



# A Data-Driven Approach to Graduate Student Mental Health

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*Texas A&M University Graduate and Professional School*

*12/1/2021*

## Multi-sourced data

- University Surveys
  - New Student Surveys
  - Graduating Student Surveys
- Campus Climate Surveys (2012 and 2016)
- GradSERU

## Findings and Sharing of Findings

- Campus Climate
- Diversity
- Mental Health
- Pandemic Response
- Sense of Belonging

## Additional Input

- Meetings with Students

## Actions

- Wellness and CAPS Support
- Student-Faculty Advisor Relationships
- Connection and Community
- Professional Development and Training
- Financial Support
- Communication and Transparency



# Collecting Data

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# University Surveys



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## New Graduate Student Survey (Fall semester)

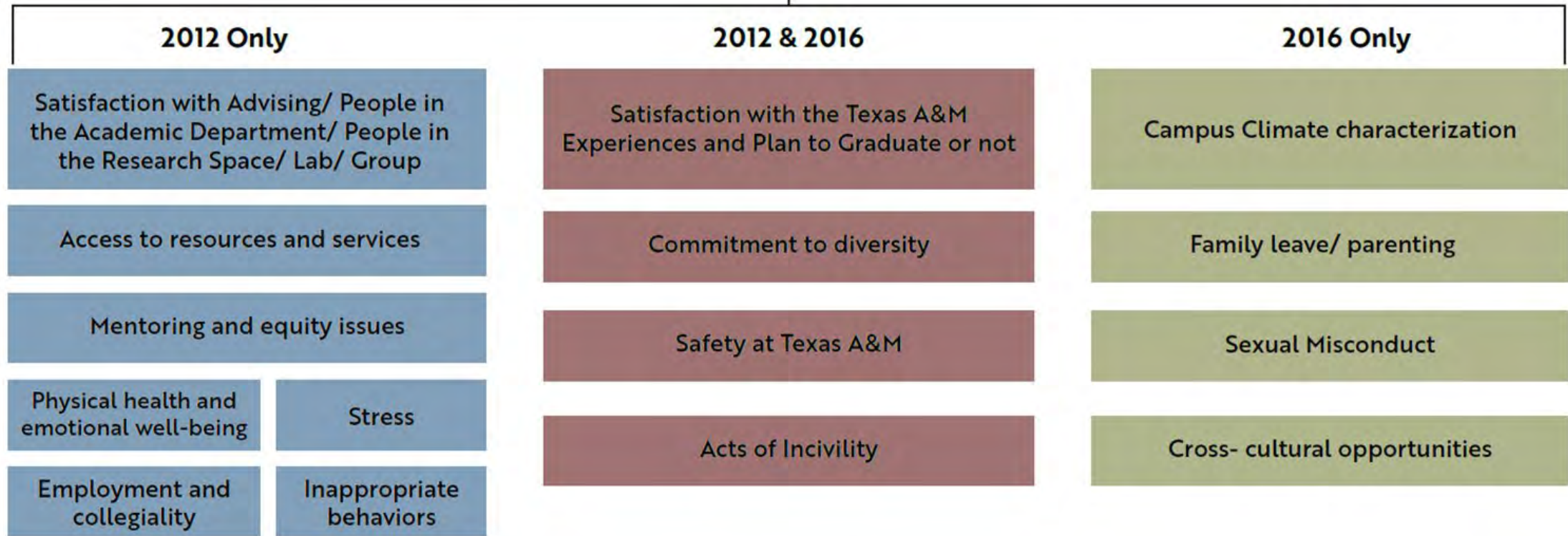
## Graduating Students Survey

- Graduating Master's  
(end of each semester)
- AAUDE Doctoral Exit  
(end of each semester)

## Campus Climate Surveys



## CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEYS





## gradSERU – Graduate Student Experience in the Research University Conducted Spring 2021



### **SERU Mission and Collaborative Approach:**

- Understanding who our students are
- Disaggregating the student experience
- Translating what we know into policy



# Findings

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## Graduate student surveys entering and departing in the Academic Year 2020 and 2021 cycles:

