



University of New Mexico

Institute for Social Research

Prepared for: University of New Mexico—Graduate Resource Center and Graduate Studies

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Center for Applied Research and Analysis Staff

At-a-Glance

In this brief: The goal of this research is to study the implementation of the Graduate Resource Center and its impact on graduate student participants. This report is a brief review of five studies completed since July 2014.

This report can be found at: <http://isr.unm.edu/centers/cara/reports/>

Main Findings

- This report is based on a review of 5 recent reports by ISR.
- The GRC received federal funding with three goals impacting Hispanic graduate students at UNM.
- The GRC holds workshops and writing boot camps in addition to sponsoring fellowships, a graduate academy, individual consultations, and graduate support groups to assist students from any of the UNM graduate programs.
- The Graduate Student Funding Initiative (GSFI) was a collaboration with the GRC and their funding ended in the Spring 2014 semester.
- Workshops during the Fall and Spring semesters were the most attended and highest rated GRC activity.
- Participating students received an average of 3.7 contacts – a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 71. A total of 1,265 students received 4,614 services from the GRC /GSFI, between October 2012 and September 2013.
- The average time students spent using GRC/GSFI services was 6.7 hours.

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Graduate Resource Center: Report in Brief

The Institute for Social Research (ISR) in association with the Graduate Resource Center (GRC) produced this report-in-brief. This report provides a review of GRC research focused on documenting the implementation of the GRC and progress towards meeting the goals of the GRC. This is done by synthesizing the results of five recent reports by ISR of the GRC. This report also includes a description of the GRC.

The Graduate Resource Center and the Graduate Student Funding Initiative

The GRC, located on the main campus of the University of New Mexico opened in 2011 to assist graduate and professional students at UNM. The GRC offers students a wide array of support services, including a computer lab, space for study and meetings, and a common area for workshops. A Title V grant promoting post-baccalaureate opportunities for Hispanic Americans made the GRC possible with three specific goals: 1) reducing Hispanic students' time to degree and increase completion rates for master's programs, 2) increase Hispanic students' retention and completion rates for doctoral programs, and 3) increase the proportion of Hispanic students enrolled in graduate programs.

The GRC, in collaboration with several departments and programs (e.g., Graduate Studies and the Project for the New Mexico Graduates of Color), offers a wide array of free academic support services to all graduate and professional students at the University of New Mexico including: one-on-one writing and statistics consultations, writing support groups, writing camps, academic and professional development workshops, fellowship programs, a student conference,

and graduate student orientations. The GRC further supports undergraduate recruitment initiatives at UNM by providing workshops and one-on-one guidance in planning for graduate school. GRC graduate consultants are graduate and professional students enrolled at UNM, recommended by UNM faculty, and certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA).

The GRC works with UNM and community organizations, including the Graduate Student Funding Initiative (GSFI) to support the UNM graduate community. The GRC holds workshops and writing boot camps in addition to sponsoring fellowships, a graduate academy, and graduate support groups to assist students from any of the UNM graduate programs. Workshops during the Fall and Spring semesters are the most attended of the GRC activities. In addition to workshops, the GRC Academy and Fellowship opportunities have been successful.

The GSFI was a collaboration with the Office of the Vice President for Research, Office of Graduate Studies, Graduate Resource Center, Graduate Professional Student Association, Project for New Mexico Graduates of Color, and University Libraries. GSFI funding ended following the Spring 2014 semester.

During its existence, GSFI offered graduate students educational workshops at no cost. Students had the option to participate in workshops independently or obtain certificates in four areas: Grant Writing, Principal Investigator Eligibility, Responsible Conduct of Research, and Research Compliance.

