

Introduction to the Graduate Assistantship Program

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Author Note

Samantha Llanos, Jessica Murguia, Wenjun Vivian Jin, Lindsay Ward, and John Weng are second year Master's students in the Postsecondary Educational Leadership Program.

## Assessing the Graduate Assistantship Program

### **Introduction**

The master's program in postsecondary educational leadership/student affairs was established at San Diego State University in 2005. During its early years, the program focused on academic instruction, and attention was placed on recruiting student affairs professionals who were already on campus, or in the San Diego area. Charged with growing the MA program and making it nationally competitive, Dr. Marilee Bresciani Ludvik initiated a series of conversations that ultimately led to the realization that a Graduate Assistantship (GA) program was needed. This would ultimately create financial support for prospective students who did not already have jobs, in addition to students coming from another area. Through agreements with the Vice President of Student Affairs at San Diego State University and Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs at UC San Diego, the GA program was initiated in the 2007-08 academic year.

The initiation of the GA program provided alignment to national expectations of graduate preparatory programs for student affairs in higher education. The Council of Advancement of Standards (CAS) (CAS, 2015) has provided standards and guidelines for various programs in student affairs and higher education since 1979. In addition, expectations and outcomes for graduate programs that prepare individuals to become practitioners in the field are included in the CAS handbook. The standard for preparatory programs include three main areas of curriculum: (1) foundational studies, (2) professional studies, and (3) supervised practice. Of these areas, supervised practice is described as a minimum of 300 hours of practice where students are provided the opportunity to engage in practice in student affairs and higher education work. By allowing students to engage in supervised practice through internships, Graduate Assistantships, and full-time positions, students would be able fulfill this expectation provided by CAS.

The current GA program's mission, goals, and outcomes, were originally drafted with the help of the GA handbook (SDSU, 2015c). After discussions between the assessment team and Dr. Bresciani Ludvik, the outcomes were refined to reflect competencies that include broad learning expectations and specific expectations that exist regardless of individual GA placement. The vision of the program is to foster socially just transformational leaders that utilize evidence-based inquiry to advance student success.

### **Program Name**

Students in the Masters of Arts (MA) Postsecondary Educational Leadership/Student Affairs program at San Diego State University are given the opportunity to apply in-class learning to the field of study by participating in the Graduate Assistantship program. This program is intended to give students a chance to apply classroom theory to real world situations. "In addition, they [assistantships] serve as valuable professional development opportunities" (SDSU, 2015c).

The assistantships take place across various academic and student services/developmental areas at both San Diego State University and UC San Diego. Members of the Graduate Assistantship Program may hold one to two positions in a single academic year; however, if a student decides to take on two assistantships, they must be held at different institutions. The majority of first year students are placed in an assistantship if indicated via their initial application to the Master's program. Students who are interested in an assistantship during their first or second year in the program can apply for positions as they become available. The coordinator of the Master's program will periodically send emails to all Master's students and announce any vacant positions accepting applications.

The time commitment for most assistantships is one academic year, although some may require the graduate assistant to stay in the position for two academic years. While work hours

vary by site, students are usually scheduled between sixteen to twenty hours per week.

Compensation is also dependent on the site. Graduate assistants and site supervisors engage in mid-year and end-of-year evaluations to review the student's work performance and professionalism. The goal of the assistantship is to prepare and expose students to leadership roles in the arena of postsecondary education. The opportunity acts as a supplement to the learning and skills that are developed in the classroom. In this report, an evaluation plan to assess the Graduate Assistant program is provided. We will take a look at the name, mission, goals, and outcomes of the program.

The Faculty Program Coordinator of the MA program, Dr. Marilee Bresciani Ludvik, serves as the administrator of the Graduate Assistantship program. She can be reached via email at [mbrescia@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:mbrescia@mail.sdsu.edu). For comments, questions, or concerns regarding this assessment project, please feel free to contact the assessment team members by email: Samantha Llanos at [garcia.samantha@ymail.com](mailto:garcia.samantha@ymail.com), Jessica Murguia at [Jessica.murguia@gcccd.edu](mailto:Jessica.murguia@gcccd.edu), Wenjun Vivian Jin at [wjj09@hotmail.com](mailto:wjj09@hotmail.com), Lindsay Ward at [lindsayward@gmail.com](mailto:lindsayward@gmail.com) , and John Weng at [johnweng92@gmail.com](mailto:johnweng92@gmail.com).

