

# Thriving in Graduate School

COSAF Funding Proposal for 2024-2025

Nice to meet you!

Shantille Connolly, she/her

Senior Health Promotion Specialist

- *Focus: Supportive Campus  
Environments*

Health Education and Promotion

Liz Gallegos, she/her

PhD Student, Entomology

Graduate Student Coordinator for Thriving  
in Graduate School



**Health Education & Promotion**

# COSAF Request: Thriving in Graduate School Community Gatherings

Requested: \$6,000 to pay for the cost of hosting community gatherings to increase social well-being and sense of belonging among graduate students enrolled in Thriving in Graduate School

- Participation fees (bowling, craft center, living well instructors, etc.)
- Mini grants for graduate students to host their own gatherings
- Catering

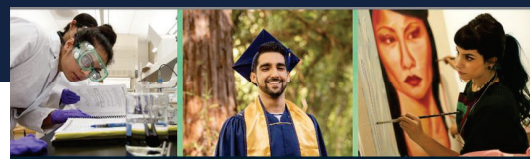
## Thriving in Graduate School

By joining Thriving in Graduate School, students:

- Learn how to cultivate well-being in their personal, academic and professional lives
- Build a community among their peers
- Learn how to embed conditions for well-being into group and academic spaces

The components of Thriving in Graduate School include:

- Weekly newsletters
- Community gatherings
- Weekly reflections



### THRIVING IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

**Balancing the demands of life as a graduate student can be stressful and challenging, but you don't have to do it alone. Join a community of staff and students that are here to help you thrive**

By joining Thriving in Graduate School, you will:

- Learn how to **cultivate well-being** in your personal, academic, and professional life.
- Receive **weekly emails** with tips to help you incorporate well-being practices into your life.
- Learn tools for creating conditions for **well-being** in group spaces like labs, classrooms, and organizations.
- Attend community building events.

Join Thriving in Graduate School: [bit.ly/ucdtgs](https://bit.ly/ucdtgs)



 Health Education & Promotion

 UC DAVIS  
GRADUATE STUDIES

 UC DAVIS  
STUDENT HEALTH AND  
COUNSELING SERVICES

# Thriving in Graduate School Participants

- 498 active participants
  - These students receive weekly newsletters and can choose to attend community gatherings or submit a weekly reflection.
  - Free and registration is ongoing.
- According to our registration data for 2023-2024:
  - 1 in 3 participants are first gen
  - 38% are international students
  - 73% are PhD students
  - 53% feel like they somewhat belong at UC Davis

*"I hope to connect with graduate students who are committed to thriving in graduate school. Students who are proactive in maintaining their well-being while in school and want the support."*

*"Resources and community to build graduate school skills and well-being."*

*"I'd like to learn skills to thrive in graduate school, and to meet other graduate students outside of my cohort."*

## Weekly Newsletter

- Written by a graduate student
- Average open rate: 65%
- Recent topics:
  - Preventing and addressing burnout
  - Cultural Awareness and Cultivating Inclusivity
  - Time Management
  - Self-Compassion
  - Mindfulness to Increase Resilience



### Preventing and Addressing Burnout

[Burnout](#) is a term used to describe a state of mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion. Much like a candle burns out after many hours of light, we also exhaust ourselves during periods of overwork. All areas of life—academia, employment, interpersonal relationships, societal issues, and so on—may contribute to chronic stress. With this in mind, take some time to recognize your needs before you feel completely overwhelmed, or address your stressors if you're already experiencing burnout.

# Weekly Reflection



## Weekly Reflection

This reflection will take you approximately 5 minutes to complete, and your responses will remain confidential. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may choose not to answer this survey without any changes to your participation in Thriving in Graduate School. If you submit a reflection, you will be entered in a weekly drawing for the chance to win a \$10 gift card to Mishka's Café.

Anyone who fills out a weekly voluntary survey and completes the reflective prompts has an opportunity to contribute to **The Graduate Mindscape**, a newsletter project designed to be a virtual [anonymous] diary for graduate students!

Complete reflection

## The Graduate Mindscape

A space for anonymous reflection and candidacy.

Interested in knowing what other graduate students are going through?? The Graduate Mindscape is a newsletter project designed to be a virtual [anonymous] diary for graduate students. Anyone who fills out a weekly voluntary survey and completes the reflective prompts has an opportunity to contribute!

### LAST WEEK'S TOP-PICK

You were asked to describe in one word this current period of your life. You answered... "Grief, Present, Dynamic, Limbo, Whew, Tiring, Discombobulated, Long, Busy, Goal oriented."

Read grad student reflections

# Community Gatherings

A space for graduate students to come together and meet new folks, learn about campus resources, discuss challenges unique to graduate school and celebrate wins.

Examples of gatherings:

- Coworking at Walker Hall
- MU Games
- Arboretum walks
- Campus resource spotlight
- Teaching kitchen demo
- Intro to Salsa Dancing

**THRIVING IN GRADUATE SCHOOL**

## Community Gathering Series

Take a break from your day to connect with other graduate students and learn about campus resources

**Tuesdays from 9-11 a.m.**  
(Drop in for 10 minutes or stay the entire time – do what works best with your schedule)

Walker Hall, East Conference Center

- January 16
- January 30
- February 13
- February 27
- March 12

Coffee and food will be provided!

REGISTER for Thriving in Graduate School to get updates about the events.

# Community Gatherings – Fall 2023

- Burritos and Board Games: 23 students
- Friends Speed Dating: 32 students
- Salsa Dancing on Halloween: 18 students
- Friendsgiving: 21 students

**Current Funding Source:** Health Education and Promotion

**Limitations:** Staff time and resources to expand



## Friends Speed Dating RSVP

**Are you looking for a casual setting to connect with new people?** Thriving in Graduate School is hosting speed dating, but for friends! Join us for 30 minutes of friends speed dating, and stay for the remainder of the event to eat, mingle, and craft. 🍷 Please RSVP by October 15.

**Date:** Tuesday, October 17

**Time:** 4-6 PM (*drop in anytime; speed rounds will happen in the first hour*)

**Location:** Walker Hall, East Conference Room 1130

# Proposed Budget (listed in order of priority)

Item	Amount	Purpose
Mini-Grants	\$2,000	Empower graduate students to plan their own community gatherings to host as part of the Thriving in Graduate School series. This funding will provide them with a \$25 gift card for their time and up to \$100 for supplies. This would increase our reach by providing an additional 16 community gatherings.
Biweekly Gatherings	\$3,000	As participation continues to increase, the cost of providing food at the biweekly gatherings is becoming more challenging. This funding would allow us to continue to provide food to incentivize students to attend.
Quarterly Gathering	\$1,000	This funding would allow us to have one larger gathering per quarter, such as a bowling event at MU Games.

# Evaluation Plan

Process Evaluation	Outcome Evaluation	Impact
Community Gatherings Surveys	Thriving in Graduate School Annual Assessment	National College Health Assessment, Winter 2025
Mini Grant Assessments		
Weekly Reflection		

*“This is a great program-- it's nice to have another resource to support grad mental health and well-being. Meetings with snacks/food were lovely.”*

**Thank you!**