GRADUATE STUDENTS NEED US TOO: BEST PRACTICES FOR ADVISING AND SUPPORTING GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

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JAMIE REYNOLDS HECK
IAN SCHONBERG
SCHERRAYN PHILLIP-GARCIA
ELIZABETH LANGEFELD

Monday, October 21, 2019, 10:30-11:30AM
PAN37: L007/L008
WELCOME!

Overview of Session:

Diversity in Graduate and Professional Student Populations

Adult Learning Theory, Development & Belonging

Panel Members Share Best Practices & Challenges

Q & A with attendees
LEARNING OUTCOMES

Identification of challenges to practice and resolve for working with this student population

Gain knowledge of techniques and strategies utilized by panelists

Engage and network with other professionals from the field
KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Misconception of the graduate learner

Socialization, student-faculty advising relationships, engagement, and peer interaction correlate positively to persistence to degree

Advisors practitioners play an instrumental role in supporting persistence
ADULT LEARNERS

• Online graduate students desire a sense of connection; proactive advising; and an ethic of care, advocacy, and accessibility (Cross, 2018)
• Self-directed, eager to learn, and motivated to achievement task by task, with real-world experience that serves as a foundation of their identity (Knowles, 1974)
• Challenges to persistence: financial independence, full-time employment, dependents, and part-time enrollment (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011)
• A need for belonging (Pontius & Harper, 2006)
• A sense of belonging fosters the attainment of esteem, which is a higher level need that influences confidence, self-worth, and capability to persist (Maslow, 1943)
KEY PRINCIPLES FOR SUPPORTING GRADUATE LEARNERS

Support groups
Interest-based organizations
Mentoring
Consistent communication
Community
Engagement
Expanded Career Services

(Pontius & Harper, 2006)
SHELLEY PRICE-WILLIAMS
Instructor, Higher Education & Student Affairs
Northern Illinois University

POPULATION: Graduate Learners
RESPONSIBILITIES: Admissions & Enrolled Student Services, Student/Program Support, Orientation/Graduation, Campus Collaborations

Institutional challenges:
• Decentralization of graduate student support
• Growing pains in graduate population
• Revolving admissions cycles

Population challenges:
• Transition to graduate education
• Needs and priorities vary among students
• Accelerated programming

Best Practices:
• Student-centered model of support
• Cross-campus collaboration
• Timely and concise communication
• Strong advocacy for students
• Flexible student support- in person, phone, video
**JAMIE REYNOLDS HECK**  
*Director of Academic Affairs, College of Nursing*  
University of Cincinnati

**POPULATION:** College of Nursing Students  
**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Clinical site coordination, course ordering, faculty affairs, enrollment management, curriculum, liaise with partners

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<th>Institutional challenges:</th>
<th>Best Practices:</th>
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<td>• Disconnect between Graduate School and rest of institution; lack of communication between persons supporting graduate students</td>
<td>• Creation of Graduate and Professional Student Advisors Community</td>
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<td>• Graduate student standardly characterized as FT PhD student</td>
<td>• Establishment of communication plan from admission offer through graduation</td>
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<td>• Resources/services supporting all graduate student population</td>
<td>• Commitment to overall graduate student experience (should be campus-wide initiative)</td>
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<th>Population challenges:</th>
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<td>• Securing preceptors for clinical experiences</td>
<td>• Ensuring graduate students have a voice</td>
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<td>• Respective State Authorization (BoN) Approval Process</td>
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<td>• Financial health, wellness, and resources</td>
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IAN SCHONBERG
Assistant Director of Graduate Advisement, J. Mack Robinson College of Business
Georgia State University

POPULATION: Graduate Learners
RESPONSIBILITIES: Admissions & Enrolled Student Services, Student/ Program Support, Graduation

Institutional challenges:
- Increasing applications throughout all programs
- Modifying programs to make them more attractive to prospective students
- Departments/schools function in silos

Population challenges:
- Cultural differences with academic and social issues
- May not have the appropriate educational background
- Coming into the program with the belief they will get a job/internship while in or graduating from program

Best Practices:
- Working with the department for status updates
- Check in emails/class visits to see how the students are doing
- Wear a smile when communicating
- Be professional even under the most difficult of situations
SCHERRAYN PHILLIP-GARCIA
Director of Administrative Services & Strategic Initiatives, Office of the Dean
Florida International University

POPULATION: Graduate Students in Nursing and Health Sciences
RESPONSIBILITIES: University and College-wide Student Success Initiatives

Institutional challenges:
• Available funding to support graduates’ financial needs
• Decentralization of graduate student support
• Faculty/student advisement

Population challenges:
• Time management
• Work/life/school balance
• Financial needs

Best Practices:
• Interdisciplinary advising model
• Development and advancement
• Peer Support
**ELIZABETH LANGEFELD**  
*Associate Director of Academic Advising & Student Life, MPA Program  
UNC-Chapel Hill*

**POPULATION:** Online and on-campus graduate learners  
**RESPONSIBILITIES:** academic advising, student organizations and programming, orientation, scheduling

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<th>Institutional challenges:</th>
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| • Lack of institutional understanding of online program needs (academic, organizational, policy)  
• Integration of campus services with online support  
• Challenge | • Dedicated orientation course for online students |
| **Population challenges:** | • Support/Communication amongst all graduate-student advisors |
| • Balancing academic load with full-time employment, dual-degree enrollment, etc  
• Burnout/overcommitment, family concerns,  
• Integration of two formats | • Dedicated Program staff in many functional areas |
| | • Student Leadership Council for student voice |
Open Forum Discussion
A DAY IN THE LIFE:

• How is working with graduate students different than working with undergraduates students?
• How do you advocate for your students?
• How have you been impacted by working with diverse students in this role?
• How do you recruit graduate students?
• How do you retain graduate students?
• How do you foster graduate student engagement?
REFERENCES


CONTACT US FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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