

New Approaches To Graduate Student Professional Development

Reginald K. Ellis, Dean, Office of Graduate Education, Clark Atlanta University



Evangeline Kubu, Senior Associate Dean for Professional Development & Founding Director, GradFUTURES, Princeton University



Aimée Surprenant, Dean, Graduate School, Virginia Tech





Transformative Graduate Education at VT

Aimee Surprenant
Dean of the Graduate School

Virginia Tech

- Land Grant university founded in 1872
- Main campus located in Blacksburg, Virginia, includes 221 buildings, 2,600 acres, and an airport
- Nine colleges and a central Graduate School
- 110+ undergraduate majors
- 150+ master's and doctoral degree programs
- 31,000 UG students
- 6,700 Grad students
- Facilities across the state and around the globe, including a strong presence in the greater Washington, D.C. metro area

Graduate Life Center (GLC)





**Graduate Student
Thanksgiving Break
Lunch**

Enjoy chicken or vegan/gluten-free chili and a choice of sweet treats while connecting with others who are also staying on campus for the Thanksgiving holiday.

11:30am-1pm | 25 November
GLC Multipurpose Room

Registration is required and will close when the event has reached capacity!

Sign Up Today



bit.ly/vtthanksgiving25

The GLC provides spaces, services, housing, and programming that meet the unique needs of graduate and professional students and encourage their active participation in the graduate community.

“A GRADUATE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT WHERE...”

Reinvigorating the Graduate Life Center

- 120 Welcome Center
 - Coffee/Tea station, iPad check-in, GAAP Cube
- Meeting Rooms, Auditorium, & MPR
 - Orientation, community-building events
 - Writing Retreats, monitors, & power towers
- Reading Room
 - GLC Cafe
- Wellness Room, Lactation Space, & GLC Pantry
 - Hokie Wellness, Basic Needs
- Collaboration with new Embedded Cook Counselor
- TV displays in the GLC (and ads elsewhere on campus)

Initiatives:

- Grad Ed Week
- Website Review
- Climate Survey work - Ann and Patricia
- Strategic Plan



Transformative Graduate Education (TGE)



DePauw 2003 (rev 2017)

Technology, inclusion & diversity,
interdisciplinary, ethics, & global



Future Professoriate Certificate

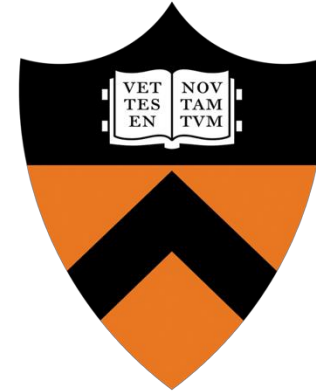
- Equipping graduate students with the tools, knowledge and skills to thrive in diverse career paths, the certificate prepares students to succeed as future faculty, administrators, industry leaders, and researchers by exposure to concepts that break the mold of existing practices in higher education.
- Goals of the certificate include
 - Training beyond disciplinary preparation—filling in the gaps
 - Preparing students for diverse work and professional environments regardless of discipline
 - Leveraging academic skills in various career paths
 - Shining a light on the opaque dimensions of contemporary (future) professions

Future Professoriate Certificate

- Preparing the Future Professor
- Contemporary Pedagogy
- Effective, Ethical, & Equitable Mentoring
- Electives such as Communicating Science, Library Research Skills, Project Management, Grant Writing, Ethical Issues in Conducting Research, Teaching and Learning Theory, Tools for On-line Education, and more.
- 530 students have received the certificate since 2015; an average of 53 a year.

GradFUTURES, Princeton University

Evangeline Kubu,
Senior Associate Dean
for Professional
Development



PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY

Princeton University

- ❖ One of the nation's nine colonial colleges, it was chartered as The College of New Jersey in 1746
- ❖ Renamed Princeton University in 1896; and formally founded the Graduate School in 1900
- ❖ In 2024-25, there were 5,826 undergraduates and 3,280 graduate students (2,902 Ph.D. and 378 Master's) enrolled
- ❖ There are 46 graduate programs spanning the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and engineering
- ❖ The Graduate School oversees graduate admissions, academic affairs, finance and administration, student affairs, access, diversity and inclusion, and professional development
- ❖ The GradFUTURES professional development unit was established in 2019



Celebrating 125 Years of
Transformational
Impact of the Princeton
Graduate School

A National Imperative

Shifting the Paradigm of Professional Development for Graduate Students



Reorient the educational environment to prioritize students as individuals with diverse educational and professional interests, needs, and challenges.



