Graduate Resource Center and Graduate Student Funding Initiative 2014 Student Survey Report

Prepared by:
Erin R. Coleman
Institute for Social Research,
University of New Mexico

INTRODUCTION

This report provides the results of the 2014 survey of the Graduate Resource Center (GRC) and the Graduate Student Funding Initiative (GSFI) participants and Graduate Studies (GS) students who did not participate in any GRC/GSFI services. Non-GRC/GSFI graduate students were included in the study in order to compare graduates who use the services offered from the GRC/GSFI to graduate students who did not use GRC/GSFI services to document any differences between these two groups of students. The survey was sent to 478 graduate students who were enrolled in Spring 2014 and who had attended at least one GRC/GSFI service since Fall 2011 and to 5,575 graduate students who, according to GRC records, had never participated in a GRC/GSFI service. This is the second time this survey has been administered. The survey was first administered in November 2012.

The response rate for both the GS survey and the GRC/GSFI survey were lower than the previous survey given in 2012. Only 68 (14%) respondents completed the GRC/GSFI participant survey and 231(4%) from the GS sample completed the non-participant survey. There is a drop in the response rate for the previous survey. The response rates for the 2012 survey were 26% for GRC/GSFI participants and 16% for non-participants.

ANALYSIS

Section One: Demographics

Section One reports demographic information, school enrollment, and graduate school status for the two groups of graduate students. This information is useful for describing the study sample and making some general demographic comparisons between the two study groups. Table 1 presents demographic data from the two groups. The majority of survey respondents were female for both the GRC/GSFI participants (63.2%) and the general GS students who had never used GRC/GSFI services (64.5%). In the previous survey we were also able to demographically compare GS respondents and GRC respondents to the entire population of graduate students. This occurred because we were able to acquire this information for all graduate students. We were not able to acquire this information for Spring 2014. For both surveys, the majority of respondents reported full-time enrollment in their respective graduate programs (79.4% for GRC/GSFI participants and 65.8% for GS survey respondents). Differences were found in the racial/ethnic makeup of the survey respondents. Almost 75% of GS survey respondents identified themselves as White, while only 44.1% of GRC/GSFI participant survey respondents identified as White. A little less than a quarter (24.3%) of the GS sample reported Hispanic as their ethnicity; 35.5% of GRC/GSFI participants reported being Hispanic. Furthermore, a little more than 20% of GRC/GSFI participant survey respondents identified themselves as either American Indian/Alaskan Native (AIAN) or Asian/Pacific Islander (API). Percentages for these categories are much lower for GS survey respondents with 3.9% identifying as AIAN and 4.3% identifying as API. On par with the previous survey, the majority of respondents are enrolled in the College of Arts & Sciences. No graduate students responded to the survey from the Law School or from the PharmD program.

Table 1: Demographics and Enrollment				
	GRC/GSFI Survey Participants		GS Survey Respondents	
	N	%	N	%
Pattern of Enrollment				
Full-time	54	79.4	152	65.8
Part-time	13	19.1	78	33.8
Gender				
Female	43	63.2	149	64.5
Male	19	27.9	76	32.9
Hispanic				
Yes	22	32.4	55	23.8
No	40	58.8	171	74.0
Missing	6	8.8	5	2.2
Race				
American Indian/Alaska Native	7	10.3	9	3.9
Asian or Pacific Islander	7	10.3	10	4.3
Black/African American	3	4.4	5	2.2
Other	12	17.6	17	7.4
White	30	44.1	173	74.9
College Enrolled In				
Anderson School of Mgmt.	2	3.1	22	9.6
Architecture & Planning	-	-	3	1.3
Arts & Sciences	32	50.0	70	30.7
Education	15	23.4	46	20.2
Engineering	5	7.8	20	8.8
Fine Arts	-	-	7	3.1
Interdisciplinary	1	1.6	6	2.6
Law	-	-	-	-
Medicine	-	-	14	6.1
Nursing	-	-	11	4.8
Pharmacy	-	-	5	2.2
PharmD	-	-	-	-
Public Administration	9	14.1	19	8.3
University College	-	-	4	1.8
Average Age	39.0		37.2	

Table 2 reports selected demographic information regarding the citizenship of respondents, their living situations, and employment. Non-U.S. citizens accounted for 17.6% of GRC/GSFI participant respondents while only 4.3% of GS respondents identified themselves as non-U.S. citizens.

