

TA/GSR Subcommittee

Final Report

Chancellor's Graduate and Professional Student Advisory Board

July 2, 2018

## **I. Graduate Program Coordinator Survey**

The CGPSA conducted an online survey of graduate group coordinators (N = 22). The survey was comprised of five sections: (1) descriptive information about their graduate program (2) specific information about the authority responsible of circulating the TA/GSR job announcement (3) information on platforms used to make the job announcement (4) number of job posting every year (5) Potential reason of less job posting on Aggie Job Link.

### **Section 1**

The survey respondents are from a wide range of graduate groups and departments. There were twenty two departments and graduate groups represented in the survey including the English, Integrative Pathobiology, Plant sciences, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, Native American Studies, Human Development/Child Development, TTP and EGG, Math/ Applied Math, Chemical Engineering/Materials Science and Engineering, Epidemiology and the MPVM Professional Program, Biological Systems Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Performance Studies and Music, Senior Career Advisor for Grad Students and Postdoc at Internship and Career Center, Education PhD/MA, Chemistry, Languages and Literatures, Microbiology, Agricultural & Resource Economics, Statistics and Biostatistics, Nutrition/Nutritional Biology.

### **Section 2**

In the second section of the survey we inquired about the authority responsible of circulating the TA/GSR job announcement among the graduate students. In general, 95% of the respondents described themselves as an authority of circulating all TA/GSR job related information among students. Only 5% of respondents in the survey mentioned that faculty in their graduate group is responsible of circulating the GSR job announcement in department.

### **Section 3**

In the third section we asked about the platforms used by the respondents for TA/GSR job posting. Most of them mentioned that they emailed directly to the graduate students and Program Coordinator Listserv. Other mentioned platforms include the Aggie Job Link, and departmental websites. One response highlighted the fact that some of the department doesn't hire TAs directly so in that cases the coordinators direct the students to other job postings and departments who are looking for TAs or GSRs.

### **Section 4**

In the fourth section of the survey we collected information about how many job has been posted every year at different available platforms at UC Davis? The response includes the variation from zero posting to many. One of the respondent mentioned that they offered two application periods for TA positions to MAE grad students. MAE grad students apply for Fall TA positions over the summer and apply

for Winter and Spring TA positions in the Fall. Interestingly some departments do not hire TAs but only hire GSRs.

## Section 5

In last section we asked specifically about the job posting on the Grad Studies Marketplace/Aggie Job Link and associated difficulties. The respondent mentioned that using Aggie job link is cumbersome, confusing, and very specialized. It has been mentioned that most of the time the positions filled internally in the department before even need to go to these platforms.

## II. Student Responsibility as a job seeker

Job finding is a not an easy task and student should have to take responsibility of that. They should need to be aware of the opportunities, need to Introducing themselves to program coordinators to get on their listserv, introduce themselves to professors for TA position, create a profile at AJL for on-campus jobs search, apply broadly for job application, find the best time to look for jobs, determine their subject area expertise to fit immediately into the right spot, get their CV ready to go for an urgent job filling and talk to the friends and folks around in different graduate schools.

Along with these qualities for long run they need to develop the following qualities:

**Be honest.** Conduct the job search with honesty and integrity. Do not lie or stretch the truth on resume, applications, or during any part of the interview process.

**Interview genuinely.** Interview only with employers they are sincerely interested in working for and whose eligibility requirements they meet.

**Adhere to schedules.** Appear for all interviews, on campus and elsewhere, unless unforeseeable events prevent you from doing so. And, if you can't make the interview because of an unforeseeable event, notify your career center or the employer at the earliest possible moment.

**Don't keep employers hanging.** Communicate your acceptance or refusal of a job offer to employers as promptly as possible, so they can notify other candidates that they are still being considered or that the position is filled.

**Accept a job offer in good faith.** When you accept an offer, you should have every intention of honoring that commitment. Accepting an offer only as a precautionary measure is misleading to the employer and may restrict opportunities for others who are genuinely interested in that employer.