### **Program Mission**

San Diego State University provides transformative experiences for students and a broad range of student life and leadership opportunities. The University accomplishes this through its many colleges, one of which is the College of Education. In order to create a meaningful mission statement for the Graduate Assistantship program, it is important to understand the context in which the program is situated. The GA program falls under one of the Master's programs in the College of Education. The vision of the College of Education includes developing effective professionals and partnerships in the field of practice.

The mission of SDSU's College of Education reads:

“The College of Education prepares effective professionals for a variety of societal service delivery and leadership roles across a range of settings including schools, post-secondary institutions, social service agencies, and vocational rehabilitation organizations. The College contributes to the knowledge base in both educational theory and practice through professional inquiry and scholarship. The College engages in strategic partnerships with the field of practice to improve client outcomes, to increase institutional effectiveness, and to promote social justice” (SDSU, 2015b).

For the GA program, we wanted to emphasize the importance of preparing professionals for a variety of societal service delivery and leadership roles in a variety of settings. The GA program supports this mission by providing students with opportunities to gain experience outside of the classroom. The diverse skills that students obtain through these assistantships help develop necessary leadership styles to prepare them for future jobs in student affairs. Under the College of Education at SDSU are a number of graduate programs that specialize in postsecondary education. One of these programs is the department of Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary Education.

The GA program was developed under the ARPE department. Once the mission of the College of Education was assessed, we studied the mission of the ARPE department in order to align additional program goals and outcomes. Faculty and staff associated with this department are prepared to promote meaningful participation of each member of the community. The ARPE department values a “commitment to make positive differences in the lives of every person they touch” (SDSU, 2015a). The mission of the ARPE Department reads: “Enable individuals, organizations and communities to support, appreciate, and engage diverse members in community integration through education, research and advocacy” (SDSU, 2015a).

The Graduate Assistantship serves as a valuable professional development opportunity. From this mission statement, we wanted to emphasize the importance of supporting, appreciating, and engaging diverse members in the community. The GA program promotes collaboration among various members. These diverse members include student affairs professionals in other departments, community members, and the student population. Through the GA program, students will support and appreciate all members involved to maintain a positive campus environment. The GA program will utilize continuous improvement and support for diverse members. Collaboration skills are important in any career in student affairs. Through the GA program, students will learn some necessary resources to students on campus and off campus. Much like the mission of the ARPE department, the GA program strives to allow students to apply in-class learning to real-world experiences and opportunities.

The ARPE department created the Master of Arts in Postsecondary Educational Leadership with a Specialization in Student Affairs program. The GA program was developed under this Master's program. The mission of the Master's program reads: "To prepare self-aware, emotionally intelligent, adaptable, compassionate, and highly competent transformational leaders who will improve access, equity, and holistic students success in all of higher education" (SDSU, 2015a).

Much like the mission statement of the College of Education, the Master's program emphasized the importance of leadership. More specifically, they utilize "transformational leadership" in the mission of the Master's program. Transformational leadership is important in any career in higher education. Collaboration and teamwork are necessary to continue to develop positive leadership qualities. To develop transformational leaders, it is important to create opportunities for students to develop these qualities outside of the classroom. Throughout the GA program, students will develop positive transformational leadership skills necessary for their

careers in higher education. Students are encouraged to work together and motivate other students, employees and their supervisor toward common goals. Another component of the Master's mission statement that our team focused on was improving student success. The team wanted to emphasize the importance of student success in higher education. The GA program will provide opportunities for students to gain work experience necessary for their future career path. The program will allow students to seek program areas of interest and open doors to their future as student affairs professionals. A combination of knowledge learned in the classroom and experience gained outside of the classroom, the GA program hopes to maximize student success.

Based on the information found above, a mission statement for the Graduate Assistantship program was created: "The Graduate Assistantship program enables students to be practitioners that are transformational leaders who improve student success in higher education through the application of in-class learning in a professional environment." An alignment can be viewed in Appendix B.