The majority of both survey respondents were U.S. citizens. For both samples, most respondents reported having no dependent children or living without dependent children. One difference between the two samples is the higher percentage of graduate students working full-time. A little over 50% of graduate students who have not used GRC or GSFI services reported working full-time while only 23.5% of GRC/GSFI participants reported working full-time. Furthermore, 22.1% of

GRC/GSFI participants reported being unemployed while 10% of GS students reported being unemployed.

Table 2: Select Demographics	GRC/GSFI Survey Participants		GS Survey Respondents	
	N	%	N	%
Citizenship Status				
Non-U.S. Citizen	12	17.6	10	4.3
Permanent Resident of U.S.	-	-	3	1.3
U.S. Citizen	50	73.5	212	91.8
Missing	6	8.8	6	2.6
Living Arrangements				
Spouse or Partner	29	42.6	124	53.7
Single	36	52.9	102	44.2
Missing	3	4.4	5	2.2
Dependent Children				
None	52	76.5	162	70.1
1	7	10.3	26	11.3
2	5	7.4	28	12.1
3	1	1.5	8	3.4
4+	-	-	2	0.9
Missing	3	4.4	6	2.6
Employment Status				
Full-time	16	23.5	133	57.6
Part-time	34	50.0	71	30.7
Unemployed	15	22.1	23	10.0
Missing	3	4.4	4	1.7

Section Two: Motivation to Complete Degree

Both the GRC/GSFI and the GS sample were asked questions regarding their motivation to finish their graduate degree along with questions asking about their support systems, which would help or hinder their goal to finish their degree. A 7-point Likert scale (1='strongly disagree' and 7='strongly agree') was used to ask the respondents to what extent they agreed with a number of statements. The average of each group was computed and a significance test was used to gauge whether respondents who used services offered by the GRC/GSFI differed from those who had never used these services. Significant differences are noted with an asterisk in the last column. Respondents who have used GRC/GSFI services agreed more strongly that they bear the full responsibility of paying for their education. Respondents who haven't used GRC/GSFI services agreed more strongly with the statement indicating their family supports their decision to go to school. Respondents who haven't used services also agree more strongly with the statement 'I will finish my degree'. Both samples have averages higher than 6.0 indicating that both groups agreed with the statement 'I will finish my degree'.

Table 3: Motivation to Complete Degree					
	GRC/GSFI Survey Participants		GS Survey Respondents		Mean Difference
	N	Average	N	Average	
The number of hours I work affects my ability to complete my degree	65	5.3	226	5.3	
I am motivated to finish my degree	65	6.2	225	6.2	
I bear the full responsibility of paying for my education	63	5.6	225	5.1	*
My family supports my decision to go to school	65	5.6	226	6.0	**
Family commitments affect my ability to complete school work	65	4.2	225	4.1	
Work commitments affect my ability to complete school work	65	4.7	226	4.6	
Class offerings don't fit my schedule	65	4.4	226	3.7	
I will finish my degree	67	6.2	224	6.6	***
My committee has been helpful	65	5.5	225	5.3	
My organizational skills have been helpful in getting through my degree	65	5.9	226	5.8	
Additional financial assistance would help	67	6.0	225	5.8	
I am able to juggle classes and activities with work, family, and other obligations	65	5.7	226	5.4	
Graduate school is stressful	65	6.2	226	6.0	
I have a strong support network	65	5.8	224	5.5	
It will take me longer to complete graduate school than I expected	65	5.1	225	4.7	
My department has provided helpful guidance	66	5.1	226	4.7	
Mentoring/advising has contributed to my progress	63	5.6	226	4.6	

*$p<.05$ ** $p<.01$ ***$p<.001$

Section Three: Graduate Resource Center and Graduate Student Funding Initiative

Table 4 reports the year respondents first used services offered from the GRC and/or the GSFI, the percentage of respondents who used specific series, and the average number of workshops respondents have attended. The most widely used services offered by the GRC and GSFI are the workshops. Nearly half (48.5%) of the survey respondents reported using GSFI workshops and 44.1% reported using GRC workshops. The Spring Semester of 2014 was the last semester of the GSFI workshops. These workshops have been popular and enjoyed large attendance perhaps due to the certificate program offered through the workshops where students can acquire certification in areas that will help them secure funding opportunities.

