

Chancellor's Graduate & Professional Student Advisory Board (CGPSA) Graduate Student Finances Subcommittee Final Report 2021-2022

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Background and Accomplishments

The Graduate Student Finances subcommittee was started two years ago as the Student Debt subcommittee with a focus on finances and debt, but was expanded to incorporate finances as a whole due to COVID. We continued the work done previously which set out frameworks, connections and approaches, including design elements for information material. Specifically, we set our focus on the development of a graduate student survival guide, which was proposed in the previous year. We connected with stakeholders on campus in the communications and finance departments to learn more about how various issues regarding graduate student finances were being addressed, in order to identify collaboration opportunities and gaps where CGPSA could step in and help. The committee was able to gather information on communication guidelines, existing materials on graduate student finances, and interested stakeholders that could move the project forward and support it with resources. Specifically, we proposed a skeleton outline for a graduate student survival guide that could be adopted across departments of different disciplines. We brought this outline to various stakeholders in the UC Davis communications and finance departments until we landed on committed support to see through the development of the survival guide. Below, we describe our findings and accomplishments during this process.

Meetings and Information Gathering

We held in person and zoom meetings and maintained constant email and Slack communication as a committee to discuss our goals, activities, responsibilities and deliverables for the upcoming year. We created an outline for a graduate student survival guide that fills in many information gaps felt by graduate students. It provides the essential direct and indirect financial information relating to graduate students, and is aimed to be adaptable to each graduate group as well. We developed the survival guide by comparing different survival guides from various graduate groups and universities, and by examining existing UC Davis resources to understand how information is currently organized, how this organization can be improved, and what is missing. Much to our surprise, we discovered that the Graduate Group in Nutritional Biology has maintained a graduate student survival guide since the 1988-89 academic year, and students have helped revise the guide over the past 30 years. This guide is visible to students and is available publicly at the following website: <https://ggnb.ucdavis.edu/resources>, and the guide for 2021-22 academic year is here: https://ggnb.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk396/files/inline-files/GGNBSurvivalGuide_2021_22.pdf. Thus, our subcommittee firmly believes that this project is do-able and will benefit greatly with leadership from Graduate Studies. Additionally, a large guiding factor in the development of the survival guide was informal feedback from graduate students that helped identify many of the

informational gaps we chose to include in the guide. Below is a synopsis of the meetings we held with UC Davis stakeholders that eventually led us to develop and improve the survival guide outline.

Jan 28th, 2022 Meeting

Attendees:

Elizabeth Lambert - Senior Director of External Relations and Strategic Communications

Grace Woods - Financial Services Analyst

Steven Albrecht - Director of Graduate Student Financial Support

Summary:

This was an introductory meeting where the committee met with UC Davis stakeholders as suggested by Dean JP Delplanque. Overall, the discussion was positive and supportive of the idea of a graduate student survival guide. The takeaway task was to develop a draft of a survival guide and hold a discussion for feedback during the next meeting.

March 3rd, 2022 Meeting

Attendees:

Elizabeth Lambert - Senior Director of External Relations and Strategic Communications

Grace Woods - Financial Services Analyst

Summary:

We received feedback on the survival guide and the idea was taken up to make the guide in a format that's adaptable to multiple graduate departments. Despite this feedback, few actions were taken. We were informed that our outline would be passed around to upper administration as well as potentially the new, incoming director for graduate and postdoctoral student support. The outcome of this meeting was for our group to place progress on hold and wait for someone in the UC Davis administration to take up our project.

April 29th, 2022 Meeting

Attendees:

Nicole Rabaud - Executive Director of Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Support

Summary:

Our outline was well received by Nicole and she volunteered her time to fill in the outline using her resources and experiences working in graduate studies. We scheduled a follow-up meeting for July 6, 2022 during which we'll provide feedback on her progress and decide the next steps to have the first draft of the guide tentatively completed before the end of 2022.

Findings

Various UC Davis stakeholders were open to our project, however, we were met with reluctance for seeing the project through until late Spring Quarter. Nicole Rabaud, the new Director of Graduate Student and Postdoctoral support met our survival guide idea with both enthusiasm and

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actionable tasks. For now, our tangible outcome is only an outline, but we hope for a draft of the guide to be ready in the next academic year as mentioned in the previous section. It's important to mention here that we chose to broaden the scope of the outline to cover critical information beyond finances as we saw a need there. Below is the outline we created.

