

Irvine Fellows and Graduate Student Socialization: Exemplary Practices
by Dean Campbell and William G. Tierney

John Weidman, Darla Twale, and Elizabeth Stein¹ have recently published a monograph on the process of graduate student socialization. In what follows we offer a thumbnail sketch of this model and how it will inform good practice for the administration of the Irvine Fellowship Program at USC.

The authors define *graduate student socialization* as “the process through which individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful entry into a professional career requiring an advanced level of specialized knowledge and skills.” The authors develop a socialization model that consists of 5 conceptual elements:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prospective students (background, predispositions) 2. University (institutional culture - academic program and peer climate; socialization processes - interaction, integration, and learning) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Personal communities (family, friends, employers) 4. Novice professional practitioners (commitment, identity) 5. Professional communities (practitioners, associations) |
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Weidman and his colleagues argue this non-linear model accommodates graduate student socialization better than traditional linear models. In previous socialization models students uniformly experience the five conceptual elements in sequential format. Graduate students enter programs under rigid faculty admissions criteria, then they experience uniform departmental and university socialization, and finally they graduate into personal and professional communities beyond campus. Non-linear models differ; the conceptual elements have no boundaries or sequential limitations. Graduate students experience socialization with more simultaneous interaction across the five components.

The authors state, “it is incumbent upon faculty and practicing professionals to build academic programs that socialize graduate students through a continuous process from admission through entry into a professional role that is under constant review and modification.” The following table outlines good practices based on suggestions from the authors, and as appropriate for the three goals of the Irvine project:

Irvine Project Goal	Suggestions for Good Practice
Increase students of color who will go on to assume faculty positions.	<p>Student Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish collaborative learning communities or cohorts. ● Establish significant mentoring opportunities with faculty. ● Establish mentoring opportunities with advanced graduate students. ● Organize workshops for getting through the dissertation process. ● Develop transparent rules and procedures for qualifying

¹ Weidman, J., Twale, D., & Stein, E. (2001). *Socialization of graduate and professional students in higher education: A perilous passage?* San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

	<p>examinations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish and circulate an orientation manual. Make the orientation process less tacit. • Tighten standards for completion of degree - avoid prolonging student hood and delaying transition to professional status. <p>Professionalization of Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infuse professional and ethical norms into graduate programs. • Invite students to co-author articles and book chapters. • Sponsor student travel to professional association conferences.
<p>Enhance the climate for faculty of color to engage in sustained intellectual dialogues.</p>	<p>Faculty Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish collaborative, interdisciplinary learning communities to lessen feelings of isolation among faculty. • Establish professional development programs, particularly around improving the teaching assistant positions and student mentoring/advising. • Provide workshops on such topics as sexual harassment, diversity, and ethics. • Develop initiatives and efforts to address women’s issues in professional development. • Examine the academic program to determine whether it provides the student with the information necessary to perform professional roles. • Involve technology in the development of new pedagogy.
<p>To enhance discussions of diversity on campus.</p>	<p>Organizational Change – Conceptual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt new approaches to teaching and learning. • Embrace collaborative strategies for bringing together graduate and undergraduate students, faculty and staff. <p>Organizational Change – Instrumental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and secure “hard money” funding for campus-wide diversity programs. • Adopt formative and summative evaluations of cost and effectiveness of diversity programs. • Expand scope of diversity program beyond the departmental or center level. • Increase the number of faculty of color on campus with exemplary recruitment and retention programs on campus. • Engage in reflective process to determine whether students are ready to assume professional roles. • Adopt initiatives and efforts to address women’s issues in professional development.