Table 4: GRC/GSFI Services Used (participants only)		
	Count	Percent
Year of First Use of GRC/GSFI Services		
2010	1	1.6
2011	10	15.6
2012	13	20.3
2013	25	39.1
2014	14	21.9
Services Used		
GSFI Workshops	33	48.5
GRC Workshops	30	44.1
One-on-one consultations writing	19	27.9
One-on-one consultations grant writing	3	4.4
Thesis/dissertation boot camps	15	22.1
Online writing lab	17	25.0
Research design, data analysis, and statistical methods	2	2.9
Thesis/dissertation writing and support groups	8	11.8
Weekly workshops on academic and professional topics	7	10.3
Presentation skills and leadership development	8	11.8
Language learning	3	4.4
I am not sure of all the available services	6	8.8
Other services*	5	7.4
Average Number of GRC and GSFI Workshops Attended	N	Average
Average number of GRC workshops	63	3.3
Average number of GSFI workshops	64	4.3

*Other services:
- Certificate awards
- GRC computers
- Printing
- Space to work and computer resources

Table 5 reports the average response from the GRC/GSFI participant sample only. Questions were asked regarding how helpful respondents found the workshops to be, as well as other services and staff with whom they interacted. Averages fell below a 5.0 once, indicating respondents are generally satisfied with the services the GRC and GSFI offer.

Table 5: Opinions of GRC/GSFI		
	N	Average
The GRC workshops I have attended have been helpful	46	5.7
The GRC workshops have helped me in my professional development	44	5.6
The GRC workshops will help me finish school	46	5.4
I have recommended the GRC workshops to other students	46	5.3
I would recommend the GRC workshops to other students	46	5.4
GRC staff has been helpful	46	5.8
Consultations with GRC staff have been helpful	44	6.3
Other GRC services I have received have been helpful	46	6.1
The GSFI workshops I have attended have been helpful	35	5.9
The GSFI workshops have helped me in my professional development	35	5.8
The GSFI workshops will help me finish school	35	4.8
I have recommended the GSFI workshops to other students	35	5.2
I would recommend GSFI workshops to other students	35	5.8
GSFI staff has been helpful	35	6.3
Consultations with GSFI staff have been helpful	35	6.2
Other GSFI services I have received have been helpful	33	6.1

Table 6 reports how familiar the GS sample was with the Graduate Resource Center and the Graduate Student Funding Initiative. More than half the GS sample reported being familiar with the GRC and/or GSFI (66.2%). Seventy nine respondents declined to answer whether they had ever considered going to any of the workshops offered by the GRC/GSFI. Of those who answered, 67.8% answered they had considered attending. Most GS respondents mentioned a lack of time as a reason for not attending sessions. Other reasons included the time of day for graduate students who work full-time; inconvenienced by the distance to campus for students who do not live in Albuquerque; and that some GS students perceive the workshops as not benefitting their particular graduate degree. Reasons for not attending workshops are located in Appendix A for review (it should be noted that many comments say they have indeed attended workshops offered from the GRC and GSFI. It may be their email addresses were not properly entered into the TutorTrac system or students who attended workshops/services did not sign in or leave information regarding who they are. There were 10 comments left stating they had indeed attended workshops offered from either or both the GRC and GSFI).

Table 6: GS Sample Familiarity with GRC/GSFI		
	Count	Percent
Are you familiar with the GRC or GSFI?		
Yes	153	66.2
No	78	33.8
Have you considered going to any of the workshops offered by the GRC/GSFI?		
Yes	103	44.6
No	49	21.2
Missing	79	34.2

Section Four: Graduate Program

Table 7 reports the reasons why respondents attend graduate school. A series of statements were made and respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with each. A 7-point Likert scale was used with 1= 'strongly disagree' and 7= 'strongly agree'. A test of significance was computed in order to see whether the GRC/GSFI sample differed from the GS sample in their reasons for attending graduate school. GRC/GSFI respondents agreed more strongly that they attend graduate school for the intense feelings they experience when they communicate their own ideas. However, they also had a significantly higher average for the statement, 'I once had good reasons for going to graduate school; however, now I wonder if I should continue'. Those two differences are the only statements with significant differences between the two groups indicating these two samples don't differ very much in their reasons for attending graduate school.

