

**Graduate & Professional  
Student  
Community Center Proposal**

**Presented to Chancellor Katehi**

**May 2012**

**Chancellor's Graduate and Professional Advisory Board**

## **Graduate & Professional Student Center Proposal**

### **Statement of Need**

A centralized resource center dedicated to serving the needs of graduate and professional students is a hallmark of top tier universities. Such a center at UC Davis would provide the facilities and community space to ensure academic and social success of its graduate students.

Worldwide, the best universities attract premier students by offering them the best resources and chances to succeed. National examples of higher education institutions that offer a centralized graduate student center include, but are not limited to: Stanford University, Northwestern University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, New York University, University of Michigan, and Pennsylvania State University. Within the University of California system, San Francisco, Irvine, Los Angeles, Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara have centers dedicated to bettering the graduate student experience both academically and socially.

The fundamental principles in such community buildings are based upon the recognition that (a) graduate and professional students need opportunities to build community and connect with students outside their discipline, (b) these students need to have easy access to various resources to support their transition and experience in graduate and professional school, and (c) these students need a centralized physical location where they can go to study, and foster social interactions.

The need for a dedicated and centralized graduate and professional student center on the UC Davis campus is obvious. In 2012 UC Davis enrolled approximately 7500 graduate and professional students. Further, the 2020 Initiative of the Chancellor projects significant future growth of this student body. In contrast to the undergraduate students, the graduate and professional student population is very diverse and therefore has a wide variety of specific needs but also many common needs. A frequent complaint of graduate and professional students is the "lack of community" on campus. Having a graduate and professional student center would allow students to meet, mix, interact, socialize, and network with fellow student and thus create a vibrant graduate and professional student community. It would also be a great opportunity to streamline and centralize graduate and professional student support services.

This idea is not new, In 2003 Dr. Sheri Tatsch along with a group of students and members of the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) produced a report outlining the need for a Graduate Student Center. This report (see attachment) details specific needs of graduate students in a centralized space. When the referendum for the

Student Community Center was proposed, graduate students voted not to be part of the center. Hesitation to join was based mainly upon the need and desire to have our *own* space.

Currently, given the UC Davis 2020 Initiative and an ever expanding student population, it is important to have resources in place for future generations of students. Undergraduates are well served with the Memorial Union, the Silo, and the new Student Community Center. Graduate and professional students also need to be prepared for the incoming increase in student population. While we are a University that puts much emphasis on interdisciplinary research, there is relatively little communication between students across disciplines and graduate groups. This is due in part to the lack of common areas devoted specifically to serving graduate students. Most graduate and professional students spend much of their time on campus isolated in their labs or specific schools. This current environment does not foster a connected and open graduate community. We believe that an exceptional graduate and professional experience will foster a community of alumni who will donate to UC Davis in the future.

With international student community comprising a very sizable share of the graduate student body at UC Davis the need for a common space is undeniable. The only available unified resource for the international graduate students – SISS (Services for International Students and Scholars) – is an organizational department focused on bureaucratic procedures. It does not serve, nor has the capacity to serve, as a community center for international students. It is not uncommon for international students feel alienated from other students on campus, including their fellow international students. The proposed graduate and professional student center would provide for international students to fully integrate as part of the UC Davis community.

Furthermore, the graduate group structure at Davis encourages dynamic and novel research. However, many graduate students especially those from small or disperse groups lack essential resources like rooms for study sessions, grading, practicing for oral exams, conducting meetings, or even accessing to a computer. A dedicated graduate and professional student center is especially important for graduate students who support their research by being a teaching assistant because they need to maintain professional distance from their undergraduate students.

In addition, a large common area with food and drink services would provide an essential venue for student interactions, gatherings, and events. There are also enormous benefits to be gained by grouping graduate student resources with the Office of Graduate Studies, Internship and Career Center, and the GSA. A centralized resource center would not only streamline graduate student services (thus reducing

time students have to spend going from one office to another), but also make them easier to access and utilize.

