

Chancellor's Graduate and Professional Student Advisory Board
Mentorship Subcommittee Report

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Graduate student mentoring remains a critical issue at UC Davis. Through our research of the various programs and extra-curricular support structures across the University, we have learned of three interrelated issues that lead to problems of student access to sufficient mentoring: while there are many mentoring resources on campus, a. Graduate students generally do not know about them, and b. They are not centralized in one easily accessible place, and c. They are primarily geared toward students with a lack of resources or accountability for mentors (specifically faculty mentors).

When we began this project, we started by exploring some of the main Graduate Student-centered information portals on campus: the Grad Studies website, GradPathways, the GSA website, and various department websites. In particular, we learned that the Grad Studies website did contain many resources geared toward mentoring, but takes much digging through the website to find them. However, most of these resources were unevenly directed at STEM students and/or expect the mentorship in both STEM and HARCS disciplines to look the same, which is not necessarily the case. Additionally, many of these resources, which primarily consist of articles or book chapters, are so detailed and lengthy that students may not take the time to read them. Next, we catalogued mentorship resources from several specific graduate programs to see how departments are handling mentorship (including English, Computer Science, Physics, History, and Chemistry). We found that these are inconsistently implemented and some departments are much better than others at ensuring students have the resources they need. Through our research, we also learned of Graduate Diversity Officer Steve Lee's article, "Mentoring Up: Learning to Manage Your Mentoring Relationships" on how graduate students can work toward being more proactive in their mentoring relationships. Our committee then met with Steve Lee and Teresa Dillinger, Director of GradPathways.

We presented the findings of our research to Steve and Teresa by first addressing the need for a centralized information and regularly scheduled programming. Information and events related to mentoring are most often disseminated via email, sponsored by GradPathways, Grad Studies, and Professors for the Future participants, but the University does not have a dedicated online presence nor office through which mentoring related resources and events are housed. From Steve and Teresa we learned that Grad Studies has attempted to address some of these issues in the past, including sending GradPathways emails directly to students (instead of through Graduate Coordinators), and explained that they have also tried to boost their social media presence while also recognizing that communications cultures vary by department. They also explained that Mentoring is already an active part of Orientation, as well as additional Orientations like the Diversity Orientation. Steve mentioned that both he and Josephine Moreno, Diversity Officer for HARCS post their slides for the events that they run. Nevertheless, the lack of a well-publicized centralized location for mentoring resources remains a problem that needs to be addressed.

Inspired by this conversation, we discussed creating a deliverable, discipline-specific self-mentoring guide. In our discussion, Teresa explained that Queen's University in Canada has developed a program much like we described, called "Grad Maps." These Grad Maps would allow students to know what they should be doing in their professional development goals while continuing to work on their interpersonal

professional relationships. Enthusiastic about this option, we met with Teresa, Elizabeth Lambert (Director of Communications), and Vice Dean Kellie Butler with our committee to figure out next steps for Grad Maps. After these conversations, we have developed the following list of recommendations to improve the quality of and access to mentorship resources.

Proposal:

Taking all of our research and advisements into consideration, the CGPSA Mentorship Subcommittee recommends that the university take two courses of action to address the mentorship gap on the campus of UC Davis: one focused upon faculty in graduate and professional programs, and the other upon the students. In terms of faculty engagement, we recommend that the Office of Graduate Studies form an official body of accountability for Graduate and Professional Program Directors similar in form to the network of Graduate Coordinators and where Program Directors can identify, share, and network mentorship resources to improve the quality of mentorship in each individual program. In tandem with this, we recommend that the already-existing mentorship training programs for faculty be developed and marketed further and that new programs be implemented that focus on improving the skill of faculty mentors and the quality of their mentorship of students in their respective program. As part of this recommendation, we suggest that enrollment and active participation in mentorship workshops, completion of a mentorship training sequence, and consistent evaluation of mentoring ability by the Office of Graduate Studies be a requirement of all faculty as part of the metric for individual tenure and promotion as well as funding for departments. Making such workshops, courses, and evaluations an integral part of tenure/promotion and department will not only encourage more faculty participation, but will raise the quality of each department's mentoring programs and access to/awareness of existing resources to ensure that students receive the mentorship they require to succeed in their program and future careers.

