DEAN’S MESSAGE

In the midst of a very cold winter, I would like to extend a warm greeting to all of our graduate students, faculty, and staff. The budget forecast from Springfield is chilly, too. The effects will be felt in the number and value of major fellowships offered; however, I am confident that our proactive planning will allow us to weather the storm. To offset the literal and figurative chill, proactive planning will allow us to weather the storm. To offset the literal and figurative chill, we have many exciting initiatives this semester.

Internal Fellowships

After a trial period of increased stipend levels ($25,000) for our major awards—the Abraham Lincoln Fellowship (ALF), the University Fellowship (UF), and the Dean’s Scholar Award (Dean’s)—we are scaling back the award amounts while increasing the overall support for our well-deserving graduate students. The new funding mechanism calls for $22,000 stipends in years one and four of our major recruitment fellowships (ALF and UF). The student’s home department or program will provide funding for years two and three. In addition, the Graduate College will augment or “top off” the departmental funding with up to $6,000 annually to reach $22,000. Tuition and partial fee waivers will be provided for all four years. Additionally, this year we are excited to implement the new, four-year STAR Awards for the crème de la crème of the recruitment round. Up to one student from each of the four disciplinary divisions—Behavioral and Social Sciences; Engineering, Math, and Physical Sciences; Fine Arts and Humanities; and Life Sciences—will receive four years of stipend ($22,000) along with tuition and partial fee waivers.

Per usual, funds released by non-matriculating recruitment fellowships will be pooled to fund one-year Abraham Lincoln and the Dean’s awards. These retention awards offer the same stipend with tuition and partial fee waiver explained above.

The current issue of GradInfo is full of useful information for graduate students, faculty, and staff. Below is a brief summary:

Recruitment and Diversity Initiatives

This term William Walden, Associate Dean for Inclusion and Diversity in the College of Medicine, and I submitted a $2 million NIH grant for the creation of a post-baccalaureate research education program for underrepresented individuals. Additionally, our recruiter has been extremely active at the local and national level. Lastly, we are proud to host this year’s Illinois African American and Latino Higher Education Alliance Diversity Dialogue and Research Forum on April 15th.

External Opportunities

Marie Khan, our External Fellowships Coordinator, assists numerous graduate students in finding and obtaining external funding. In fact, she reports that 119 students secured over $2 million in support for this academic year. UIC graduate students are reminded to take advantage of the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange, which allows them to take classes at Northwestern University and the University of Chicago while paying only the usual UIC tuition and fees (if applicable).

Graduate Student Appreciation

In addition to a new LinkedIn page, an ongoing premium subscription to Versatile PhD, and a new weekly writing session, the Graduate College has organized a week-long smorgasbord of activities during its inaugural Graduate Student Appreciation Week, March 9-13. Spearheaded by Theresa Christenson-Caballero, Assistant Director of Graduate Student Outreach and Career Development, there will be free meals, workshops, panel discussions, and informational sessions.

Stellar Staff

In December, we received confirmation of the obvious fact that the Graduate College’s yearman administrator, Executive Assistant Dean Steve Kragon, is invaluable. He was awarded one of only six Chancellor’s Academic Professional Excellence (CAPE) Award. Congratulations, Steve!

Counseling Services

Recent conversations with faculty and students have demonstrated that many people across campus do not realize that UIC boasts a robust Counseling Center staffed with friendly licensed and board certified psychologists and psychiatrists as well as paraprofessionals and a social worker. It is time to remove the stigma of taking advantage of mental health services. Furthermore, they are free!

Even though snow is falling as I write these words, I am confident that spring will arrive soon!

Karen J. Colley
Dean and Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics
The Graduate College is excited to present our first annual Graduate Student Appreciation Week March 9 – March 13, 2015. This week celebrates the more than 4,000 graduate students who play an essential role at UIC. The week of March 9th will consist of a week-long series of events where UIC graduate students will have the opportunity to participate in sessions that cultivate professional and career development as well as academic success. Students will also enjoy fun social events including giveaways, massages, meals, and personal wellness activities.