Support the full range of careers both within and beyond academia.



Full range of career pathways of PhD alumni are known and made transparent to institutions, departments, faculty, current and prospective students, and the campus community.



Department cultures and structures ensure that students will feel supported as they explore the full range of career options.



Institutional and departmental resources are available and accessible to help students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to enter careers of choice.



Foster the full inclusion of current and prospective doctoral students from diverse backgrounds.



Ph.D. Education Initiative (2019)

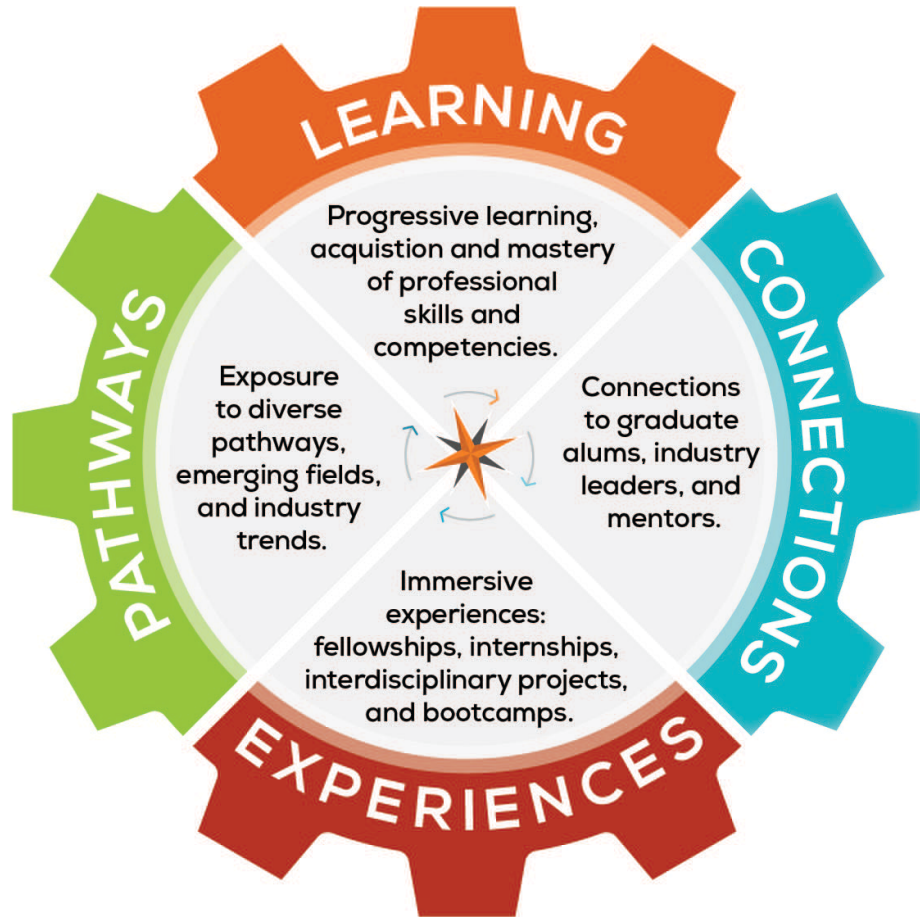


The Princeton
Graduate School

www.gradfutures.princeton.edu

Professional Development Framework

Holistic support across the graduate student lifecycle



The Princeton
Graduate School

www.gradfutures.princeton.edu

Competencies and Skills

Fueling graduate student success & strong career outcomes

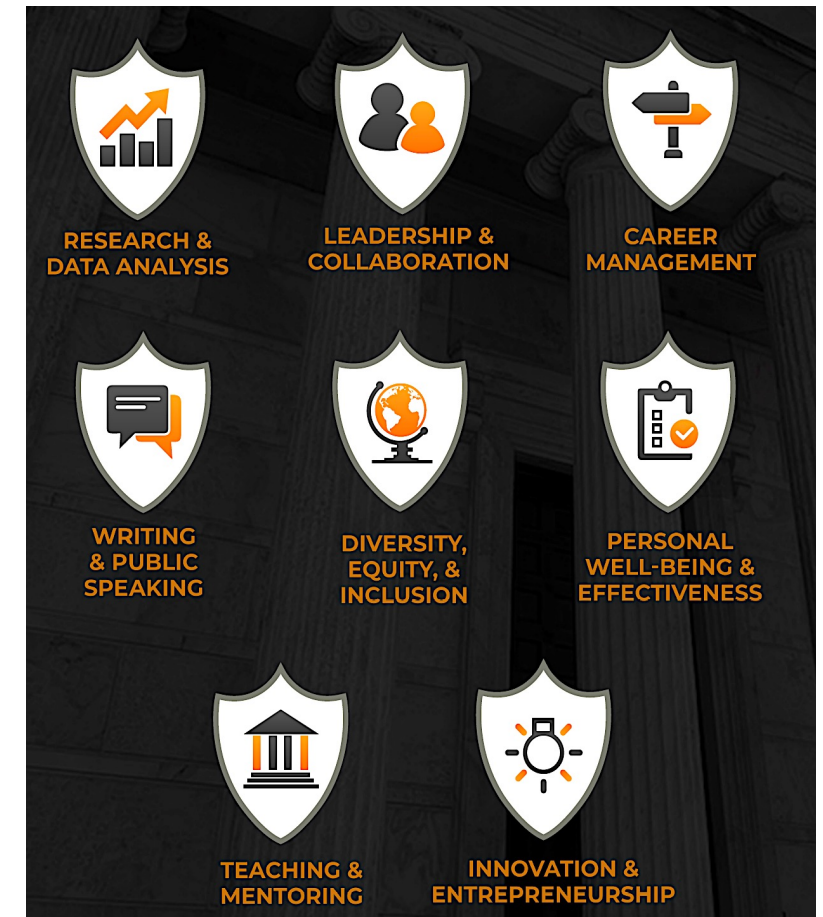


— shaped
Scholar Professionals

with deep discipline-specific
expertise PLUS transferable
interdisciplinary skills



The Princeton
Graduate School



www.gradfutures.princeton.edu

Expansive Ecosystem

Activating internal and external partnerships



Working closely with faculty to create customized, discipline-specific professional development programs and resources.



Faculty Members

Collaborating with a coalition of staff across campus with the shared goal of expanding programs, resources, and opportunities.



Campus Partners

Designing bespoke experiential learning programs in partnership with academic institutions and nonprofit, public, and private sector organizations.



Academic, Industry & Community Partners

Graduate Students



Co-creating programs and events with graduate students that reflect their unique interests, input, and innovative ideas.

Graduate Alums



Involving graduate alums as advocates and mentors to provide meaningful advice, referrals to opportunities, and inspiration.

Associations, Foundations & Government Agencies



Engaging with scholarly and praxis-based associations, foundations, and government agencies that play a role in advancing professional development for graduate students.



GradFUTURES Team



The Princeton
Graduate School

www.gradfutures.princeton.edu

