



The Graduate Student Experience:

Redesigning Graduate School
So That Every Student Can Flourish and Finish

March 25-27, 2024

Doubletree Asheville Biltmore
115 Hendersonville Rd, Asheville, NC 28803



Monday, March 25, 2024

4:00 - 7:00 pm	Registration	Hall/ Foyer
5:00 - 6:00 pm	<p>Welcome and Plenary</p> <p>John N. Gardner, Co-Founder and Executive Chair, Gardner Institute</p> <p>Drew Koch, CEO, Gardner Institute</p> <p>Alyssa Crittenden, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean, Graduate College, University of Nevada, Las Vegas</p>	Burghley
6:00 - 7:00 pm	<p>Dinner</p> <p>Cash bar will be available</p>	Burghley
	<p>Post Dinner Conversation on Current Status of The Graduate Student Experience</p> <p>John N. Gardner, Co-Founder and Executive Chair, Gardner Institute</p> <p>Leonard Cassuto, Professor of English and American Studies, Fordham University</p>	Burghley

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

7:30 am - 3:00 pm	Registration	Hall/ Foyer
7:30 - 8:30 am	Breakfast	Burghley
8:30 - 9:45 am	<p>Welcome and Plenary</p> <p>Alyssa Crittenden, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean, Graduate College, University of Nevada, Las Vegas</p> <p>Ebony McGee, Professor of Innovation and Inclusion in the STEM Ecosystem at Johns Hopkins University's School of Education, Department of Mental Health, Johns Hopkins University</p>	Burghley

10:00 - 11:00 am	Concurrent Sessions	
11:15 am - 12:15 pm	Concurrent Sessions	
12:30 - 1:30 pm	Lunch and Plenary Drew Koch , CEO, Gardner Institute John N. Gardner , Co-Founder and Executive Chair, Gardner Institute	Burghley
1:45 - 2:45 pm	Concurrent Sessions	
2:45 - 3:00 pm	Snack Break	
3:00 - 4:00 pm	Roundtable Discussions	
4:00 - 4:15 pm	Break	
4:15 - 5:00 pm	Plenary Sara Stein Koch , Institute Fellow & Senior Associate for Institutional Support, Gardner Institute Brent Drake , Senior Vice President for Operations and Research, Gardner Institute	Burghley
Wednesday, March 27, 2024		
7:00 - 8:00 am	Breakfast	Burghley
8:00 - 10:00 am	Workshops	
8:00 - 8:55 am	Concurrent Session	Burghley B
9:00 - 10:00 am	Concurrent Session	Burghley A
10:15 - 11:15 am	Case Study and Roundtables	
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Lunch	

12:45 - 1:45 pm	Concurrent Session	
1:45 - 2:00 pm	Snack break	
2:00 - 3:00 pm	Resource Creation, White paper, and Action development	
3:15 - 4:00 pm	Close and Call to Action John N. Gardner , Co-Founder and Executive Chair, Gardner Institute Sara Stein Koch , Institute Fellow & Senior Associate for Institutional Support, Gardner Institute	Burghley

