



Creating a Sense of Community and Belonging for Master's Students

Concurrent Session

Thursday, December 7, 2023

4:30pm - 5:30pm

James Ahern

*Vice Provost & Dean,
Graduate Education
University of Wyoming*

Wendy Boland

*Dean, Graduate &
Professional Studies
American University*

Kerry Wilks

*Dean, Graduate School &
Associate VP, International Affairs
Northern Illinois University*

CGS Study 2021

- “Supporting Graduate Student Mental Health and Well-being: Evidence-Informed Recommendations for the Graduate Community”
- Executive summary and full study on website (not behind paywall)
- Targeted well-being and mental health services
- Mitigate impact of hyper-competitive campus cultures
- Training for GR faculty and Grad Program Directors

Supporting a Culture of Well Being & Connection

Sneak In The Veggies

- If you build it, they will come? Or the importance of indirect interventions
- Addressing food insecurities
- Technology Tuesdays
- Shut up and write Tuesdays. Breaks. Bring in people who offer services come too.
- Social Media Competitions
- Gamification: Badges and credentials
- What can YOUR program/unit do?

GOAL = Thriving, Not Surviving

There is no health without mental health; mental health is too important to be left to the professionals alone, and mental health is everyone's business.

Vikram Patel



School of
Graduate Education

University of Wyoming

- 3,054 Graduate Students
 - 52% master's
 - 40% doctoral
 - 8% cert./non-degree
- State Flagship & Land-Grant University
- Doctoral – Higher Research Activity (R2)
- Located in Laramie (pop. 32,000)
- Founded in 1886

Graduate Student Crisis Intervention

2022-2023

41.7% (n = 228) of UW's graduate students screened at risk for urgent mental health concern(s).

Students with risk of severe or moderately severe depression are **61% more likely** to consider dropping out.



Dynamic survey

Identifies life issues and risk factors

Crisis Intervention

Immediate Help Process

Survey
nuro
DISCOVERY
Response

UW CARES

Immediate
Help

1,457 UW Cares Referrals
Since 2021

Top Issues:
Depression, Anxiety,
Food Insecurity



INTEGRATING ONLINE & RESIDENTIAL OFFERINGS

To achieve greater integration, we must address access issues such as online streaming technologies, accessibility, and recording archives.

Student Services – Virtual and In-person

Increase student services (such as coaching, math/stat, writing) for graduate students

Programming – Virtual and In-person

Virtual & In-person writing sessions

Lunch Meet-ups

Townhalls

International Student Events – name pronunciation workshop

Community Building – campus tours

Communication & Outreach

Newsletter, Direct Emails, Webpage, Student Leaders