### New Student Responses (New Aggie Survey)

Climate/Belongingness Statements	% Agreement
Diversity and Inclusion are Important at Texas A&M.	74%
I feel welcomed at Texas A&M.	78%
I feel that I belong at Texas A&M.	73%
I feel valued as an individual at Texas A&M.	68%

### Master's Student Responses (Graduating Master's Survey)

Climate/Obstacle Statements	% Agreement
Fellow students in my program showed respect for me.	92%
Fellow students in my program showed respect for one another.	89%
I was treated with respect by faculty in my program.	91%
The social climate of my program is positive.	89%



# Commitment to Diversity



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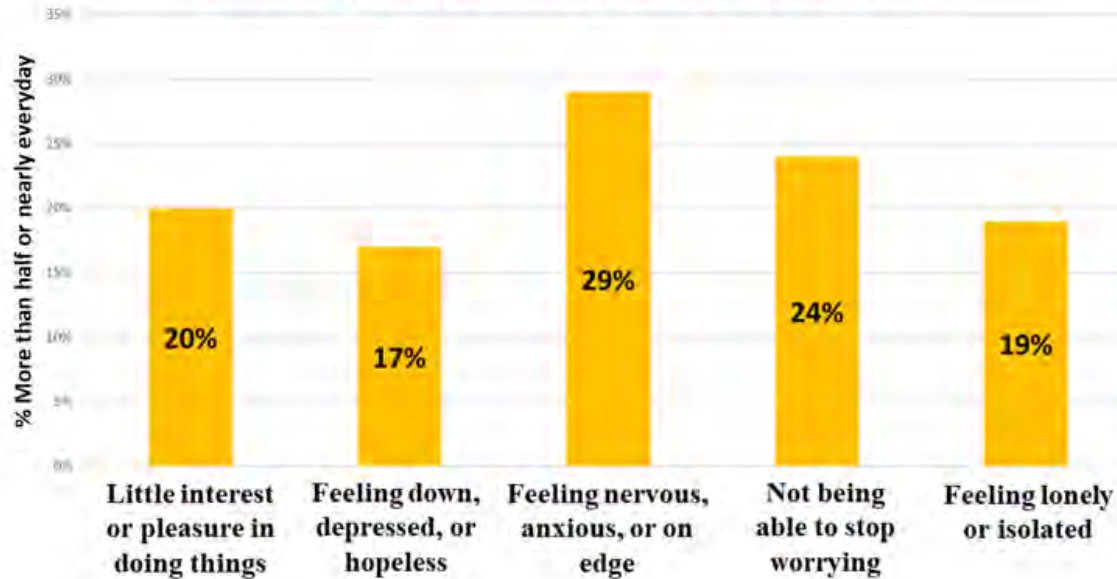
Climate Survey		gradSERU
Q: Faculty, Faculty Advisors, and Committee Chairs are committed to diversity. (% Agreement)		Q: Faculty respect students regardless of their background. (% Agreement)
2012 Year (80%)	2016 Year (63%)	2021 Year (92%)
Q: Graduate Students are committed to diversity. (% Agreement)		Q: Students respect other students regardless of their background. (% Agreement)
2012 Year (70%)	2016 Year (74%)	2021 Year (91.1%)