### **Literature Review**

When it comes to developing the GA program, the CAS Standards (2015) provide program coordinators a reminder that that while education must be provided, supervised practice must occur as well in graduate preparatory programs for student affairs professionals. Further, the ACPA Student Learning Imperative (1996) reminds educators that student learning and student development are inextricably intertwined with one another. Thus, professional development of those new to the field and the individual learning of students in graduate preparatory programs must be designed in tandem so that students are best able to develop not as scholars, nor as practitioners but as scholarly practitioners. That said, when considering a plan for developing student learning and student development in future student affairs professionals, we must look to the graduate assistant's experience as a student but also a new

professional. Research by Haley, Hephner, and Koutas (2011) on supporting transition indicated that programs must not only develop GAs professionally but also facilitate learning through integrated experiences so that a bridge can form across theory and practice. Further, in considering how preparatory programs can support graduate student learning and growth, Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) found that programs must utilize professional associations to establish specific competencies such as those provided by ACPA and NASPA (2010), and foster a culture of learning. This learning can occur through feedback from supervisors, integration in coursework. Perhaps the most important reminder is that GAs cannot expect the learning to end after graduate school as they continue their work at new institutions and as the field continues to change in demand.

### **Theoretical Framework**

When considering the GA program from a theoretical perspective, it must be noted that the existing literature on student development theory does not apply to graduate student development and cannot be used interchangeably (Quayle & Harper 2015). Further, much of the existing literature that exists in the field is on doctoral students, and not students at a master's level. Quayle and Harper (2015) identify three primary theories for working with graduate students: (1) Adult Learning Theory, (2) Socialization Theory, and (3) Graduate Student Development Theory (Quayle and Harper, 2015). Of these three theories, research from Adult Learning Theory (Merriam, 2001) was conducted on adult learners. The research makes fundamental assumptions that students are independent and can direct their own learning. Further, the research assumes that there is a clear distinct separation from students. The master's program at San Diego State University, however, includes students who recently matriculated from undergraduate education. This creates dissonance in one of the fundamental assumptions of this learning theory, limiting its applicability to students who are

older and self-independent.

The other two theories consist of research that was conducted on doctoral students (Gardner 2009; Golde 1998). This creates a predicament where preparatory programs at a master's level might not be able to utilize research for a typically older population. In this process, the assessment team realizes the limitations that exist in currently available theoretical frameworks for master's level programs. These limitations create a call for the development of program outcomes guided by use of informal theory that is based on a summation of currently available formal theory, that is, research conducted on similar but slightly different populations. Program coordinators for student affairs graduate preparatory programs thus must utilize assessment to understand and demonstrate student learning and development as a mechanism for self-correction in development opportunities for master's students (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 2010). This realization reaffirms the need to assess the GA program in order to better understand if students are meeting the outcomes and if the outcomes are still aligned with the demands of the field.

### **Program Goals**

The GA program originally listed ten program goals but, for the purpose of this assessment, the team decided it would be best to turn the original measurable program goals into the program outcomes and instead create three broader goals that encompass the ten original program goals. After consultation with the Faculty Program Coordinator of the MA program, Dr. Marilee Bresciani Ludvik, it was decided that the GA program goals would be directly aligned with the cornerstones for the MA in Postsecondary Educational Leadership Program. These cornerstones are:

- Self-Aware, Compassionate, Adaptive, Transformational Leaders
- Evidence-Based Inquiry to Advance Access, Equity, and Students Success

- Socially Just Resource Stewards (SDSU, 2015a)

The alignment between the MA program and GA program is necessary because the graduate assistantships supplement the MA program by enabling the theoretical foundations on college student development learned in class through hands-on application. Similarly, the three new program goals relate to the mission of the GA program by specifying the core learnings in the MA in Postsecondary Educational Leadership Program that the GA program hopes to enhance through the out of class experience.

The goals of the graduate assistantship program are as follows:

1. To prepare perceptive student affairs professionals
2. To enable students to apply innovative, evidence-based practices in the workplace
3. To empower students to be socially just individuals

**Program Goal #1:**

This goal indicates that students must be perceptive in their role as student affairs professionals. Being perceptive means that students are emotionally intelligent and adaptive to different situations. This goal directly falls in line with the mission of SDSU's College of Education, which highlights "preparing effective professionals for a variety of societal service delivery and leadership roles across a range of settings" (SDSU, 2015b).

