



Mitigating the Caregiving Burden among Graduate Students: Policies, Programs and Practices

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

Webinar Logistics

- Please submit questions at any time through the Q&A feature in your Zoom toolbar. We will only be answering audience questions during the designated Q&A period.
- The recording and presentation slides will be emailed to registrants as well as posted to the CGS website after the live event.

Plan for today

- **Four speakers** will speak for approximately **45 minutes** total, followed by Q & A
 - **Janet Gao** of the Council of Graduate Schools will present highlights on caregiving burdens from the RAPID convening for approximately 10 minutes.
 - Following her presentation, three graduate deans **Michael Solomon** (University of Michigan), **Chevelle Newsome** (California State University, Sacramento), and **Caterina (Rina) Bristol** (Alabama State University) will discuss how their respective institutions codified accommodations and support for graduate students with various caregiving responsibilities.

Introduction: Suzanne T. Ortega





Highlights on Disproportionate Care Burdens among Students

Janet Gao, *Research and Program Associate, Council of Graduate Schools*

CGS/CHBGS/COE RAPID Convening

- June 29–30, 2021
- Part of NSF-RAPID supported project, “Investigating Challenges to Matriculation and Completion for Underrepresented STEM Graduate Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic (#2037360)
- **Purpose:** to serve as a platform for graduate education leaders to compare, discuss and curate some of the emerging evidence-based practices and approaches to mitigate the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the URM graduate education pathways in STEM fields.
- 50 participants comprised of graduate deans, McNair Program Directors, and other campus stakeholders from institutions that submitted the large data samples to RAPID survey, as well as representatives of the COE and additional CGS and CHBGS members.



Discussion Centered around:

- How have caregiving responsibilities – either for young and/or adult dependents – impacted the ability of students from traditionally underserved backgrounds to pursue (for prospective students) and continue (for current students) their graduate studies?
- What/Where might be potential opportunities for colleges and universities to do more to support students with caregiving responsibilities?

Concerns over disproportionate caregiving burdens:

- The limited caregiving resources accompanied by increased stress during COVID-19 have produced negative impacts - historical **underrepresented** students and **female** students were especially vulnerable
- Loss of job and on-campus childcare has posed challenges on **time-management** for asynchronous learning experience.
- Worries about technology and lab access, study space, regular mentorship, and continued funding have led to ongoing stress over the timeline for **degree completion**.
- For students that are **new moms, single parents, or parents of multiple children**, the challenges surrounding childcare were multiplied.

What can be done or has been done to alleviate the concerns:

- **Communication** is essential to ensure graduate students get the support they needed.
 - Outreach to students
 - Creating office hours
- Foster **peer support group** as it provides accessible student support system for graduate parents.
 - GPS at University of Alabama's Graduate School
 - SWAP at Texas State University
- Expand the Wi-Fi **access** or provide possible **space** on campus so students can conduct their work.
- **Virtual spaces** could be normalized and intersected with life/home.
- Continued and sustainable **funding**, especially through teaching and research assistantship, are critical.
- Reducing the **structural barriers** that we used to think of as prerequisite for success can alleviate some issues.



