

Project Title Cultivating Diversity and Inclusion in Academia: Applying to Graduate School Workshop Series

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What are you proposing to do and how will you do it?

(a) We are proposing to host a series of open workshop sessions for underrepresented undergraduate students interested in applying to graduate school programs. These workshops will require students to complete a portfolio, and will discuss crucial steps for successfully preparing for graduate school applications including sessions on: Graduate Readiness Exam (GRE) preparation, asking for letters of recommendation, identifying undergraduate research opportunities, creating a curriculum vitae (CV), establishing a faculty and/or graduate student mentor, identifying best fit programs, writing a statement of purpose and personal history statement and other important topics. This will give students, who do not necessarily have access to graduate prep courses a chance to be exposed to and prepare for graduate school earlier.

(b) Program specific – Students who are admitted to the program will also be required to create a body of work that will serve as their primary writing sample for their graduate school portfolio. Graduate programs commonly ask for some body of writing that exemplifies mass communication skills and showcases their ability to think critically. While different programs may have different requirements for acceptable writing samples, students will be required to identify and complete the most commonly accepted body of writing for their desired graduate program (i.e. research proposal/paper, grant proposal, meta-analysis, etc.) Students will have one year to complete their writing sample. If students applying to programs with a research do complete a research project, they will be required to submit their project to the UC Merced Spring Research Symposium or a similar UC Merced hosted event that is readily accessible to students.

(c) Content will be tailored for students of color who are underrepresented in academia (i.e. Black, Latinx, LGBTQ+), first-generation, non-traditional and transfer students in order to bridge the gap for graduate degree attainment. Sessions may also be useful for staff and master's students who are also interested in applying for graduate school. We will ensure that we foster a supportive and inclusive environment. We will create a course webpage using CatCourses or Weebly to ensure students have access regardless of class and/or work schedule.

How will the program contribute to and enhance UC Merced's campus climate as a more equitable and inclusive place to study, research and work?

As UC Merced is a Hispanic and minority serving institution, there is a need for culturally tailored, linguistically accessible opportunities for professional development and engaged research and learning. According to UC Merced's most recent data reports from fall 2018, 73.2% of undergraduates are first-generation and of these 89.9% are International students, 87.3% are Hispanic, and 56.1% are African American/Black. Transfer students are included in

the 73.2% are often excluded from programming that is designed for undergraduates starting their freshman year. Our proposed program will not only serve as a bridge for those students who may be first in their families to attend a higher institution and who experience financial, language and learning barriers, but will also allow a safe space for students to ask questions and learn about possibilities after receiving their bachelor's degree. This program may also support retention efforts as students will be connected with a graduate student and faculty member in their field(s) of interest and information about research/internships will be shared when available. Students will also be connected with peers interested in graduate school and be able to network with each other on and off campus and other graduate students, staff and faculty. Campus climate will be enhanced as undergraduates will be more informed about life beyond undergraduate and be aware of opportunities to produce competitive graduate school applications and conduct scholarly research.

Describe how this project is a new, high impact, collaborative, experimental and/or sustainable approach to enhancing and/or addressing an area of campus climate.

(a) This project is a sustainable approach to addressing equity in access to information and opportunities for students of color. Although there are opportunities for students to research and prepare for graduate school on campus (i.e. UROC, UC Leads), slots in these programs are few and require students to be available during specific periods during the summer and throughout the semester that are not feasible for all students.

(b) Current graduate school preparation programs do not address the social and financial hurdles often faced by minority students who desire higher education. Our proposed program allows students to participate in workshops tailored to navigating social stigma, pursuing social/financial resources available to minority graduate students, networking and collaborating with other organizations/individuals who promote minority representation, and other topics that foster inclusion for underrepresented individuals to graduate program pursuit.

(c) Additionally, our program will allow students an opportunity to find research, writing and/or internship experiences that fit their schedule and they will have an opportunity to present their ideas and work to peers. This project has the potential to reach students, staff and faculty, enhancing opportunities for collaboration and mentorship.

Describe the expected difference(s) the project will make on the issues addressed, the audience(s) it will serve and the number of people it will affect. (Proposals must describe and include supporting impact data from documented climate surveys, findings or statistics.)

(a) Based UC Merced data available on undergraduate major/program, the majority of students are studying for a degree in Biological Sciences, Computer Science & Engineering, Psychology, Mechanical Engineering and Management and Business (Fall 2018). We will use this information to ensure that workshop and program content provided covers majors/subject areas that students wish to consider a graduate degree in. This approach has the potential to reach a majority of students, whether they can attend in-person workshops or refer to the online resources. However, all students will be encouraged to tailor content from our program to the specific needs of their pursued graduate school program.

(b) GRE preparation courses are usually expensive and at hours that do not work for everyone.

Preparing for this exam can be very stressful, especially for students who feel ill-prepared and overwhelmed. Our program will pull together available free resources for students to use and access in order to prepare for the GRE. A three-part GRE workshop will be provided, one for each standard exam type: quantitative reasoning, verbal reasoning and analytical writing.

How will the project bring together two or more campus entities, advance mutual goals and/or share knowledge? Specifically identify how the project will be integrated into the activities of teaching, research or public service.