# Mental Health and Resource Awareness

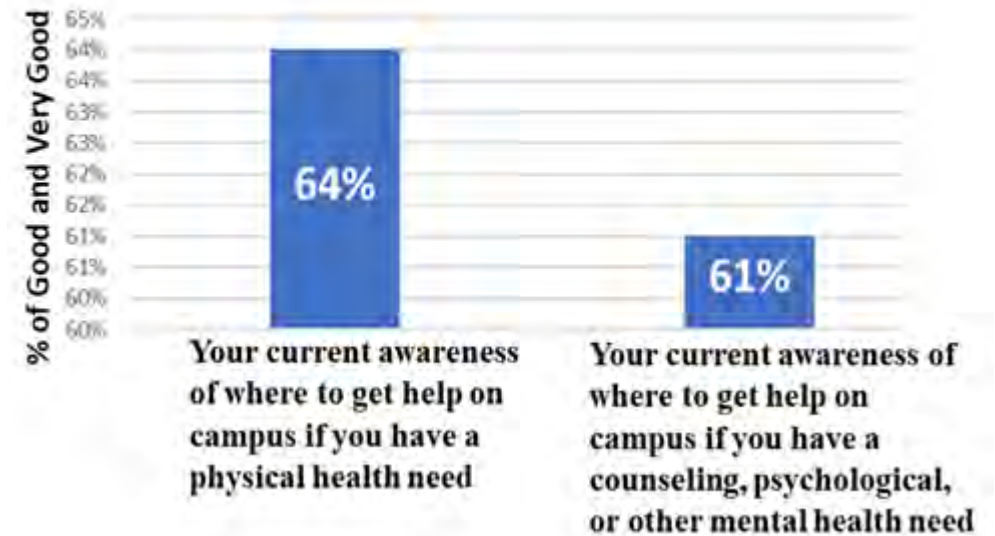


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## Anxiety, Depression, and Loneliness



## Resource Awareness



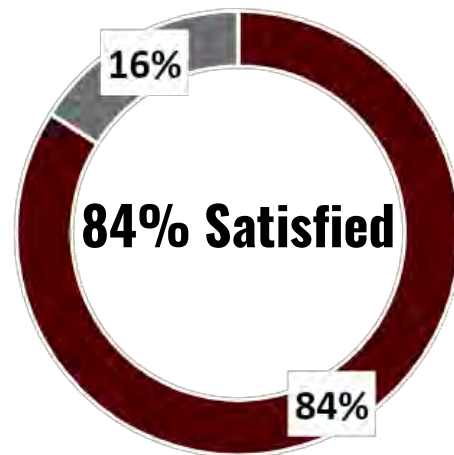
# COVID-19 Pandemic Response



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*"To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following aspects of how Texas A&M University responded to the COVID-19 pandemic during the current academic year?"*

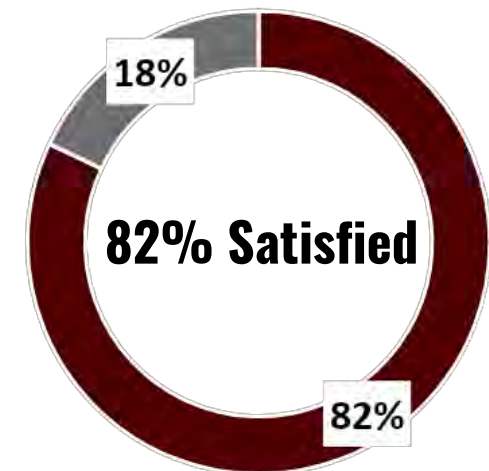
**Organization of instruction during this academic year**



