MENTORING GUIDELINES
Agricultural and Resource Economics Graduate Program, UC Davis
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The UC Davis Graduate Program in Agricultural and Resource Economics (ARE) has a long legacy of effective graduate instruction that has produced over 350 distinguished alumni of the Ph.D. program. A well-recognized feature of that legacy is the consistently high quality of the mentoring provided by faculty in the graduate program. Mentoring takes place at a number of stages including: initial academic plan preparation, instruction, research and teaching supervision, dissertation conceptualization, dissertation work and completion, job market, and professional development.

High quality graduates and high morale among students distinguish the UC Davis ARE Graduate Program. Two components of our teaching and mentoring philosophy allow us to consistently produce leaders in the profession:

First, the ARE Graduate Program fosters a working and social atmosphere in which students and faculty interact as colleagues. Professors are readily accessible, and successful collaboration between students and faculty is evidenced by the large number of joint publications.

Second, students become researchers during the dissertation stage, and the ARE Graduate Program ensures that students are not left to "sink or swim." The ARE Graduate Program faculty engage in a careful mentoring process involving choice of a research project that matches the individual student's interests, close guidance at every step of the dissertation process, aid in getting work exposed in publications and meetings, and assistance in finding high-quality jobs.

UC Davis Graduate Studies Regulations and Policies
The primary resource for official polices that relate to advising and mentoring at UC Davis is the "Advisor's Handbook" (latest version November 2015):

http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/sites/default/files/upload/files/facstaff/gs202-advisers-handbook.pdf

Two sub-sections are particularly relevant for the purposes of these guidelines: (i) "Regulations and Policies / Faculty Committees for Advanced Degrees" (pp.35-39) and (ii) "Regulations and Policies / Standards of Scholarship" (pp.40-42). We encourage faculty and students to be familiar with these sub-sections. We underscore three specific policies here:

1. Ph.D. students are required to submit a draft of their complete dissertation to committee members for comments at least 4 weeks before the expected signature date. Four weeks is a minimal expectation and students should be aware of the fact that some faculty hold 9-months appointments and may not be accessible during the entire summer. Students and committee members should agree on an explicit timeline that ensures all committee

members have sufficient time to read the dissertation before the expected filing date (pp.35-36).

2. Faculty may co-author scholarly publications with graduate students. Collaboration is usually beneficial to all parties. Co-authorship in such cases requires that both the faculty member and the student have made "substantial conceptual contributions," which means input beyond providing instruction, financial support, or dissertation guidance. (p.41)

3. The Ph.D. dissertation may include co-authored, collaborative work wholly or in part (p.42).

UC Davis Graduate Council Mentoring Guidelines

The UC Davis Graduate Council of the Academic Senate has developed Mentoring Guidelines (linked on the ARE webpage): https://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/sites/default/files/upload/files/grad-council/mentoring.pdf

According to the UC Davis Graduate Council Mentoring Guidelines, mentoring students through dissertation research means:

- Evaluating clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the student' research.

- Encouraging an open exchange of ideas, including pursuit of the student's ideas.

- Checking regularly on progress.

- Critiquing written work.

- Providing and discussing clear criteria for authorship of collaborative research.

- Assisting in finding sources to support dissertation research such as teaching assistantships, research assistantships, fellowships, etc.

- Being aware of student's research needs and providing assistance in obtaining required resources.

Discussion of Guidelines and Best Practices

As a Graduate Program, we recognize that faculty may differ in what practices enable them to provide the highest quality mentoring, just as students may differ in what mentoring practices work best for them. Even for an individual faculty member, the faculty member may find that the best mentoring practices may vary for each faculty-student mentoring relationship.

We encourage faculty and students to read and regularly consult the policies and guidelines referenced above to guide their practices as they strive to maintain and improve the quality of mentoring provided by faculty in the ARE Graduate Program.