Highlights for the week include a Personal Branding and Professional Networking Workshop. Facilitators will guide students through effective networking techniques, as well as improve their marketability for future jobs. There will be additional workshops on improving graduate student writing, learning about college teaching, and submitting successful fellowship applications. A dinner and dialogue program will take place in the middle of the week with the Gender and Sexuality Center where students will discuss topics of affirming identities over dinner in an informal setting. Career and professional development sessions include a Professional Development Plan Workshop where students will devise a strategy for their own individual development plans for the completion of graduate study and beyond. Free professional photo headshots will be offered at the LinkedIn Labs session, and students will be guided through improving their professional social networking profiles. We are also very excited for our #Alt-Academy—Alternative Career Paths for Graduate Students Panel. This interactive panel and discussion will help students think about possible career options that exist for PhDs outside of the academy. Panelists from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds will talk about their journeys, struggles, and successes in Alt-Academic careers.

In addition to the appreciation events in March, the Graduate College hosts a number of other programs and workshops. In February, students attended “What’s Love Got To Do With It? Relationships and Communication Workshop” as well as Thesis and Dissertation Submission Info Sessions and a Graduate Student Excursion to the Shedd Aquarium. In March, we will be collaborating with the Campus Advocacy Network to offer a Bystander Awareness training and have multiple events that tackle graduate student stress and wellness. In April, students can attend the CV Doctor Workshop and CV/Résumé Review Session. We will also offer a presentation on Giving an Effective Research Talk and a panel discussion on Parenthood and Academia. Monthly coffee hours, community events, and additional outings to museums will continue take place this semester.

Registration information about our workshops and programs can be found at http://grad.uic.edu/graduate-college-events-and-workshops. For any questions, please contact Theresa Christenson-Caballero, Assistant Director of Graduate Student Outreach and Career Development at tchris1@uic.edu.
**“GET YOUR WRITE ON!” – THE NEW WEEKLY WRITING SESSION**

In Fall 2014, the Graduate College, inspired by writing-intensive initiatives staged by UIC’s Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy (CUPPA), created the “Get Your Write On!” quiet writing space. Promising a table, wifi, coffee, and quietude in SSB 2790, the Graduate College’s auxiliary space, the bi-weekly event was opened to graduate students working on their thesis or dissertation. Interest was acute with the twelve seats filled quickly by students in Art History; Communication; Computer Science; Disability Studies; History; Kinesiology; Managerial Studies; Psychology; Special Education; and Urban Planning.

The approach is no frills. As one student remarked, “Sometimes the simplest things are the best.” On dedicated Mondays, organizer Benn Williams, Assistant Director of Interdisciplinary Programs and Development, offers coffee while students bring their own mug, laptop, books, headphones, and determination to write/edit their manuscript(s) for three hours.

The impact has been positive and immediate. One PhD student in history remarked: “I now have an outline for my dissertation prospectus after this one [session].” Other students expressed gratitude, e.g., “Thank you, thank you, thank you! This is exactly what I needed!” and “In a nutshell, thank you for providing a very comfortable environment to help us graduate students write.” In fact, some students arrive fifteen minutes early and a third must be kicked out at noon, confirming another student’s comment: “This is the kind of group I need. No distractions. No pressure. I haven’t stayed that completely focused for three straight hours in a long time. I actually wanted to stay longer!”

A survey of graduate students indicated strong preference for weekly meetings, and so this schedule has been adopted for Spring 2015. All seats are filled, but students are welcome to contact Benn Williams to join the wait list and show continued demand for the program.

**THE VERSATILE PHD**

Today’s graduate students must think “outside of the box” when it comes to their employment after graduating from UIC as the tenure-track positions held by their mentors is only one of several likely opportunities. To assist with the exploration of non-teaching employment, the Graduate College has undertaken a number of initiatives, including the hiring of a dynamic Assistant Director of Graduate Student Outreach and Career Development (see related article) and paying for an institutional membership to the online resource called The Versatile PhD.

Founded and led by Dr. Paula Chambers, Versatile PhD provides non-academic career information for PhD students and postdocs in the humanities, social sciences, and STEM disciplines. It is more than just a website, however. VersatilePhD.com is a portal to options other than tenure-track academic careers. It has a PhD Career Finder that lists and describes non-academic careers by discipline; a vibrant community where students can get support and advice; authentic résumés and cover letters that helped PhDs land their first non-academic jobs; inside information on specific careers; and a Power Search feature that connects students with non-academic contacts and mentors.

