The Graduate Student Assistant Handbook

Presented and developed by: Division of Student Affairs Graduate Student Assistant Task Force in Campus Life
Dear Graduate Student:

Thank you for your interest in a graduate student assistant (GSA) position in the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) at CSU Channel Islands (CI). We created this handbook to give you a better understanding of what we offer, outline the DSA GSA process, and share information regarding how to get started.

DSA Graduate Student Assistantships are positions that provide student affairs-related skills. It is an ideal opportunity to gain skills in a chosen field. Being selected for a year-long academic assistantship will provide more depth to your understanding of higher education and strengthen the needed experience on your resume that can lead to gainful employment post-graduation. Our assistantships are paid positions.

Tips for starting the search:

- Learn about our campus and CI student population by viewing the current CI Campus Highlights;
- Learn about the DSA and identify why you are interested in an assistantship at CI;
- Review your specific area of interest within student affairs; and
- Review this handbook in its entirety. At the end, you will find information on how to apply for DSA GSA positions.

Best regards,

DSA Graduate Student Assistant Task Force
GENERAL INFORMATION

The DSA and CI offer temporary employment opportunities to enrolled graduate students at CI, which can assist them in gaining valuable work experience related to their educational goals. To be hired as a GSA, graduate students must be enrolled in a minimum of four (4) units per semester in a graduate program at CI. GSAs may work up to 20 hours per week during the academic year and possibly more when school is not in session. Current CI employees should contact Human Resources to determine eligibility for a Graduate Student Assistant role.

Purpose and Learning Objectives

The Division of Student Affairs Graduate Student Assistantship Program provides students professional development opportunities that enhance their academic experience in preparation for a full-time career in higher education.

As a result of working as a DSA graduate student assistant, students will be able to:

- Develop a greater level of familiarity with student affairs and its role in a higher education institution;
- Articulate one immediate (within one to five years) and one future (ten-plus years) career goal;
- Application of one to two student development and learning theories;
- Articulate the role of diversity in higher education and cite two current examples;
- Develop a greater level of familiarity with and list five of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA)/National Association for Student Affairs Professionals (NASPA) Professional Competency Areas;
- Develop a greater level of familiarity with and list three of the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) categories;
- Identify one to three national, state, regional and local professional associations and publications associated with the specific area of the position;
- Articulate three to five key considerations for budgeting, resource utilization planning, strategic decision making, and personnel management;
- List three to five tips for assessing the needs of particular populations and the associated effectiveness of programs;
- Articulate three to five strategies for effectively working with students one-on-one or in groups to facilitate student development, organizational functioning, and/or problem-solving;
- Provide one to two examples of excellent written and/or spoken communication; and
- Identify two to three important considerations for developing and/or modifying programs to meet the needs of a particular population and to facilitate student and/or staff development.

Benefits of Participation

The benefits of participating in the program include:

- An opportunity to connect curriculum to practicum by applying the knowledge and principles acquired in a graduate academic program;
- On-going training in a higher education setting;
- Learning about the programs/services the DSA offers CI students;
- An opportunity to develop skills by participating in professional development training sessions, staff meetings, and potential professional conferences; and
- Improving the skills and techniques needed to locate professional career opportunities post-graduation.
Job Qualifications

Minimum Requirements:

- Must be enrolled in a graduate program at CI, preferably in Educational Leadership – Higher Education Concentration, Education, Business, or a related field, with a minimum of four (4) units per semester;
- Must be able to commit to a minimum of ten (10) hours per week for two (2) consecutive semesters (fall and spring). Hours will vary from 10-20 hours per week based on the needs of the department;
- Must have some flexibility with schedule as you may be required to assist during nights and weekends for events, workshops, etc.;
- Must be able to maintain the confidentiality of student information at all times (as per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA] and other regulations);
- Must be computer literate (familiar with PC applications, MS Office Suite, etc.); and
- Must be proactive, self-motivated, and have a strong interest in the area of the assistantship.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience working in an office setting
- Relevant experience as listed in position descriptions with knowledge in higher education (i.e., career services, outreach, assessment, client relations, recruitment, business administration, research, or student development) is a plus

Role of the Division of Student Affairs and CI

The DSA assumes an active role in coordinating procedures that govern graduate student assistant positions at CI in the Division. The School of Education, Extended University, and the Graduate Studies Center all serve as advocates for all graduate student assistants to ensure that work performed contributes to the student’s academic studies.

