



Starting 2014-15, the Diverse Educational Community and Doctoral Experience (DECADE) will be institutionalized and housed under the ADVACE program. DECADE will continue its mission to increase the number of women and underrepresented minorities receiving doctoral degrees at UCI. This publication is made possible by contributions from students serving on the DECADE Student Council.

DECADE Spring Journal Club

Written by Candice Gellner
 DECADE Education Committee Chair

Every quarter DECADE holds a journal club to encourage discussion between faculty and students on topics related to diversity issues. To foster the best type of communication about potentially controversial subjects, we focus our discussion around a paper that speaks to these diversity issues. Our most recent journal club took place at the GRC on April 27th, 2015 from 3-5pm. The paper titled, "*Graduate Students' Perceptions of Their Advisors: Is There Systematic Disadvantage in Mentorship?*" by Shiri Noy and Rashawn Ray was the topic of discussion.

The paper not only focused on describing the different type of mentors and what to expect from them, but also spoke to the way graduate students from diverse background, and women of color in particular, felt like their advisors' disrespected their personal experiences and identities. When this topic came up in discussion at the journal club, many underrepresented minority (URM) graduate students told personal stories of how their advisor dismissed their ideas when they presented them, but when their peers presented the same ideas at a later time, the professor supported them. Unfortunately this story wasn't told by just one student, but many, and speaks to the systematic disadvantage and implicit bias that URM students face in graduate school.

When faculty were asked about their mentorship experiences as graduate students, they spoke about it in a much different way; mentioning that the idea of "mentorship" is still a relatively new idea. Some spoke to the fact that mentorship was not something that they received, while others said that they sought out multiple people to help guide them through their graduate education. Faculty didn't call them "mentors," but "stealth advisors," or those people that were helping them out behind the scenes.

The idea of having multiple mentors came up a few times during the journal club. Senior graduate students spoke to the necessity of having many different people help you through your graduate experience because no one person can help you with everything. You may have your direct advisor help you with applying for funding or understanding your research, but having other mentors help you navigate the more difficult aspects of graduate school is KEY.

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The “Know-How Sessions” Creates Space for Future Scholars

Written by Mark Redondo Villegas
DECADE Recruitment Committee Co-Chair

Reflecting back at my undergraduate experience, I wish I had received advice from graduate students about graduate school. Feeling like I didn't belong in academia, I made it my mission to create spaces of opportunities and support for future thinkers. This past year as chair of the DECADE Recruitment Committee, I, together with other members of the DECADE executive council and Graduate Division, created The “Know-How Sessions” as a resource for underrepresented and first-generation undergraduate students to see academia as attainable and graduate students as relatable.

Under the auspices of DECADE and the support from Graduate Division, the “Know-How Sessions” became a series of 5 interactive seminars hosted in the Graduate Resource Center during Winter and Spring Quarters of 2015. The seminars featured 4-5 graduate students on each panel from various ethnic and disciplinary backgrounds, presenting on topics such as underrepresentation in academia, graduate school life, funding, the importance of mentorship, pursuing undergraduate research, and writing applications. A total of 30 undergraduates attended the sessions, with a couple students attending multiple sessions.

The seminars cultivated graduate students' engagement with students, peers, and staff, providing them an opportunity to practice using their communications skills that will serve them as future professionals. Likewise, the seminars provide a public forum for grad students to articulate their academic pathways, research, career goals, and the aims of their projects.

As UCI is approaching the status as a Hispanic Serving Institution, DECADE partnered with Chican@/Latin@ Graduate Student Collective (CLGSC) to help bring in an important Latin@ undergraduate constituency and activate Latin@ graduate students. Marcela Martinez, a leader in CLGSC and a Ph.D. student in Education, has been key to the success of the program. The Know-How Sessions is an example of a successful and strategic collaboration of different graduate student communities.

Through the “Know-How Sessions”, DECADE and CLGSC, graduate students are becoming proficient in developing strategies of diversifying the graduate student population, at UCI and elsewhere. They are helping to demystify academia and showing young people of all backgrounds that they too can become brilliant—and involved—scholars.