**Withdraw from recruiting when your job search is completed.** If you accept an offer or decide that full-time graduate or professional studies are for you, notify your career center and withdraw from the on-campus recruiting process immediately. And, let employers that are actively considering you for a job know that you are now out of the running. By informing everyone that you've got a job or are headed to graduate school, you not only get the chance to brag but also to help your friends who are trying to get on interview schedules or who are being considered for positions.

**Claim fair reimbursement.** If an employer has agreed to reimburse you for expenses you incur in its recruitment process, your request should be only for reasonable and legitimate expenses.

**Obtain the career information you need to make an informed choice about your future.** It's up to you to acquire the information about career opportunities, organizations, and any other information that might influence your decisions about an employing organization.

### **III. Aggie Job Link (AJL) officers and Graduate Program Coordinator roles and responsibility**

Starting as a graduate student on campus is filled with excitement, struggles, and curiosity; however, it is a process of continuous learning. One perspective of learning is to find out if one has enough funding to financially support their studies. Our team started working on a guide to show how one can fund their graduate studies. While talking to an AJL officer, our committee found out that an important task is to ensure that all graduate program coordinators and graduate students are aware of AJL and that they use it as a platform for posting on-campus jobs available for MS and PhD students. Based on results from our survey of graduate program coordinators about the use of AJL, usually program coordinators post TAs and GSRs positions on their listserv.

From the survey it seems like graduate students know that AJL exist and they can use it to find a job on-campus. Therefore, there were recommendations to make on-campus graduate student hiring more equitable. Some of AJL's staff like Ashley, Marjannie and Elizabeth wrote an article about the top 9 reasons to use Aggie Job Link for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. The main point of AJL article are listed below as written in their article:

#### **9 Ways Grad Students and Postdocs Can Use Aggie Job Link**

- 1) **Searching for on-campus job.** *Are you looking for a teaching assistantship or a graduate student researcher (GSR) position? Aggie Job Link is updated every day with on-campus job opportunities for both graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.*
- 2) **Signing up for a company information sessions and recruiting events.** *Are you interested in working for a particular company? Companies regularly come to campus to provide background information, discuss upcoming job opportunities, explain their interview processes, and answer any questions about their hiring practices. Sign-ups for these informative networking events are located on Aggie Job Link.*
- 3) **Applying for career positions.** *Ready to make the leap towards your dream career? Companies specifically recruiting for UC Davis talent are constantly posting openings on Aggie Job Link, and the ICC flags the postings that are targeting for Master's, PhD and postdoctoral scholars, which are then highlighted in the weekly bulletin. To subscribe to the bulletin, GradCareers go to the following link:  
<https://icc.ucdavis.edu/services/connect.htm>*
- 4) **Learning about companies that will be at an upcoming Internship and Career Fair.** *Each quarter the ICC host an Internship and Career Fair with over 100 companies in attendance looking to hire all students, including graduate and postdoctoral scholars. Aggie Job Link provides an extensive list of the companies that*

attend the fairs, what the company does, and what types of majors and degrees that they are looking to hire.

5) **Scheduling an advising appointment.** Not sure if your resume or CV is up to par? Need support on the job search or career development? Using Aggie Job Link, you can schedule a free 30-minute confidential career advising appointment with one of the ICC's Senior Career Specialist specially trained to advise graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. Appointments can be used to start the job search, convert a resume to a CV, practice interview questions, negotiate job offers, and so much more!

6) **Completing a practice interview.** Not sure about your interview skills? On Aggie Job Link, you can choose to practice a pre-made interview or build your own from a list of over 1200 questions. You can even record your answers on your webcam. You are welcome to keep your practice interview private, but you can also send the completed video recording directly to a career advisor to receive feedback.

7) **Opting in to resume books.** Did you know that some companies will request resumes from particular graduating classes directly from the university? On Aggie Job Link, you can opt-in to certain resume books to ensure that when the university receives a request, you will be included in the pile.

8) **Gaining transcript notation for an internship.** Completed a graduate internship? On Aggie Job Link, you can fill out a form that will allow that internship to be included on your academic transcripts.