Table 7: Reasons for Attending Graduate School					
	GRC/GSFI Survey Participants		GS Survey Respondents		Mean Difference
	N	Average	N	Average	
Because with only a bachelor's degree I would not find a high enough paying job later on	61	4.6	228	4.54	
Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things	63	6.4	227	6.3	
Because I think that a graduate education will help me better prepare for the career I have chosen	67	6.3	228	6.21	
For the intense feelings I experience when I am communicating my own ideas to others	63	5.5	226	4.8	***
Honestly, I don't know; I really feel that I am wasting my time in school	63	2.4	224	2.3	
To prove to myself that I am capable of completing my graduate degree	61	5.0	226	4.8	
In order to obtain a more prestigious job later on	62	5.4	226	5.2	
I once had good reasons for going to graduate school; however, now I wonder if I should continue	63	3.5	225	2.8	**
For the pleasure that I experience while I am surpassing myself in one of my personal accomplishments	63	5.2	225	5.2	
For the pleasure I experience in broadening my knowledge about subjects which appeal to me	63	6.2	225	5.9	
Because this will help me make a better choice regarding my career orientation	65	5.6	224	5.5	
For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult academic activities	63	5.5	226	5.5	
To show myself that I am an intelligent person	63	4.7	226	4.5	
In order to have a better salary later on	63	5.2	224	5.3	
Because my studies allow me to continue to learn about many things that interest me	67	6.1	225	6.1	
Because I believe that a few additional years of education will improve my competence as a worker	63	5.4	224	5.5	

* $p<.05$ ** $p<.01$ ***$p<.001$

Both samples were also asked about their graduate program. A graduate student's awareness of their program requirements and their sense of support in their departments may impact their need to seek outside services for assistance. Respondents who have never used GRC or GSFI services agreed slightly more with the statement that they are satisfied with their choice of graduate

program. They also agreed slightly more with the statement, 'Faculty is generous with their time'. The GRC/GSFI sample agreed more with the statement, 'Faculty socializes with students'.

Table 8: Graduate Program					
	GRC/GSFI Survey Participants		GS Survey Respondents		Mean Difference
	N	Average	N	Average	
I understand the requirements in my program	65	5.8	228	5.9	
I am annually reviewed to assess my progress	65	5.2	226	5.3	
There is some sense of solidarity among the students who enter the program at the same time	65	5.2	228	5.1	
Students have an active role in program decisions that affect them	65	4.6	228	4.3	
Students have little contact with each other	65	4.0	228	3.6	
Experienced students mentor new students	65	5.0	227	4.3	
Students freely share information with each other about opportunities and how to get through the program	65	5.5	228	5.2	
I am part of a supportive student community in my program	65	4.9	226	4.6	
Faculty care about students in the program	67	5.0	227	5.4	
Faculty cares about advising students	65	5.3	227	5.1	
Faculty is accessible to students	65	5.3	227	5.5	
I am satisfied with my choice of graduate program	67	5.4	227	5.6	*
My department gives me regular and constructive feedback on my progress towards degree completion	65	4.8	226	4.4	
I am satisfied with my choice of this university for graduate school	65	5.2	227	5.3	
My graduate program encourages me to complete my degree	65	5.5	227	5.3	
Faculty is generous with their time with students	65	5.0	227	5.16	*
Faculty socializes with students	65	5.1	227	4.9	*

*$p<.05$ ** $p<.01$ ***$p<.001$

CONCLUSION

In order to compare graduate students who have used services offered by the Graduate Resource Center and the Graduate Student Funding Initiative to graduate students who never used these services, a survey asking about graduate programs and graduate experiences was sent to each group. This survey was first administered in 2012. As noted earlier, it appears some of the students identified as graduate students who never used GRC/GSFI services had in fact used these services. The GRC/GSFI participant survey was sent to 478 students, and 68 responded. The GS survey was sent to 5,575 students and 231 responded. Ten of the GS survey respondents had used GRC/GSFI services. They mentioned this in the comments section of the survey asking why they had not attended the workshops. The most mentioned reason for not attending the workshops was issues with time. They reported either not having the time to attend, or the time the workshop was scheduled conflicted with other engagements