Recent topics in the humanities and social sciences forum included: “insight into the federal hiring system,” “data analyst,” “need help... encouragement,” “consulting,” teaching at private secondary schools.” Recent topics in the STEM forum included “LinkedIn profiles,” “connections between doing science and doing art,” and “transitioning to climate change field.”

There is also a Versatile meet-up group here in Chicago with monthly meetings held downtown at Howells & Hood, 435 N. Michigan Avenue.

The Graduate College-paid subscription allows anyone with a valid UIC netid (including alumni for up to one year after graduation) to access ALL of the site’s content and features. Students can feel safe because the site is completely confidential; no identifying information is reported to others or to UIC, and UIC does not track or identify users. To access the premium content and features on the site, login is required through the UIC Access to The Versatile PhD Premium Content link.

“An excellent resource. So great to communicate with people going through the same process. I particularly like the honesty in the discussions about members’ trials going through the degree process. I have had some of my own! Reading the stories by other members helped me to put my experience in perspective and find some peace with what I was going through.” —Actual VPhD user
The Office of Recruitment and Diversity Affairs maintains an extensive recruitment schedule, locally and nationally, designed to highlight the many excellent graduate opportunities at UIC. Recruitment efforts during the last year included visits to several Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions (including some in Puerto Rico), and Tribal Colleges. Additionally, the Graduate College is a participant in the Urban Health Program (UHP), which is designed to increase and retain the number of African American, Latino, and Native American students in graduate health degree programs. Much of the recruitment schedule was intended to fulfill the GC UHP mission.

Recruitment highlights include:

- The 2014 CMEP McNair Week, which, in collaboration with the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, attracted 65 prospective applicants from 12 universities, who visited all three campuses across three days.
- Continued participation in the National Name Exchange (NNE), a consortium of over 50 national universities, which annually collect and exchange the names of their talented underrepresented minority students in an effort to increase their enrollment in graduate education. During the 2014-2015 NNE cycle, over 150 UIC undergraduates registered to be part of the exchange.
- The Graduate College provided over 170 UIC application fee waivers for eligible students applying for graduate study at UIC for fall 2015 matriculation. The majority of these underrepresented minority students had participated in programs like McNair, MARC, RISE, and/or were Pell grant recipients.

Illinois African American and Latino Higher Education Alliance (IALHEA) Diversity Dialogue and Research Forum

The Graduate College is an active participant in planning and supporting the Illinois African American and Latino Higher Education Alliance (IALHEA) Diversity Dialogue and Research Forum. The forum is intended to showcase the scholarly work of underrepresented students from Illinois. The goals of the Research Forum are to increase faculty student research collaborations; facilitate mentor relationships between faculty and students of color; increase the persistence of African American, Latino, and other underrepresented students in academia; and enhance their research.

Over the last decade, more than 100 UIC students of all academic levels have participated in IALHEA as Research Forum presenters.

This year’s IALHEA will take place on April 15, 2015 in the UIC Student Center East (750 S. Halsted St., Chicago, IL). Please come and support our presenters and meet our guests. Even if your busy schedule only permits you to attend part of the conference, please join us. Click here to register.

TENTATIVE CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

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<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Welcome Diversity Dialogue and Panel</td>
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<td>12:30</td>
<td>Networking Lunch</td>
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<td>Research Plenary</td>
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<td>2:30</td>
<td>Research Posters Session</td>
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<td>4:00</td>
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Events such as the IALHEA Diversity Dialogue and Research Forum provide invaluable opportunities for UIC graduate students to present their work in a professional setting and engage in cross-disciplinary conversations with mentors and academic peers.
EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

For fellowship funding, the beginning of the spring semester is full of anticipation. Most deadlines for major awards are in the late fall to very early spring, and now students are waiting to hear the outcome of their hard work. Currently, UIC graduate students are watching for announcements from the U.S. Fulbright Student Program, Ford Foundation, National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship Program, Social Science Research Council, and many other avenues of support.

The Graduate College provides fellowship waivers for those students who have received substantial sums of funding; through this arrangement, we are able to track the salaries and funding sources for many UIC grad students. For the 2014-2015 academic year, we had 119 students secure substantial support, including visiting predoctoral fellowships at Ithaca College and George Mason University, fellowships from the U.S. State Department for International Fulbright recipients, and support from non-profit and private agencies such as Wenner Gren, the Max Kade Foundation, and the Field Museum.