9) **So much more!** Want to learn more? Contact the Internship and Career Center's Career Services for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars. Marjannie Akintunde, Senior Career Advisor, 2nd Floor South Hall, (530) 752-8342 | [meakintunde@ucdavis.edu](mailto:meakintunde@ucdavis.edu)

Moreover, graduate students who are seeking on-campus (TAs, GSRs) and off-campus jobs need to take certain responsibilities to ensure job security. This journey starts right from the day of orientation. There is a section in both graduate student's orientation and international graduate student orientation where they talk about employment regulation, teaching assistant orientation, and other job related websites and resources. All students interested in seeking jobs should create an account in Aggie job link and login to the page with their username and password to search for new positions. Each student needs to upload their updated resume to AJL and if they would have any questions, they should schedule a meeting with any of the AJL representatives to take advantage of their skills.

Our team has met AJL officers and found out that they are really friendly people to take help from in finding on campus jobs and third party recruiters. They showed inclination to conduct a workshop during graduate student orientation in 2018 about the use of AJL and securing jobs. AJL is open to help students who are encountering any difficulties on their website. Graduate program coordinators are also posting career and internship opportunities throughout the year. Graduate students need to be on the listserv for their specific graduate program and can also be a part of other related graduate programs listserv. One can search jobs based on the emails they receive from graduate program coordinators. There is a chance for all the graduate students to acquire a job if they utilizing the resources available to them on campus.

#### **IV. Jobs security in future**

Through interviews with graduate program coordinators and people at the Internship and Career Center, our committee found several ways that students can increase their chances of job security in the moment and in the future. For instance, one of the first steps students should take is to reach out to professors they are interested in TA'ing with. They should introduce themselves and explain their interests and be sure to follow up on that meeting afterwards. Students should reach out to program coordinators in March, April, or May about calls for applications from departments they are interested in working with. This is the time of year when calls for applications come out and departments begin making decisions for TA's for next year.

Students should mark their calendars ahead of time and schedule dates when to reach out to program coordinators and search the TA/GSR Marketplace for jobs. Furthermore, students should always follow up on a job application if they have not heard anything in a timely manner. However, students should also be aware that program coordinators work hard and to be careful not to message them too often. Above all, students should connect with the program coordinators in their own departments/graduate groups if they run into trouble securing funding for the following year. It is useful to let coordinators know early on that there is a problem rather than waiting until the last minute.

## **V. Conclusion**

In conclusion, we hope this report contains information that can be passed along to students and administrators. We'd like to convey that potential improvements to Aggie Job Link may bring ease to the process. We also hope that the information here, along with the infographic below, can help bring some transparency to the process of obtaining TAs.

*Infographic below*

# 5 TIPS TO SECURE A TA-SHIP



## HOP ONLINE: CHECK AGGIE JOB LINK

One of the first things you need to do is create an account with Aggie Job Link. Set aside some time for this because you will need to upload a resume in order to see jobs. Grad Studies filters TA and GSR positions from Aggie Job Link to the TA/GSR Marketplace: <https://grad.ucdavis.edu/resources-services/student-employment/job-listings>. Bookmark this link and check it regularly.



## NETWORK: TALK TO PROFESSORS AND PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Many TA positions are gained through networking. Remember, faculty have the final say on who is hired. Talk with faculty you want to work with about TAing for them. Also, many departments do targeted outreach when they have open positions. Introduce yourself to program coordinators and ask to be kept in the loop about potential TA opportunities.



## TIME YOURSELF: KNOW WHEN TO LOOK AND CONNECT

Timing is important when searching for TAs. Some departments schedule TAs for the whole year. They will put out calls for applications in the Spring quarter (March/April). Other departments assign TAs quarter by quarter. They will likely be looking in the last few weeks of each quarter. Another great time to look for TAs is during the first week of the quarter when departments are looking to fill open positions last-minute.



## PREPARE: HAVE YOUR CV READY TO GO

In order to meet deadlines with a quick turnaround, have a CV and an outline of a cover letter ready to go. This way, you will be ready to apply for last minute job openings.



## KNOW YOUR RESOURCES

Stay in touch with the Internship and Career Center (ICC) to know more about jobs and get help crafting your CV and cover letters. Talk to other grad students about where they have TA'd and their experiences finding jobs. The program coordinator for your department may also have other tips for finding TAs.