**Communication from Texas A&M University about its responses to COVID-19**



**Efforts to protect health of students**



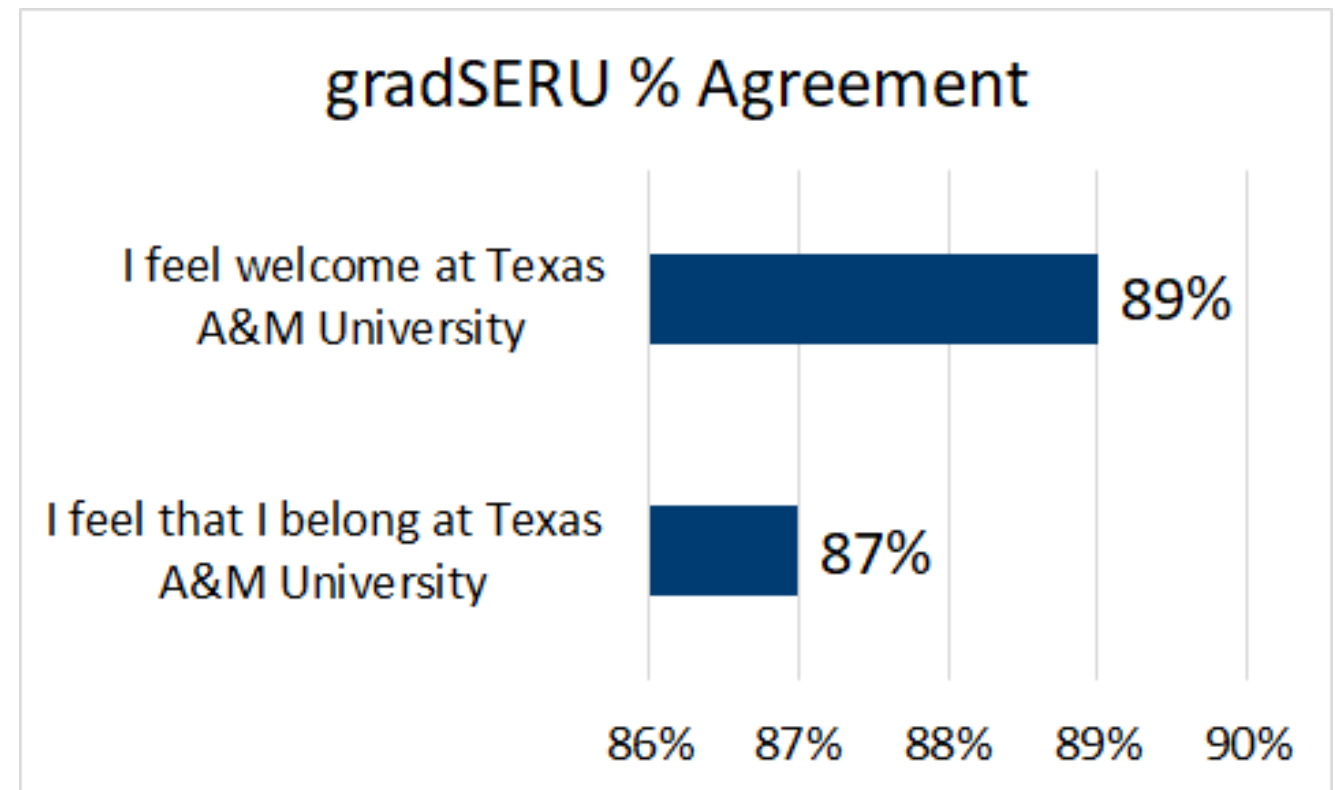
# Sense of Belonging



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## Graduate and Professional Key Performance Indicator in the TAMU 2020-2025 Strategic Plan:

*Improve graduate student climate as indicated by GradSERU climate survey for the following two metrics: (i) I feel that I belong at Texas A&M University; (ii) I feel welcome at Texas A&M University.*





# Areas of Concern



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## Major Themes for Challenges and Stressors:

1. Financial stressors
2. Student-faculty advisor relationships
3. Employment expectations
4. Wellness and mental health





# Sharing Survey Findings

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# Student Organizations



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# Administrator, Faculty and Staff Groups



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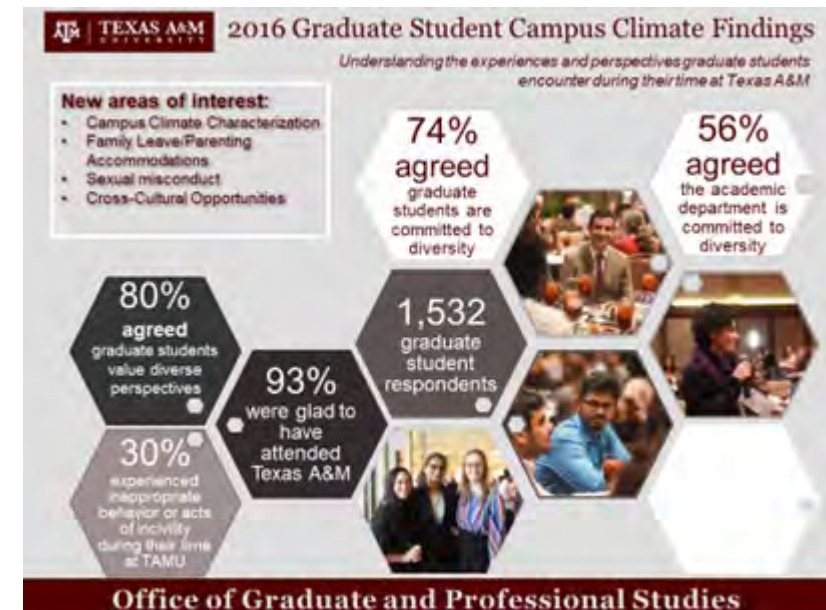
- Graduate Operations Committee Deans (Associate Deans for Graduate Studies)
- Council of Principal Investigators (Faculty Researchers Group)
- Office for Diversity
- Diversity Operations Committee (Assistant/Associate Deans for Diversity)
- Vice President for Student Affairs Leadership Team
- African American Professional Organization



