![Council of Graduate Schools logo](CGS COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS)

Synopses of Winning ETS/CGS Award Proposals

2023: California State University, Bakersfield
The Next Step: Building Career Readiness Among Graduate Students
across the CSU

"The Next Step: Building Career Readiness Among Graduate Students across the CSU" aims to ensure that the 50,000+ students enrolled in a graduate program in the California State University system are provided with access to high-quality cocurricular programming that prepares them for future career success, regardless of their field of study. Led by graduate education leaders at eight of the CSU campuses and with an additional fourteen campuses agreeing to promote this programming on their campuses, this project will develop and deliver programming to graduate students across the CSU that addresses the eight career readiness competencies identified by National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) – career and self-development, communication, critical thinking, equity and inclusion, leadership, professionalism, teamwork, and technology. This collaboration promises to build upon the strengths and expertise of each campus to deliver shared opportunities to graduate students across the system that will enhance their career success and lifelong career management.

The success of this effort will be measured by the project's achievement of the following four outcomes:
> (1) identification of any gaps in their co-curricular programming relative to the eight NACE career readiness competencies;
> (2) development and delivery of high-quality co-curricular programming addressing all eight of the NACE career readiness competencies to graduate students enrolled at any of the 23 CSU campuses;
> (3) satisfactory awareness among graduate students of the relevance and usefulness of the skills and abilities delineated by the NACE career readiness competencies for their post-graduation success; and
> (4) satisfactory self-assessment among graduate students of their mastery of the skills and abilities delineated by the NACE career readiness competencies.

2022: Morgan State University
Teaching Assistant Project (TAP)

The professional identity of university faculty combines expertise in research and teaching. The fact that future faculty (doctoral students) will spend years and accumulate numerous course credits acquiring scholarly and research expertise makes the near universal absence of comparable training for instruction very puzzling. Morgan State University seeks to address this concern through the *Teaching Assistant Project (TAP)*. The Provost established a funding stream

for the assistantships. Prior utilization of TAs at Morgan State University has been sparse and without coordination. TAP's comprehensive plan coordinates instructional supervisors, a Teaching Assistant Development Director, ongoing workshops and colloquia, thorough evaluation, and curricular requirements.

We designed TAP to enrich the instructional experience of doctoral students while building critical professional expertise. This program has several features intended to provide a progressive development from novice to proficient instructional skills, to foster a community of learners and coaches, and to ensure the development of a personal teaching philosophy informed by the science of learning that fully embraces inclusion and diversity.   Within three years, a quarter (200) of our doctoral enrollment will have teaching assistantships at any given time. All Morgan TAs will participate in TAP.

The instructional curriculum focuses on a series of four graduate courses that, while providing a robust immersion in techniques and skills necessary for instruction in higher education, also emphasizes our commitment to principled, reflective teaching centered on inclusion and diversity. The first two courses will be required of TAs, with the opportunity to acquire a post-baccalaureate certificate by completing all four. The CGS/ETS award will support the design and deployment of these courses (the first has been developed and implemented).

2021: University of Montana
Completing the Circle: Supporting the Success of Native Graduate Students

"Completing the Circle: Supporting the Success of Native Graduate Students," focuses on a sub-population of under-represented minority students, who are a significant regional population in the cultural life of the West: Native American graduate students. At the University of Montana, which occupies the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispell people, we honor the past, but we also value the present contributions of our Native communities to the health of our society. Our work has four components: Peer Cohort Meetings, A Native American Visiting Scholar Series, A Peer-to-Peer Mentor Fellowship Program, and Tribal Listening Sessions. Through these efforts we hope to recruit more Native American students into our graduate programs, to increase retention and completion, and to strengthen our connections with regional tribes to foster a reciprocal emphasis on community improvement by elevating the visibility of our Native graduate students.

2020: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Addressing Systemic Racism Through Structured Learning Communities

The Graduate School of UNC-Chapel Hill, will build on the work of its [Diversity and Student Success](#) (DSS) team which strives to create an environment where students are equipped to not only survive but to thrive during their tenure as graduate students. The current racial unrest, the Black Lives Matter movement, and COVID-19 have elevated the importance of DSS's work. DSS/The Graduate School will pilot the development of intersecting learning communities for both graduate students and faculty/departments to continue building upon innovative diversity and equity efforts, to address various components of systemic racism, and to create an

inclusive and welcoming climate for all graduate students. The intersecting learning communities include:

1. <u>BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) Graduate Student Learning Communities</u>. The intent of these communities will be to provide students with the tools to navigate successfully the academic continuum and toxic working/learning environments, going from merely enduring to flourishing. Through these learning communities, students will be empowered with coping strategies and healthy ways to deal with traumatic events and skills to respond in an empowered way to acts of racism, microaggressions, and implicit bias.

