

# DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING GRADUATE STUDENT ORIENTATION

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Sponsored by the American College Personnel Association's  
Commission for Admissions, Orientation, and the First Year Experience

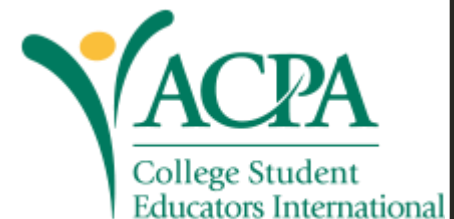
Panelists:

Sarah Elsey

Dr. Jacqueline Looney

Dr. Christine Wilson

Moderator: Dr. Patty Witkowski



# Panelists



Sarah Elsey  
UCCS



Dr. Jacqueline Looney  
Duke University

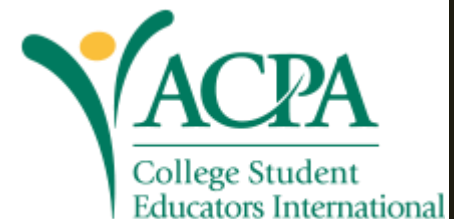


Dr. Christine Wilson  
UCLA

# Webinar Overview

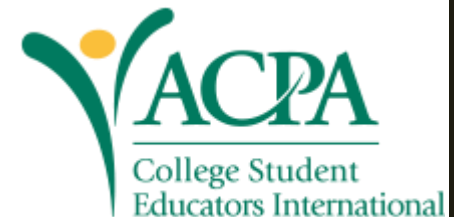
Each panelist will discuss the following for their institution (Duke University, University of Colorado Colorado Springs, and University of California-Los Angeles):

- Institutional Context
- Departmental Structure (department that offers Graduate Student Orientation)
- Collaboration with Academic Departments
- History of Orientation Program
- Marketing Approach
- Funding of Program
- Priority of Orientation
- Current Orientation Offerings
- On-Going Transition Programming for Graduate Students
- Future Directions



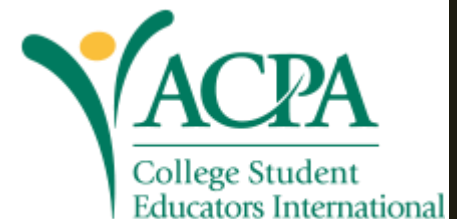
# Duke University-Institutional Context

- Duke University is a private research university located in Durham, North Carolina
- The Graduate School (TGS) is one of 10 Schools within the university
- TGS enrolls approximately 2,500 Ph.D. students and 700 research master's degree students
- There are 70 departments and programs working with approximately 1,200 graduate faculty members
- School's structure is organized into four units that support graduate departments in providing support services for students: Academic Affairs, Admissions, Finance & Administration, and Graduate Student Affairs



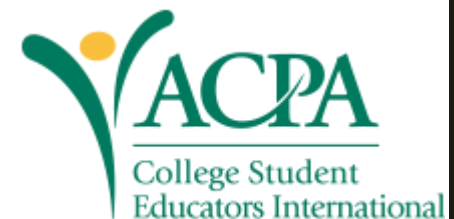
# Duke University-Orientation Program History

- Established in 1996 to ease the transition of newly enrolled students



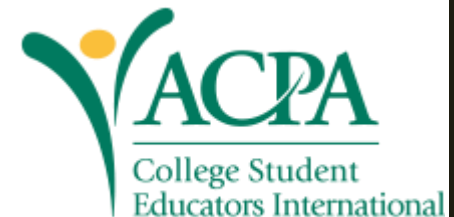
# Duke University-Marketing

- Email correspondence to new students – one invitation with links to register for events held all week, about 3 – 4 emails total to encourage them to register and attend various events
- Website - <https://gradschool.duke.edu/student-life/calendar-events/orientation-week>
  - Weeklong schedule
  - Welcome video
  - Listing of departmental orientation sessions
  - Orientation recap following the week showcasing event photos, highlighting key information that may have been missed with links to campus resources
    - Student Handbook
      - Welcome from the Dean of The Graduate School
      - Standards of Conduct
      - Professional Development Opportunities



# Duke University-Funding

- Budgeted annually by TGS
- Average about \$40k in Orientation Week activities
  - Approximately \$40 per new student based on 800 incoming graduate students
  - Expenses include:
    - Student, Staff and Volunteer lunches
    - Publications – folders, signage, campus maps, handouts
    - Reception food & entertainment
    - Promotional materials for giveaways
- Space rental fees

