

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

*Members: Allison Fulton (chair), Tara Caso, Breanne Weber, Jill Huynh, Daniel Speer*

### **Background**

The 2020-2021 academic year marks the fourth consecutive year of the CGPSA Mentorship Subcommittee. Since its formation in the Fall Quarter of 2017, subcommittee members have worked closely with various staff in the Office of Graduate Studies, including Teresa Dillinger, David Blancha, Elizabeth Lambert, and Elizabeth Sturdy to complete a variety of tasks related to graduate and professional student mentoring at UC Davis. To date, the subcommittee has researched existing mentorship resources and programs at UC Davis, the UC system as a whole, and institutions outside of the UC system. The subcommittee has utilized this data to develop and begin the implementation of new, program-specific self-mentoring documents (Grad Maps) for the MA and Ph.D. programs in the Department of English and the Graduate Group of Epidemiology. In addition, the subcommittee has also collaborated with the Office of Graduate Studies to determine the best ways in which to disseminate these materials and others to pilot program departments. The 2019-2020 subcommittee then worked to establish a collaborative relationship with the new Director of Mentoring and Advising, Elizabeth Sturdy, and to determine how best the CGPSA subcommittee could support and complement her efforts with our own work. In Spring Quarter of 2020, we proposed that the subcommittee continue for one final year as a branch of the CGPSA. For the 2020-2021 academic year, we built on our subcommittee's existing institutional knowledge of mentorship at UC Davis by working directly with Elizabeth Sturdy to advise on curriculum for the Graduate Mentoring Initiative as well as develop a future plan for a modified and permanent iteration of this subcommittee.

### **Accomplishments**

We dedicated the 2020-2021 academic year to carrying out two primary objectives:

1. Collaborate with Graduate Studies (Elizabeth Sturdy, Director of Mentoring and Advising) to advise on workshop materials for the pilot Graduate Mentoring Initiative program.
2. Develop a vision, constitution, and plan for creating an institutionalized advisory board focused on professional and graduate student mentoring.

We conceived of this two-pronged project as a way of testing out how graduate and professional students could serve on an advisory board directly related to mentorship and take what we learned to craft a vision for a mentorship advisory board independent of the CGPSA. We made the decision at the beginning of the year to develop a board outside of the CGPSA because the subcommittee has been in existence for several years, suggesting the need for a permanent student voice. While the subcommittee's past projects have made some impact on mentoring at Davis, we realized that 1) student advisory efforts could have more leeway to pursue larger projects on a longer timeline outside of the CGPSA structure, 2) it is time to free up space for the CGPSA to pursue other important and relevant professional and graduate student concerns, and 3) institutionalizing the board within the UC Davis administration may increase its future impact in comparison to the current advisory role the board fills.

To that end, we spent the fall quarter determining our year-long aims and intended outcomes. In winter and spring quarter, we regularly met with the Director of Mentoring and Advising, Elizabeth Sturdy, and offered feedback to develop and revise curriculum and workshop materials for the Spring 2021 Graduate Mentoring Initiative pilot program. Drawing from this experience, we then spent the month of April drafting a potential constitution for an independent advisory board on graduate and professional student mentorship. Based on our initial proposal, Elizabeth Sturdy and Gillian Moise, CGPSA chair, have consulted with Graduate Studies staff about the viability and potential structure of the future board. Our ongoing conversations with Elizabeth Sturdy will help finalize plans and determine next steps in this regard.

In sum, the past four years have led us to the conclusion that this subcommittee would best serve its function as a permanent fixture within or adjacent to the Office of Graduate Studies. Given the high rate of turnover in the CGPSA, Graduate Studies' clear prioritization of improving mentoring programs and resources at Davis, and the potential for strong future collaborations with the Director of Mentoring and Advising, we recommend the permanent institutionalization of a professional and graduate student-run mentorship advisory board.

### **Future Directions**

A few mentorship subcommittee members will transition to the newly formed advisory board on mentorship under the direction of Elizabeth Sturdy. We will collaborate with her on the Graduate Mentoring Initiative pilot program to continue developing the structure, aim, and purpose of an advisory board on mentorship. Our long term goal is to establish this advisory board as a permanent fixture in the Office of Graduate Studies, setting a new precedent to allow for direct collaboration between Grad studies staff and graduate and professional students across existing associations and committees (i.e. GSA, CGPSA). To that end, our plan for the 2021-2022 academic year is as follows:

*Fall 2021:* Finalize the advisory board recruitment process to recruit the first cohort of new members.

*Winter/Spring 2022:* Develop a pilot mentor/mentee program directed at graduate students by recruiting graduate and professional students and postdoctoral researchers who will provide input as we develop the program, and potentially act as facilitators.

### **Proposal**

- 1. Dissolve the CGPSA Mentorship Subcommittee at the end of the 2020-2021 academic year.** Given the three points listed above in the Accomplishments section and our ongoing efforts, the subcommittee will continue as an institutionalized board under the guidance of the Director of Mentoring and Advising in the Office of Graduate Studies. Therefore, the subcommittee has autonomously decided to dissolve to enable CGPSA to pursue other initiatives.
- 2. 2-3 of the current Mentorship Subcommittee members will transition from CGPSA to the new advisory board and work directly with Elizabeth Sturdy on a mentee pilot project for**

**the 2021-2022 academic year.** Subcommittee members are already working closely with the Director of Mentoring and Advising to determine the best course of action for developing a mentor/mentee pilot project for graduate and professional students. This project is intended to complement the existing Graduate Mentoring Initiative program for faculty that was developed and piloted this year. The subcommittee members who intend to transition into positions on the new mentorship advisory board will work with the Director of Mentoring and Advising over the summer to refine the project proposal, determine the structure of the project and its pilot, and recruit new members to the board as outlined by our provisional constitution draft.