## Graduate and Professional Community *Lunch and Learn* Series

### Campus-Wide Climate Presentations

- Students, Faculty, and Staff







# Additional Input

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# Meeting with Students



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- **Graduate and Professional Student Government/Grad School Forum (August 2020)**
  - Open to All Graduate Students
- **Grad School Facilitated Meeting with the President and Provost (Sept 2020)**
  - With Small Group of Graduate Students
- **CGS-JED Grad Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Town Halls (Fall 2020)**
  - Graduate Student Leadership
  - Graduate Advisors and Program Directors
- **Town Hall with Interim President and Provost (April 2021)**



# Actions in Response to Grad Student Concerns

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# Addressing Areas of Concern



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- 1) Connection and community
- 2) Communication
- 3) Financial support
- 4) Professional development and training
- 5) Counseling and Psychological Support
- 5) Wellness activities

# Example Academic College Actions



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**Agribusiness:** Published article in the MAB newsletter to communicate survey findings. Raised awareness and reiterated their commitment to a supportive community for all students.

**College of Geosciences:** Hired a Diversity Dean. Now includes diversity in performance evaluations of departmental leadership and faculty.

**Bush School of Government and Public Service:** Convened a College-Level diversity committee composed of administrators and faculty.

**GOC Deans' Pledge related to COVID delays in progress** -- Colleges and Grad School agree to:

- *Actively foster flexibility, borne out of a spirit of understanding and compassion for students*
- *Examine each student's situation individually, considering all relevant factors that may have impeded progress to degree*
- *Understand that non-academic factors (financial insecurity, travel restrictions, connectivity issues, family pressures, stress) may have impeded progress to degree*
- *Communicate with transparency and openness*
- *Recognize that impacts of spring 2020 will likely extend into future semesters*

# Wellness and Counseling and Psychological Services Support



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- Wellness Corner - Grad School Professional Development Monthly eNewsletter
- Wellness Bites - for professional development facilitators
- Grad School Community of Scholars Themes
  - Resilience in the Face of Adversity
  - Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Embedded CAPS Counselor (September 2021)



Wellness Corner

Virtual At-Risk Intervention Training





# Connection & Community



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GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL  
*cordially invites you to attend...*

**FALL 2021 LATINX GRADUATE STUDENT,  
FACULTY AND STAFF COMMUNITY MIXER**  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2021

Register here:  


**Networking Social**  
5:30 - 7:30 p.m. CDT | MSC RM 2300 D & E  
In collaboration with the  
Latinx Graduate Student Association  
(LGSA)

\*Business casual attire required



**SUMMER 2021  
EVENTS**

**CELEBRATING GRADUATE &  
PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS**

Info and registration:  
[u.tamu.edu/CoS2021](http://u.tamu.edu/CoS2021) 

**COMMUNITY  
of SCHOLARS** 

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9th 7:00 PM <b>MOVIE NIGHT</b> 📍 SIMPSON DRILL FIELD	MONDAY, JUNE 21st 6:30 AM <b>YOGA CLASS</b> 📍 TEXAS A&M GARDENS
TUESDAY, JULY 13th 7:30 - 9:30 AM <b>GRAB N' GO BREAKFAST</b> 📍 ACADEMIC PLAZA	WEDNESDAY, JULY 28th 6:00 - 8:00 PM <b>ART AND MUSIC EVENT</b> 📍 TEXAS A&M GARDENS

- BGSA/LatinX Mixers
- Howdy Week event
- New Graduate Student Orientation
- Grad School Football Game Tailgate
- Community of Scholars Dinner and Dialogue

GRADUATE AND  
PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

**FALL 2021  
NEW GRADUATE  
STUDENT  
ORIENTATION**

August 20th & 27th, 2021  
Memorial Student Center &  
Rudder Theater Complex

Be on the lookout for additional information soon!  
Open to all new graduate students.

