The University of New Mexico

2013-2014 UNM Graduate and Professional Student Fellowship Participant Survey Report

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INTRODUCTION

The graduate fellowship offered by El Centro de la Raza and the Graduate Resource Center (GRC) is intended to provide the Latina/o graduate community with academic support, resources, networks, and skills in order to help them successfully complete their graduate degrees. At the end of the fellowship, all participating students who have successfully finished the fellowship program are awarded a $1,000 scholarship to support their research. The fellows must commit to the following activities in order to receive the scholarship:

- Attend an eight-month Graduate Fellow program
- Participate in at least two monthly workshops
- Submit assignments assigned by faculty fellows
- Meet with a faculty mentor once per month

The monthly meetings were facilitated by faculty fellows and by El Centro de la Raza and Graduate Resource Center staff. They covered a range of professional and academic topics in the monthly meetings. The two required monthly workshops could be completed through El Centro de la Raza, the Graduate Resource Center (GRC), the Graduate Student Funding Initiative (GSFI), or the Project for New Mexico Graduates of Color (PNMGC).

The 2013-2014 Fellowship received 42 applicants, 20 of which were selected, and 1 participant dropped out of the program after the first month. A total of 19 participants completed the Fellowship and the current report is based on the 18 participant responses to a survey they were asked to complete upon finishing the program. The survey was conducted by the Institute for Social Research at UNM. 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, reasons why they go to graduate school and finishing graduate school, their experiences with the Fellowship and their aspirations following graduate school.

Demographics

Thirteen of the participants were female and the remaining 5 were male. The average age of the participants was 29.1 years old and ranged from 23 to 44 years of age. Race and ethnicity questions were broken down into several categories. First, respondents were asked if they were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. All 18 respondents answered "yes" to this question. Fourteen reported Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano as their origin. One reported Cuban, and the remaining 3 reported yes to this question and identified Salvadoran and

Venezuelan/Argentinean as their origin. One who reported being of an 'other' origin did not report the specific country.

Thirteen participants listed white as their race. The remaining five chose 'Other Asian, other Pacific Islander' and were asked to specify which race they identified with. Participants who chose this last category were prompted to type in their preferred racial identity. One chose Hispanic, 1 chose Latino, 1 chose Mexican, 1 chose Meztiza, and 1 chose Mix as their race.

Ten of the participants reported living with a spouse or partner. Only 2 reported living with dependent children; 1 reported living with 1 dependent child and 1 reported living with 4 dependent children.

Employment

Only 1 respondent reported being currently unemployed, the other 17 are currently employed. Four of the 17 reported working full-time and the other 13 reported working part-time. The number of hours participants reported working ranged from 10 to 50 hours with an average of 26.4 hours per week. Of the 17 employed participants, 13 reported UNM as their principal employer. The jobs participants reported working at UNM were teaching assistant, graduate assistant, research assistant, project assistant, program specialist, and legal assistant. The two other jobs listed were computer manufacturing and wildlife biologist. Participants were asked what their usual employment pattern has been for the last 3 years. Six reported working full-time, 10 reported working part-time, and 2 reported student as their usual employment pattern.

Educational Background

Nine of the participants graduated from a New Mexico high school. Fourteen reported being first-generation college students. Three reported being second-generation college students and 1 reported being a third-generation college student. Ten participants reported a Bachelor's as their highest level of education completed. Seven have already received a Master's degree and 1 is currently ABD (all but dissertation). Seven reported that they are currently completing a Doctoral degree and the remaining 11 reported working toward a Master's degree.

Thirteen reported their usual enrollment pattern as being full-time and 5 reported part-time. Six reported being enrolled in the summer semester. Five reported not being enrolled in the summer semester and that they primarily do work not related to their graduate program/degree. Three reported that while they are not enrolled, they still do work related to their graduate degree during the summer. Four participants selected N/A when asked about their usual summer enrollment because this was their first year as a graduate student. Only 1 respondent reported taking at least one term off (excluding summer) during their graduate program.