Graduate Student Survival Guide

Funding Grad School

Establishing Residency for Tuition Purposes

Employment

- UC Path
- Teaching Assistantships
- Research Assistantships

Internal Funding

- Internal fellowship application

External Funding

- Grants
- Pivot - search engine for funding

Federal Aid (FAFSA)

- Campus fee grant eligibility
- Mentioned it's required to have one on file for certain aid (e.g. Aggie Compass funds)

Fellowships

Short Term/Emergency Funding

- Financial Aid Office - Emergency, Short-Term, Assistant Loans
- Aggie Compass

Payment Disbursement

- Direct Deposit
- Disbursement Info

Travel Awards

- GSA
- Grad Studies
- Departmental

Basic Needs

- Define Basic Needs and Aggie Compass
- Food (List resources, short description, and provide link)
 - Pantry/Freedge - Free food and personal hygiene items
 - Calfresh - Food stamps - Free food California state program

- Housing
 - Emergency rehousing
 - Housing for families

Grad Program Information

Office supplies
Photocopying
Equipment
Poster printing

Taxes

- Explain taxing system in the US briefly - not withheld
- Obligatory annual filing
- Forms: W-2, 1042-S, etc
- Glacier
- Residency for tax purposes
- UC Davis Vita
- FTB seminar by SISS
- GSA seminar

Information for Student Parents and Caregivers

- Childcare + support + daycare
- Caregiving

Wellness Resources

Utilizing UC SHIP

Mental Health

- Ombuds
- SHCS Counseling Services

Physical Health

Additionally, last year's group rendered several designs which can be utilized once the guide is developed fully. These designs are shown on the following page.



Grad Student Survival Guide

Context and Resources for
Navigating Graduate School



UCDAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



Housing Resources and Factsheet



UCDAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



Student Finance Resources and Factsheet



UCDAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



Student Parent Resources and Factsheet



UCDAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



Grad Student Survival Guide

Context and Resources for Navigating Graduate School



01
Housing



02
Student Finances



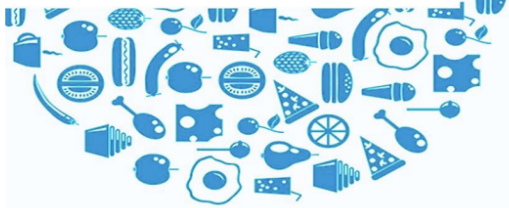
03
Student Parent



04
Basic Needs



Basic Needs Resources and Fact Sheet



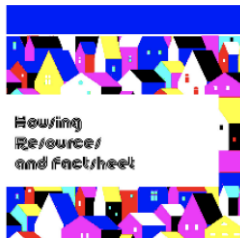
UC DAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA





Grad Student Survival Guide

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Navigating Graduate School



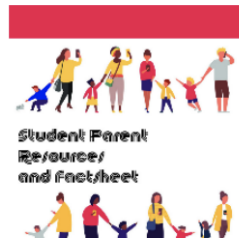
01

Housing



02

Student Finances



03

Student Parent



04

Basic Needs

Recommendations

Our subcommittee was only able to complete an outline of the graduate student survival guide this academic year. The ultimate goal is to have a complete survival guide. To achieve this, here are our recommendations:

- Maintain contact with key people:
 - **Nicole Rabaud:** she is the Executive Director for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars, and has taken on the role of filling out our outline. She is a key person to maintain contact with and continue progress.
 - **Grace Woods:** she is a Financial Services Analyst and provided our group with positive feedback and support.
 - **Elizabeth Lambert:** she is the Senior director of External Relations and Strategic Communications. She is largely in charge of orientation content as well as the general, online website for student resources. She also provided our group with positive feedback and support.
 - **Steven Albrecht:** he is the Director of Grad Student Financial Support. He was not highly involved in our discussions but could be a good future resource.
- The guide should be able to stand alone and be distributed to graduate groups so they can adapt it to their specific needs and requirements.
- In order for the guide to stay relevant, it must be actively updated by various graduate departments yearly. Otherwise, the resource will become outdated and unutilized.

Summary and Future Directions

We have taken concrete steps in order to create the graduate student guide and hopefully have it ready during the next academic year. Having the outline completed was an important first step, however, we have recruited the assistance of a full-time, paid UC Davis employee to fill the outline with information. This is an important point for future groups to note as we ourselves as graduate students may not have the time to fulfill a task of this size, however, there is existing support within UC Davis staff. Distributing the guide to all graduate groups will be very helpful as it would provide a baseline for information that each graduate group could build upon or modify for their specific program. As new opportunities arise, the guide can be updated accordingly to remain relevant and useful for incoming graduate students of all backgrounds. This work will help advance UC Davis goals of equity in graduate programs by ensuring that much needed information for graduate student success is readily available and accessible to all. Our main goal with this project is to ensure that graduate students have all resources in a concise, clear format available to them to enable their personal financial success, in addition to their academic success.