Institutional Policies, Programs and Practices

Michael (Mike) Solomon, *University of Michigan*

Chevelle Newsome, *California State University, Sacramento*

Caterina (Rina) Bristol, *Alabama State University*

Support for Graduate Caregivers at University of Michigan

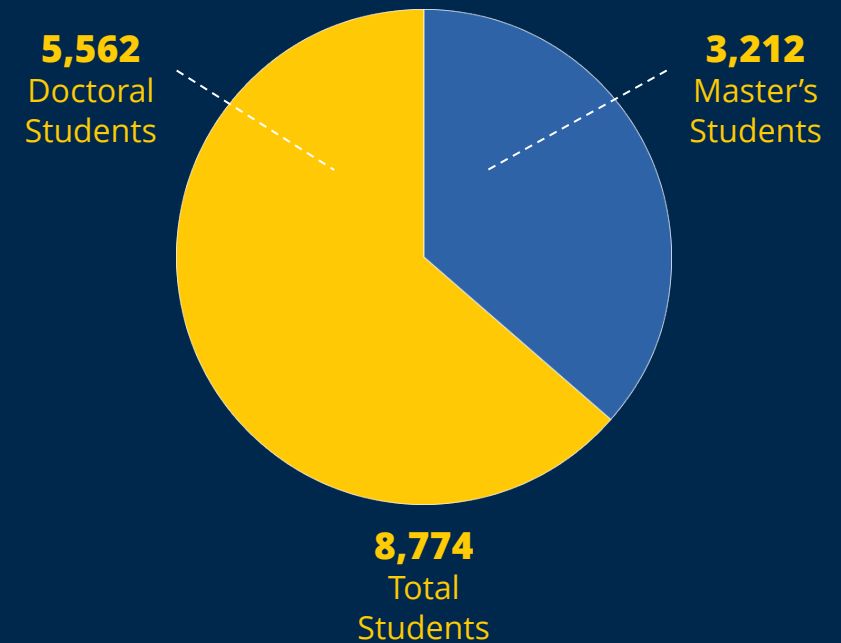
Mike Solomon, Rackham Graduate School

CGS Webinar
November 3, 2021

Institutional Context

- All campus graduate and professional enrollment is about 18,000.
- Rackham Graduate School is home to research-based master's degrees and all doctoral programs; home to about 100 master's and 100 doctoral programs.
- From the Michigan Doctoral Experience Survey, an estimated 3-4% of doctoral students are parents (~175-225 students).
- The graduate school offers programs and services to support graduate education and the graduate student experience.

Total Students in 2021



Benefits Support for Caregivers: Child Care Subsidy

- A need-based award administered centrally by the **U-M Office of Financial Aid**. Students must demonstrate need based on the Expected Family Contribution, existing financial aid, and the cost of attendance.
- 2021–2022 Maximums
 - For one child, the maximum is \$3,118 per term.
 - For two children, the maximum is \$4,572 per term.
 - For three or more children, award maximum is \$6,028 per term.

Academic Year 2019

Terms of subsidy received by Rackham students : 325

Average amount received per term: \$3,186

Academic Year 2020

Terms of subsidy received by Rackham students : 299

Average amount received per term : \$3,167

Benefits Support for Caregivers: GradCare

- Doctoral students receive full funding during fall and winter academic terms; spring/summer support depends on discipline.
- Full funding includes stipend, benefits, and tuition.
- Benefits include GradCare, an HMO plan for benefits-eligible graduate students, including graduate employees (GSRA, GSI, and GSSA) and doctoral fellowship recipients.
- GradCare covers 100% of pre-natal, delivery, post-natal, and well child care; dependent care is covered; coverage continues through spring/summer
- Other students, such as master's students, are eligible for a student plan that complies with the Affordable Care Act (about \$2,000/annually)

Academic Policies That Support Caregivers

Leave of Absence Policy

- Eligible doctoral students may take a semester by semester leave for urgent family necessity or care for dependents.
- About 15 students initiate a family care LOA per year; about one-third are for one term, one-half are for one year, and the balance are longer (a leave of up to two years is allowed).
- In partnership with the Center for the Education of Women (CEW+) we provide support for health insurance fees for student parents who are experiencing financial hardship.

Academic Policies That Support Caregivers

Parental Accommodation Policy

- Provides 6–8 weeks of time away from active study immediately following a birth or the adoption of a young child.
- Full-time student status and associated benefits are retained.
- An additional year is added to normative time to degree.

Research and Professional Support for Caregivers (in Partnership with CEW+)

Graduate Student Professional Travel with Children Grant (up to \$750):

Rackham student parents traveling with small children (under the age of 6) while attending conferences, workshops, meetings, or other academic events related to research or professional development. (About 25 applications/year)

Postdoctoral Professional Travel with Children Grant (up to \$750): travel expenses for children under the age of 6 who accompany a postdoctoral parent to a professional meeting. (About 10 applications/year)

Emergency Funds: Although funds are available to all students, for student parents, there are often additional complexities. During the spring/summer 2021 term, CEW+ partnered with Rackham to expand eligibility for emergency fund support to include expenses incurred for unlicensed child-care.