Ten of the participants applied to other graduate schools in addition to UNM. Two reported not being accepted into any other graduate program, 6 reported acceptance into 1 additional program, 1 respondent was accepted into 2 additional programs, and 1 reported acceptance into 7 additional graduate programs.

GRADUATE PROGRAM

Students were asked why they chose their graduate program. Table 1 reports the percent of students who indicated the various reasons they chose their particular program. The highest percentage of participants selected location/region as an important factor in choosing UNM for their graduate program (44.4%). Faculty/Program reputation was the second most selected reason for students to choose UNM for their graduate program (38.9%).The least selected factor for choosing UNM was the program requirements for their degree (5.6%). The categories were not mutually exclusive and participants selected as many reasons as they wanted.

Table 1: Reasons for Selecting Graduate Program	
	Percent
Faculty/Program reputation	38.9
University reputation	33.3
Financial support	33.3
Program requirements	5.6
Course offerings/curricula	22.2
Job placement	22.2
Location/Region	44.4
Other*	16.7

*The reasons explained for 'other' are as follows:

-Completed a MA in Spanish Linguistics in order to improve their application to Speech Language Pathology Master's programs

-Interest in the field of Public Administration

-Professional interest

Fifteen participants reported attending orientation workshops that were devoted to graduate student issues. Nine reported attending orientations specific for their department. Thirteen received or were at least aware of the 'Graduate Student Handbook' offered to graduate students when they began their program. However, 5 reported not receiving a handbook or were unaware of the handbook.

Nine participants reported their graduate program website offered completion or attrition rates. Two reported this information was not available, and 7 reported they didn't know if it was available. Five reported this information affected their decision to enroll in their program. Only 3 participants reported their program website offered information regarding job placement for recent graduates. Eight reported their program website did not offer this

information, and 7 reported they didn't know if their program website offered this information. Three reported this information affected their decision to enroll in their graduate program.

Students were asked to list any other professional or academic organizations they were affiliated with on campus. They listed the following: Centro de la Raza; CommGrads; Graduate and Professional Student Association; Graduate Students in Mathematics and Statistics; Gates Millennium Scholar; TRiO-Ronald E. McNair Scholar; Mexican Student Association; Phi Iota Alpha Fraternity; National Securities Studies Program Scholar; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Alpha Chi Omega; Spanish and Portuguese Graduate Student Association; Student Organization of Latin American Studies. Five participants did not report affiliation with any professional or academic organizations. The number of organizations participants reported affiliation with ranged from 1 organization to 5.

Table 2 reports participant responses to statements about their graduate program using a 7-point Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree). An average of 6.6 is a strong indicator that participants understand the requirements in their respective programs. The average of 6.3 for university satisfaction indicates most of the Fellows are satisfied with UNM; the average dipped slightly when asked whether participants were satisfied with their respective graduate programs within UNM with an average of 5.8. The lowest average (indicating disagreement) is for the statement: Students have little contact with each other, meaning most graduate students felt they interact with other students in their program.

Table 2: Graduate Program	
	Average
I understand the requirements in my program	6.6
I am annually reviewed to assess my progress	4.7
There is some sense of solidarity among the students who enter the program at the same time	4.8
Students have an active role in program decisions that affect them	4.6
Students have little contact with each other	3.2
Experienced students mentor new students	4.4
Students freely share information with each other about opportunities and how to get through the program	5.4
I am part of a supportive student community in my program	4.8
Faculty care about the students in the program	6.1
Faculty really cares about advising students	6.1
Faculty is accessible to students	5.7
I am satisfied with my choice of graduate program	5.8
My department advocates for me when necessary	5.5
My department gives me regular and constructive feedback on my progress towards degree completion	4.7
I am satisfied with my choice of this university for graduate school	6.3
My graduate program encourages me to complete my degree	6.0
Faculty is generous with their time with students	5.7

Advisor Information

Participants were asked whether they had an advisor and about their relationship with their advisor. Table 3 reports responses to these questions using the same Likert scale as above. Two participants reported not having an advisor, so the table reports the responses of the 16 participants who do have an advisor. Of those 16, three reported not having an advisor immediately starting the program, and 13 reported having an advisor immediately upon starting their graduate program.