YOUR ROLE & EXPECTATIONS AS A GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANT

While the area you prefer to work in will have specific information as to your position expectations, the DSA requires all graduate students who obtain GSA positions in the Division to possess some essential qualities. They are as follows:

Ability to (under the supervision of site supervisor):

- Demonstrate professionalism in all areas of your role as a student on campus;
- Develop a positive rapport with members of the campus and external communities;
- Maintain confidentiality at all times and exercise discretion and good judgment;
- Actively participate in your work environment;
- Maintain regular communication with supervisor;
- Speak and present in small and large group settings;
- Adapt and respond to a dynamic work environment;
- Conduct research on issues and topics relative to the site and profession as needed; and
- Demonstrate collegiality with campus constituents and community stakeholders.

Must Demonstrate:

- A positive attitude;
- The capacity to establish positive relationships with members of the campus and external communities;
- A customer service-oriented approach;
- The capacity to exercise sound judgment;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills; and
- A holistic approach when working with students, considering all aspects of a student’s developmental needs.
Enrollment

GSAs are required to complete a minimum of four (4) units of graduate-level work per semester.

Academic Standard and Disciplinary Standing

All GSAs are expected to maintain a satisfactory academic record/disciplinary standing. Students must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (B) or better with no course grades lower than a C+. Any grade below C+ may result in automatic termination of the assistantship.

Academic honesty is the keystone of the scholarly community, and all graduate students must uphold CI’s academic honesty policy. Graduate students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct, Title V, Title IX, and Community Responsibility in addition to employment regulations. Visit the Student Conduct & Community Responsibility website for detailed information.

Supervision

GSAs will be directly supervised by student affairs professionals as identified in the position description. From time to time, daily supervision may be assigned to other members of the area as the supervisor deems necessary, depending on project or scope of work for that day. All supervisors will have appropriate masters/graduate education with a minimum of two years’ professional experience post graduate program.

Orientation and Training

All new graduate student assistants will be required to attend: (1) the DSA Graduate Student Assistant training; (2) the bi-annual DSA Student Assistant Orientation and Training; and (3) supplemental, departmentally-based training session(s) as needed. Dates and times will be given at the beginning of your assistantship.

Evaluation

At the start of each assistantship, the supervisor and graduate student assistant will meet to outline goals and/or objectives for the year. Each GSA will be evaluated by their immediate supervisor at least once per semester, preferably once at the end of the first semester and once at the end of the second semester. The goals and/or objectives will be reviewed and discussed, and the written evaluation shared with the GSA. Additionally, each GSA will be given an opportunity to evaluate and provide constructive feedback related to her/his experience within the DSA Graduate Student Assistantship Program.

Assessment

Assessment is a vital part of program development and student learning. In that vein, the DSA GSA Program is built on a strong foundation of constant assessment and evaluation, both for the GSA and her/his supervisor(s). Throughout the experience, GSAs will complete long-form assessments and journal reflections to demonstrate ongoing learning and understanding of student affairs as an industry, the NASPA Professional Competencies, and the program’s purpose. If there are questions regarding the assessment plan specifically, please email Raquel De Los Santos at raquel.delossantos@csuci.edu.

Resignation/Termination

If a GSA finds it necessary to resign from her/his position prior to the end of the appointment period, a letter of resignation must be sent to the student’s supervisor and the GSA program coordinator with a minimum two (2) weeks’ notice. The GSA should discuss their intent to resign with her/his supervisor prior to submitting the letter to the program coordinator. Additional paperwork may need to be completed with Human Resources to finalize the resignation.

A GSA position may be terminated by the area supervisor for failure to adequately perform assigned duties specified in the position description, including academic performance, unprofessional behavior, or for failure to complete the minimum number of required graduate coursework units.
DSA GSA HIRING PROCESS

Recruitment

Graduate students interested in pursuing open positions in the DSA will follow the application process as outlined at the end of this manual. Appointments are initiated in the department/area and reviewed by the program coordinator. Appointments, unless otherwise noted, are for two (2) academic semesters. The DSA application is a rolling process, with recruitment throughout the year. If the DSA GSA Task Force deems it necessary, they may elect to organize and facilitate a Graduate Student Assistantship interview day for all interested graduate students in late spring/early fall of each year. Prior to the interview day, students will have reviewed material about each approved site, including literature and the application.

On the interview day, students will meet and talk with site supervisors of areas with positions available for recruitment. Supervisors will submit a list of preferences for students to be assigned to their site based on interviews. The GSA Task Force will match site and student requests and make assignments prior to the start of the fall semester. Once the assignment is approved, the recruitment paperwork is forwarded to Human Resources and the student will receive notification along with detailed instructions related to completing the hiring process.