**Program Goal #2:**

This goal underscores the importance of applying methods of inquiry and theoretical foundations in student affairs. After completing their graduate assistantship, students will not only recognize the importance of data and college student development theories, but will also be able to apply them when making decisions that affect students. This directly aligns with "scholarship," one of the eight tenets for the SDSU College of Education (SDSU, 2015b). It is the belief of the college that research leads to effective practices (SDSU, 2015b). Explain how

applying methods of inquiry & theories leads to effective practices....

**Program Goal #3:**

This third goal indicates the need to empower the graduate assistants to be socially just and equitable in their decision-making. In the College of Education, three of the eight tenets stress that students, regardless of their background, should (1) have access to education, (2) respect for uniqueness, and (3) advocate for diversity in education (SDSU, 2015b). Although these tenets are taught in the classroom, the GA program provides graduate students with the opportunity to practice being equitable in their assistantships and in a professional environment.

**Program Learning Outcomes**

Given that graduate assistantships are available to both first and second year students and offered by a variety of departments at both UC San Diego and San Diego State University, the design of program outcomes are intentionally non-specific in referencing skills that graduate assistants may develop. That being said, the program outcomes for the graduate assistantships are also intentionally aligned to the Master's program as if it were a stand-alone academic course. For a chart to visualize this alignment, see Appendix A. That said, as a result of participating in graduate assistantships, students will:

- Demonstrate three professional skills that directly apply to one or more areas in student services and/or academic support and development
- Apply course learning, such as student development theories, to their graduate assistantship(s)
- Analyze professional success through informal and/or formal reflections and evaluation
- Identify three transferable skills to advance towards professional goals
- Describe professional goals based on personal interest, abilities, and experiences in

the GA Program

- Identify two potential references from the assistantship site(s)
- Explain at least one approach for integrating technology into their profession
- Explain how current trends and contemporary issues inform their practice as socially-just practitioners (SDSU, 2015a)

### **Planning for Delivery of Outcomes**

To ensure that all the Graduate Assistantship learning outcomes are measured, the program learning outcomes alignment map below was created (Appendix C). Although the experience of each graduate assistant varies significantly depending on the department and campus they are placed, the team focused on the commonalities that all graduate assistants are expected to experience. Those commonalities being the orientation, brown bag lunch series, one-on-one's with supervisors, individual functional tasks, and the end of semester evaluations. That being said, not all of these activities have occurred in recent years. For the past two years, the brown bag lunch series, have not been taking place. All eight outcomes, however, were aligned to at least one of the five program services. The Graduate Assistantship Program is a one-year program with the option to extend into the second year depending on conversations between the graduate assistant and their supervisor. Thus, the assessment of outcomes will be rotated during the assessment cycle. At the same time, since the program is so large there are multiple opportunities for assessment among the five program services.

### **Assessment methods and tools**

#### **Methods Overview**

The activities of the GA Program will be assessed using an assessment cycle that includes both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The outcomes of these activities are Program Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8. There will be a focus on one program activity every

academic year. For the first year, the functional tasks of the assistantship(s) will be assessed. The method for assessing the outcomes will be a survey and a focus group.

### **Population and Sample**

According to the *Fact Sheet: Master of Arts in Postsecondary Educational Leadership-San Diego State University*, the two cohorts average 25 people each (SDSU 2015c). There are approximately 40 graduate assistantships made available every year to the first and second cohort members combined. Some students may choose to have two assistantships, resulting in roughly 30 students with assistantships within the two cohorts. During the first assessment year, only first year students will be sampled because of differences that might exist in experiences and the resulting cohort cultures. This is in part due to the fact that three new faculty members were added, and differences in faculty that are teaching the courses. Further, the current first year cohort is receiving education in Integrative Inquiry, a course component that the second-years did not undergo. By focusing on one specific group, the assessment results can focus on the impact of academic coursework that might be unique to the first years.

### **Focus Group**

The Graduate Assistant functional tasks will be assessed using a survey and a focus group during the spring semester. First year graduate students will be invited to participate in a survey which will end with an optional sign up to participate in the focus groups. The team ultimately decided to only focus on first year students because second year students have already taken many of the core courses, thus providing a different level of exposure in theoretical education. Further, it would be difficult to make a comparison between the first and second year students because there has been a recent revamp in the program and the instructors and courses have since been changed. The questions for the survey and the focus group can be found in Appendix D and E respectively.