Our desire is for a center that is located on campus in a fairly central location. From surveying student needs, the following have been identified as the most important and pressing (in order of importance):

1. Study Rooms
2. Small meeting rooms (also to serve as QE exam practice rooms)
3. Large Multipurpose room
4. Meeting space for graduate and professional student organizations
5. Multipurpose room/large auditorium (hosting events, GSA meetings, lectures, guest speakers, etc.)
6. GSA offices
7. Resource Hub with information pertaining to resources for graduate students
8. Computer Lab
9. Lounge Areas
10. Offices for Community GSRs (SRRRC, LGBTRC, CCC, WRRRC, GSADC)
11. Child play area
12. Space for Internship and Career Center, CAN/CAPS counselor
13. Food and Coffee service area
14. Pub
15. Game Room
16. Community Kitchen
17. Writing tutors

It is unfortunate that UC Davis lacks a space dedicated to graduate and professional students on campus. Graduate and professional students need a dedicated center, not only to consolidate resources and facilitate a campus-wide graduate student community, but also to attract the best students to UC Davis. The Chancellor's Graduate and Professional Student Advisory Board pledges to take a leading role in planning, fundraising, and advocating for the creation of a Graduate and Professional Student Center. We ask for the support of the Chancellor and the administration in bringing this project to fruition.

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May 10, 2012

Chancellor Linda Katehi  
University of California, Davis  
One Shields Avenue  
Davis, CA 95616

Dear Chancellor Katehi;

This letter serves to express my enthusiastic support for graduate and professional students in their efforts to build a Graduate and Professional Student Center. We believe this building will foster a sense of community among vet students and other graduate and professional students. In my opinion, UC Davis needs a space specifically designated for graduate and professional students to grow academically, professionally and to build relationships with other students.

A centralized space for graduate and professional students on campus would serve as:

- A central resource center for all graduate programs and professional schools
- A venue for study groups, meetings, and TA office hours
- An avenue for camaraderie and a sense of community among all graduate and professional students

The UCD School of Veterinary Medicine fully supports the creation of a Graduate and Professional Student Center.

Sincerely,

*Michael D. Lairmore*

Dean  
School of Veterinary Medicine



GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION  
ONE SHIELDS AVENUE  
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616-0000

Dear Chancellor Kaethi,

As part of the continued excellence of the University of California, Davis, I believe that it is crucial to emphasize and support Graduate Student Education. The creation of a Graduate Student Center would help to foster a sense of community amongst Graduate Students that is currently lacking because of the diaspora of students and student services across the campus. A Graduate Student Center would also highlight Graduate Student education on our campus. In support of this concept, the Graduate Student Association passed the following resolution:

"The Graduate Student Association of UC, Davis supports the proposal for pursuing a Graduate Student Community Center. The GSA supports the fundraising and construction of a center to serve and benefit graduate and professional students."

Thank you for your support of Graduate Student education and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Regards,

Katheryn Kolesar  
Chair, GSA

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May 22, 2012

Chancellor Linda Katehi  
University of California, Davis  
One Shields Avenue  
Davis, CA 95616

Dear Chancellor Katehi:

On behalf of the department, I wish to express my wholehearted support for the proposed 'Graduate and Professional Student Center'.

It is my opinion that such a building will significantly enhance the academic and social environment for graduate and professional students on campus. Our campus clearly needs to set aside a venue that is specifically designated for graduate and professional students to foster productive interactions and serve as a resource-center for activities organized by the Graduate Student Association and the Office of Graduate Studies.

As our campus continues to grow and emerge as a premier graduate institution in the nation, the proposed center will go a long way in achieving that goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sashi K. Kunnath".

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Sashi K. Kunnath  
Professor and Department Chair

University of California, Davis

## Graduate Group in Immunology



May 22, 2012,

Chancellor Linda Katehi  
University of California, Davis  
One Shields Avenue  
Davis, CA 95626

Dear Chancellor Katehi:

This letter is regarding my support and excitement for the efforts to build a Graduate and Professional Student Center. As the Chair of the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGPSSA) and the Graduate Student Representative for the Graduate Group in Immunology (GGI) I believe this building will be an essential asset for both of these communities. Having a centralized space for both Black graduate and professional students will foster a community sense, which is strongly needed for the this community here at UC Davis. In addition, the creation of this center would finally provide a centralized space for graduate and professional students from different graduate groups and diverse backgrounds to collaborate, meet and social which is highly needed to build a sense of community here at UC Davis. This sense is community I believe in needed for students to be successful during the time here at UC Davis.

Graduate Students will benefit from this centralized space by serving as:

1. A centralized space to a build community.
2. A place to hold meetings and group functions.
3. A place to interact and collaborate with members of different graduate student groups and create a diverse community.

As the Chair of the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association and Graduate Student Representative for the Graduate Group in Immunology I fully support the creation of a Graduate and Professional Student Center.

Sincerely,

**Marjannie D. Eloi, M.S.**  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Chair  
Black Graduate and Professional Student Association  
Graduate Student Representative  
Immunology Graduate Group