Table 3: Advisor Information	
	Average
I currently have the advisor that I want	6.1
I am satisfied with the process by which I came to have my current advisor	5.7
I am satisfied with the amount and quality of time spent with my advisor	5.4
My advisor has been helpful	6.2

Why Attend Graduate School

Students were asked why they attend graduate school, which is reported in Table 4. A 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree) was used as in previous tables. The most agreed with statements for why graduates attend graduate school were to better prepare for careers they have chosen (6.7); to continue learning about things that interest them (6.6); for pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things (6.4); and broadening knowledge about subject that appeal to them (6.5). One of the lower averages (4.6) was for the statement, "Because with only a Bachelor's degree I would not find a high-paying job later on." Most participants disagreed with statements regarding not knowing why they remain in graduate school and once having good reason for graduate school but no longer knowing if they want to continue.

Table 4: Why Attend Graduate School	
	Average
Because with only a Bachelor's degree I would not find a high-paying job later on	4.6
Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things	6.5
Because I think that a graduate education will help me better prepare for the career I have chosen	6.7
For the intense feelings I experience when I am communicating my own ideas to others	5.9
Honestly, I don't know; I really feel that I am wasting my time in school	1.9
To prove to myself that I am capable of completing my graduate degree	5.2
In order to obtain a more prestigious job later on	5.0
Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like	6.4
I once had good reasons to for going to grad school; however, now I wonder whether I should continue	2.5
For the pleasure that I experience while I am surpassing myself in one of my personal accomplishments	6.4
For the pleasure I experience in broadening my knowledge about subjects which appeal to me	6.5
Because it will help me make a better choice regarding my career orientation	5.8
For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult academic activities	6.2
To show myself that I am an intelligent person	5.3
In order to have a better salary later on	5.7
Because my studies allow me to continue to learn about many things that interest me	6.6
Because I believe that few additional years of education will improve my competence as a worker	5.9

Finishing Degree Program

Students were asked about finishing their degree. Table 5 reports the averages response to questions asked regarding their motivation to finish and what may be hurdles to finishing their degree. Five participants 'strongly agreed' the numbers of hours they work affect their ability to finish their degree. All participants agreed additional financial assistance would be helpful for

them to finish. All participants agreed they are motivated to finish and will finish their degrees regardless of the barriers they face to obtaining their degrees.

Table 5: Finishing the Graduate Program	
	Average
The number of hours I work affects my ability to complete my degree program	4.9
I am motivated to finish my degree	6.7
I bear the full responsibility of paying for my education	4.7
My family supports my decision to go to school	6.2
Family commitments affect my ability to complete school work	4.3
Work commitments affect my ability to complete school work	5.4
Class offerings don't fit my schedule	3.9
I will finish my degree	6.7
My department has encouraged me to finish my degree	6.1
My committee has been helpful	5.2
My organizational skills have been helpful in getting through my degree	5.8
Additional financial assistance would help	6.7
I am able to juggle classes and activities with work, family, and other obligations	5.2
Graduate school is stressful	6.4
I have a strong support network	5.8
It will take me longer to complete graduate school than I expected	4.4
My department has provided helpful guidance	5.3
Mentoring/advising has contributed to my success	6.3
Completing this degree will help me get a good job	6.3

Participants were asked about their future career goals. The categories, presented in Table 6, were not mutually exclusive and respondents had the option to choose more than one career. Participants also had the option to choose 'something else' if their preferred career choice was not included. Table 7 reports the average response of participants when asked to what extent they were interested in pursuing the below career choices. The same Likert scale was used with 1 representing 'strongly disagree' and 7 representing 'strongly agree'. Three participants 'strongly disagreed' with choosing a tenure track position as a career, and 14 agreed to some extent they will consider a tenure track position for a possible career choice. Of those who answered questions regarding their future career goals, 'something else' received the highest

average; there were no follow-up questions regarding what 'something else' may refer to and if this trend continues, it may be pertinent to inquire as to what graduate students see themselves doing with their graduate degrees.