Panelists for “Who You Know Matters: Fostering Networks, Allies and Mentors” on April 21st, 2015 at GRC

Special Thanks to “Know-How” Session Presenters: Afiya Browne, Edelina M. Burciaga, Karina Corona, Marina L. Corrales, Julius Edson, Gabriela Gonzalez, Autumn C. Holmes, Karen Jallatyan, Hector Y. Martinez, Marcela Martinez, Daniel Milan, Analicia M. Mesinas, Aide M. Munoz, Wendy Ochoa, Leopoldo Peña, James B. Pratt, Ray San Diego, Tanya Sanabria, Archibaldo Silva, and Cathery Yeh

Reflections on Participating in DECADE

Written by Martín Jacinto
Member of DECADE Recruitment Committee



My path to graduate school began on the first day of UCI's Summer Competitive Edge Program. I wondered if I was capable of succeeding in graduate school. Many of my fears were rooted in my personal history as a first-generation college student. My parents were Mexican migrants with no formal education. Each new personal encounter in academia made me feel more isolated from family and friends. I had no one back home with whom to share my experiences. This feeling of seclusion exacerbated many of my insecurities. On that first day of the Competitive Edge program I was extremely anxious about how I would deal with graduate school. However, due to Competitive Edge program being a part of DECADE and the wonderful people involved, I immediately felt a sense of home and comfort that calmed my anxieties.

As the fall quarter commenced, I instantly encountered scenarios that intensified my uncertainties as a first-generation graduate student. I didn't know how to communicate with faculty, staff, and sometimes other graduate students. I often compared myself with others and faced the impostor syndrome many students in my position feel. I worked hard to compensate for what I felt were my deficiencies. I felt burnt out and constantly stressed. But I found substantive sources of encouragement with DECADE and throughout UCI that helped me cope with my stress and lack of confidence. DECADE's council meetings were platforms for me to share my experiences. I not only received great advice, but I also connected with other students who felt the same way I did.

Too often we are made to believe our feelings are unique, but I soon realized that I was not alone in my experiences. It prompted me to become more involved in DECADE in order to address the larger issue of impostor syndrome and isolation amongst graduate students of color. If I hadn't shared my history with others, I would have continued down a path of stress and insecurity that would have hindered my academic progress. Participating in DECADE-related activities such as Journal Club and Council Meetings, I was excited to involve myself in an organization seeking to address issues relevant to students from various socioeconomic backgrounds. It was clear that DECADE's mission was more than just increasing the number of students of color in doctoral degrees at UCI, but to also seek to address complex issues regarding diversity and retention.

By the end of the winter quarter, being an active member of DECADE gave me a substantial boost in confidence. Although insecurities remain, the confidence I've gained has prepared me for my academic journey. I do get stressed (because this is grad school after all), but I don't get as stressed because of the network of support I've gained. As a result of participating in DECADE, I feel a greater sense of community and home that has freed me to contribute to UCI.

Diversity Online: Communicating Success to Graduate Students

Written by Karen Jallatyan
DECADE Communications Committee Co-chair

This quarter, UCI Graduate Division and DECADE have made significant strides in communicating resources on graduate student diversity and success. Below, I are three online sites that are meant to facilitate access to professional resources among graduate students, connect them with one another, and link with the broader academic professional world. They are the **Graduate Professional Success (GPS) website**, the **Graduate Division website** and the recently created **DECADE Facebook page**.



The **UCI Graduate Professional Success (GPS)** website introduces you to the GPS initiative which is designed to help UCI graduate students develop skills to bridge their graduate and post graduate training with their future careers. By offering workshops, programs and courses, internships, professional shadowing, counseling and job search assistance, the GPS invites graduate students to take advantage of its campus wide resources to develop skills around the following competencies: communication, leadership and management, teaching, career development, ethics and responsible conduct of research and obtaining independent funding. Do yourself a favor, start planning for success by visiting the UCI GPS website now and using the great resources put at your disposal!

Next, take a chance to explore the **UCI Graduate Division website** (www.grad.uci.edu). This is a site that you as a graduate student need to familiarize yourself with and frequently visit. The UCI Graduate Division website keeps you updated about funding, academics, and graduate services. More specifically, the website features its many graduate services through the **Graduate Resource Center (GRC)**, which is just a few clicks away! The GRC offers professional development workshops and programs that include writing support, courses in communication skills, preparation of grant and fellowship applications, wellness and work-life balance, graduate mentoring and much more!

While exploring the GRC site, you can also learn about opportunities to become a mentor! For example, through the **Graduate InterConnect Program**, you can champion incoming international graduate students as well as become involved in the new graduate student orientations and contact programs offering health and wellness, recruitment and retention resources and other campus services.

