

# 2020 - SSHA New Instructor Orientation

Graduate Division Academic Counselor

Maria Nishanian

# The Graduate Division Mission

The Graduate Division is dedicated to excellence in academic and research training of graduate students at UC Merced.

The Division works closely with the Graduate Council of the Academic Senate to:

- Ensure the highest quality in graduate education
- Facilitate development of doctoral and master's degree programs
- Implement Senate policies.



Interim Vice Provost and  
Graduate Dean Chris Kello

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# MARIA

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# NISHANIAN

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## GRADUATE ACADEMIC COUNSELOR

I am here to provide:

- One-on-one counseling
- Academic and personal support
- Help in developing effective communication skills
- Time management strategies and work/life balance
- Help overcoming self doubt and imposter syndrome
- Facilitate healthy research communities
- Referrals to campus services
- Lend listening ear when you are stressed



**Hours:** Drop-in Mon-Fri 9:00AM-4:00PM  
Call/text/email for an appointment

**Location:** SSB 2nd floor Rm233

**Phone:** 209-947-9358

**Email:** [mnishanian@ucmerced.edu](mailto:mnishanian@ucmerced.edu)

# Integral Campus Partners

- **OMBUDS** - <https://ombuds.ucmerced.edu/> Safe confidential and informal place where UC Merced community members can go for informal assistance with managing conflict, complaints.
- **CAPS** - Counseling & Psychological Services <https://counseling.ucmerced.edu/>
- **CARE Office** <https://care.ucmerced.edu/>
- **Student Accessibility Services** <https://disabilityservices.ucmerced.edu/>
- **Basic Needs** <https://basicneeds.ucmerced.edu/>
- **Student Health Services** <https://health.ucmerced.edu/>
- **Career Center** <https://hire.ucmerced.edu/>
- **International Affairs** - <https://international.ucmerced.edu/>

# Graduate Division Resources

## **Graduate Dean Virtual Office Hours**

Hosted by Interim Vice Provost & Graduate Dean Chris Kello and staff members to address questions and concerns related to research and any other topics that may arise.

## **UC Merced Grad Life Facebook Forum**

This new private Facebook group is a space to connect with incoming, current and graduate student alumni on topics related to grad student life at UC Merced.

## **English Support**

**Ongoing** - The English Language Institute (ELI) is available to help with grammar, writing, pronunciation and more.

## **Graduate Student Support Group**

Facilitated by Dr. Shao Li. Open to all current and incoming graduate students and provides a free, confidential space to improve graduate student experiences.

To RSVP email [gradresources@ucmerced.edu](mailto:gradresources@ucmerced.edu)

# Best Practices/Recommendations

## [Graduate Policies & Procedures Handbook Academic Year 2020-2021](#)

- Primary resource for graduate academic policies
- Explains key milestones for academic progress
- Ensures consistency and fosters transparency

## [Agreement between Student and Mentor: Expectations and Objectives](#)

- One-on-one meetings
- Participation in group meetings
- Academic Milestones
- Student's role on a project and authorship discussion

MORE, Rackham Graduate School's Mentoring Committee, University of Michigan

# Best Practices/Recommendations

Mentoring should be provided in three broad areas:

1. Guiding students through degree requirements
2. Guiding students through thesis or dissertation research
3. Guiding students through professional development

Faculty should also demonstrate willingness to communicate with and understand each student as a unique individual. This means:

1. Recognizing and understanding the various cultures of their students.
2. Building trust and fostering a comfortable working environment.
3. Respecting family responsibilities of each student and be cognizant of students who need extra support.

These guidelines are available on the [Academic Senate - UC Merced webpage](#)

# Best Practices/Recommendations

## Individual Development Plan:

- The IDP is a tool for providing structure to mentors and mentees in their work together (Vincent et al., 2015)
- Developing IDPs requires that mentees think through their short- and long-term career plans and formulate a path to enact the plans with support from their mentor
- IDPs provide a mechanism for supporting effective mentor-ship behaviors in a manner tailored and responsive to mentees' career plans as well as their unique skills, interests, and values (Hobin et al., 2014)

The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM (2019)



# Best Practices/Recommendations

Policies and practices must be fair and consistent

Documentation is important

- Informs the student
- Ensures consistency
- Fosters transparency
- Allows different stakeholders to understand situation



- BUILD **TRUST** OVER TIME
- **BOTH PARTIES** GUIDE THE RELATIONSHIP
- CONDITIONS WILL **CHANGE**
  - **TURBULENCE** MAY OCCUR!
- **COMMUNICATION** IS ESSENTIAL
- A **SKILL** THAT IMPROVES WITH **GUIDANCE & COMMITMENT**

# Graduate Division Contacts

**Interim Vice Provost and Graduate Dean - Chris Kello:** [ckello@ucmerced.edu](mailto:ckello@ucmerced.edu)

**Interim Associate Graduate Dean - Asmeret Berhe:** [aaberhe@ucmerced.edu](mailto:aaberhe@ucmerced.edu)

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**Grad Funding:** [gradfunding@ucmerced.edu](mailto:gradfunding@ucmerced.edu)

**Graduate Resource Center:** [gradresources@ucmerced.edu](mailto:gradresources@ucmerced.edu)

**Academic Counselor:** [mnishanian@ucmerced.edu](mailto:mnishanian@ucmerced.edu)

**Early engagement/intervention = more potential options & solutions**