### **Implementation of Assessment Process**

As mentioned above, the five activities which the program includes have not consistently occurred but, ideally, the activities will be measured in a three year assessment cycle. The cycle would be as follows:

- Year One: GA Functional Tasks: PLO 1, PLO 2, PLO 4, PLO 6, PLO 7, and PLO 8
- Year Two: Orientation and Brown Bag Series: PLO 2, PLO 6, PLO 7, and PLO 8
- Year Three: GA/Supervisor 1:1 and Semester Evaluations: PLO 3, PLO 5, and PLO 6

The assessment of the GA functional task will begin the assessment cycle during the 2015-2016 academic year. The assessment team will conduct the entire first year of assessment but succeeding years could be assessed by the Faculty Program Coordinator, Administrative Program Coordinator, or the Assistant Program Coordinator for the MA in Postsecondary Educational Leadership program.

For the first year of assessment cycle, the focus group will take place week 6 of the spring semester and the survey will be administered concurrently to all students signing up for the focus groups. The team will collaboratively design the questions. The instrument for data collection will be developed by John. The survey will be administered using Google Forms, a free online data collection platform. At the end of the survey, students will have the option of signing up to participate in the focus group. The survey will be open for a week and then reviewed by all the members of the assessment team.

The focus group coding will occur during week 7, 8 and 9. The focus group will be facilitated by Lindsay, as Jessica takes notes. The transcription of the focus group will be done by Samantha and Vivian. After the assessment of each method is complete, the team will discuss the findings and implications. Ideally, recommendations will first be presented to the Graduate Assistantship Coordinators and Program Coordinators, when the semester is complete. An

executive summary will also then be made available to supervisors and graduate assistants. The recommendations are meant to help guide the the program coordinator, site coordinators, and advisory board.

### **Pilot Plan and Results**

In order to assess our assessment methods, the survey questions were distributed to two second year graduate students in the MA program who concurrently hold graduate assistantships. Vivian was in charge of developing the survey questions and John was in charge of sending the survey via email to the second year students who volunteered to participate in the pilot. The two second year students that participated in this pilot were asked provide feedback and their interpretations of the survey. The assessment team will review the feedback and make adjustments to the questions as needed. The survey questionnaire that was piloted can be found in Appendix C.

After reviewing the feedback from the second year students, the assessment team made some revisions to the survey questions. The first question addressed was “Please describe three tasks that you have been assigned in your first year of the graduate assistantship?” One second year student reported that this question did not take into consideration if the student currently held two GAships. This question did not request that the student describe three tasks from more than one GAship. The next question that the assessment revised based on students feedback was “Suppose you were in charge of the program, and had to make one change to the program, what would it be?” One second year student reported that this question did not clarify what “program” we were requested to change. The assessment team needed to be sure to specify that we were referring to the GA program, and not their current assistantship. The last question that the assessment team updated was “What are some examples of ways you have been successful during your assistantship?” Students who tested the pilot again reported that this question did not

specify if they should describe more than one assistantship. Based on the remaining feedback from the two second year students who participated in this piloting of the survey, no other revisions were made to the survey questions. The survey questions have been updated and revised as follows:

1. How many graduate assistantships do you currently hold?
2. Please describe three tasks that you have been assigned in your first year of the graduate assistantship (please select only one GAship to list tasks).
3. Please indicate how some of the skills you've developed, either through the tasks you've listed above, or in other areas of your GAship can be possibly utilized in any potential future professions? Please explain briefly. (PLO 4)
4. How have you applied course learnings to your current graduate assistantship tasks? Please explain briefly. (PLO 2)
5. Suppose you were in charge of the Graduate Assistantship Program, and had to make one change to the GA program, what would it be?
6. What are some examples of ways in which you have been successful during your assistantship(s)?
7. Identify at least three skills that can be transferred to your future professional work? Please explain how those skills can be related to the specialty area you wish to pursue?
8. List at least two potential references from your graduate assistantship that can be used as your future references. Please explain the nature of your relationship (PLO 6).
9. Please provide one or two examples on how you utilize technology in your current GAship(s). (PLO 7)
10. How do current trends and contemporary issues inform your practice as socially-just practitioners? Please describe briefly. (PLO 8)

