

UCIRVINE
Graduate Division





One Size Does Not Fit All: Developing meaningful wellness programs for graduate students

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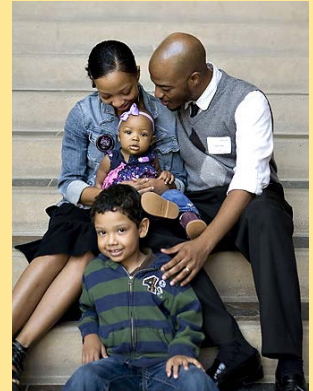
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Overview

- Unique Needs of Graduate Students
- Institutional Challenges
- Graduate Mental Health Statistics
- Graduate Division Counselor
- Protective Factors
- Campus Resources
- Preventative Approaches to Graduate Wellness

The Unique Needs of Graduate Students

- Rigorous academic programs
- Faculty advisor expectations (on time and performance)
- Non-traditional student characteristics
 - Student parents/caretakers
 - Older students
 - Underrepresented students
 - International students
- The development of a professional persona/reputation in addition to training
- The linkage between the academic and the personal at the graduate level → we need to rethink our approach



Institutional Challenges

- **Campus services are undergraduate-focused**
- **Information silos:** academic units vs. service providers
 - Lack of communication between these units impacts how graduate student cases are handled



Institutional Challenges

UCI graduate students present concerning statistics:

- 17% - Graduate students estimated to screen-in for Axis 1 mental health disorders
- 15% - Graduate students estimated to experience substance abuse
- 43% reported knowing another graduate student whose academic performance was impaired by major mental health problems
- 43% reported that they needed help or were told that they needed help
- 25% reported engaging in counseling/use of medication

How Issues Are Identified:

- Consultation Team: UCI crisis management group
- Academic Units
- Graduate Division
 - Quarterly grade checks
 - Exception requests
- Student self-referral

The UCI Model: A Graduate Division Counselor

- In 2011 the Graduate Dean identified need for a bridge resource between the student, the department and other campus resources. Position evolved from part-time to 100% dedicated counselor.
- Clinically trained counselor, but NOT working as a clinician
 - Can require students to meet with the counselor – especially if academic need is demonstrated
- Performs case triage, referrals to other service providers
- Provides link between service providers and academic units
- Works in conjunction with the UCI Consultation Team
- Can be accessed by students, faculty and staff alike

The UCI Model: A Graduate Division Counselor

- With tie to central academic unit, can mitigate impact of personal issues on academic profile
- Access to a range of administrative records, such as graduate application to inform case work



Characteristics of the Current Caseload

- Predominately consists of:
 - Women
 - Underrepresented minorities
 - International Students
- Sampling of reasons students meet with the Counselor:
 - Case presented by the Consultation Team
 - Often entails long-term monitoring/tracking
 - Faculty referrals to Counselor → students of concern
 - Difficulty communicating with faculty advisor
 - Experiencing overwhelming personal difficulties
 - Difficulty making academic progress due to various forms of anxiety



Graduate Counselor: Campus Collaborators

- Does not supplant existing services
- Operates as a hub for graduate student cases
- Communicates with various service providers, including:
 - Campus Clinical Social Worker
 - Academic units (Associate Deans, faculty, staff)
 - Campus legal counsel
 - Counseling Center
 - Office of Student Conduct
 - Disability Services Center
 - Graduate Resource Center (GRC)
 - Housing...etc.

Building & Supporting Protective Factors

- Activate and reinforce student's support network of faculty, staff and peers
- Encourage student to rely on outside support networks such as family (if there is a positive relationship) and other friends
- Encourage student to schedule downtime to help improve motivation, coping skills and a healthy work-life balance



Building & Supporting Protective Factors

- Encourage student to maintain structured support as needed
- Increase awareness of resources among STEM students
 - Significantly less likely to be aware of UCI's services than non-STEM
- Maintain timelines and expectations set in action plans and contracts
 - Maintaining structure protects the student by helping them understand expectations

Proactive Wellness Approaches

- New Graduate Orientations
 - Campuswide New Graduate Orientation – Year 7
 - International New Graduate Orientation – Year 5
- GRC “Life Skills” workshop series
- Emphasis on career planning and professional development
 - Dissertation Boot Camp
 - Mentoring Excellence Program
 - Foundations of Teaching
 - “Activate to Captivate”/ Public Speaking
 - Graduate Professional Success



Campus Resources and Partners

- Clinical Social Worker
- Consultation Team
- Counseling Center
- International Center
- Office of Student Conduct
- Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity
- Housing
- UCI PD
- University Legal Counsel
- Disability Services
- Student Health
- Health Education
- CARE

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