2<u>. CASRGE (Collaborative to Address Structural Racism in Graduate Education)</u>. This learning community for faculty and administrators will address issues of departmental culture by creating a safe space in which to raise cultural awareness around bias and structural racism. Through formal trainings, a monthly journal club, and a curriculum of best practices and resources for creating an overall inclusive departmental environment, we will support individual learning communities as they develop department-specific strategies to combat structural racism.

3. <u>Intersecting Activities between BIPOC and CASRGE Learning Communities</u>: We will work with students to develop "Resolution/ Solution" projects that will allow them to engage with campus leadership and become a tangible part of the change that is needed / anti-racism efforts. For example, we will use scripts written and performed by MFA graduate students of color to bring voice and visuals to the lived experiences of UNC BIPOC graduate students. These projects will be utilized for both training sessions and to promote dialogue with the CASRGE and BIPOC Learning Communities.

The intersectional learning communities will build upon the existing mission and philosophy of holistic student success applied in all the DSS initiatives, which includes the Carolina Grad Student F1RSTS, Global Grads, Initiative for Minority Excellence, Military-Affiliated Grads, and Queer Graduate and Professional Students, as well as the Summer Undergraduate Pipeline (SUP) recruitment initiative. DSS was created to better retain students from diverse backgrounds, to see them through degree completion, and have a positive impact on their experience as graduate or professional students at UNC-Chapel Hill. Central to the creation of each initiative has been the care and encouragement of the "whole" student, not just their academic success, but also their holistic development. By improving individual departmental climates and promoting healthy dialog with students, we will provide a healthy environment for overall student success which should further increase retention and student success.

2019: Wayne State University
Success for Underrepresented students in Graduate Education (SURGE)

Urban universities serve as main entry point into higher education for underrepresented (UR) students. Wayne State University (WSU) is an urban research-intensive university in Detroit where more than a third its undergraduates come from underrepresented backgrounds, yet persistence to graduate programs is low. UR students face many challenges including tuition costs, the need to work to support their families, feelings of isolation on campus, and lack of

support in the application process because those closest to them have limited experience with university application and financial aid processes. To address these issues, we have designed an innovative and multi-faceted approach consisting of:

1. **Peer Mentoring**: Undergraduate students from underrepresented backgrounds will be paired with graduate mentors during one academic year. We will partner with three long-standing student success initiatives on campus: The Center for Latino/a Studies, McNair Scholars, and the Office of Multicultural Student Engagement (OMSE) to enhance our recruitment capabilities and facilitate our ability to focus our support on first-generation, historically underrepresented students. Mentees will work with graduate students to learn about graduate school, develop career goals for post-graduation, explore relevant graduate programs and complete graduate school application materials. The year-long program will be focused on developing a support network, helping students develop a sense of belonging and a growth mindset, and reduce "imposter syndrome".

2. **Mentee and Mentor Training**: Graduate student mentors will participate in inclusive mentoring and leadership training, as well as learn to participate in inclusive mentoring networks. Mentees will participate in graduate application bootcamps, financial literacy seminars, as well as workshops focused on demonstrating critical thinking skills, writing purpose statements; preparing for interviews, selecting and working with faculty and career mentors, and managing conflict and stress.

3. **Scholarship Funding**: Dedicated scholarship funding will be available for students who have completed the program and been accepted into a master's program. Availability of financial support affects university attendance and persistence for students in general, and for UR students in particular. AGRADE scholarships will reduce both the cost and time required to complete a master's degree thereby supporting persistence.

2018: Vanderbilt University
Supporting the Transformation from Students to Leaders

The Graduate School at Vanderbilt University, with campus and external partners, will promote graduate student leadership development through three innovative interventions. Woven through all three focus areas will be programming that pays particular attention to the needs of first-generation students, those from underrepresented minorities, and women in the academy.

1. **FirstGen Success:** In a structured first-year experience for graduate students who self-identify as first generation (those without a parent who has attended college), students will participate in three streams of support: discussion groups and social events led by a first generation faculty leader; formal training events covering skills, resources, culture norms and career development; and an etiquette dinner providing experiential learning of professional norms.

2. **Training Tomorrows' Mentors:** By providing high-quality intervention for both mentors and mentees, we aim to improve the quality of mentoring at Vanderbilt and beyond, in this generation and the next, because we believe by training mentees we can positively affect the quality of tomorrow's mentors. Programming in this priority area will depend largely on external specialists and train-the-trainer efforts toward training students and faculty to be better communicators as well as training Vanderbilt staff for sustainability of the efforts. Programming will include a specific emphasis on mentoring that fosters an environment of inclusiveness.

3. **Managing Conflict and Difficult Conversations**: Numerous obstacles encountered by graduate students could be ameliorated through building both student and faculty confidence when confronting conflict. External mediation skills trainers will conduct 2 workshops for students, postdocs, faculty and staff. Participants will gain the confidence and skills needed to approach difficult subjects and learn skills to successfully navigate such discussions. Our Graduate Life Coach will then roll these efforts into a sustainable departmental roadshow available upon request by departments, programs and student groups.