Table 6: Possible Career Choices	
	Average
Tenure track position	5.3
Private/Public researcher	5.0
Administrator	4.3
Bureaucrat	3.6
Something else	5.4

GRC/GSFI

Only 1 Fellows participant reported not using services from either the GRC or GSFI at the time of the survey. The remaining 17 reported having used either GRC services, GSFI services or both. The number of GRC services used ranged from 0 to 20 with an average of 9. The number of GSFI services used ranged from 0 to 20 with an average of 4.2. Table 7 reports the percent of students who used services provided by the GRC and GSFI.

Table 7: GRC/GSFI Services Used	
	Percent
GSFI workshops	72.2
GRC workshops	88.9
One-on-one consultations	38.9
Thesis/Dissertation boot camps	11.1
Online writing lab (GrOWL)	11.1
Research design, data analysis, statistical methods	5.6
Thesis/Dissertation writing and support groups	16.7
Workshops on academic and professional topics	33.3
Presentation skills and leadership development	22.2
Language learning	12.2
Other services*	16.7

*Other services are as follows:

-GRC online workshops

-Printing services

Participants were asked how satisfied they were with the GRC/GSFI services they received. Table 8 reports the average responses from participants who used GRC/GSFI services using the standard Likert scale used in the previous tables. Participants seem satisfied with both the GRC and GSFI staff being helpful. The GRC workshops received a slightly higher average than the GSFI workshops on the satisfaction scale. Participants mostly agreed they either have or would recommend GRC and GSFI workshops to other students.

Table 8: Satisfaction with GRC/GSFI	
	Average
The GRC workshops I have attended have been helpful	6.1
The GSFI workshops I have attended have been helpful	5.8
The workshops have helped me with my professional development	6.2
The workshops will help my finish school	5.7
I have recommended the workshops to other students	6.1
I would recommend the workshops to other students	6.2
GRC staff has been helpful	6.7
GSFI staff has been helpful	6.2
Consultations with GRC staff have been helpful	6.6
Consultations with GSFI staff have been helpful	5.7
Other GRC services I have received have been helpful	6.6

EL CENTRO DE LA RAZA

All Fellows participants reported attending at least four Fellows workshops. The number of Fellows workshops participants attended ranged from 6 to 16 with an average of 9.4. In addition to workshops provided by the Fellowship, participants had access to other services. Table 9 reports the percent of participants who used each particular service provided by the Fellows facilitated by El Centro de la Raza and the Graduate Resource Center.

Table 9: Fellows Services Used	
	Percent
Advisement	27.8
Advocacy	16.7
Mentoring	27.8
Internship and scholarship opportunities	44.4
Social/Cultural support	27.8
Community involvement	16.7
Leadership development	22.2
Graduate fellowships	83.3
Student employment opportunities	5.6
Home away from home facility	22.2
Computer pod with basic free printing	22.2
Break room	27.8
Other services*	16.7

*Other services are as follows:

-Conference room

-Raza graduation

Participants were asked a series of questions regarding their satisfaction with El Centro de la Raza and the Fellowship. The same Likert scale was used as in previous tables. Table 10 reports the average student response to the various satisfaction questions. The averages for satisfaction with the Fellowship program are quite high, mostly never dipping below a 6. Students had a lower average for making connections with other Fellows, indicating some may feel they did not create the networks they would have liked to. This is reiterated in the comments section (see Appendix). Students also indicated that a semester long program was not long enough. This seems to be a mistake in the survey instrument because the Fellowship is a year-long program.