UC Davis Graduate Studies offers mentoring-related workshops for both graduate students and faculty, including a range of Professional Development workshops for students[1] and the Mentoring at Critical Transitions seminar series for faculty, which aims to enhance faculty mentoring and provides archives as a useful resource.[2] For additional resources, there exist a number of thoughtful external written sources that discuss graduate mentoring from the viewpoint of both faculty and graduate students.[3]

One consistent theme that emerges from virtually all mentoring guidelines is the importance of regular meetings and feedback. The GAC recommends the following specific guidelines related to meetings and feedback:

- Students in the dissertation stage and their faculty supervisors should hold regular face-to-face meetings to discuss progress and next steps. Aside from periods where fieldwork makes it impractical, we recommend that such meetings be held at least once per month, and perhaps more frequently.

- Students should schedule meetings, preferably face-to-face, with their full dissertation committee as a group to apprise all members of progress at least once per year, if not more frequently. The responsibility for organizing the full-committee meetings rests with the student.

- Students are also required to meet at least annually with their Faculty Advisor, a member of the GAC and generally not their dissertation committee chair. In addition to discussing the required annual progress report, this is an opportunity for students who have advanced to candidacy to get feedback from someone other than the dissertation supervisor and committee members.

Another consistent theme among documents on mentoring is the importance of setting expectations. Expectations are often communicated implicitly and therefore unclearly, which can result in misunderstanding and unnecessary tension. The GAC recommends the following that supervisors establish clear expectations about:

- Normal dissertation progress. The ARE Graduate Program Degree Requirements[4] explicitly state the formal checkpoints and student responsibilities that define "normal progress." Advisors play a key role in helping students progress between these formal checkpoints. This is best done at the earliest possible stage with a face-to-face meeting to establish clear expectations; in many cases, written expectations may be useful for both the advisor and the student. Feedback about progress toward those expectations and adjustments, if needed, should be communicated regularly and continuously

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[1] https://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/professional-development

[2] https://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/faculty-staff/mentoring-critical-transitions

[3] See for example:
http://www.gradsch.osu.edu/DEPO/PDF/MentoringAdvisingGradStudents.pdf
http://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/publications/mentoring.pdf

[4] https://apps.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/programs/degreq/2016-gare.pdf

throughout the dissertation research process. Dissertation supervisors should consider dedicating one meeting a year with each student they advise to an open discussion of these expectations, what is working well, what improvements are needed, and other forms of feedback, including about the mentoring relationship in general.

- The expected frequency of meetings and form and frequency of communication between meetings. These naturally change as the dissertation research progresses; any such changes in expectations should be discussed and communicated clearly.

- Co-authorship. There are different protocols regarding co-authorship, including co-author order, and expectations regarding input into the paper. Co-authorship expectations should be explicitly discussed before research is substantially underway and should be reassessed as research is being carried out, especially as contributions of the student and/or the faculty evolve.

    o Faculty are expected to provide advice, feedback, and constructive critique as part of their ordinary functions as University faculty. The provision of these services alone is not sufficient to warrant co-authorship on papers emanating from a student's dissertation.

    o Thus, just as graduate students hired as GSRs to work on faculty-funded and faculty-led research need to "earn" co-authorship by contributing substantially to the design and execution of the project, faculty members on dissertation committees need to "earn" co-authorship of dissertation-related work.

    o Often, faculty provide contributions to students' dissertation work that go beyond normal advising and justify co-authorship. Examples include but are not limited to the direct provision of data not otherwise available; significant intellectual input into the research question, the research design, empirical strategy, modeling work, or proof writing; and the direct contribution to programming or econometric work. In such cases, more involved collaboration and co-authorship can be beneficial to both student and mentor.

    o Generally, the extent of faculty involvement on a student's dissertation work should be discussed with the student at an early stage, and the student should be given reasonable opportunity to remain the sole author of the dissertation work if (s)he so chooses.

- While an exit seminar (i.e., a dissertation defense) is not a program requirement, it is an advisable step as the student prepares to complete and file the dissertation. This provides an opportunity for the full dissertation committee to be convened one last time. This final committee meeting can allow the student to synthesize their research and formulate a post-dissertation plan that includes, for example, publishing the research, establishing a broader research agenda to guide future contributions, and preparing for continued professional development in the student's chosen field.