Concurrent Sessions

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

<p>10:00-11:00 am</p>	<p>Academic Learning Environments & Graduate Student Sense of Belonging</p> <p>Steve Desir, Director, Professional Development Equity in Graduate Education Consortium and Assistant Research Professor, University of Southern California</p> <p>Annie Wofford, Assistant Professor, Florida State University</p> <p>Aireale Rodgers, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison</p> <p>In graduate education, the lab, classroom, and candidacy exam are all designed to provide graduate students with opportunities to build their scholarly identity and knowledge as academic professionals. Panelists will present emerging research designed to increase awareness of how these learning environments function as racialized and gendered spaces that can advance or inhibit graduate students' sense of belonging in their disciplinary communities. This research panel is designed to provide faculty and graduate program administrators who are interested in advancing equity in graduate education with the skill-set to identify issues of race and gender that emerge in academic learning environments.</p>	<p>Burghley A</p>
	<p>Integrating Writing Support into the Graduate Curriculum</p> <p>Jill Smucker, Director of Graduate Education, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville</p> <p>After years of offering writing workshops and bootcamps to graduate students with limited engagement, the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Graduate School is taking a new approach. Understanding that many students choose not to take advantage of optional resources, we have hired expert content creators to develop writing support modules that will be integrated into graduate coursework. This effort will support faculty and students in enhancing writing competencies to support increased retention and degree completion.</p>	<p>Burghley B</p>
	<p>The Network for Enriched Academic Relationships (NEAR), Guiding Students to Success</p> <p>Elizabeth Colucci, Assistant Dean for Graduate Professional Development, University at Buffalo, SUNY</p> <p>Mentoring relationships are critical to graduate student success. Mentoring can happen in formal settings and matching programs as well as informally. The Network for Enriched Academic Relationships (NEAR), a University at Buffalo-wide interdisciplinary mentoring network for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, fills the gap between formal and informal mentoring, creating opportunities for situational mentoring that could lead to more long-term mentoring relationships.</p>	<p>Stuyvesant</p>
	<p>Holistic Approaches to Cultivating Graduate Student Diversity and Success at the University of Minnesota</p> <p>Aimzhan Iztayeva, Program Associate, University of Minnesota</p> <p>Maija Brown, Assistant Director Transition & Retention, University of Minnesota</p> <p>This session focuses on the University of Minnesota's Graduate School and the Graduate School Diversity Office's mission to holistically support graduate students and discuss key initiatives that target specific populations, such as first-generation college students who are enrolled in graduate programs (First-Gen Connect), international graduate students (Grad InterCom), and the Community of Scholars Program (COSP), an award-winning program that centers the experiences of Native and domestic graduate students of color who are in research-based programs.</p>	<p>Vanderbilt</p>

Concurrent Sessions

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

<p>11:15 am- 12:15 pm</p>	<p>Work-Life Balance Coaching Framework: Clarity and Alignment for MBA Students in Transition</p> <p>Lisa Fournier, MBA Career Coach, St. Cloud State University</p> <p>Matthew Trombley, Interim Director, MBA Program, St. Cloud State University</p> <p>The Herberger Business School at St. Cloud State University offers career and personal coaching using a unique work-life balance coaching framework as a feature of the MBA program. The coach partners with students on an individualized basis to find work-life balance, reorder priorities, and create forward-thinking goals within a holistic context. The coaching program helps define the success in the MBA program by incorporating how a student moves forward after attaining their degree.</p>	<p>Stuyvesant</p>
	<p>Morgan's Structured Teaching Assistant Program (MSTAP): Innovations in Preparing Future Educators</p> <p>Mark Garrison, Dean, School of Graduate Studies, Morgan State University</p> <p>Morgan's Structured Teaching Assistant Program (MSTAP), the 2022 ETS®/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education" recipient, has unique features anticipated to have significant impact for the graduate and undergraduate learning experience. Participation is required of all University TAs, including completion of two graduate courses on instruction and assessment. The Morgan team has secured an NSF Innovations in Graduate Education award (ID: 2325659) to study the MSTAP experience in context of career readiness.</p>	<p>Vanderbilt</p>
	<p>Academic and Career Synergy: A Recipe for Graduate Student Success</p> <p>Rebecca Zolotor, Dean and VP, School of Health Sciences, Purdue University Global</p> <p>Adam Bufka, Director, Center for Career Advancement for the School of Health Sciences, Purdue University Global</p> <p>This presentation explores the dynamic synergy of curricular and co-curricular approaches to career development. It highlights the integration of career touchpoints throughout a student's academic journey, incorporating elements such as resume building, cover letter crafting, and AI technology-enhanced mock interview practice pertinent to a program of study. Additionally, we will discuss the strategic integration of professional certifications to augment students' marketability and job readiness. This synergistic approach equips learners with comprehensive career development experience, preparing them for a competitive job market armed with essential skills and credentials.</p>	<p>Burghley A</p>
	<p>A New IMAGE: Increasing Modalities and Access to Graduate Education</p> <p>Nicole Lounsbery, Director, Graduate School, South Dakota State University</p> <p>This session highlights the development of a model that provides more effective ways to connect with a diverse graduate student population. The demand for accessible online graduate education and the progressively diverse student learner caused us to not only increase course delivery options, but also utilize inclusive pedagogy and adaptive course design to improve the overall student experience. Furthermore, new communication and service strategies were implemented to expand support for both prospective and current students.</p>	<p>Burghley B</p>