Lastly, I would like to introduce the recently created **UCI DECADE Facebook page**. Before you continue reading, please go online and like this page! It is meant to serve as a platform for graduate and postdoctoral scholars, university administrators and the broader campus community to communicate events and resources, and discuss matters pertaining to diversity on our campus. We hope to connect with you through UCI DECADE Facebook page and work with you toward promoting diversity and excellence at UCI!

“Smooth Like Jazz”: Skillful Communication with Faculty Members

Written by Phong Luong, Graduate Division Counselor

Skillful communication with faculty can be difficult for many graduate students. Graduate students are often dependent on their faculty for financial support, letters of recommendations, and connections in their respective fields. As such, skillful interaction with faculty members is a prominent factor in successfully negotiating the graduate experience. In developing these skills, it may be helpful to hear from other UCI graduate students.

General tips for successful student/faculty communication for the UCI graduate student from the UCI graduate student:

- “Email is okay. Face to face is always better. Ask for options rather than sharing only your vision.”-UCI graduate student
- “Don’t just contact your professor. Make an effort to connect with them. Go to office hours, school sponsored events, invite them for lunch (but make them pay).”-UCI graduate student
- “The more times you speak with a faculty member, the more you see them as a person who just wants to help you. After a time, it becomes smooth like jazz.” -UCI graduate student
- “The fear of getting rejected or even verbally berated is still there after 4 years. I have to see rejection as a clear message that I need to refocus my work.” -UCI graduate student

Note: Diffusing a conflictual conversation can be done by validating the other person’s experience (e.g., I can understand why you might feel like that); calmly stating that professional communication and dialogue is important to you; and ask for suggestions and alternatives.

- “Perfection is unrealistic. It can be a lonely place. It’s worked better for me to openly communicate to my advisor, mentors, and peers about my strengths and weaknesses. This vulnerability allows for empathy and grace, along with feedback that generates innovation.” –UCI graduate student
- “Control over my breathing helps control the tone and pace of my voice.”-UCI graduate student
- “Language is key. The words you choose can’t create animosity.” -UCI graduate student

Note: Communicating with non-defensive language with your faculty member includes asking questions based on curiosity (e.g., What is it about this concept that’s interesting to you?); offering options and choices (e.g., I can email or meet with you in person).

- “I clearly defined my short and long-term goals with my professor.” –UCI graduate student

Note: Define course, lab, and publication expectations. Understand your funding and career options.

Using an Individual Development Plan (IDP) can facilitate the process:

www.grad.uci.edu/forms/academics/IDP_form.docx. For more funding and career information contact the Graduate Resource Center (GRC) at 949-824-3849.

It is important to respect faculty and their position, but try not to get caught up in the power dynamics. With non-defensive language, the student can take more control and initiative during any conversation. The development of skillful, “smooth like jazz” communication does not occur in the moment. The graduate student has to clarify what each faculty member’s expectations and preferences are. In that sense, preparing for the conversation is equally as important as the conversation itself. Mind your speech and then speak your mind!

For more information, contact Phong Luong, Graduate Division Counselor, pbluong@uci.edu, 949-824-0246

Congratulations to Awardees and Honorable Mentions!

Pre-Doctoral Awardees and Honorable Mentions

Awarded

Bianca M. Ceballos, 1st Year
Program: Chemistry
Advisor: Jenny Yang
NSF GFRP, 2015

Susan Gil, 1st year
Program: Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program
Advisor: Rotating
NSF GFRP, 2015

Alma Nidia Garza, 2nd year
Program: Sociology
Advisor: Cynthia Feliciano
Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, 2015

James B. Pratt, Jr., 2nd year
Program: Criminology, Law and Society
Advisor: Geoff Ward
NSF GFRP, 2015

Kirstie Salinas, 1st Year
Program: Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program
Advisor: Rotating
NSF GFRP, 2015

Honorable Mentions

Tania DoCarmo, 1st Year
Program: Sociology
Advisor: Nina Bandelj
NSF GFRP, 2015 Honorable Mention

Autumn C. Holmes, 2nd year
Program: Microbiology and Molecular Genetics
Advisor: Bert Semler
NSF GRFP, 2015 Honorable Mention
Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, 2015 Honorable Mention

Martín Jacinto, 1st year
Program: Sociology
Advisor: David Smith
Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, Honorable Mention, 2015

Monique Kelly, 2nd year
Program: Sociology
Advisor: Rubén Rumbaut
Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, 2015 Honorable Mention

Stephanie A. Pullés, 1st Year
Program: Sociology
Advisors: Susan K. Brown and Frank D. Bean
NSF GRFP, 2015 Honorable Mention

Congratulations to Awardees and Graduates!