Table 10: Satisfaction with Fellowship	
	Average
El Centro staff has been helpful	6.3
The Fellows monthly gatherings have been helpful	6.4
The Fellows monthly gatherings have been helpful for my academic development	6.5
The Fellows monthly gatherings have been helpful for my professional development	6.3
The Fellows monthly gatherings have been helpful to my personal development	6.3
The Fellows will help me finish school	6.4
I have recommended the Fellowship to other students	6.4
I would recommend the Fellowship to other students	6.6
My meetings with the faculty Mentors have been helpful	6.7
I can relate to the Faculty Mentors	6.3
The Faculty Mentors have been helpful	6.5
The scholarship amount was just right for the amount of work required	5.9
I needed the scholarship to pay for school	6.1
I have made connections with other Fellows students that will be helpful for me as I progress through graduate school	5.4
This program provided me strategies that will help me finish graduate school	6.1
This program served as a support system	6.3
Program meeting days fit into my schedule	6.2

Students were asked to share what they found to be the most helpful aspect of the Fellowship program. Participants mentioned the monthly meetings and the guidance they received from the Faculty Mentors as being the most helpful components of the Fellowship. Below are the students' responses:

- The information
- I really appreciate the perspectives from the four faculty members. Although it was a lot of work, I also am appreciative of being required to attend the GRC workshops. Most of the workshops were incredibly helpful and information that I wish I had learned earlier in my graduate program.
- The monthly meetings and the willingness of staff to help with questions and concerns.
- The money
- The sessions once a month

- Fellowship sessions
- All the insights about how to become successful academics
- Hearing and seeing people that came from a similar background as me, who were openly discussing many of the obstacles they had faced throughout both their professional and academic developments in relationship to their backgrounds.
- The mentoring and wisdom shared
- The program mentors who gave the monthly sessions were from diverse fields and knowledgeable about a wide range of topics. I was able to relate to them and their unique experiences.
- Mentorship
- The most helpful thing about this fellowship was the guidance we received from the faculty mentors. They weren't shy or embarrassed to share their experiences with us, and they did not hesitate to share their opinions regarding graduate school and career decisions. The resources we were given are invaluable. I didn't care about how much money we received; I really wanted the mentoring support we received, and I am extremely thankful that I had the opportunity to be a part of this program.
- Meet people from different areas that have similar cultural background that I have.
- Its staff, particularly those who are always available and their doors are always open.
- Support from the staff.
- N/A
- Building community
- Support and information

Participants were also asked about aspects of the Fellowship they did not find useful. Unlike the question asking what the participants found most useful about the Fellowship, to trends emerged for what they found least valuable about the Fellowship. Participants commented on things like meetings not fitting into their schedule and their discipline not being research intensive, therefore meetings may not have benefitted them. Other comments indicated the meeting summaries as being unproductive. Below are the comments left for those who left feedback in this area (participants who wrote in, 'nothing', or 'N/A' are not presented):

- My paperwork was misplaced on more than one occasion. Thankfully I had made copies of all my paperwork so I could resubmit it. It would also be useful to allow the fellows to actually access their Dropbox folder instead of just allowing us to view them. That way, we could upload documents into the folder instead of worrying about them getting "lost" when submitted by email or wasting paper to print them out and turn them in at the monthly meeting.

- The monthly Fellowship meetings. They conflicted with my research schedule and lab meetings.
- The summaries of the workshops
- It would have been nice to have made more connections with the other fellows.
- It was confusing to know what was exactly due and what counted as a workshop or not.
- There was a large focus on research. In my field although I do personal research to better inform my design decisions I don't do a whole lot at all, nor will I ever have to quantify and present any of it. So, when discussing research I simply felt it was not necessarily applicable to me personally.
- The lack of team building and networking among the fellows.
- Perhaps rather than writing 16 summaries for workshops, we could choose to write maybe 10 or so, allowing us to choose those most relevant to us.
- Nothing at all! We were even fed at every single meeting!
- Some of the GSFI workshops are very specific for certain areas of graduate studies.
- That El Centro is closed during the weekends. It would be useful to have access to the facility on the weekends in order to have a space to study and work.