GRC Implementation

This section provides a review of research activities focused on the synthesis of five

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- 65% of respondents indicated some aspect of the workshops they attended was valuable to their graduate school experience.
- Most students reported their race/ethnicity as being either Hispanic/Latino (26.3%) or White non-Hispanic (24.3%).
- Of the 11 colleges and schools at UNM—non-degree and interdisciplinary excluded—the majority of graduate students (33.4%) were affiliated with the College of Arts & Sciences.
- Participants agreed the Fellowship has motivated them to finish and they will finish their degrees regardless of the barriers they face in obtaining their degrees.
- The most valuable aspect of the Academy, was support from staff and other graduate students, and the supportive environment and ability to share knowledge with others.
- Academy participants were generally satisfied with the services at the Academy; the workshops were helpful in their professional development and they recommend the workshops to other graduate students.
- The highest percentage of participants selected location/region as an important factor in choosing UNM (44%). Faculty/Program reputation was the second most selected reason students choose UNM for their graduate program (39%).

Target Audience

University of New Mexico administration, local and state government policymakers.

recently completed reports. As noted earlier this research is designed to study the implementation and development of the GRC program and its impact on graduate students. This includes the number and type of services provided by the GRC, how these services have been used, what students have found helpful about GRC services, and what students have suggested as improvements to GRC services. We also asked students how GRC services have helped improve their skills, their motivation to complete their degree, and reasons for attending graduate school. Because the GRC offers a wide variety of services a variety of research methods have been used.

Graduate Resource Center and Graduate Student Funding Initiative 2014 Student Survey Report: This report presents results of a 2014 survey of GRC and GSFI participants and Graduate Studies (GS) students. GS students were included in the study in order to compare students who use GRC services to graduate students who did not use GRC services. The survey was sent to 478 graduate students who were enrolled in Spring 2014 and who attended at least one GRC/GSFI service since the Fall of 2011 and to 5,575 graduate students who had never participated in a GRC/GSFI activity. This was the second time this survey had been administered. The survey was first

administered in November 2012. The response rate for GS students and GRC/GSFI students was lower than the previous survey given in 2012. Only 68 (14%) GRC/GSFI students completed the survey and 231 (4%) from the GS sample completed the survey. Respondents in the GRC sample displayed satisfaction with GRC services they used. The most popular services used were the GRC and the GSFI workshops.

Review of Services Provided by the Graduate Resource Center and Graduate Student Funding Initiative October 2012-September 2013: This report, finalized in June 2014, is a review of individual and group contacts recorded by the GRC and GSFI. These data cover the time period, October 2012 through September 2013. A total of 1,265 students received 4,614 services from the GRC /GSFI. Participating students received an average of 3.7 contacts – a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 71. The average time students spent using GRC/GSFI services was 6.7 hours. The mode of time spent using services was between one and two hours.

Approximately 26% of students reported their race/ethnicity as being Hispanic/Latino. White non-Hispanic was 24.3%. The database was missing race/ethnicity for 30.6% of students. A larger percent of individuals

Methodology

This research is designed to study the implementation and development of the GRC program. This includes the number and type of services provided by the GRC, how these services have been used, what students have found helpful about GRC services, and what students have suggested as improvements to GRC services. We also asked students how GRC services have helped improve their skills, their motivation to complete their degree, and reasons for attending graduate school. Because the GRC offers a wide variety of services a variety of research methods have been used.

Workshop Evaluations: Evaluations of workshops were completed by attendees at all workshops. Evaluations asked about satisfaction with services, what was most/least valuable, and suggested improvements.

Surveys: Surveys of graduate students who completed the Fellows program and the Academy program were completed. The survey included various sections including demographic information, educational background, employment history, their use and satisfaction with GRC/GSFI and El Centro services, their opinions and experiences with their graduate program, and reasons why they attend and finishing graduate school, their experiences with the Fellowship and their aspirations following graduate school.

Official Data: Institutional data was received from the TutorTrac system. These data allowed ISR staff to analyze the number of students served by the GRC and the demographics of students using the GRC.

GRC Comparison Study: This study focuses on comparing GRC graduate students with a group of Graduate Studies graduate students who did not participate in any GRC services. Survey sections included a section on demographics, motivation to complete their degree, GRC services used, familiarity with the GRC, reasons for attending graduate school, and awareness of their program requirements and their sense of support in their departments.