Demographic differences yielded only a slight difference in racial categories with an over-representation of American Indian/ Alaskan Native and Asian/Pacific Islander in the GRC/GSFI participant survey (10.3% & 10.3% for GRC/GSFI participants versus 3.9% and 4.3% for GS respondents). For enrollment in Schools and Colleges, there were no GRC/GSFI respondents from the Fine Arts College, Architecture and Planning, or from the University College. For both surveys, there were no respondents from the Law School or from PharmD. There is an over-representation of non-U.S. citizens who have used GRC/GSFI services indicating the Graduate Resource Center and the Graduate Student Funding Initiative are reaching a population who may need extra assistance in their graduate program.

Differences between the two groups' motivation to finish their degree and feelings toward their graduate programs were measured using T-tests of their average responses to Likert-scale questions. These T-tests yielded minor differences between the two groups indicating there may be only a small difference between these populations. There were more pronounced differences in the demographic composition of the samples.

Respondents in the GRC/GSFI sample displayed general satisfaction with the GRC/GSFI services they used. The most popular services respondents used were both the GRC and the GSFI workshops. When asked about their satisfaction with the services, averages only went below a 5 in one instance indicating graduate students agree that services, workshops and staff have been helpful for those who have contact with these services.

Further comments can be found in the Appendixes which follow this conclusion. Reasons for GS students not attending GRC/GSFI workshops are in Appendix A. Reasons GS students are not interested in attending workshops can be found in Appendix B. A question was posed to the GRC/GSFI sample asking, 'Knowing everything that you know now, what advice would you give others entering or in the early years of graduate school?' Those comments can be found in Appendix C. Additional comments left by GRC/GSFI participants are located in Appendix D.

Appendix A: Reasons for not attending workshops, comments from survey

- Not convenient as a distance student (I live in Gallup)

- I've considered attending various sessions in the past, however working at south campus (north of the Pit Arena) and business needs that dictate having to take annual leave makes it impossible to attend.

- I live in Texas

- Busy schedule

- The times didn't work well with my schedule, either during a class or too late at night

- Not very clear questioning line on this subject...but I attained all 4 GSFI certificates so it should be clear that there are a lot of sessions I attended

- Didn't match up with my schedule and/or I was lazy and didn't feel like going

- The commitments would have occurred at times of maximum load doing coursework. I intend to take some of these as I work on my proposal now that coursework is finished.

- Work conflicts, I typically get 30 minutes for lunch.

- Time

- Job duties

- Not oriented toward my discipline

- Overwhelmed with other responsibilities

- The timing was off

- Time Conflicts

- I live 90 miles from campus. I wish there were online sessions.

- ...That's kind of begging the question, isn't it? I went to writing workshops for a few semesters, and they were very helpful.

- Past sessions were not helpful enough to me to warrant time lost from work.

- Out of town

- Currently I am not post-comps, therefore my advisor has to be PI on all grants. Also with the teaching load I'd had in previous semesters, it made it difficult to make any of the scheduled times. I am done with coursework, so that should help to free up my schedule to allow me to attend.

- Scheduling Conflict

- Full Time Job and Full Time Student difficult to find the time to attend

- Either scheduling didn't work out, or I didn't think the offering applied to me.

- They are often held at times that I can't attend, since I also work full time during normal business hours.

- Didn't feel it was time yet, also feel like I can accomplish same thing (maybe more) by just DOING it (on my own).

- Haven't reached the point of my PhD yet to use them.

- I could not get the time off of work

- I plan to attend, I just was not at that point in my graduate program yet.

- Not writing my thesis yet

- Time

- I did attend.

- Time of the session ended up not working with my schedule

- Time offered

- Sometimes schedule conflicts, sometimes I was just too tired to sign up; you know...grad student problems.

- They are informative, practical, and helpful.

- Time limitations with work schedule.