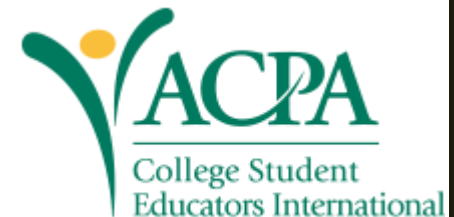


# Duke University-Orientation Priority

- Allows new students to become familiar with The Graduate School as a resource
  - Work with the students throughout their education
  - Students understand the role of TGS in their lives—entry to exit
    - Support services
    - Student health and wellness
    - Research opportunities
  - TGS first interaction with new students, allowing us to make various connections with individual students for any of the following;
    - Leadership opportunities
    - Awards
    - Student group connections and leadership roles



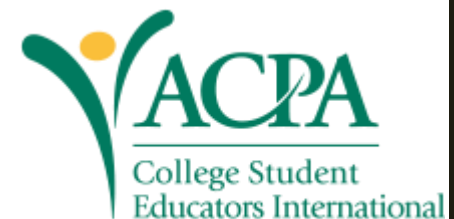
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# Duke University-Orientation Structure

- Welcome Reception for New Graduate Students
- English for International Students (EIS) Writing and Oral Exams
- Understanding Graduate Student Finances
- Graduate Student Orientation Session – Seminar and Resource Fair
  - Mandatory for all newly matriculating graduate students
  - All students receive a resource packet
  - Students hear from the Provost, Dean of The Graduate School, President of Graduate & Professional Students Council
  - Faculty and Student Perspective panel discussion with Q & A
  - Overview of the online Student Handbook which was recently transitioned from printed copy to online version
  - Overview of academic community, policies, and resources

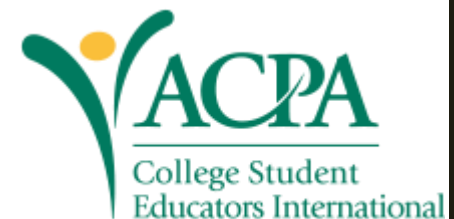


# Duke University-Orientation Structure (cont.)

- Safety Workshop – optional event
- Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Orientations – requirement for all students
  - Master's Degree Students
  - Humanities and Social Sciences PhD Students
  - Natural Sciences and Engineering PhD Students
  - Basic Medical Sciences PhD Students
- Mentoring and Graduate Student Success (using the Duke Mentoring Toolkit)
- Graduate and Professional School Convocation - official opening ceremony to welcome all graduate and professional students
- Welcome Back Reception for Returning Graduate Students

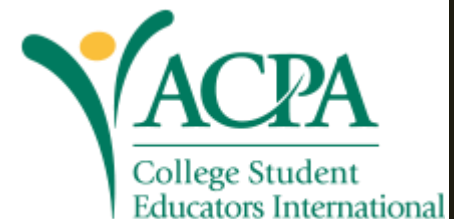


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# Duke University-Future Directions

- Invite existing students to volunteer and serve as ambassadors at our orientation event
- Revisit the layout of the information and resource fair based on student and staff feedback over the past couple of years
- Add a diversity and inclusion workshop which follows the model of the mentoring workshop
  - Use the [Mentoring Toolkit](#) and the [Cultivating a Culture of Mentoring](#) resources foundation for all students



# UCCS-Institutional Context

- 4 year public
- 20 master's and 5 doctoral programs
- Turned 50 in 2015
- Graduate School was established in 1999
- Total campus enrollment Fall 2015: 11,300
  - 1,681 graduate students
    - 148 international graduate students
- Colleges with highest graduate enrollment: College of Education, Engineering and Applied Sciences, and Business

# UCCS-Departmental Structure

- Decentralized
- 2 full-time staff, one ½ time Dean
- 3 student employees
- Two full time graduate admissions staff housed in the admissions department, 1 admissions staff for all international students.

# UCCS-Departmental Collaborations

- Graduate Executive Committee meets monthly
- Program specific orientations limited
- Include all new students
- Department relationships have improved

# UCCS-Orientation Program History

- Been in position for 1 ½ years
- Orientation improvements were an initial goal
- Resource fair style in past
- Moved to conference style in fall 2015

# UCCS-Marketing

- Admission Reports weekly
- Email Marketing System
- Short Survey RSVP
- Program Directors and Staff
- Calling Campaign



# UCCS-Funding

- Recruitment and Retention Split Budget
- Catering and Parking cost covered by Grad School
- Breakdown

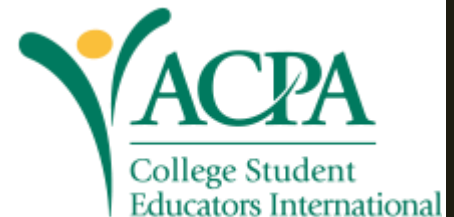
# UCCS-Orientation Priority

- Resistance from programs when began
- Priority for students, but not the university
- Some programs don't offer additional orientation to the graduate student experience in their area
- Decentralized



Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO COLORADO SPRINGS



# UCCS-Orientation Structure

- Mandatory Check-in and Welcome for International Students
- Fall and Spring Events
- Welcome Presentations and Reception
- Topic Areas
- Feedback Survey-Parking Pass!