Institutional Data Review: In the future, we hope to analyze student level UNM institutional data with the goal of studying progress towards the goals of reduced time to graduation, increased retention and completion rates, and increased proportion of Hispanic students.

served were females (61%) compared to males (39%). The percentage of males in the graduate and non-degree university population is 44%. American Indians comprised 5.6% of students receiving services.

Of the 11 colleges and schools at UNM—non-degree and interdisciplinary excluded—33.4% of GRC participants were affiliated with the College of Arts & Sciences. A large number and percent (20.4%) of GRC participants reported a non-degree status. The College of Education represented 18.5% of the students using the GRC/GSFI. The fewest participants were from the School of Law (0.3%) and the College of Pharmacy (0.6%).

Graduate Resource Center and Graduate Student Funding Initiative Workshop Evaluations October 2012-September 2013: This report covers the workshop evaluations completed by students who attended GRC and GSFI workshops between October 2012 and September 2013. A total of 1,078 evaluations were completed. During this reporting period there were 129 workshops offered compared to 203 workshops in the previous time period. Attendees reported being satisfied with the services provided by the GRC /GSFI. Respondents had the option to comment in several sections regarding what they found to be most valuable about the workshops, least valuable, and any suggested improvements. For the most valuable section, 65% of respondents indicated some aspect of the workshop was valuable to their graduate school experience.

2013-2014 UNM Fellows Participant Survey Report: The Fellowship report discusses the results of a survey conducted in April, 2014 with GRC Latino Graduate Fellowship graduate students. The Latina/o Graduate and Professional Student Fellowship is a joint initiative between the Graduate Resource Center and El Centro de la Raza. The fellowship seeks to increase the representation of the Latina/o graduate and professional student community in academic and professional organizations. A total of 19 participants completed the Fellowship and 18 participated in the survey. The survey included sections regarding: demographics, educational background, employment history, the use and satisfaction with GRC/GSFI and El Centro services, opinions and experiences with the graduate program, reasons for attending and completing graduate school, experiences with the Fellowship, and aspirations following graduate school.

All 18 respondents were Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin. The age of the participants ranged from 23 to 44 years old, and 13 students were employed by UNM. Seven reported they were completing a Doctoral degree and the remaining 11 were working toward a Master's degree.

Students were asked why they chose their graduate program. The highest percentage of participants selected location/

region as an important factor in choosing UNM (44%). Faculty/Program reputation was the second most selected reason for students to choose UNM for their graduate program (39%). Students were asked why they attended graduate school and most agreed with the statement, "to better prepare for a chosen career."

Fellows were satisfied with the Fellowship program offered by El Centro de la Raza and the GRC. Fellows indicated mentors and support as being some of the more influential aspects of the Fellowship. Some participants indicated they would have liked to have made more connections and networks in the Fellowship, and responded positively that the program would help them finish school.

2014 UNM Graduate and Professional Student Academy Participant Survey Report: The 2014 UNM Graduate & Professional Student Academy's (the Academy) mission is "...to support students by providing skills training, and connecting them to resources and networks that will assist them in completing their degree program in a timely manner." Twenty-one students applied to the Academy and 9 were accepted in 2014. All Academy participants completed the semester long program. Similar to the Fellows survey, Academy respondents completed a survey that asked for demographic information, educational background, employment history, their use and satisfaction with the GRC/GSFI, their opinions and experiences with their graduate program, reasons why they went to graduate school and finished, their experiences with the Academy, and their aspirations following graduate school.

The majority of Academy participants were female (7 of 9). The age of Academy participants ranged from 24 years old to 64 years old and averaged 33 years. Five identified as Hispanic, 3 reported White as their race/ethnicity, 1 reported Asian Indian, 1 reported Chinese, and 4 reported Other Asian/Other Pacific Islander as their race/ethnicity. Respondents were allowed to identify being of Hispanic origin and to choose a race with which they identified.