- Schedule conflicts

- Timing never worked out

- I did attend.

- Scheduling conflict

- Already scheduled appointments, classes, etc.

- I did attend. I've completed all the certificates.

- Going to this summer

- Work schedule

- Wasn't ready to write thesis/too busy

- I worked off campus and couldn't commute back and forth between work and UNM in the middle of the day.

- Conflicting times and dates

- Because the Poli Sci department screwed me over with a surprise refusal to accept my master's degree from NMSU, even though my research there was published AND accepted at the 2014 International Human Rights Conference in Istanbul Turkey. I had spent several years as an adjunct. 'For my own good.' I found a better program elsewhere who were very happy to accept my excellent degree from NMSU. I have a very low opinion of how graduates are treated at UNM.

- I did attend some. I found the grant certification not particularly useful as it was too broad and mostly drew from life sciences not social sciences.

- To get ready for my final project

- Did not know about it or not interested

- Time conflicts

- I have a family and time is difficult to come by.

- I did attend the sessions.

- Only available at lunch

- No time.

- Bootcamp was full when I tried to register in Spring 2013, I just watched the zotero workshop online
- Timing, this past year was crazy in my department (I work full time) so I just couldn't make it work.

- I received grant writing training elsewhere professionally, also the session seemed geared at research proposals and grants/proposals through UNM which wasn't quite what I was looking for.

- Too busy; also, felt I could complete the Thesis on my own.

- The dates varied wildly throughout the semester. We need to schedule these for just one or two days, and then you receive the certificate. It's incredibly hard to make it to all the sessions. Not to mention, it was confusing to find out which session matched which certificate. Also personally, I've had a full class load since I started at UNM and live far from campus, so it was hard to schedule sessions close to my classes so I would even be around to attend the sessions. I wouldn't drive all the way to campus for a session if I didn't have any other business there.

- Time of day offered - in-person. Work restricted from attending

- Not accessible on-line

- Scheduling at odd times and during busy parts of the day

- Timing

- Haven't had the time yet

- Could not make the time because of class or work.

- Time constraints

- Lack of time

- I did attend them

- I attended a number of them

- They are during work hours
- Time constraints

- Don't fit my schedule

- Work schedule conflicted with offering since they were mainly during the day.

- I'm not ready

- No need of it at the moment

- Scheduling

- I live 47 miles away from UNM main campus and it makes it difficult to attend these workshops when they are offered.

- Writing time

- Lack of time, just not 'getting around' to it.

- Not timely.

- Timing, most if not all of the interesting offerings are offered during the day.

- For professional development

- Busy with classwork/research.

Appendix B: Why GS sample is not interested in services offered from the GRC

- Currently have not enough time to participate in this workshops; also, do not directly apply to my program at this time.

- Are they available online, as I am a distance learning student.

- Because I can only enroll part-time and my program will take seven years to complete, I don't have time for additional coursework beyond the required curriculum.

- I already get this kind of my support from my advisor.

- I am almost done with my degree.

- Earning certificates

- I am interested in more information - such as what types of support there is specific to business students.

- They don't really seem that useful.

- I am.

- I'm interested if they help me 1) complete the dissertation, and/or 2) get a job.

- Because I work full time and I am in graduate school and everything that has been sent to me from GRC happens at times that I am unable to attend.

- I personally never really use any kind of tutoring. If I need information, I usually look it up online. I also consult faculty members in my department, including my advisor. It seems to be enough, at least for now.

- Should have been presented at the beginning of academic journey, not after finished

- I work at LANL -- it's easier for me to get 'help' off campus.

- Time constraints

- I am already funded by the Los Alamos National Laboratory

- It doesn't really pertain to my career or educational goals.

- Busy schedule

- These programs sound all research orientated. My profession is business and in most departments, we have positions that specialize in grant writing, proposal development and other research compliant information. These are also programs offered through pre and post award. So if you are an employee and student (my case) there appears to be an alternate source for these services.

- My time is very limited. I work, have 3 children, and the demands of my graduate program leave very little room for time to commit to anything else.

- I don't know the ropes of the masters program.

- Because I graduated.

- Because I'm not.