(a) The program's primary intent is to increase individual students' graduate school preparedness to be able to go attend graduate school at UC Merced as well as other graduate programs. Obstacles minority and first-generation students often face are limited knowledge about necessary graduate school components during undergrad and thus limited access to graduate programs. Our program is specifically designed help students with limited access gain the necessary tools and introductory experiences to be able to pursue higher education anywhere in the country.

(b) The entire program's emphasis is building graduate school readiness through mentorship. Identifying a graduate student or faculty mentor is serve as representative examples for students who desire similar positions and fields of work, which bridges the gap between what underserved students may believe is possible and having to tools necessary to achieve their goals. are also If an aim of the university is truly inclusion, this aim should reach beyond UC Merced campuses and impact the world. Graduate student acceptance should be representative of the minority students that exists on the UCM campus.

(c) The proposed program also provides current graduate students and faculty who are interested in individual teaching and mentorship the opportunity to work with students readily interested in conducting research and pursuing graduate school.

Describe the leadership, capacity and qualifications of the individual or group to implement the project. (Proposal specifically describes the leadership, capacity and qualifications of the individual or group to implement the project and specifically describes how each individual will implement the components of the project. Project Managers are in good standing with the University.)

Leadership:

Tashelle Wright (project manager) and Avia Gray (project co-manager) will develop and lead the workshop sessions for the duration of the program – fall 2019 to spring 2020. Tashelle and Avia will develop session content, schedule space(s) for meetings, contact guest speakers and identify research and internship opportunities for undergraduate students. Both Tashelle and Avia will facilitate in-person workshops. We have both held leadership positions at UC Merced and our previous institutions (i.e. GSA, GDACD, Black Student Union/Association, Latinos in Action, Psychology Club, Women in STEM).

Capacity:

As of fall 2019, Tashelle will be a fourth-year doctoral graduate student and Avia will be a third-year graduate student. Both will be able to dedicate on average 5 hours/week to

developing workshop content and managing the site that content is posted on for students.

Qualifications:

Tashelle is a first-generation undergraduate and graduate students in Public Health whose research emphasizes how oral health disparities and tobacco use intersect. Avia is a first-generation doctoral student in Health Psychology whose research promotes chronic illness psychosocial health and racial inclusivity in psychosocial research. Both students participated as McNair Scholars at their previous institutions, a program specifically designed to foster diversity and inclusivity in graduate school pursuit for people from recognized minority groups. As McNair Scholars, they each completed two summers of research at the undergraduate level and participated in similar workshop sessions described in this proposal (i.e. how to develop a CV and statement of purpose, GRE preparation, networking). Tashelle graduated with a Bachelor's in Public Health, minor in Neuroscience. Avia graduated with a Bachelors in Psychology and a Masters in Psychological Research. Collectively we were accepted to 13 number of graduate programs. We are each have connections with graduate students and faculty in different disciplines than our own. We are teach, mentor and conduct research with undergraduate students at UC Merced.

Describe how likely the project is to be continued and incorporated or replicated by other organizations on campus and demonstrate why. (Demonstration of likelihood is supported with facts.)

We hope that this program will become sustainable and be inclusive of all students on campus, especially for those who traditionally would not have the privilege to attend graduate school related programming and those who are not sure about graduate education due to first-generation or low-income status. This has the potential to continue via an on campus club or housed within the Bright Success Center.

Provide the full timeline – from start to completion – for the project.

July 2019:

(a) Submit IRB for this workshop series and identify 1-2 speakers/panelists for fall and 1-2 speakers/panelists for spring.

Recruit interested and eligible students by emailing current UCM faculty in across various campus:

(i) Low income or

(ii) Identifies as a someone from a nationally recognized minority group (i.e. racial, sexual/sexually oriented, financial, or health minority)

(iii) Must be junior/senior status undergraduates or a Masters student. Not open to freshmen, sophomores or doctoral students. Students in their final year of school (seniors and final year Masters students) will be notified of the program's prospective timeline to ensure their time spent will be relevant to their respective graduate programs' timelines. Students who are seniors and final year Masters students are not disqualified from participation because the workshops is designed to improve their graduate applications, which are useful skills anytime the student decides to apply.

(c) Acquire GRE vouchers.

(i) Students eligible for GRE vouchers must also submit a completed graduate school application. All students may participate in the GRE workshops, however only students seniors in their final year, actively applying to graduate schools will be eligible for vouchers.

(ii) A portion of grant funding will be used to support GRE materials.

August 2019:

(a) GRE workshop – As graduate applications for some programs are due in early November, we wanted to give students who are preparing to apply in Fall 2019 the maximum time allotted to take and retake the GRE throughout the year as necessary. (Make it a retreat and use funding here?)

(1) Introduction to graduate school applications, graduate school and reference website (weebly or CatCourses), (2) students will identify goals and create a timeline of tasks for applying and (3) distribution of GRE preparation materials (quantitative reasoning, verbal reasoning, analytical writing). Note: It is important that students start this process early to provide adequate time for GRE prep, asking for letters of recommendation, identifying research/internship opportunities and developing required application documents.