CONCLUSION

The 2013-2014 Fellowship received 42 applicants, 20 of which were selected, and 1 participant dropped out of the program after the first month. The 2012-2013 academic year also had 20 participants and 1 who dropped out before completing the Fellowship. The 2013-2014 Fellowship program had 13 females and 5 males. All respondents reported being of Hispanic origin.

The Fellows seem to be satisfied with the Fellows program offered by El Centro de la Raza and the Graduate Resource Center. The averages remain near 5 and 6 indicating agreement with questions asked regarding the participants' satisfaction with the program. This is also consistent with the 2012-2013 Fellowship participants. Participants also agreed with statements regarding satisfaction with the Graduate Resource Center. Comments by the Fellows provided support for the Fellows program and participants seemed generally happy with the program. Fellows indicated mentorship and support as being some of the more influential aspects of the Fellowship. Some participants indicated they would have liked to make more connections and networks within the Fellowship. A few commented on the timing of meetings being an issue during the Fellowship. The majority of participants had particular issues with one aspect or another of the program without any real trends emerging. This suggests the Fellowship is running well. The mentorship and support seem to be the most beneficial piece of the Fellowship.

Appendix A: Additional Student Comments

- Thank you for providing this program. The lessons learned are invaluable. Hearing this advice has made me realize all that a graduate program encompasses. Being first generation to go to college, I had never heard the breakdown of all the important components that I need to keep in mind throughout the process. This program has set me up for the journey through graduate school and beyond into my career.
- Thank you for this program. I wish that I had learned about it earlier in my program.
- Only that the summaries of the workshops were not helpful and very time consuming.
- One of the best experiences in my whole graduate career so far. Love all the profess [sic].
- Here is a pen. Now please write out the rest of your life.
- I really enjoyed this fellowship the only thing I would say is that the GRC workshops were the only events that were conducive to my full-time work schedule because they were held over lunch. Events in the afternoon or on weekends would be beneficial to those of us that work full time. Also, the fellowship really stressed networking and leadership building but didn't do any team building or networking sessions among the fellows themselves. I probably only got to know one or two of the fellows and that's because I know them from other organizations. It would have been nice to ad one session where we could just get to know each other bond and do some team building. It would have been a good way to network long term for us and possibly collaborate with other departments.
- I appreciate and value the opportunity and experience granted to me through this program.
- I truly appreciate all the amazing support, advice, resources, and guidance we were provided this year. I don't know how I would have survived my first year of graduate school without this fellowship in terms of emotion. We were provided with so much valuable emotional support; it motivated me to finish the semester strong. I believe the requirements of this fellowship were so good for me. I'm glad we are required to attend GRC workshops as well as presentations in our field, because it has really helped me be a better-educated graduate student. I thank each and every person who was involved with the Latino/a Graduate and Professional Student Fellowship, because you truly are helping make a difference!
- Thank you so much for this opportunity. This was an amazing experience and I feel so inspired and grateful to be a part in it!

- It would be very useful to have El Centro de la Raza open 24/7 in order to have a place to study and work. Also, I wish there were more cultural events like "danzas" and "temazcales" and all those community events that could gather the Latino community together. I know El Centro has had conferences and advisement sessions, but El Centro is really missing cultural events.
- The Fellowship was very helpful for my personal and most of my academic career. However, I felt it emphasized too heavily on the professor/tenure track professional development. I would suggest that the application or description of the program specify that that is the emphasis of the fellowship or that the topics covered and examples used be broader and more encompassing students who wish to pursue other careers. It was a great experience and although I felt out of place at times it is a program that I would repeat!

Appendix B: Participant Department or School/College Affiliations:

- Spanish & Portuguese
- Communication & Journalism
- Biology
- Psychology
- Organizational, Information, & Instructional Technology
- Latin American & Iberian Institute
- Architecture
- Language, Literacy, & Sociocultural Studies
- Speech & Hearing Technologies
- Statistics & Mathematics
- Biochemistry & Molecular Biology
- Public Administration
- Counselor Education