- I have written several grants successfully on my own and I am looking at a career change that probably won't involve any more grant writing

- I'm very close to being done.

- interested

- I could fix my problem by myself or resort to my mentor.

- I have graduated and will not need their services.

- Waste of time

- UNM does not have a PhD program, where grant writing, etc., would be useful. The MBA that I completed did not have components that tracked to grants, etc. Furthermore, the JD program is also not research-oriented.

Appendix C: Advice from GRC/GSFI participants to new graduate students

- Think of a specific career direction and focus on how to prepare for it while in grad school. Begin building a network. Most grad students in science and engineering work outside academia and the network can provide advice on how to prepare for a career in industry, government, or non-profits.

- Slow progress is better than no progress

- Choose your program wisely- have a focus and talk to the faculty you wish to work with. Be sure that they are on board with/interested in your topic(s), and they have the time and desire to work with you. Seek out funding opportunities that are in line with your research interests, even if they aren't necessarily in your department. Ask for regular meetings with your advisor/faculty to help keep you on track. Find a good therapist early on, so when you really need them, they are there.

- Consider a Masters degree rather than a PhD.

- Stay organized with research and degree progress. Finish your coursework as quickly as possible and try not to be overwhelmed during the first year of the program

- Know what you want to gain from pursuing a graduate degree. Have goals, and be prepared to sacrifice free time to achieve them. Research your mentor prior to choosing one. Plan financially for the years you will be in grad school.

- Use the resources at the GRC, the center is there to help you finish.

- Stay organized, and remain cognizant of the requirements for your program. Keep in frequent contact with your advisor about your research interests.

- Be prepared to do your own research on your graduate degree program. Faculty have little to no time or interest in students that are not directly being mentored by them and know little to nothing regarding the requirements for degree programs. There will be a disconnect between the advisement person and faculty, be prepared to play the role of ambassador between each to complete your program.

- Choose your program wisely- have a focus and talk to the faculty you wish to work with. Be sure that they are on board with/interested in your topic(s), and they have the time and desire to work with you. Seek out funding opportunities that are in line with your research interests, even if they aren't necessarily in your department. Ask for regular meetings with your advisor/faculty to help keep you on track. Find a good therapist early on, so when you really need them, they are there.

- Stay organized with research and degree progress. Finish your coursework as quickly as possible and try not to be overwhelmed during the first year of the program

- Know what you want to gain from pursuing a graduate degree. Have goals, and be prepared to sacrifice free time to achieve them. Research your mentor prior to choosing one. Plan financially for the years you will be in grad school.

- Use the resources at the GRC, the center is there to help you finish.

- Stay organized, and remain cognizant of the requirements for your program. Keep in frequent contact with your advisor about your research interests.

- Make sure you are 300% sure about what areas of study you want to do and make sure you have the right amount of faculty willing to support your work,etc.   Also, find a place were graduate students are friendly and willing to become a support for you during your program. Or find a group outside but be connected socially with other graduate students. Grad school could be a lonely place.

- It is not easy. Keep going.

- Obtain and hold down a real job, pay some bills, manage your time/resources/finances, experience 'real life,' then consider graduate school.

- Only study a topic you are really enthusiastic about!

- Visiting the campus and faculty before deciding on a program is a good idea. A supportive community is everything.

- Take some time off before grad school. Make a writing schedule. Find a lab where the students seem happy. Learn to ask for what you need.

- If you find that your advisor is not helpful and is often condescending or demeaning, take that as an indication that this person does not want to work with you. It was my experience that my advisor did not want to work with me, and did not share this information and instead ensured to make my graduate experience miserable, and went as far as attempting me to remove me from the program. Although he was unsuccessful, this was a horrible experience and I'm in the process of applying into another program.

- If you're not 100% enthusiastic about the major, don't enroll. Ask current staff, faculty and students lots of questions about the program. If many of the classes are being taught by grad assistants instead of professors, DO NOT enroll. The morale will be bad, the classes marginal and most of the teaching assistants will be theoretical, self-absorbed snobs with NO real world experience in anything.

- The key is to find a professor to guide and mentor you before you start a program. For me, graduate school has been a positive experience. The professors at the LLSS program have given me the incentive to pursue a doctoral program. These professors are effective at mentoring and guiding students. I absolutely love the LLSS faculty. They're the best.

