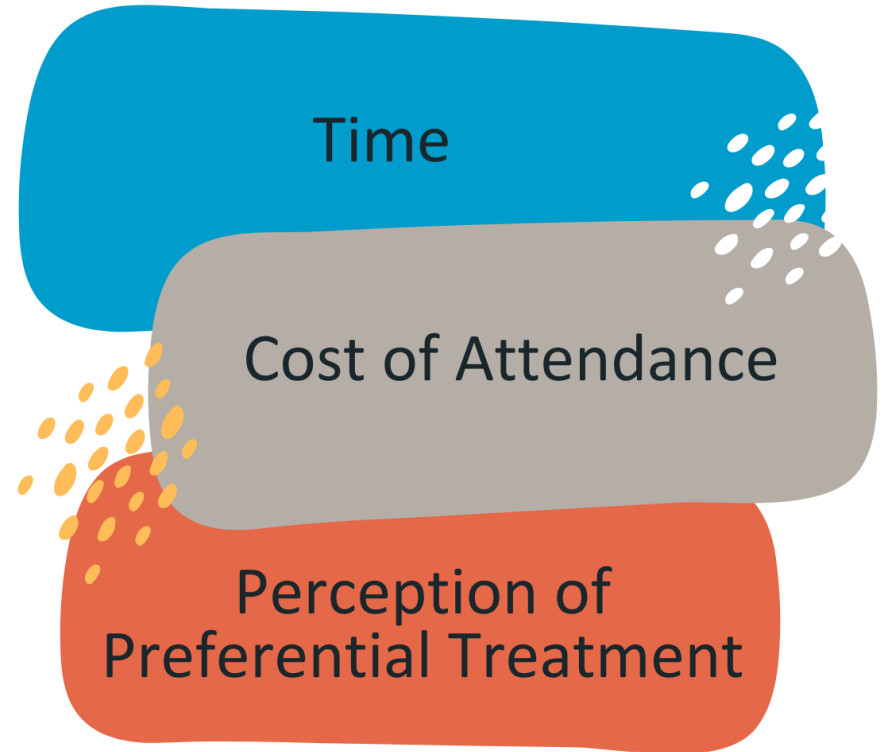
4+1 Program Issues/Concerns

Faculty time:

- Developing partnership
- Reviewing curriculum
- Accepting other institution's credits

Tuition differential

4+1 Option for WMU students



Expectations for Liberal Arts Department

Active Promotion

- Relies heavily on active promotion by liberal arts college and faculty

Identify Applicants

- Expects faculty to be able to identify applicants

Remain Current

- Depends on faculty advisors to be current on 4+1 pathway processes

WMU Resources Required

WMU Grad College
has no budget for
4+1 partnerships



WMU Graduate Program Director assumes responsibility for:


- Responding to inquiries
- Processing application, admission decisions
- Providing initial advising, guidance on university policies
- Handling university-required forms, processes

WMU department faculty review coursework


WMU Funding of 4+1 Students



Students are responsible for securing their own financial resources



Departments decide whether to include these students in their GA budget



Students are encouraged to apply for scholarships and are guided to resources

Future of WMU 4+1 Pathways



WMU Lessons Learned



How do I identify partners?

- Leverage existing relationships
- Utilize institutional reports to identify where your graduate students earned their bachelor's degree



How do I track 4+1 students?

- Use a Banner attribute or application fee waiver code



How do we set ourselves up for success?

- Maintain open channels of communication
- Establish annual check-in



Utilize existing processes.

- Moved to Prior Learning Assessment

Thank You for Attending



Malia Roberts, PhD

Malia.Roberts@wmich.edu
Senior Director, Graduate College Enrollment
Western Michigan University



All material in this presentation, including text and images, is the property of RNL. Permission is required to reproduce information.