Concurrent Sessions

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

<p>1:45-2:45 pm</p>	<p>Who is the Ideal Grad Student? Rhetorical Aspirations Versus Historical Reality</p> <p>Brendan DeCoster, Assistant Director, Student Services, University of Maryland</p> <p>Kristen Stack, Director, Student Services, University of Maryland</p> <p>While departments seek a diverse graduate student body, recent issues have made it difficult to assess students based on anything other than specific academic attributes. However, this elides a more serious and pressing phenomenon, which involves how the ideal graduate student is conceived in financial, federal, and curricular fields. This presentation elucidates how these other fields describe our capacity to ensure a diverse student body, and how we can navigate them as we move forward.</p>	<p>Stuyvesant</p>
	<p>Building and Implementing a Data-Informed Framework for Holistic Graduate Student Success</p> <p>Claudia Petrescu, Vice Provost for Graduate Education & Dean Graduate School, Kansas State University</p> <p>Megan Miller, Assistant Director of Graduate Student Success, Kansas State University</p> <p>This session will present the process to identify and to collect data needed to develop a holistic graduate student success framework. Our definition of holistic graduate student success aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, respectively that graduate student success means both personal and professional success. We will discuss how we used data to design interventions aligned with each need category. Finally, we'll dive deeper into a couple of these interventions to showcase impact.</p>	<p>Vanderbilt</p>
	<p>Scaling Undergraduate Student Success Supports for Graduate Student Equity</p> <p>Jody Fournier, Provost and Vice President, Capital University</p> <p>Deanna Wagner, Associate Provost/Title IX Coordinator, Capital University</p> <p>When the University's decentralized approach to graduate student support produced lackluster results, a University-wide group worked together to create more equitable student support structures around this specific population. The group focused on sharpening communication methods for support, increasing services available to graduate students, and expanding opportunities for graduate assistantships on campus in various fields. This presentation will provide a replicable and scalable model of extending existing undergraduate supports and initiating new services for graduate students.</p>	<p>Burghley A</p>
	<p>Recognizing and Supporting the Unique Needs of Online Graduate Students</p> <p>Karim Lehman, Vice Provost for OHIO Online, Ohio University</p> <p>Thomas Raimondi, Sr. Director, Strategy and Operations for OHIO Online, Ohio University</p> <p>Despite the exponential growth of online programs, the unique needs of online graduate students often go unaddressed. Ohio University has developed a comprehensive approach to support the academic, personal, and professional success of online students, who are often balancing careers and families in addition to academics. Learn about how OHIO is prioritizing online graduate student success through professional success coaches, early alert systems, preparatory courses, access to 24/7 mental health support, and level-appropriate career coaching.</p>	<p>Burghley B</p>

Concurrent Sessions

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

<p>3:00-4:00 pm</p>	<p>Improving Non-Academic Career Preparation for Doctoral Students</p> <p>Toni Abts, Director, Graduate Educational Policy Office, University of Minnesota</p> <p>Historically, doctoral career preparation has focused on preparing future faculty. However, recent data tells us that only half of PhD graduates are taking jobs in academia. To address this divide, we must innovate our methods for career preparation to better support our students. Following an introduction by the presenter, participants will engage in group discussions on the barriers to non-academic career preparation and promising practices for reforming methods of training doctoral students.</p>	<p>Vanderbilt</p>
	<p>Graduate Student Career Development: Strategies and Resiliency</p> <p>Danielle Hart, Associate Director of Graduate Student Career Development, Miami University</p> <p>In this session, we will discuss effective ways to help their students develop self-care and resiliency skills when encountering failure on the job search, particularly the faculty job search.</p>	<p>Burghley A</p>
	<p>Nurturing Excellence: The Diversity Campus Experience at a University in the South</p> <p>Leonard Newby, Assistant Professor, Urban Education/Graduate Studies, Langston University</p> <p>Desmond Delk, Associate Professor, Health, Physical Education, & Recreation, Langston University</p> <p>Discover the transformative impact of the Diversity Campus Experience (DiCE) in this 60-minute case study presentation. Founded in 2013 by the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association, DiCE empowers graduate students of color to recruit and mentor prospective peers. From workshops to personalized introductions, DiCE has enriched the academic, personal, and professional lives of participants. Join us for insights into fostering diversity and excellence in higher education through this dynamic initiative.</p>	<p>Burghley B</p>