- GO FOR IT. You will never find your limits if you don't push for them.

- Know the expertise of your advisor and possible committee members. Consider how their expertise relates to your academic interests. Understand potential committee members' personalities and how these may affect the ways they interact and make decisions on your behalf.

- Understanding the world views of your chosen mentors and/or professors is the most important factor in achieving your graduate school research objectives.

- Start early. Be prepared. Read ahead...journals, theses, dissertations, all the books on the reading list, etc. Pay attention. Network.

- Take advantage of GRC offerings and establish study relationships with classmates. Our discipline is a close-knit group, with two or three social events each year. Showing up and getting acquainted establishes an unexpected bond that is very valuable as I go along. Showing up at GRC events reinforces that bond beyond my own discipline. It is also a safety net when I am stressed out.

- there's nothing new to add; my department/program was in a state of flux when i started. there were classes offered, and the professor who taught them was there when i started the program in the spring of 2012. when i took classes during the summer, i realized that some classes (mainly graduate engineering classes) wouldn't be offered. but then when i wanted to enroll in fall classes, i realized that the available classes had been drastically reduced by the departing professor. all current students in the department have this issue; we talk about it often, we take the same classes, we guide and lead each other towards the classes that will satisfy necessary requirements. remaining faculty is aware of the issue; it is being addressed on a semester basis.

- Take the time to ensure distance students are included in every aspect of their graduate experience. The issues they bring up may not seem imperative to staff, but it may be a concern to the student.

- Choice your field according to the personal level of interest & career prospect.

- Relax, set time to read and complete your assignments and importantly need discipline. Stay one week ahead of all your readings. When ever you find yourself waiting - read and take notes. If you are going to be traveling - take your readings and notebook with you. Let your family know when you can't be bothered so, you are not

interrupted. If you have difficulty with understanding the readings - ask your partner to help you in listening to you as you explain to him what you just read.

Appendix D: Additional comments left by the GRC/GSFI participants

- Getting the classes I need in a reasonable amount of time and so that they are evenly balanced in terms of course load across semesters is nearly impossible. This may delay my graduation.

- I greatly appreciate the support of the GRC and GSFI

- I would like to thank the staff for all their work.

- The Master's students at that university are treated with far less support than Doctoral. All emphasis is given to either undergraduates to finish or Doctoral with little regard towards Master's. This regard shows in everything from funding to policy.

- I greatly appreciate the support of the GRC and GSFI

- Your website needs improvement. The page that comes up when you google 'GRC writing bootcamps' is not current. It's hard to navigate through the menus to get to the page you want.

- Make sure your advisor is helpful and available to see through that you are successful.

- I guess I am a 'non-traditional' student in that at about the time of 'retirement' I went back to college. So, just an information, as a 'Senior' (understand I am speaking of age, not class level), some of the survey questions were not exactly applicable to me, or were applicable differently than for a typical student. I want to add that my experience, over all (one professor exception) has been absolutely super.

- Good day to you all.

- It is difficult to remember an accurate number of sessions attended. High quality leadership at the GRC (Laurence) has enhanced progress for many students. Everything about the GRC is wonderful, right up to the new PSAs on KUNM. I believe everyone feels welcome and supported by many programs. I see how the consultants grow through experiencing a variety of on-the-job tasks, such as running boot/writing camps, tutoring, conducting the weekly learning opportunities, and more.

- Many of these questions, especially 20, 21, and 22, are for early-career people, ignoring those of us who have completed one or more careers and will now go on to researching, writing, and teaching. I would stress that graduate and post-graduate education at any age is very valuable, not just for self-esteem but for continuing to teach and consult after graduating. To clarify #19, OILS faculty is as generous as they can be, considering there are so few of them. Same applies to my minor.

- Dual degrees and the graduates who pursue them are a different 'species' and shouldn't necessarily be advised the same way.

- Response time is essential. Be attentive to all students. It is realized that face to face is more personalized, but it would be nice for instructors to work at making sure distance students have the feeling of inclusion. If possible have face to face courses available at distance sites. ITV is nice and is appreciated, but there is a loss of personalized instruction, which can be more productive.