Structural and Programmatic Supports (in Partnership with CEW+)

- Student Caregiver Resource Page
- Participation and support of CEW+ working groups, including Student Caregiver Excellence Committee
- Avenues for the Graduate Student Parents and Caregivers (GSPaC) group to engage with the Student Caregiver Excellence Committee
- Student Parent/Caregiver Survey
- Rackham Student Parent Facebook Group

Current Programs and Future Needs

- Availability of Support for Unlicensed Child Care
- Student Life Academic Notifications Process used to address needs of student parents
- Priority Registration
- Reserved Spaces and Funding for Student Parents at U-M Child Care Centers
- Syllabus Statement

Thank You

Mike Solomon, Rackham Graduate School

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Implementing Caregiver Support Services at Sacramento State

“Mitigating the Caregiving Burden among Graduate Students: Policies, Programs and Practices”

CGS Webinar
Wednesday, November 3

Chevelle Newsome
Graduate Dean
CSU, Sacramento

California State University, Sacramento

Undergraduate Student Population – 28,697
Post-baccalaureate Student Population – 2,754



Institutional Framework of Support





Caregiver Student Support is grounded in the university mission of Inclusivity

- Are graduate students with caregiver responsibilities legitimate? Yes, their concerns and needs are valid and as an inclusive community we should seek to build a support structure to assist students in maintain progress toward the degree
- Lack of services and support impedes academic progress for graduate students with caregiver responsibilities
- Implement a network of services that offer students with caregiving responsibilities an array of offerings and opportunities to meet their needs, while supporting their academic progression



Caregiver graduate student support services

- Case Management
 - Resource options communicated
- Advocacy
 - Drafting and implementing campus-wide academic policies that support students with caregiver responsibilities
- Education
 - Educating the campus community of the existence and needs of graduate students with caregiver responsibilities



Operationalizing the plan

- Emergent as collaborative programs and services to support this subset of the graduate student population
- Must be low-cost for institutional support to continue the services
- Include students and faculty to provide information on needs and effectiveness of support structures
- Challenges are the slow and incremental impact for students



Programming for Graduate Student Caregivers

- Associated Students, in partnership with local healthcare organization, provided information for students to access care online to support students' personal life stressors – particularly caregiving and parenting resources.
- Academic Services – providing pre-service teachers to offer tutoring services to allow graduate students time to focus on their studies
- Graduate Student Club – Created story time for children of graduate students so that they had additional time

Providing Interventions and Responding to Graduate Students with Caregiving Responsibilities



- Social Support – Engaging natural support systems; peer to peer
- Matching needs to interventions – Need to build capacity; communicating services and support systems
- Physical support is essential to help graduate students access financial support and community resources on campus



Alabama State University

Helping graduate students one at a time

Caterina Bristol, D.A.
Assistant Provost and Dean of the Harold
Lloyd Murphy Graduate School
cbristol@alasu.edu

Institutional Profile

Alabama State University

Historically Black University located in Montgomery, Alabama founded by nine former slaves in 1867.

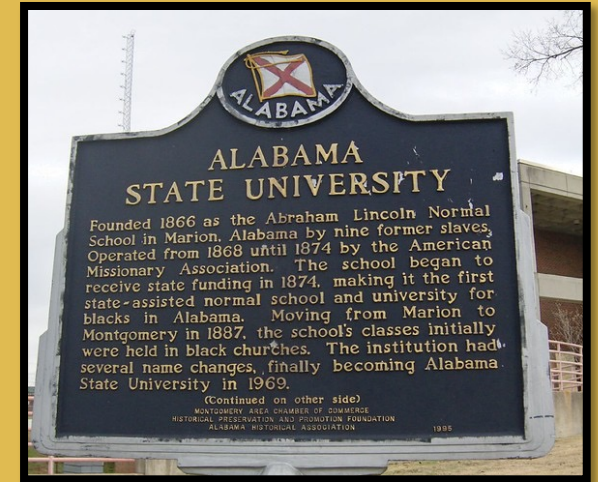
Has provided graduate education for over 75 years.

Many students are first generation graduate school.

12% of ASU students are enrolled in graduate education.

The largest percentage of graduate degrees are awarded in Health Sciences and Education.

65% of all graduate students attend their programs fulltime, with the majority in COHS and SWK.