Concurrent Sessions

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

8:00-10:00 am	<p>Supporting First-Generation Graduate Students</p> <p>Alison Hyslop, Associate Dean/Professor, St. John's University</p> <p>Lorie Charles, Graduate Coordinator, St. John's University</p> <p>First generation graduate students (FGGS) have their own challenges. Using design thinking, participants will identify issues that arise for FGGS from applying, to advising, to graduating. We will explore extra-academic concerns such as expectations, mindset, and a sense of community. Participants will identify issues, develop plans, and provide feedback on projects, structures, or policies. Deliverables would include implementation plans, ideas for improving the climate, and a new outlook on how to support our students.</p>	Stuyvesant
	<p>Wake up! Engaging Adult Learners in Graduate School</p> <p>Julie Fernandez, Dean, College of Education, Charleston Southern University</p> <p>Krista Allison, Chair of the EdD in Leadership, Charleston Southern University</p> <p>Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Gen Z coexist in our graduate programs. Presenters will discuss generational differences seen in the graduate population and provide practical approaches for engaging all generations. Through the application of adult learning principles and experiential education, our classrooms can become diverse and thriving environments. This interactive session will assist faculty and administrators in understanding the graduate population and provide teaching techniques for engaging all candidates.</p>	Vanderbilt
8:00-8:55 am	<p>From Curriculum to Career: Measuring the Success of Graduate Education</p> <p>Brendan Gillis, Manager of Teaching and Learning, American Historical Association</p> <p>Daniel Denecke, Program Director, National Science Foundation</p> <p>James Grossman, Executive Director, American Historical Association</p> <p>This session will focus on the strengths and limitations of the metrics currently used to track success in graduate education. Our panel brings together representatives of institutions involved in funding, studying, and reforming postsecondary education to address what we can learn about student experiences using the data that is currently available for both the humanities and STEM fields. What do students want from their graduate programs? What are the biggest obstacles to achieving successful outcomes? And how might a broader disciplinary perspective inform the next phase of research and reform?</p>	Burghley B
9:00-10:00 am	<p>A Graduate Student First-Year Experience Program – GT6000 at Georgia Tech</p> <p>James Black, Director of Student and Academic Affairs, Office of Graduate Education, Georgia Institute of Technology</p> <p>Marc Ebelhar, Graduate Student Success Specialist, Office of Graduate Education, Georgia Institute of Technology</p> <p>GT6000 is Georgia Tech's small-group, peer-led, extended-orientation program for first-semester graduate students. The program is designed to promote a positive student experience through social interaction, familiarization with campus resources, and peer mentorship. In this session, we'll provide an overview of the program structure, learning objectives, and student feedback. We'll also present compelling results from a recent study comparing the experiences of students in the program with the broader graduate student body at Georgia Tech.</p>	Burghley A

