

Graduate School: Making the Most of it For Your Postgraduate Career

Suggested description

Your graduate degree will provide you with many opportunities, but how do you make sure that you are identifying and accessing the best resources to help you succeed after graduation? How can these resources support both your academic and professional development? In an open dialogue, the panelists will discuss the various ways that resources on and off campus, such as faculty, colleagues, professional organizations, and workshops can be applied to your immediate and future benefit.

Rough Outline:

1. Welcome and introduction. Brief profiles of Nicole and Wilkey (N, W)
2. What is your metaphor for graduate school (N, W)
 - a. Students write in their outline, "Graduate school is like..."

We will then have a few TAs read their metaphor and explain what they mean by it.
The objective of this opening exercise is to break the ice and to survey the attendees to see what sort of conceptions they hold about the nature and purpose of graduate school. It will also serve to get them to start establishing a mental frame conducive to exploring the opportunities of the graduate school experience.
3. Building supportive, productive relationships on campus
 - a. Faculty as a resource (N i-ii, W iii-vi)
 - i. Why they're one of your most important resources
 - ii. Faculty as a professional development resource
 1. Writing, publishing, presenting
 2. Making introductions and connections in your field
 - iii. Faculty as an academic development resource
 1. The craft and habits of scholarship
 2. Assembling a dissertation/thesis committee
 - iv. What's a mentor for, and how to find one
 - v. Ways to approach faculty
 - vi. Networking within and across departments/units
 - b. Colleagues as a resource (N)
 - i. Developing a support system
 1. academic
 2. social
 3. professional
 - ii. Collaborating efforts to develop opportunities
4. Your current curriculum...it's more than just credit (N)
 - a. Tailoring your curriculum to current job trends
 - b. How to use your coursework for professional development purposes
5. Organized and formal development opportunities (N, W)
 - a. Several different varieties
 - i. Opportunities to learn about research
 - ii. Opportunities to learn about teaching

- iii. Guest lecturing
- b. Professional development opportunities
 - i. UD CTE HETC certificate program
 - ii. UD Ethical Conduct of Research short course
 - iii. Lilly East Conference
 - iv. Professional organizations, workgroups

*Rather than a PowerPoint or traditional outline, TAs will be given an outline with space so that they can fill in questions and comments as the panel progresses. This will encourage students to think about how they would apply the information presented using their own experiences. After each major section, students can ask questions or make comments.

Session Outline

- I. What is graduate school to you? Graduate school is like...because... In the space below, describe or draw a metaphor for graduate school.

- II. Introduction to cultivating resources. What resources on campus have you already developed an interest in learning about or have you already learned about?

- III. What role can faculty play in your professional and academic development?
 - A. *Where can I learn more about faculty in my department or other departments?*

 - B. *Which faculty are good potential resources for my academic enrichment?*

 - C. *Which faculty are good potential resources for my professional development?*

 - D. *What journals do faculty in my department read? What conferences do they go to regularly?*

 - E. *Are any of the faculty in my department editors for journals? Book review editors?*

 - F. *What have you found helpful in making the most of your grad studies? (continuing students)*

IV. How to get the most out of your curriculum?

A. What skills are in demand in your field and are courses offered?

B. Are there any assignments in your courses that would make great conference paper or journal article topics?

V. Working with your colleagues. What role can extracurricular activities play in your professional and academic development?

VI. Formal development opportunities.

A. What department-specific experiences are offered?

B. Ways to maximize your teaching experiences.

C. UD certificate programs and short course offerings

D. Professional organizations

Time Line	Action Steps
Year 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Learn about the faculty members in your department. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Who has research interests similar to yours? b) Who has editorial ties to journals (book review editors are especially helpful) that are important in your field of study? c) Who has what rank? d) What journals do they read? What organizations are they a part of? e) Who would make a good job reference in the future? 2) Learn about job market trends <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Are there trends in the skills that potential jobs require? b) Are there courses in the curriculum that would provide me with these skills? c) How do potential dissertation topics relate to these trends? 3) Search for and participate in extracurricular activities that will improve your knowledge and experience in departmental citizenship.
Year 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue action items from Year 1 2) Narrow down and cultivate potential committee members 3) Develop stronger relationships to faculty members 4) Begin presenting your work as papers and posters at conferences 5) Begin networking during conferences and learning more about others in your field
Year 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Think about whether you want a job in academia or the private sector. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) What faculty members have experience to share? b) If you are interested in academia, think about what type of academic setting you are interested in working at and where you are interested in working. 2) Firm up your committee selections and invite them to serve. 3) Seek out fellowships and funding to support your writing, research. 4) Develop your CV, teaching, and research statements. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Have faculty members in your department review these documents. 5) By the end of year three, you should discuss with potential professional references their ability and willingness to write references (don't leave this to the last minute!!!).
Year 4- defense	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Apply for graduation 2) Apply for doctoral sustaining status 3) You should start looking at job openings about August prior to your fourth year 4) Develop an organization system to keep track of job search and research materials 5) Attend conferences that offer on-site interviews 6) Keep abreast of administrative matters so that you do not miss any graduation deadlines.