2017: University of Washington
U501: Extend the Reach

The Graduate School at the University of Washington will expand its University 501 (U501) online orientation modules and reach more students, staff and faculty at our own university, as well as at other universities. U501 "flips" orientation so all incoming graduate and professional students can view online modules containing text and videos with students, faculty and staff introducing key information before they arrive on campus.

Students may access these at any time - day or night, in any country, at their own pace. It introduces the nuts and bolts of graduate school, gives an overview of the graduate student experience and details resources and support systems.

- Internal to the UW, usage rates and user feedback from the 2017 pilot will be used to refine existing and add new content to further prepare students to transition to the UW. We will also identify individual UW graduate programs interested in tailoring this information to their own orientations, and we will work directly with these programs to pilot their specific versions.
- Externally, we will develop instructional modules to guide other universities -- research and non-research, master's granting, public and private -- in building their own online orientations. Comprehensive modules will ensure greater reach and effectiveness in delivery of their own orientations by taking users through a step-by-step process delivered in a format similar to U501 itself.

2016: Cornell University
Cornell University Innovative Inclusion Interventions (I3): Promoting Graduate Student Success through Advancements in the Climate of Graduate Education

The Graduate School at Cornell University, with campus-wide partners, will promote graduate student success and a more inclusive climate through four innovative interventions supporting the academic and social engagement of graduate students across identities.

1. **Summer Success Symposium**: In an event for new and continuing research degree students who have received fellowships in support of diversity, and/or identify as first-generation college (FGC) students and/or students of color, participants form connections with peers across graduate fields and establish a sense of community, and engage with successful Cornell Ph.D. alumni and faculty from diverse backgrounds.

2. **Interactive Theatre.** Through moderated discussions regarding video recordings of an interactive theatre project, student and faculty participants in *My Voice, My Story: Lived Experiences of Graduate and Professional Students* encounter the diverse lived experiences of Cornell graduate students and achieve listening for understanding, comprehension of the impacts of exclusion and inclusion in the learning and research environment, respect for mutual similarities and differences, and awareness of unconscious bias and how to confront it.

3. **Intergroup Dialogue Project**. Students contribute to transforming the campus climate through participation in the Intergroup Dialogue Project (IDP) immersion program, facilitating communication across social, cultural, and power differences, in a critical and meaningful way.

4. **Inclusive Teaching**. Participants in the Inclusive Teaching Institute (ITI) for Graduate Students and Postdocs, co-sponsored by Cornell University's Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CU-CIRTL) and the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) engage in complex discussions about diversity and inclusion, and learn how to incorporate inclusive teaching practices into their classrooms at Cornell and beyond.

2015: University of California, Los Angeles
Smart Recommendations: Digital Guidance & Support throughout a UCLA Graduate Student's Academic Career

Building on an existing website, GRAPE (Graduate and Postdoctoral Educational Support), this proposal is to build an engine called Smart Recommendations to deliver funding information to students based on their unique backgrounds, academic pursuits, and aspirational goals, and also on choices they previously made on the website. Once the platform is built, it will be expanded to deliver other types of recommendations such as on campus processes, seminars and workshops, professional and career development opportunities, and key deadlines. Smart Recs will push content and empower students to act.

The GRAPES website was redesigned to make it more usable and made information more easily discoverable. The next step which this project will undertake is to make the information retrievable based on past use and to make user-specific recommendations. The first stage will be open to new and continuing UCLA students and postdocs; future plans are to extend access to other populations at UCLA. UCLA is open to sharing underlying technology and infrastructure with other institutions that seek to implement similar functionality.

The program will be assessed with existing pipeline programs through surveys and focus groups. After initial testing, Smart Recs will be rolled out to the entire UCLA graduate student population and will be assessed to characterize user satisfaction, interest and behaviors. Analytics will be used to gauge student interests in specific events and workshops to ad in planning and resource allocation.

2014: Duke University
Duke OPTIONS: Online Professional development Tool for Individual OpportuNitieS

Duke Options is an online professional development planning tool that helps doctoral students identify career opportunities and target their professional development activities to reach their career goals. The tool identifies six core competencies doctoral students should development: teaching and mentoring communication skills, professional adaptability, self-awareness, leadership, and professionalism and scholarly integrity. The tool provides suggestions, resources and steps based on the four broad disciplinary areas at Duke: social sciences, humanities, basic medical sciences and natural sciences and engineering.

Users then can set deadlines for themselves to achieve their goals on a 5-year planning calendar, with suggestions embedded by the tool for appropriate timeframes. Additionally, the tool includes ways students can consult with their advisors to help achieve their goals.

Development of the tool involves cross-campus collaborations, including the Career Center and Office of Postdoctoral Services, Directors of Graduate Studies, key faculty members, and student groups. Lunches with targeted student groups would roll-out the tool to students.