**Graduate & Professional Student  
Ice Cream  
Social**



# Financial Support



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- Mandate that university tuition & fees be paid for PhD graduate assistants
- Reimbursement of employer insurance contribution for new hires
- Mini-Grants for GSOs to organize innovative networking and PD opportunities



- Collaboration with GOC Deans to identify and fund PhD students delayed by COVID for the next few years
- Increase Emergency Funding opportunities for graduate students

# Improving Student-Faculty Advisor Relationships



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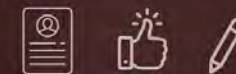
Graduate Ombuds Officer  
Individual Development Plan Workshops  
Student-Advisor Compact  
Graduate Mentoring Academy  
Doctoral Student Profile and Feedback System



Graduate Mentoring  
Academy

Graduate and  
Professional School

The Doctoral Student Profile and Feedback System



*Presented by the Graduate and Professional School*



Graduate and Professional School



# Expanding Career Center Graduate Services



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## Career Fair

Get ready for the Career Fair with our detailed game plan



## Resume & Cover letter

Learn to write a compelling Resume, CV and Cover letter



## Jobs & Internships

Explore various resources to find a job or internship



## Interviews & Offers

Tips and tricks for your different interviews



## Networking & LinkedIn

Networking opportunities and rock your LinkedIn



## Virtual Resources

Use our online resources to stay ahead of the curve

# Communication & Transparency



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Work with the Provost to ensure:

- Graduate Assistants with teaching responsibilities receive all messages related to instruction, and
- Graduate Assistants are considered in decision-making about instructors

Keeping communications regular and open with graduate and professional students

Slate CRM -- Target Specific Graduate Student Audiences for Relevant Messages

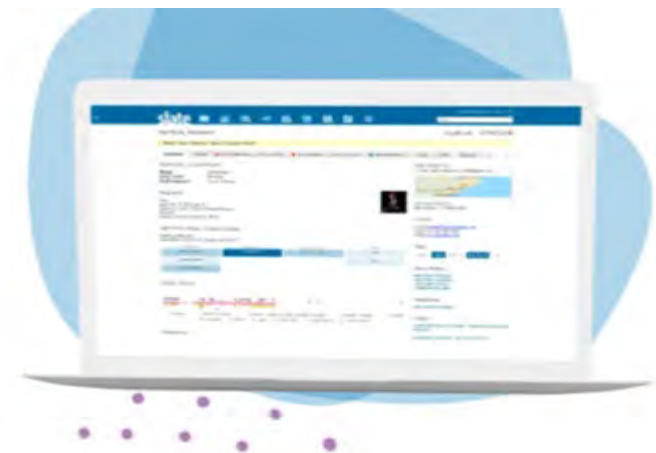


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Professional School



**Howdy Andrew,**

On October 5, 2021, Interim Provost Tim Scott sent a **message to faculty and graduate students with teaching responsibilities** to address the concerns of several college deans and department heads about instructors who fail to teach their courses in the face-to-face format advertised during preregistration. That message provides guidance



Graduate and Professional School



STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

ELEVATE

Graduate and professional education

- Attract, develop, support, and graduate outstanding and diverse graduate and professional students
- Nurture a diverse, inclusive, and respectful environment between faculty, staff, and students:
  - Address climate and culture issues proactively and improve transparency and accountability
- Develop infrastructure and learner support services:
  - Ensure a high-quality digital learning environment, foster graduate and professional community, and propagate the “Aggie” experience for all students

- Leading campus initiatives to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion to foster a sense of community among students in the graduate school
- Enhancing professional development opportunities
- Collaborating with service offices to meet the needs of graduate and professional students
  - Aggie One Stop
  - Well-being and support resources



**SUPPORT**  
students'  
wellbeing and  
meaningful  
experiences



# Questions?

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