Concurrent Sessions

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

	<p>The Purpose Driven PhD</p> <p>James Grossman, Executive Director, American Historical Association</p> <p>"No More Plan B," published in the Chronicle of Higher Education in 2011 by the American Historical Association's president and executive director ignited more than a decade of work in graduate education reform, much of it funded by the Mellon Foundation. The influence of the AHA's work is suggested by changes in common vocabulary, especially the extent to which "Career Diversity" has replaced the problematic "#alt-ac." This presentation will articulate the AHA's vision for graduate education reform, with an emphasis on centering the seldom asked question: what is the purpose of any given department's PhD program?</p>	Burghley B
10:15-11:15 am	<p>Graduate Fellowships- Professional Experience & Affordability in Master's Programs</p> <p>Jeanne Zilliox, Associate Vice President Graduate Enrollment Management, Merrimack College</p> <p>Merrimack College offers Graduate Fellowships in many of our Master's Degree Programs. The purpose of the fellowship is to provide high impact professional experience during their degree as well as making their degree affordable. During the session we will explore the four different fellowship models available to our students. We will also outline the process we use to interview for and award the fellowships.</p>	Burghley A
	<p>Understanding the First-Generation Graduate School Experience</p> <p>Amy Overman, Assistant Provost for Scholarship and Creative Activity, Elon University</p> <p>Kenneth Brown, Jr., Assistant Director for First-Generation Student Support Services, Elon University</p> <p>Laké Laosebikan-Buggs, Director of Inclusive Excellence for Graduate and Professional Education, Elon University</p> <p>Elana Gutmann, Graduate Apprentice, Student Conduct, Elon University</p> <p>Darynha Gnep, Graduate Apprentice First-Generation Student Support Services, Elon University</p> <p>Navigating graduate school can be overwhelming, particularly for first-generation graduate students. Literature on unique challenges faced by these students is sparse. This session will engage participants in thoughtful reflection and discussion on effective ways for institutions to assist students. Participants will explore pertinent questions that should be directed to students and identify crucial information needed from students and campus constituents. This collaborative effort seeks to inform and shape comprehensive institutional support for first-generation graduate students.</p>	Vanderbilt
	<p>Consistency and Support from Start to Finish: A Doctoral Program's Mentorship Model</p> <p>Lisa Borrero, Associate Professor, University of Indianapolis</p> <p>Meeting the needs of graduate students, particularly those in demanding doctoral programs, requires a unique combination of consistent messaging, support structures that encourage student agency, and a personable, tailored approach. This roundtable discussion will cover features of the mentorship model used within the Doctor of Health Science program at the University of Indianapolis and explore the successes and challenges that faculty and staff have experienced using the model to meet the needs of their students.</p>	Stuyvesant

Concurrent Sessions

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

<p>12:45-1:45 pm</p>	<p>TILting Towards Inclusiveness: Enhancing Retention and Success for Minoritized Graduate Students</p> <p>Anthony Molaro, Associate Professor, Saint Catherine University</p> <p>This conference proposal offers the experiences of one graduate program's efforts to improve the graduate student experience, emphasizing retention and outcomes for minoritized students. It will situate our efforts within the broader disciplinary student outcomes landscape. I will describe our work to create an enhanced orientation program and our use of inclusive teaching practices to improve the graduate student experience.</p>	<p>Vanderbilt</p>
	<p>Lessons Learned: Applications in NYC Graduate Education and on Your Campus</p> <p>Scott Evenbeck, Board Member, Gardner Institute, and University Professor, Baruch College</p> <p>Ryan Coughlan, Associate Professor, Higher Education Administration, Marxe School, Baruch College</p> <p>The presenters have a range of experience developing and launching new initiatives in different sectors of the US education system—independent universities, public research universities, community colleges, and secondary schools. They will discuss the ways in which they have integrated best practices from across the field of education into the design of a new graduate degree program. Drawing upon their work to build this new initiative, the presenters will share their approach to program development and prompt attendees to consider new possibilities within their own graduate programs. In this interactive session, attendees will have the opportunity to reflect on their own institutional context, existing strengths, student needs, and structural constraints. As they guide attendees through a brainstorming exercise, the presenters will share how they have worked to address some of the most pressing challenges in graduate education—enrollment management, student engagement, online learning, responsive curriculum, and fiscal responsibility—within the context of their latest efforts to design and launch a new program.</p>	<p>Burghley A</p>
	<p>Impact of UNLV Funding on the PhD Student Graduation Rate and Graduate Time within STEM Fields</p> <p>Kazim Julian, Masters student in Economics, University of Nevada, Las Vegas</p> <p>Nikolina Pender, Director of Data Analysis & Assessment, University of Nevada, Las Vegas</p> <p>We use historical and current student enrollment data for students in College of Engineering and College of Sciences Doctoral programs at our institution to fit a competing risks model. This estimation strategy allows us to measure the impact of factors influencing student retention in the program and degree completion. Our results find that funding is the greatest factor predicting degree success and impacting time-to-degree. We find a gap in degree success for minority students.</p>	<p>Burghley B</p>

