

## **Characteristics of an Excellent Graduate Student Experience**

### **First experiences**

- Attentiveness to issues of diversity
- Philosophy of inclusiveness
- Clear and accurate information about the graduate program (including requirements, faculty, etc.)
- Prompt responses to questions about the program and the admissions process on the part of the DGS and faculty
- Reflective and efficient approach in designing and implementing the admissions process
- Effective recruiting visits and events
- Package of student support that corresponds to the average time to degree and that includes opportunities for professional development in teaching and research
- Orientation to department, university, and community
- Early responsive and informative interactions with DGS and faculty

### **Program structure and academic environment**

- Lively, productive, high-level faculty with active departmental programs of lectures, visitors, etc.
- Well-taught courses in an academically challenging core curriculum with relevant electives
- Clear expectations about mileposts in graduate career and timely completion of degree
- Multiple opportunities for feedback regarding academic performance over the course of the student's degree progress, including annual written performance evaluations
- Supportive, involved research advisor
- Effective dissertation guidance from mentor(s) and committee
- Multiple mentors within the student's academic department(s) and outside them, including mentors from the professional community and from national and international communities when appropriate and possible
- Intellectually and socially supportive circle of graduate students
- Active graduate student organization with participation in program governance
- Built-in opportunities to assess student competencies to support advanced study
- Built-in opportunities for appropriate community engagement (e.g., internships, practicums)
- Knowledgeable and supportive staff

### **Professional development**

- Exposure to a diversity of models and exemplars within their academic profession
- Opportunities and support to attend conferences and present papers
- Support for publishing articles and papers
- Developmentally appropriate teaching and research experience
- Effective programs to develop general professional skills and knowledge (writing, research ethics, PFF, etc.)

- Effective career counseling and placement help for both academic and nonacademic jobs
- Development of a rich student portfolio to assess student development (e.g., syllabi, writing samples, statement of teaching philosophy)

**General support and environment (not program-specific)**

- Opportunity to have an inclusive graduate student experience
- Processes for allocating resources and opportunities related to the graduate education experience that are equitable and transparent
- Adequate financial support allocated through a fair and consistent process
- Affordable, safe housing
- Affordable health care
- Affordable and accessible child care if needed
- Helpful Graduate School and other university services
- Attractive community for extracurricular activities