Academy students were asked why they attended graduate school. The two most agreed with statements referenced future career goals as reasons they attended graduate school. All participants agreed to some extent they were motivated and were confident they would finish their degree.

Academy participants were generally satisfied with the services provided to them by the Academy. They agreed the workshops were helpful, that the workshops helped them in their professional development and they recommended the workshops to other graduate students. Furthermore, Academy participants agreed monthly Academy meetings were helpful and they related to their Academy mentors. When asked about the most valuable aspect of the Academy, some participants

GRC Activities and Descriptions

The eight highest attended GRC activities and the number of students attending each activity between October 2012 and September 2013.

Workshop:	The GRC offers workshops to give additional assistance on topics such as writing literature reviews, data analysis, and other professional skills. There were 1,657 students in attendance.
Boot Camp:	The GRC boot camps are designed to help master's and doctoral students finish writing projects in a supportive writing environment. There were 660 students in attendance.
Writing:	The GRC offers writing support groups and individual consultations to aid students in the writing process. These meetings may involve a one-to-one meeting with GRC staff to help with issued students encounter while writing a thesis, dissertation, or other writing projects. There were 552 students in attendance.
GrOWL:	In the Writing Lab, students have the option of submitting a writing piece online for GRC staff to assist. GRC staff comment on structure and concepts in the manuscript and offer advice and pointers to students submitting their writing. There were 346 students in attendance.
Evening Lab:	The lab provides a quiet environment for writing and research. The lab is equipped with desktop computers. There were 341 students in attendance.
Support Group:	Writing support groups offer graduate students a community of writers who can support one another and provide accountability. These are peer-to-peer groups where students can report on their progress and reinforce good writing habits with each other. There were 271 students in attendance.
Jump Start:	This is offered by the GRC for newly accepted graduate students and provides general information about the campus and opportunities. Jump Start is intended to compliment departmental-specific orientations and is open to all accepted graduate and professional students. There were 234 students in attendance.
Stats:	The GRC offers assistance to students seeking guidance with statistical methods and study design. They also provide help with statistical software and help with statistical analysis. There were 118 students in attendance.

responded the support they received from staff and other graduate students as the most valuable aspect. Others mentioned the supportive environment and the ability to share knowledge with others as being most valuable.


Conclusion

The GRC offers many services to graduate students to aid in the process of graduate degree completion. The GRC operates under a Title V grant promoting services to Hispanic and Latino graduate students to aid them in completing their degree. Services offered by the GRC are open to all graduate and professional students including non-degree seeking students.

The five reports summarized in this brief report cover the GRC. The report of the workshops offered by the GRC, showed participants agree the workshops have been helpful and the knowledge gained from the workshops will aid in their ability and skill set to complete their degree. A total of 129 workshops were offered during the 2012-2013 academic year. These workshops covered topics such as statistical analysis, grant applications, conference presentations, and professional development.

A total of 1,265 students received 4,614 services from the GRC/GSFI between October 2012 and September 2013. Females accounted for 61.3% of the students receiving services. Primary users of GRC services were those identifying as Hispanic or white.

The report that compares students who use GRC/GSFI services to students who have never used these services did not yield many differences; however, there was an over-representation of non-US citizens using GRC/GSFI services when compared to the general population of graduate students.

The Academy and Fellows programs offered through the GRC provided students with the opportunity to participate in a semester or year-long program. The longer programs succeeded in building a community among student participants. Many participants in these two longer programs said they appreciated the opportunity to network with other graduate students and they found the programs to be good support systems for them while they navigated their respective programs. Some participants reported, they had recommended the Academy and Fellows programs to other students. 

About The Institute for Social Research

The Institute for Social Research is a research unit at the University of New Mexico. ISR conducts high quality research on local, state, national, and international subjects. Critical issues with which the Institute works includes substance abuse treatment, health care, education, traffic safety, DWI, crime, homeland security, and terrorism.

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