Signature Programs

Offered 163 programs last year, engaging ~40% of unique graduate students



GRADUATE ALUM MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Matches current graduate students with graduate alumni mentors based on interests.

Since 2020,
1000+ graduate
students matched



CUSTOMIZED EXPERIENTIAL PROGRAMS

Curated part-time opportunities within higher ed, nonprofits, government, and the private sector

Since 2020,
800+ placements



INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING COHORTS

Cohorts examine industry and global trends, explore diverse pathways, and build professional competencies and connections. They complete a capstone project and earn a microcredential or badge.

In 2024-25, over 100+
graduate students earned
microcredentials



GRADFUTURES FORUM

Annual week-long, free professional development conference open to graduate institutions across the country and the globe.

Since 2020,
thousands of
attendees from 100+
participating
institutions



The Princeton
Graduate School

www.gradfutures.princeton.edu



CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
Office of Graduate Education

- Expanding Graduate Student Success at Clark Atlanta University
 - Reginald K. Ellis, Ph.D.
 - Dean, Office of Graduate Education



CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
Office of Graduate Education

- Atlanta University Founded in 1865 (first black degree granting institution in 1929)
 - Clark College Founded in 1867
- Consolidation of Clark College and Atlanta University 1988
- Clark Atlanta University --- One Exceptional University --- One Exceptional Brand



CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
Office of Graduate Education

- Vision:
 - **"To enhance access and opportunity for graduate learners while providing resources to ensure their matriculation and career placement."**



CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
Office of Graduate Education

- **CAU Graduate Student Success Pillars:**

- I.) Support Graduate Student Health and Wellness**

- II.) Strengthen Graduate Mentorship Opportunities**

- III) Expand Graduate Academic Writing Support**

- IV.) Amplify Graduate Advisement and Professional Development**



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CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
Office of Graduate Education



Thank you!



Discussion