(b) Students will identify their graduate student or faculty advisor and begin their graduate school writing sample. ***Seniors and final year Masters students will be encouraged to improve upon a body of writing with their respective mentors.

September 2019:

(a) Intro to Graduate School Applications: Letters of Recommendation

(b) Intro to Graduate School Applications: Personal Statement/Proposal Statement Workshop CV Building Workshop

(c) Writing sample ideas are due Sept. 31st. ***Seniors and final year Masters students will be encouraged to improve upon a body of writing with their respective mentors.

October 2019:

(a) Intro to Graduate School Applications: CV Building Workshop

(b) Writing the Introduction Workshop – Students are expected to continue to work with their mentor. ***Seniors and final year Masters students will be encouraged to improve upon a body of writing with their respective mentors.

November 2019 – December 2019:

(a) Graduate school applications due for those applying for 2020–2021 admissions.

(b) Writing the Body Workshop – ***Seniors and final year Masters students will be encouraged to improve upon a body of writing with their respective mentors.

(c) Networking Workshop #1: Choosing a Graduate Faculty Mentor and Connecting with Current Students

(i) Will cover how to effectively choose a mentor in graduate school and reaching out to graduate students at their desired programs.

(ii) Guest Speaker

January 2020:

- (a) Writing the Discussion/Conclusion Workshop – ***Seniors and final year Masters students will be encouraged to improve upon a body of writing with their respective mentors.
- (b) Building a Professional Conference Presentation Workshop

February 2020:

- (a) Choosing Your Graduate Program Workshop – For those admitted into graduate programs (and those applying next year) we will hold at least one session on “choosing your graduate program”, which will discuss factors to consider when making decisions about where to go after acceptance.
- (b) Meet-up: work on completing research projects and completing research presentations.

March 2020:

- (a) Professional Networking and Outreach Workshop – Will include strategies on how to find internal, external, national, and local funding/resources available to graduate students
- (b) Participate/attend various events during UC Merced’s Annual Research Week.
- (c) Meet-up: work on completing research projects and completing research presentations.

April 2020:

- (a) Meet-up: work on completing research projects and completing research presentations.
- (b) Career Development Workshop – preparing for the job market

May 2020:

A small reception and celebration for active participants. This will also be an opportunity to undergraduate students to share their work via a presentation or poster. This event will be open to the campus, including faculty and the community.

What are your project goals and expected outcomes?

Short-term goals: Students will have a completed graduate school portfolio for use in actual graduate school applications. Students are expected to create a CV, complete graduate school applications, acquire letters of recommendation. The portfolio will serve as their template for current and continuing graduate school applications, beyond their time in our program. We expect students to use this opportunity to have applicable skills and tools for graduate school.

- (a) Professionally, students must also have a completed research study for presentation that most appropriately fits with their desired graduate programs line of interest. Students who are able to carry out their study will be required to submit a presentation to the UC Merced Annual Spring Research Symposium or other UC Merced sponsored research conference.

Long-term goals: We hope all our students are able to acquire the tools and skills learned from

workshops and program participation and successfully gain entry to graduate school programs.

What is your definition of success? How will you measure it?

(a) Successful completion of the portfolio and a research proposal will serve as objective evidence progress is made towards graduate school entry preparation.

(b) Objective outcomes of our proposed program's success include: program completion, research proposal completion, graduate program acceptance rates (including 1-year post-measures of graduate program acceptance rates), increased "graduate school readiness" as measured by through self-reported survey measures pre- and post-program participation, number of completed portfolio components (e.g. completed graduate program application, CV, letters of recommendation, etc.)

(c) Students will also be asked to give reviews prior to and following completion of the proposed program detailing their knowledge and expectations of graduate school, and whether the program increased knowledge and met those expectations. Responses indicating whether students found the program helpful or unhelpful will also be recorded as indication of the program success or failure. Students will be asked general reactions to the program, improvements for future program designs, and specific reactions to whether individual program components were helpful to their applying (e.g. workshops, weekly meetings, research presentations, etc.)

(d) Additionally, students will be measured on "graduate school readiness" prior to beginning the program and after one-year completion. This will be a self-reported indication that students either did or did not feel like the program actually increased knowledge, abilities, skills necessary for applying to graduate programs. Improvements in graduate school readiness will reflect better graduate school readiness, which is a marker for our program.

What tools will you use to collect the data needed to measure the progress and success of each expected outcome? When will you use them?

(a) The Graduate School Readiness Survey will serve as a measure progress and will be distributed before the sat and and after completing the program. (Huss, Randall, Patry, Davis, & Hansen, 2002; Neimeyer, Lee, Saferstein, & Pickett, 2004;

<http://www.smcm.edu/psychology/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2014/10/grad-prep.pdf>)

(b) Completed graduate portfolio items

(c) Participant reviews

(d) Brief surveys before and after each session that will be used for a final report at end of the program. Demographics will be collected each workshop.

~~Project sponsoring unit~~ Leave this field blank

UC Merced Sponsor Health Sciences Research Institute (HSRI)

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Budget form [wright_2019-20_dei_grant_budget_form.xlsx](#)

Application form (if submitting a PDF)