Concurrent Sessions

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

<p>2:00- 3:00 pm</p>	<p>Designing Graduate Programs for Accessibility, Student Success, and Progressive Attainment</p> <p>Mary Wearn, Dean, School of Arts & Letters, Middle Georgia State University</p> <p>Benita Muth, Chair of English, Middle Georgia State University</p> <p>Monica Miller, Associate Professor of English and Program Coordinator of Graduate Programming in Technical and Professional Writing, Middle Georgia State University</p> <p>Michael North, Assistant Professor in Public Relations, Middle Georgia State University</p> <p>In alignment with Middle Georgia State University’s hybrid access mission, the newly formed School of Arts & Letters (SoAL) launched professionally oriented, liberal arts graduate programs beginning in 2019. The curriculum, delivery structures, student support systems, and cultural orientation were strategically designed for access, student success, and progressive educational and professional attainment. This panel will discuss the modular, stackable, interdisciplinary curriculum; asynchronous delivery; and community-building support and culture that have fostered SoAL graduate student success.</p>	<p>Vanderbilt</p>
	<p>Building a Graduate Culture - Student Needs Assessment (Canceled)</p> <p>Jennifer Anderson-Meger, Director of Graduate Studies, Viterbo University</p> <p>Viterbo University has seen significant growth in graduate programs and students over the past 8 years. Graduate students now comprise approximately half of the overall student population. Up to this point each graduate program has operated independently. Under the new Director of Graduate Studies, we want to identify ways to better serve all the graduate students at Viterbo. A student needs assessment was developed fall semester 2023 with the goal of analyzing findings during spring semester 2024. This session will discuss findings from the needs assessment and engage participants in discussion around how their campuses meet graduate student needs.</p>	<p>Burghley A</p>
	<p>Harnessing Data to Inform Practices, Policies, and Processes to Enhance the Graduate Student Experience</p> <p>Anne Converse-Willkomm, Associate Dean - Graduate College & Associate Teaching Professor, College of Arts & Sciences, Drexel University</p> <p>Deidre McMahon, Assistant Dean Online Education, Drexel University</p> <p>A wealth of comparative data exists around the entire undergraduate student life-cycle. At the graduate level, however, the data is highly limited, leaving institutions of higher education to formulate best guesses with regard to retention, stop outs for online, average time to complete a degree, percent of students using FFA, and overall student experience. There is little, to no ability, to benchmark success. In this resource creation session, participants will discuss approaches to gather in-house and national data to inform strategies to enhance the Graduate Student Experience.</p>	<p>Burghley B</p>

The Graduate Student Experience

Rationale and Call for Action

John N. Gardner, Executive Chair & Co-Founder, Gardner Institute
Sara Stein Koch, Institute Fellow & Senior Associate for Institutional Support, Gardner Institute

Rationale

While undergraduate education has received much attention over the past forty years, with specific focus on concrete ways to increase student success (e.g. “first year experience”), the same attention has not been paid to graduate students. We think it is time for a more deliberate set of efforts to increase student success using a holistic perspective that addresses student retention, progression, and completion rates, mental health and wellbeing, and career preparation. We are inviting your participation in the inaugural convening to discuss improving the graduate school experience in order to better serve our national interests as the gold standard for global graduate education.

Call to Action

Students elect to attend graduate school for a variety of reasons. The job market is increasingly competitive. With nearly 24% of American citizens holding a bachelor’s degree (US Census Bureau, 2022), many are looking to receive advanced training to better position themselves in a broad market. The professoriate will continue to grow and require advanced degrees to become academic leaders. Industry leaders increasingly hold advanced degrees, which bolster innovation, entrepreneurship, and global impact. Our aim is threefold: to reduce graduate student withdrawals and separations, enhance student experience and wellbeing, and strengthen post-graduate outcomes. Our focus begins at the point of matriculation and extends to graduation and beyond. We are focused on holistic approaches to retention, progression, and completion.