Dissertation Awardees and Graduates

Edelina Burciaga, 5th year
 Program: Sociology
 Advisor: Cynthia Feliciano
National Science Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant
Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship

Vladimir Diaz-Ochoa
 Program: Microbiology and Molecular Genetics
 Advisor: Manuela Raffatellu
 Dissertation Title: "*Salmonella* Evades Manganese Sequestration to Overcome Oxidative Killing in the Inflamed Gut and Outgrow Commensal *Escherichia coli*"

Summer 2015 Graduate
President's Dissertation Year Fellowship (PDY), 2014-2015

Raúl Pérez
 Program: Sociology
 Advisor: David Frank
 Graduate Dissertation Title: "Navigating the Hurtline: Race in American Stand-up Comedy from Civil Rights to Color-Blindness"

Summer 2015 Graduate

Graduate Dean's Dissertation Fellowship (GDDF), 2014-2015

Aurora Pribram-Jones
 Program: Chemistry
 Advisor: Kieron Burke
 Graduate Dissertation Title: "Foundations of Thermal Time-Dependent, Ensemble, and Thermal Density Functional Theory"
Summer 2015 Graduate

Mark R. Villegas, 7th year
 Program: Culture and Theory
 Advisor: Glen Mimura
 Graduate Dissertation Title: "Savage Vernacular: Performing Race, Memory, and Hip Hop in Filipino America"
President's Dissertation Year Fellowship (PDY), 2014-2015

Menglu Yuan, 6th year
 Program: Pharmacology
 Advisor: Frances Leslie
UCI/Stanley Behrens Public Impact Fellow 2014 – 2015
ASPET Washington Fellow 2014 – 2015
CCST Science & Technology Policy Fellowship Finalist 2015
Presidential Managerial Fellows Program - STEM Finalist 2015



Vladimir Diaz-Ochoa, a summer 2015 Ph.D. graduate from the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics department at UC Irvine, has been selected as the 2015 Graduate Hooding Ceremony student speaker. Vladimir was also a past DECADE Student Council Co-Chair representing graduate students in STEM fields, mentored students in various capacities through DECADE initiatives and was a past recipient of the President's Dissertation Year Fellowship (PDY) in 2014-2015.

Congratulations on being selected as the 2015 Graduate Hooding Ceremony speaker!

Upcoming Graduate Resource Center (GRC) and DECADE Events

Mentoring Excellence Program

Graduate Resource Center

Fall dates will be announced soon. Please contact Megan Story (storym@uci.edu) for questions and more information.

The Mentoring Excellence Program (MEP) is offered quarterly to graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. This program consists of six modules focusing on skills and resources related to mentorship. Individuals who complete all six sessions receive a Certificate of Completion. Attendance is mandatory at all sessions. **Successful completion of the Mentoring Excellence Program (MEP) is required for Graduate Division positions including DECADE PLUS, Graduate InterConnect, and Summer Research Program mentors.**

DECADE Student Council Elections

Nominations are opening on Monday, June 8th! Students may self-nominate or nominate a peer they feel are well-qualified for a position on the DECADE Student Council. Descriptions of position duties and responsibilities may be found beginning June 8th in the DECADE section of the Graduate Division website (<http://grad.uci.edu/about-us/diversity/decade/index.html>).

Election Timeline:

June 8 – 24: Nominations Accepted

June 26 – July 9: Voting Period

July 16: Winners Officially Announced

DECADE Networking Lunch

Graduate Resource Center

The DECADE Community is invited to partake in this special event on July 1st at 12 noon. Current graduate students and Competitive Edge participants will have a chance to meet and network over lunch. Please RSVP to diversity@rgs.uci.edu by Wednesday, June 24th.

To receive DECADE emails, join our listserv by emailing uci-decade@uci.edu using your UCI email account.

Please forward any questions or comments to Jason Cruz (DECADE Coordinator) at diversity@rgs.uci.edu