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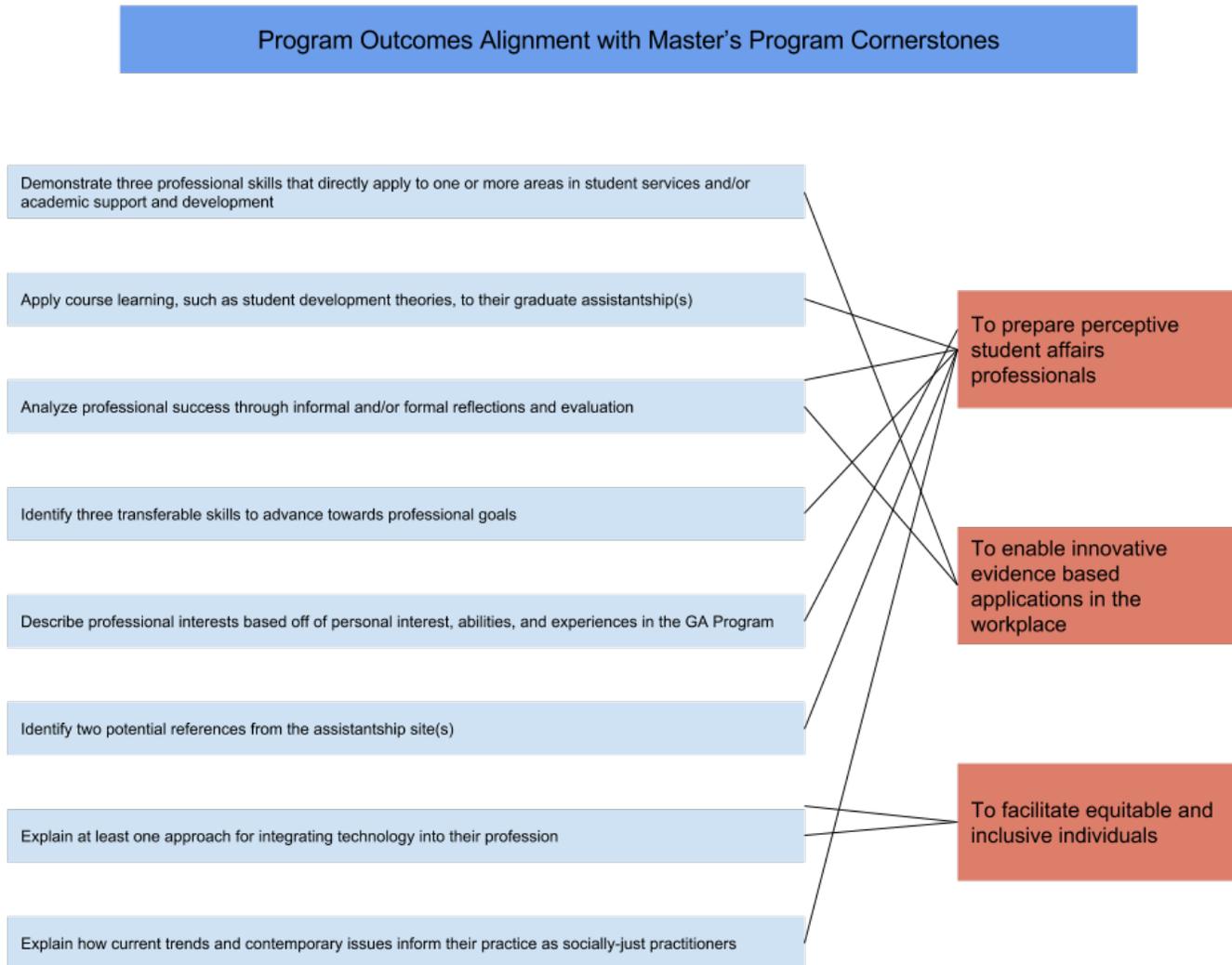
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Appendix A



## Appendix B

## Mission Statement Alignment

## SDSU Mission (Academic Affairs Mission)

The mission of San Diego State University is to provide well balanced, high quality education for undergraduate and graduate students, and to contribute to knowledge and the solution of problems through excellence and distinction in teaching, research, and service. (See Senate Policy File, paragraphs 1.0 - 3.6, University Policies, Academics, Mission and Goals)

<http://provost.sdsu.edu/vision.html>



## College of Education Mission

The College of Education prepares effective professionals for a variety of societal service delivery and leadership roles across a range of settings including schools, post secondary institutions, social service agencies, and vocational rehabilitation organizations. The College contributes to the knowledge base in both educational theory and practice through professional inquiry and scholarship. The College engages in strategic partnerships with the field of practice to improve client outcomes, to increase institutional effectiveness, and to promote social justice.