In terms of our student-focused recommendation, we propose the development and distribution of a map-like document similar to the aforementioned Queens University "grad maps." Providing students with a document such as this to assist with self-mentorship and prepare students to advocate for themselves in their own mentorship relationships with faculty will ensure that they have at least some easily accessible information and resources for success in their specific programs, even if the program has not yet implemented the aforementioned tenure/promotion metric. We envision UC Davis Grad Maps to be a concrete, detailed set of guidelines and milestones customizable to each program to ensure that all students receive equal access to the materials they need to succeed without needing to go out of their way to identify or locate materials via word-of-mouth, a Google search, or other inhibiting factors that are currently preventing students from receiving the information they need to complete their programs on time. These maps would ideally be housed both in an easily accessible place on the Grad Studies website and on the website of each individual program or grad group for ease of access. UC Davis Grad Maps would be colorful and engaging, interactive and easy-to-follow, and would provide much detail without being bogged down in specifics so as not to become another manual, article, or book chapter students need to read if they need help or guidance. Creating a deliverable, required by the Office of Graduate Studies to be distributed directly to students either in hard copy at orientation/each program's visiting day, via email as a PDF, or to be housed in an easily accessible place on the Grad Studies website (or all three), would ensure that all students have access to a self-mentorship document that would not serve as a replacement to faculty mentors, but as a supplement, as it will provide students with the knowledge they need to form the right questions and approach their mentors with a conversation.

We also propose the development of required mentor/mentee workshop sessions specifically designed for the UC Davis Graduate Student Orientation. These sessions could be inspired by TA orientation sessions with respect to rules and style. They could also simply be summarized versions of current Mentoring Up/Grad Pathways workshops that have already been developed by the career and internship center. Through these sessions, students would not only learn about the many available resources on

campus, but they would also become aware of their importance and learn how they can best benefit from them. These sessions would also be a great opportunity to walk students through the introduction of mentor/mentee relationships and their importance in determining student success in graduate school.

Timeline:

In light of our meetings with Steve, Teresa, Kellie, and Elizabeth, we recommend that the CGPSA Mentorship Subcommittee remain in place during the next 2-3 years of CGPSA's tenure to assist the Office of Graduate Studies with the development and distribution of UC Davis Grad Maps. Because the development of these documents will be time-intensive (over 2-3 years), we suggest, based on Elizabeth's recommendation, to begin implementation of Grad Maps at the college level, then move to departments/programs and graduate groups.

Following this plan, the 2018-2019 CGPSA Mentorship Subcommittee would work closely with the Office of Graduate Studies and the previously recommended network of Directors of Graduate Study to develop a clear template for the document and create a program-specific trial of the document in the Fall Quarter of 2019. If the results of the trial run are positive, the 2019-2020 CGPSA Mentorship Subcommittee would utilize the template to assist with the creation of the first official round of UC Davis Grad Maps at the college-level, identifying trends and patterns in each college's programs to create one map for every college and collecting the resources and information necessary to develop program-specific Grad Maps the following year. The distribution of this first round of UC Davis Grad Maps would begin in Fall Quarter 2020 at orientation and visiting days for the departments of each college. The 2020-2021 CGPSA Mentorship Subcommittee members would then work with the Office of Graduate Studies and Directors of Graduate Study to develop program-specific documents, using previously gathered research and the universal template as a guide. These documents would be finalized and rolled out at orientation and visiting days by Fall Quarter 2021.

We propose that UC Davis Grad Maps become a regular deliverable to be distributed at orientation events and via email and clearly accessible via the Grad Studies and individual program websites by the end of Spring Quarter 2020, and that faculty mentorship programs become strengthened required during this time. Creating a tangible document will ensure that students have easy access to guidance and resources while the university alters its requirements for tenure and promotion and builds more programs for faculty training and mentorship enhancement.

In the light of the development of new orientation agenda for 2019-2020 academic year, we also propose that a UC Davis Mentee orientation be considered as a part of the 2019 orientation program.