DSA GSA Application Process

If you are interested in a DSA GSA position, review the following steps to search and apply for employment via Dolphin CareerLink:

1. Login Instructions: Login to myCI and click the “Dolphin CareerLink” tab located on the right under “My Links.” If you are a first-time user, it will prompt you to set up a student profile. If you are having difficulty logging into your myCI portal, please contact the IT Help Desk at 805-437-8552.

2. Upload a resume/cover letter/student employment application: Click on the “Documents” tab. Select “Add New” to upload your document(s).

3. Search for on-campus employment: Scroll over the “Jobs & Internships” tab. Click “Jobs & Internships” when it drops down. Select the “Advanced Search” option and select “Campus/Work Study” on position type. Click “Search.”

All DSA GSA positions (as they become available) will be posted here. Areas within the DSA that are currently offering positions (pending funding) include Associated Students Inc.; Campus Life; Housing & Residential Education; Retention, Outreach & Inclusive Student Services; the Vice President for Student Affairs office; and Wellness & Athletics.

For questions, comments or further assistance, please contact Raquel De Los Santos, GSA Program Coordinator at 805-437-8493. at 805-437-3967.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – DOLPHIN CAREERLINK
APPENDIX B – RESOURCES
How to Register
1. Login to your myCI portal
2. Click the “Dolphin CareerLink” tab under “My Links”
3. If you are a first-time user, it will prompt you to set up a student profile.

If you're having difficulty logging in to your myCI portal, please contact the IT Help Desk at (805) 437-8552.
If your account is blocked please contact Career Development Services.

Upload a Resume/Cover Letter/Student Employment Application
1. Click on the “Documents” tab
2. Select “Add New” to upload your resume, cover letter, etc.

Register for Workshops/Events
1. Click on the “Events” tab
2. Select the workshop title you want to attend
3. Click “RSVP” to register for the workshop

Search for Jobs or Internships
1. Scroll over the “Jobs & Internships” tab, and then click “Jobs” when it drops down
2. Select the “Advanced Search” button
   • To look for on-campus positions, select “Campus/Work Study,” then click “Search.”
   • To look for off-campus positions, filter the position by “Position Type” and “Job Function” only. Use the Ctrl button to select multiple position types or job functions. Then click “Search.”
   “To save your search, click on “Saved Searches.”

   • Type in a title (e.g., On-Campus Jobs, Part-Time Marketing Jobs, etc.)
   • Select how often you would like to receive an email announcing job openings (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)
   • Click “Yes” if you would like to see new results only in your email or click “No” if you want to see all open positions that meet your search criteria. Then click “Save.”

Steps to Complete Student Employment Application for On-Campus Employment
Fill-out the student employment application attached to the job posting and select “Print” and not “Save.”
1. Print the document and sign at the bottom of the application.
2. Scan the document. Both pages of the student employment application must be included in a single PDF file. Dolphin CareerLink only allows documents up to 200kb of space, so make sure you scan the document as a PDF and not as an image (BMP, JPG, etc.). If you would like assistance with scanning and uploading your student employment application, drop-by the Career Development Center in Bell Tower 1548 and we will be happy to help. Hours are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you are having issues with scanning, please contact the IT Help Desk for technical support regarding document scanning or your computer. Career Development Services cannot offer technical support assistance beyond scanning documents in our center.
Help Desk info: phone: 805-437-8552; email: helpdesk@csuci.edu; in person: Broome Library 1340
Below is a list of articles on graduate student assistantships as well as other resources that will provide you with useful information as you prepare for an assistantship in the Division of Student Affairs.

**Articles**

“Thoughts on Professional Experience and Graduate Assistantships”

“How Graduate School is Different from College”
gradschool.about.com/cs/transitions/a/howgraddiff.htm

“New School, New Job, New Life: Supporting the Transition of Student Affairs Graduate Assistants”
pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1029&context=elp_fac

“Student Affairs Graduate Assistantships: An Empirical Study of the Perceptions of Graduate Students’ Competence, Learning, and Professional Development”
eric.ed.gov/?id=ED520937 (accessible through CI Library)

**Links**

Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners (NASPA/ACPA Core Competencies)

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education Standards (CAS Standards)
www.cas.edu/standards

**Websites**

ACPA - American College Personnel Association
www.myacpa.org/

CAS - council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education
www.cas.edu/

NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
www.naspa.org