Our 119 fellowship winners secured a total of $2,253,191 to fund their research, coursework, dissertation writing, and overall cost-of-living. Students in the Behavioral and Social Sciences won the bulk of this funding, following by Life Sciences, Engineering, Math and Physical Science, and then the Fine Arts and Humanities. This indicates an acute need for support in the humanities and arts. Students in these areas actively apply for funding outside of UIC; however, they have more limited and oversaturated opportunities than students in other disciplines.

The Graduate College also works with students who have received grants or been placed on department/program-held training grants. Most often, these mechanisms of support come from the National Science Foundation or the National Institutes of Health, to fund specific research agendas. We currently have 76 students at UIC with funding through these mechanisms (and many more who are set-up as grant-funded Research Assistants), supported by $1,542,320 in stipends. These are impressive numbers!

**SOURCES OF FUNDING, 2014-2015**

- American Heart Association (6 recipients)
- Diversifying Faculty In Illinois (31 recipients)
- International Fulbright (18 recipients)
- National Science Foundation support (16 recipients)
- UIC Departmental Award (22 recipients)
- Assorted US Federal Funding (4 recipients)
- Foreign Government Funding (3 recipients)
- Non-profit/Private Support (12 recipients)
- Professional/Industry Support (5 recipients)
- Visiting Predoctoral Fellowship (2 recipients)

**TOTAL SUPPORT BY ACADEMIC AREA, 2014-2015**

- Behavioral and Social Sciences ($923,833)
- Engineering, Mathematics, and Physical Sciences ($387,770)
- Fine Arts and the Humanities ($212,863)
- Life Sciences ($728,725)

Questions, choices, and challenges are all part of what students experience during college – and graduate school is no different. Many times you can work through them on your own or with the help of friends, family, or a partner. Sometimes, the issues can feel too private, overwhelming, or complicated to share with someone you know; or, perhaps, you may have become isolated while working on your thesis or dissertation. Talking with a Counseling Center professional can provide the safe, supportive, and confidential setting to explore your concerns and improve your emotional and academic functioning.

The UIC Counseling Center is a primary resource providing comprehensive mental health services for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. We provide students with accessible and culturally sensitive mental health services to promote overall wellness and help them to make the most of their learning experience at UIC. The Counseling Center staff includes licensed and board certified psychologists and psychiatrists, psychology interns and externs, a social worker, and trained paraprofessionals. In short, our therapists can help students increase resilience and positive well-being by developing effective coping and problem-solving skills.

Students interested in Counseling Center services can walk in to schedule an intake appointment or call the front desk (see inset box). During the initial appointment, information is gathered to assess each student’s needs and an appropriate plan for treatment. Counseling Center services are supported by the Health Service Fee; therefore, all fee-paying, enrolled students at the UIC are eligible for Counseling Center mental health services.

What types of therapy are available?

- Individual Therapy: Students work one-to-one with a therapist to address any concerns. We utilize a short-term model for counseling, i.e., issues usually are addressed in a focused manner. Once assigned to a counselor, you and your counselor will discuss effective therapeutic goals, frequency of sessions, and likely length of treatment.
- Group Therapy: Students explore personal and interpersonal growth in a safe, supportive environment with others with similar experiences. Groups meet once a week, typically have 5-8 members and 1-2 trained group therapists.
- Couples Therapy: Couples counseling is available to enrolled UIC students and their partners. Couples of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and relationship statuses are eligible for this service.
- Workshops/Consultation: We provide presentations, workshops, and consultation to students, faculty, and staff at UIC focused on activities and information to increase individual, interpersonal, and professional development and also how to best help others who are distressed.
- Psychiatric Services: We offer limited, short-term, psychiatric services to students who are actively involved in individual or group psychotherapy at the Counseling Center. Your counselor will coordinate a consultation, if needed.
- Case Management/Referrals: During the evaluation, it may be determined that the student would benefit from seeking services outside of the Counseling Center. Recommendations are provided that may include a referral to other services offered on campus or a community resource may be offered.
- InTouch Crisis Hotline: (312) 996-5535. If you are experiencing a crisis or emergency and require services outside of the Counseling Center’s regular business hours, the InTouch Hotline is a free crisis intervention, counseling, and referral service offered to UIC students. The InTouch Hotline is staffed by volunteers trained through the UIC Counseling Center Para-professional Program, and is available Sunday-Friday, 6:00pm - 10:30pm.