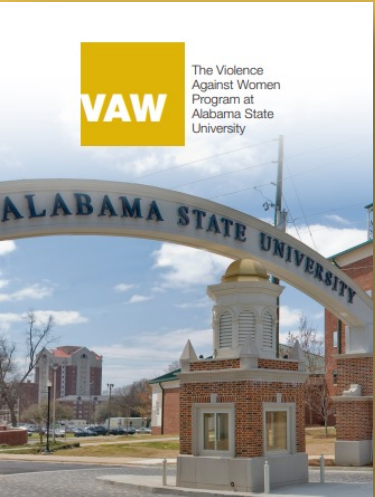
Campus Resources



Zelia Stephens Early Childhood Center



ASU Childcare Program



VAW
The Violence
Against Women
Program at
Alabama State
University

Anxious?
Join ASU's Counseling
Services Zoom Call
Thursday, October 22nd
11:20-12:00

Join us for a
chance to win
a \$30 VISA
giftcard!

Direct message
@allstudentsunited
on Instagram for
more information!

**All
Students
United**

ASU
WHATABURGER.
FEEDING
Student
Success

ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY
RESOURCE
ROOM

POWERED BY
WHATABURGER

Virtual
REFLECTIONS GROUP

For individuals who have experienced loss through
the death of a family member or friend.

*Social Work Students,
come out for a day of pampering...*

We Got You
a mental health event
provided by The Department of Social Work,
The University Counseling Center, The BSW Student Advisory
Committee and The BSW Community Advisory Committee

Tuesday, October 26, 2021
3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
**Abernathy Hall,
Rooms 302 and 303**
RSVP Required

In order to receive a ticket for a vendor service, participants must
attend the speaker's entire presentation. Only one vendor service per
person. For hair service, hair must be freshly shampooed and dried.
For makeup service, bring your choice of lash strips.
Appointments are in 15 minute increments.

Complimentary services provided by: Tre's Bien Salon, E Rob Beauty, Medical
Advocacy and Outreach, King Shine, Mary Kay Cosmetics, Moe's Restaurant,
Heritage Barber & Style, Transitions Technical College and more.

RSVP Here

ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY
SUICIDE
Prevention & Intervention

Let's start a conversation about
Suicide Prevention and Mental Health.

R U GOOD DAY
JOIN US!
THURSDAY, APRIL 8
11 a.m.-1 p.m.

zoom
<https://tinyurl.com/xs7jhuwz>
Meeting ID: 998 7938 2483
Passcode: 766084

DISCUSSION!
DOOR PRIZES!
JOIN US VIRTUALLY!

ASU
ALABAMA STATE
UNIVERSITY
Call the ASU Counseling Center at 334-229-4382 or the Crisis Hotline at 862-294-3575.

One Graduate Student at a Time - A Case Study

COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Cohort & Individual Supports

Holistic: From application and cohort development through licensure

Maslow: Make sure that all students have basic needs met.

Mentoring program

Financial Support

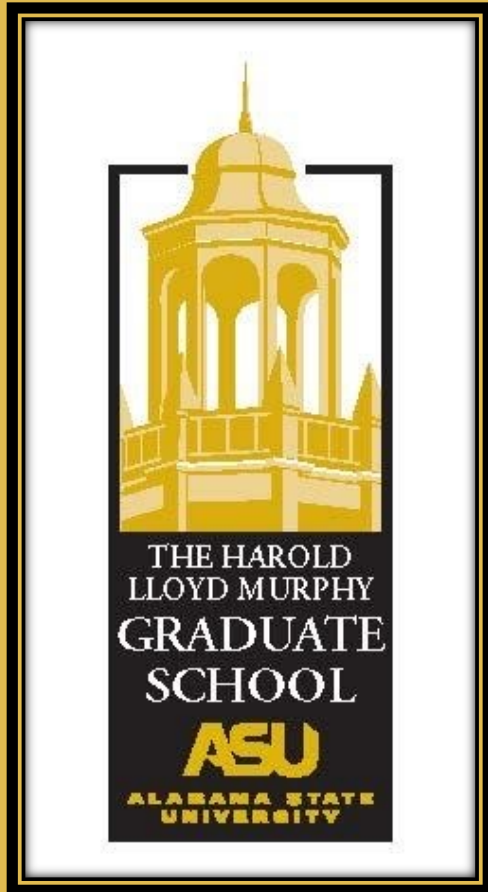
- Scholarship application includes opportunity to detail caregiver/commuter status, etc.
- Stipends

Social events, check-ins

Clinical Sites and COVID

Outcome: 97% pass rate on national licensure exams





THANK YOU

Upcoming Events

- **CGS 61st Annual Meeting**
December 1-4, 2021
Sheraton New Orleans Hotel, New Orleans, LA