Plenary

Building Bridges in Graduate Education: Wrap-Around Services and the Vital Role of Community in Fostering Student Success

Alyssa Crittenden, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean, Graduate College, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Many university administrators were drawn into graduate education to make a difference. For me, this was a call to disrupt inequitable systems in higher education. While we have known for decades that graduate training (particularly at the doctoral level) needs serious renovation, systemic change is slow across the U.S. university system. Many approaches to reducing structural barriers focus on building recruitment pathways, changing admissions policies, and providing additional graduate funding, particularly for first-generation college, low-income, and/or students from underrepresented communities. There is very little discussion, however, of the critical need to recognize and cultivate the knowledge, skills, and strengths that historically marginalized students bring to graduate education. Using case studies from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), I highlight the central role that wrap-around services and community building play in the establishment of holistic support structures. I highlight efforts to reduce housing, food, and technology insecurity and the expansion of cultural affinity groups and programming on campus. This work represents the ongoing process of building bridges between university administrators, faculty, staff, students, and the communities we serve. I argue that this type of ongoing collaboration and a shared commitment to equity are key to effecting meaningful change in graduate education.

Plenary

The Risk and the Resistance – Dismantling the Toxicity in the STEM Ecosystem

Ebony McGee, Professor of Innovation and Inclusion in the STEM Ecosystem at Johns Hopkins University's School of Education, Department of Mental Health, Johns Hopkins University

This presentation delves into the intricate landscape of the STEM ecosystem, scrutinizing the prevailing risks associated with its current state and demographics. A thorough exploration of empirical findings will shed light on racialized stress and fatigue especially in Black communities. We will delve further into the role of advancing technologies such as artificial intelligence, and their implications, amplifying both the opportunities and the problems in the landscape. An analytical retrospective into the history of STEM will elucidate how we arrived at this juncture. The factors influencing the role of STEM institutions and companies in potentially perpetuating or mitigating these issues will also be identified.

The second part of the presentation will outline the consequential impact of these risks on individuals and communities within STEM. The concept of the 'Recovering Engineer' and facets like the 'Black and Pink Tax' will spotlight the existing inequities. The strain on brilliant individuals grappling with economic difficulties and the psychological impact manifesting as Impostor Syndrome will be addressed.

Finally, we will step into the realm of resistance, exploring practical strategies for combatting these issues. We will examine the importance of stereotype management, the necessity for ethical considerations within this equity conversation, and the potential of social network analysis towards fostering a supportive environment. The presentation concludes with a revolutionary proposal to dismantle the toxicity in the STEM ecosystem, invoking the principles of Afrofuturism as an empowering vision for a racially and socially equitable STEM future.

Plenary

Addressing Silos: A Shared Vision of Student Success For Undergraduate and Graduate Students

Drew Koch, CEO, Gardner Institute

John N. Gardner, Co-Founder and Executive Chair, Gardner Institute

All of us are familiar with the organizational silos found at our own institutions. Two of the biggest and unchallenged silos are undergraduate and graduate education, lumbering on in peaceful but separate co-existence. Leaders from the Gardner Institute, John N. Gardner the Co-Founder and Drew Koch the CEO, will address two considerations:

1. Why is a non-profit organization focused on undergraduate student success turning its attention to graduate student success; and how might this relate to the interface of undergraduate and graduate education at your institution?
2. How to explore the ideal integration of undergraduate and graduate education at your institution for the purposes of producing more successful students at all levels. And how might you organize and pursue an internal process to do just that? The academy has 40+ years of improving the success of first-year students. It is time to expand the model for even greater impact.

Plenary

The Great Unknown: Discussions on How to Gain Insight into Graduate Student Success Nationally

Brent Drake, Senior Vice President for Operations and Research, Gardner Institute

Thanks to almost two decades of institutional data collection from the National Center for Education Statistics it is easy for an individual to discover that of all degree seeking undergraduate students that started at a postsecondary institution in fall 2013, 37.2% that started at a two-year institution had completed an award by fall 2021, and 52.0% who had started at a four-year institution had completed an award. Given the long history of submitted data, we can examine graduation rates for multiple entry cohorts by institutional characteristics, time to degree, student sex, student race/ethnicity, student first-year loan status, and student Pell awards. Obviously, this level of insight allows policy makers and institutions to drive student success efforts at the undergraduate level. Unfortunately, there is no comparable set of nationally collected data on the success of graduate students. This presentation will focus on the state of what data is currently available at a national level. It will then present an admittedly incomplete measures of disaggregated success that can be derived from it. Finally, potential frameworks for filling the data gap will be discussed. Participants will have an opportunity to brainstorm and discuss a potential path forward to allow for greater insight into the success of graduate students nationwide.