<http://go.sdsu.edu/education/dean/mission.aspx>



## ARPE Mission

Enable individuals, organizations and communities to support, appreciate, and engage diverse members in community integration through education, research, and advocacy.

<http://interwork.sdsu.edu/main/about>



## Master's Program Mission

Prepare self-aware, emotionally intelligent, adaptable, compassionate, and highly competent transformational leaders who will improve access, equity, and holistic student success in all of higher education.

[http://interwork.sdsu.edu/main/system/files/files/student\\_affairsDOCs/GA\\_Handboo\\_%5BUPDATED\\_Summer2015%5D.docx](http://interwork.sdsu.edu/main/system/files/files/student_affairsDOCs/GA_Handboo_%5BUPDATED_Summer2015%5D.docx)



## GA Program Mission

The Graduate Assistantship program enables students to be practitioners that are transformational leaders who improve student success in higher education through the application of in-class learning in a professional environment

[http://interwork.sdsu.edu/main/system/files/files/student\\_affairsDOCs/GA\\_Handboo\\_%5BUPDATED\\_Summer2015%5D.docx](http://interwork.sdsu.edu/main/system/files/files/student_affairsDOCs/GA_Handboo_%5BUPDATED_Summer2015%5D.docx)

## Master's Program Goals (Cornerstones)

- Self-Aware, Compassionate, Adaptive, Transformational Leaders
- Evidence-Based Inquiry to Advance Access, Equity, and Student Success
- Socially Just Resource Stewards

Appendix C

<b>Program Outcomes</b>	<b>Activity</b> Orientation	<b>Activity</b> Brown Bag Lunch	<b>Activity</b> GA/Supervisor 1:1	<b>Activity</b> GA Functional Tasks	<b>Activity</b> Semester Evaluations
Demonstrate three professional skills that directly apply to one or more areas in student services and/or academic support and development				X	
Apply course learning, such as student development theories, to their graduate assistantship(s)		X		X	
Analyze professional success through informal and/or formal reflections and evaluation			X		X
Identify three transferable skills to advance towards professional goals				X	X
Describe professional goals based on personal interest, abilities, and experiences in the GA Program			X		X
Identify two potential references from the assistantship site(s)		X	X	X	
Explain at least one approach for integrating technology into their profession	X	X		X	
Explain how current trends and contemporary issues inform their practice as socially-just practitioners		X		X	

Appendix D  
Survey Questionnaire

Please see the list of short answer survey questions below for the first year graduate students in the Postsecondary Educational Leadership in Student Affairs program at SDSU about their GA functional tasks:

1. How many graduate assistantships do you currently hold?
2. Please describe three tasks that have you been assigned in your first year of the graduate assistantship? (PLO 1)
3. Please indicate how some of the skills you've developed, either through the tasks you've listed above, or in other areas of your GAship can be possibly utilized in any potential future professions? Please explain briefly. (PLO 4)
4. How have you applied course learnings to your current graduate assistantship tasks? Please explain briefly. (PLO 2)
5. Identify at least three skills that can be transferred to your future professional work? Please explain how those skills can be related to the specialty area you wish to pursue?
6. List at least two potential references from your graduate assistantship that can be used as your future references. Please explain the nature of your relationship (PLO 6)
7. Please provide one or two examples on how you utilize technology in your current GAship. (PLO 7)
8. How do current trends and contemporary issues inform your practice as socially-just practitioners? Please describe briefly. (PLO 8)

To view the survey questionnaire in full visit:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1L5KNl851L8nnz8WtYsye1rkhVHLWKN8CZnAX7XEN->

yk/viewform.

## Appendix E

### Focus Group Questions

1. Having read the information on the informed consent form, are you willing to participate in this study?
2. Where do you hold an assistantship?
3. What are some of your duties at your GAship? (PLO 1)
4. What informs your decision-making in the workplace? (PLO 8)
5. Think about your experience at your GAship(s), what are some ways in which you have applied course learnings (such as student development theories) from the MA program to your GAship(s)? (PLO 2)
6. What are some examples of ways that you have been successful during your assistantship? (PLO 3)
7. Suppose that you were in charge of the program and had to make one change to the program, what would it be?