# UCCS-On-Going Transition Programs

- Typically at the department level
- 2-3 professional and social events a year co-sponsored
- Graduate Student Association's Role

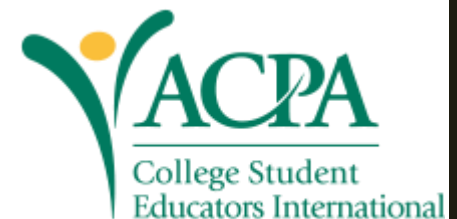
# UCCS-Future Directions

- Best time of day and semester for welcome events
- More variety of presentation topics
- Program specific orientation for all
- More department support



Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO COLORADO SPRINGS



# UCLA-Institutional Context

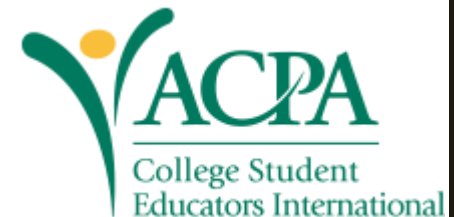
- UCLA is a large R1 University
- All undergraduate and graduate programs are full-time
- 29,000 undergraduate students, 12,000 graduate and professional students
- Demographics of graduate and professional student population
  - International – 21%
  - Underrepresented minorities (domestic) – 15%

# UCLA-Department Structure

- *UCLA has graduate programs in the following areas:*
  - *Academic Schools and Departments*
  - Humanities
  - Life Sciences
  - Physical Sciences
  - Social Sciences
  - Academic Health Sciences (Ph.D. programs in Dentistry and Medicine)
- *Professional Schools and Departments*
  - Nursing
  - Public Health
  - Law
  - Medicine
  - Dentistry
  - Arts & Architecture
  - Education & Information Studies
  - Engineering & Applied Sciences
  - Anderson Graduate School of Management
  - Luskin School of Public Affairs
  - Theater, Film & Television

# UCLA-Department Structure

- The UCLA Graduate Student Resource Center (GSRC) is a department in a centralized Student Affairs organization.
  - Initiative of the Graduate Students Association
  - Began 11 years ago
  - GSRC works with academic departments primarily through the departments' graduate students affairs officers (SAO)
    - GSRC relies on departmental SAO's to forward GSRC emails to their students, to refer their students to our services, and to plan their own orientation events around the campus-wide events.
    - Departmental SAO's involved in GSRC strategic planning and oversight



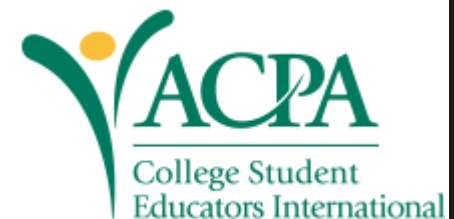


# UCLA-Orientation Program History

- GSRC began in January 2005
- Assessment revealed no campus-wide graduate student support and an orientation program was the first initiative undertaken.
- UCLA Association of Graduate Counselors and Advisors endorsed the idea of a campus-wide orientation
- 1<sup>st</sup> annual UCLA Graduate Student Orientation held in September of 2005

# UCLA-Marketing

- Save the date emails to departmental Student Affairs Officers (SAO) to be forwarded to students
- The GSO Coordinator (a graduate student) goes to the Graduate Students Association Forum in late spring to begin recruiting volunteers (goal is for 120) for the event.
- 7 weeks before orientation: all incoming students receive an email from the GSA President inviting them to register for the orientation
  - Link to the website and pictures of previous orientation.
  - Video in production for 2016
- 3 weeks before orientation: a second email is sent reminding students to register
- 3 weeks before orientation: an email is sent to departments reminding them to remind their students to register



# UCLA-Funding

- Approximately 1500 students register for orientation and 1100-1200 attend. Lunch is provided to all who register. Those who attend but did not register are not given lunch.
  - Costs
    - Orientation Coordinator (grad student) - \$4,000 stipend
    - Continental Breakfast (paid for by the Student Union) - \$3000
    - Lunch for graduate students (paid for by Student Union) - \$9000
    - Lunch for volunteers and resource fair participants - \$2300
    - Venues (partially subsidized by student union fund) - \$3000
    - A/V for non-student union facilities - \$1500
    - Materials and Supplies - \$2000
    - Volunteer Training Dinner - \$1300
    - Packet Stuffing snacks - \$200
    - Volunteer T-shirts - \$800
- Based on 1150 attendees, cost per participant is \$23.56.