As protected by law, matters shared with Counseling Services staff are kept confidential. This means, among other things, that therapy visits here are not part of your academic record, nor part of any medical record you may have at campus medical facilities. The exceptions include instances of imminent danger of serious harm to yourself or others; cases involving physical and/or sexual abuse, and/or neglect, of children or elderly adults; and as requested by subpoena or mandated by court order or state/federal law.

Have you ever thought about donating to the Graduate College to help with fellowships and programming? Now is the perfect time! Thanks to a generous anonymous donor, donations of $100 - $5,000 will be DOUBLY matched. Give $200 and the Graduate College will receive $600! (Only first-time donations to the University are eligible for the match.) GIVE NOW.

You can specify whether you want your donation to support fellowships by selecting the Graduate Fellowships Fund, or to be used more broadly to benefit graduate students and promote community amongst the graduate population at UIC by selecting the Graduate College Deans Fund.

To find out more about giving back to the Graduate College, please visit our website or contact Benn Williams, Assistant Director of Interdisciplinary Programs and Development.

GIVE NOW

SUPPORT THE GRADUATE COLLEGE
GRADUATE STUDENT TRIP TO FIELD MUSEUM

Over 50 UIC graduate students visited the Chicago Field Museum on an excursion organized by Theresa Christenson-Caballero, Assistant Director of Graduate Student Outreach and Career Development in the Graduate College. Check our Events Page regularly to see what is going on every month!

STEVE KRAGON WINS CAPE AWARD

The Graduate College’s Executive Assistant Dean, Steve Kragon, received a 2014 Chancellor’s Academic Professional Excellence Award (CAPE). The CAPE Award honors the contributions of individual staff members and encourages the professional growth and achievement of Academic Professionals at UIC. Only six people were honored with the award this year.

Steve has worked in the Graduate College for over 30 years, and anyone who has had the good fortune of working with or being helped by him knows how deserving he is of recognition. Steve’s tireless efforts and many contributions to the administration of graduate education at UIC have been invaluable to advancing the mission of this university.

LINKED IN

Visit the Graduate College’s Linked In site for a selection of news, opinion, and advice pieces from publications such as the Chronicle of Higher Education and Inside Higher Ed. Content is specifically geared to graduate students, whether they are at the beginning of their studies or on the verge of graduating.
The Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program (CMEP) allows graduate students in a doctoral program, or in a participating training program that is jointly supported by the Exchange Scholar’s home and host institutions, to enroll at one of the three participating institutions to take advantage of academic courses at the other participating institutions. The three institutions in the program are the University of Chicago, Northwestern University and the University of Illinois at Chicago. UIC students are permitted to take a total of three quarters of classes through the CMEP program at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University; however, the courses must NOT be available at UIC.

UIC students who would like to take courses at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign or the University of Illinois at Springfield may do so as a concurrent registrant through the UIC Registrar’s Office – not through CMEP.

Approved applicants for the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program will be referred to as Exchange Scholars. Exchange Scholars pay for class(es) taken at the host institution at the home university rates. Students show proof of payment they made at the home campus, or bill from the home campus, to the host campus liaison.

A graduate student who is approved as an Exchange Scholar will register at UIC for GC 500 in the equivalent hours of the actual host course(s) and the actual course(s) at the host institution. The student will pay the usual UIC tuition and fees, with the tuition and most fees waived at the host institution. Exchange Scholars going to the University of Chicago must pay the U of C health fee even though a similar fee is charged at UIC.

Since the participating schools have different term structures and start-times for their courses (U of C and NU use the quarter system), it is important to stay in contact with the liaisons on both campuses in order to avoid any registration issues.

Procedures and Application
Carefully read the information, procedures and application instructions provided at http://grad.uic.edu/chicago-metropolitan-exchange-program-uic-students-attending-nu-or-u-c. Note that late requests may not be approved.

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Xiaoyu Hu in Biopharmaceutical Sciences won 2nd Place in the 2014 Image of Research contest with her entry “Butterfly in the Spine.”

The Graduate College will soon begin accepting entries for the 8th annual Image of Research exhibit competition. Details will be emailed to all registered graduate students and posted online.

Contact Us
The Graduate College is located on the 6th floor of University Hall. Room 606, our main office, is open from 8:30 a.m. until 4:45 p.m.

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Image of Research 2015

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