# UCLA-Orientation Priority

- Priority for the upper administration
  - The Chancellor, the Vice Provost for Graduate Education, and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, most academic departments and schools participate in the plenary session and most academic departments and schools.
  - The majority of students who are not already in classes (law and medicine start a month before the rest of the graduate and professional programs) or otherwise engaged in departmental programs (the business school has chosen not to make room in their orientation activities for the campus-wide GSO) attend the orientation.
- Assessments suggest that GSO is a valuable experience.
- Some faculty are aware of and supportive of GSO, many are not really aware.

# UCLA-Orientation Structure

9am-10am – Registration and Breakfast

10am – 11am – Plenary Session (Chancellor, VP of Grad Division, VC Student Affairs, GSA President)

11am-12:00pm – Keys to Success in Graduate School (7 different breakout sessions based on department/degree objective) – Panels of current grad students

11:00am-3:30p.m. Campus Tours (a tour designed by graduate students for graduate students and led by graduate students)

12:00pm-12:15pm – Title IX info (all students are required to complete an online module, this short session is for reinforcement)

12:15pm-1:00pm LUNCH

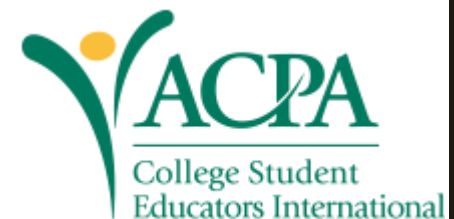
12:30pm-4:30pm – Resource Fair

1pm-2pm – Afternoon session #1

2:15pm-3:15pm – Afternoon session #2

3:30pm-4:30pm – Afternoon session #3

4:45pm-7pm – GSA GradBar (not officially an orientation event, but students think it is)

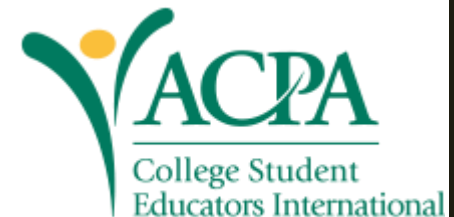


# UCLA-Orientation Structure (Sessions)

- Financial Literacy
- Funding your Graduate Education
- Funding your Graduate Education for International Students
- Intro to the Library
- LGBT at UCLA
- Wellness at UCLA
- Recreation Center Open House and Mini-Workshops
- Graduate Student Parents
- Intro to the International Center
- Insurance Plan
- Relationships with Advisors and Mentors
- Being a TA
- Living in Los Angeles (things to do)
- Transportation in Los Angeles (how to get around)
- Students of Color (there is also a diversity-themed orientation event the day before)
- Women in Academia
- Academic Writing in Graduate School

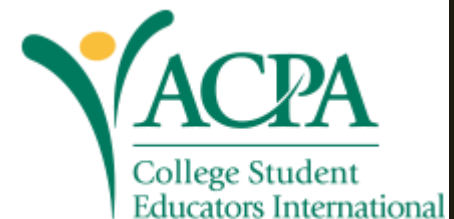


Understanding the Grad Student Health



# UCLA-Orientation Structure (Resource Fair Participants)

- All student affairs offices that are not solely for undergraduates
- Library
- BruinCard
- Transportation
- Housing
- UCLA Credit Union  
Graduate Division  
Career Center
- 35-40 student groups



# UCLA-On-Going Transitions Programs

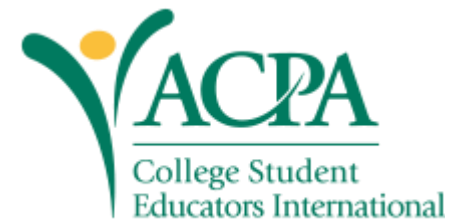
- Workshops provided by the GSRC:
  - Topics related to the challenges of graduate school
  - Writing
  - Presenting
  - Applying for fellowships and grants
  - Applying for employment



# UCLA-Future Directions

- Same structure since it's inception 10 years ago.
  - Tinkered at the margins structurally
  - Have made significant changes to the content and delivery of the various workshops based on our assessments and on what we know about the changing needs of our students.
- The GSRC is reviewing and updating its strategic plan during this academic year.
  - Will be looking at GSO to determine future directions

# Questions?



# Contact Us!

- If you have any questions for panelists, feel free to contact us!

Sarah Elsey: [selsey@uccs.edu](mailto:selsey@uccs.edu)

Dr. Jacqueline Looney: [grad-gsa@duke.edu](mailto:grad-gsa@duke.edu)

Dr. Christine Wilson: [cwilson@saonet.ucla.edu](mailto:cwilson@saonet.ucla.edu)

Dr. Patty Witkowsky: [pwitkows@uccs.edu](mailto:pwitkows@uccs.edu)

