



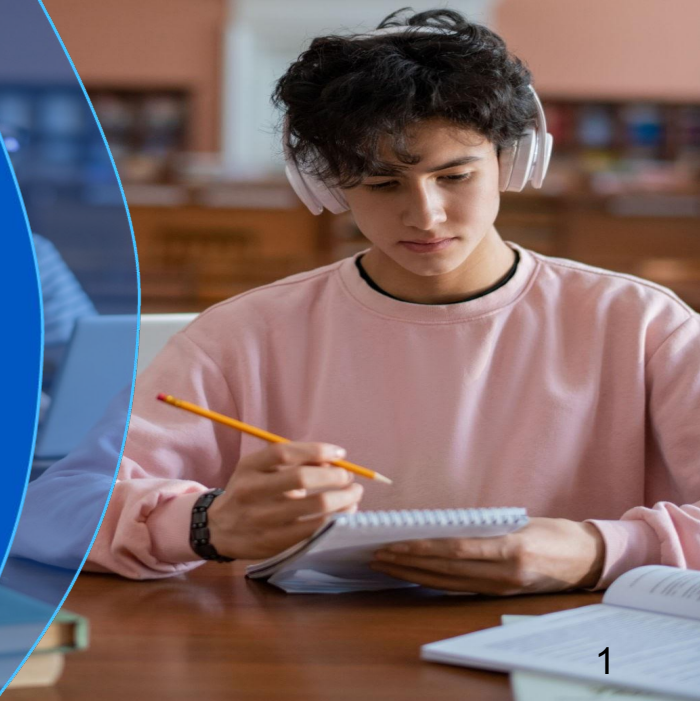
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Evaluating the Social and Professional Priorities of SIParCS Graduate Students

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Introduction



The Purpose of the CODE Intern

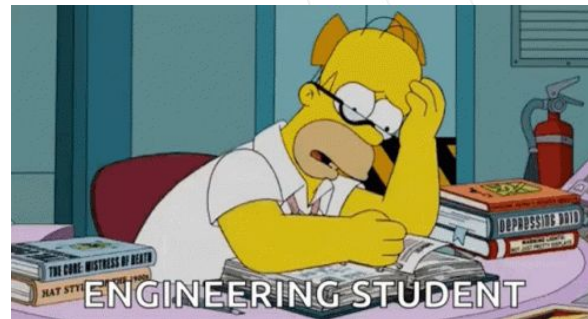
The SIParCS internship is unique because it employs both undergraduate and graduate students. What makes the program more unique is the position of the **CODE Intern**.

The CODE Internship was created for aspiring Student Affairs professionals to gain experience in administration and program management.

The CODE Intern's responsibilities include, but aren't limited to:

- Planning and executing social and professional events
- Assist in fostering connection and belonging between internship participants
- Disseminate important information to all interns

- **Challenges:**
 - o Different populations, different priorities
 - o Lack of literature focused on graduate students and their needs
- **Previous experiences and concerns**
 - o SIParCS administrators mentioned previous reluctance to engage in social and professional activities
 - o Personal experiences have shown that STEM students tend to avoid social activities to meet project deadlines
- **The “Why”**
 - o With minimal literature & research + previous experience, it makes it difficult to know the best way to support graduate students.



Research Questions



Does the competitive culture by STEM programs lead to graduate students experiencing institutional and cultural barriers to co-curricular engagement?

What are STEM graduate students' interests, motivations, and values when it comes to social and professional development and support?

How can student affairs professionals, specifically the SIParCS CODE Intern and staff, adequately support the graduate students in the program?



Participant Demographics

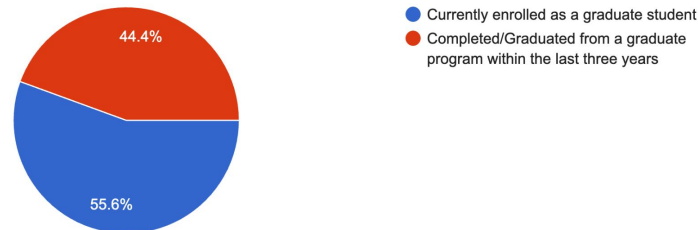


There were 25 individuals eligible to complete the study.

- 9 people completed the survey
- 4 people completed the interview

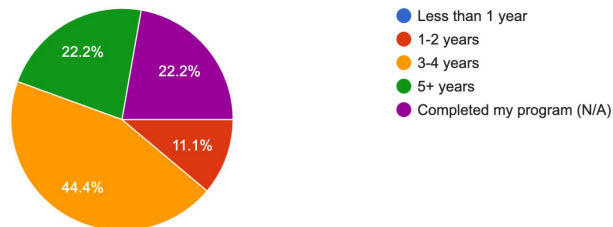
1. What is your current status regarding your graduate program?

9 responses



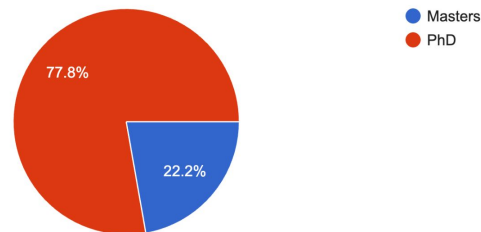
3. How many years have you been involved in a graduate degree program?

9 responses



What degree level are/were you pursuing while in the SIParCS program?

9 responses



Preliminary Survey

- 1 of 2 parts
- Completely anonymous
- 10 high-level questions
- Opportunity to provide email and pseudonym for interview

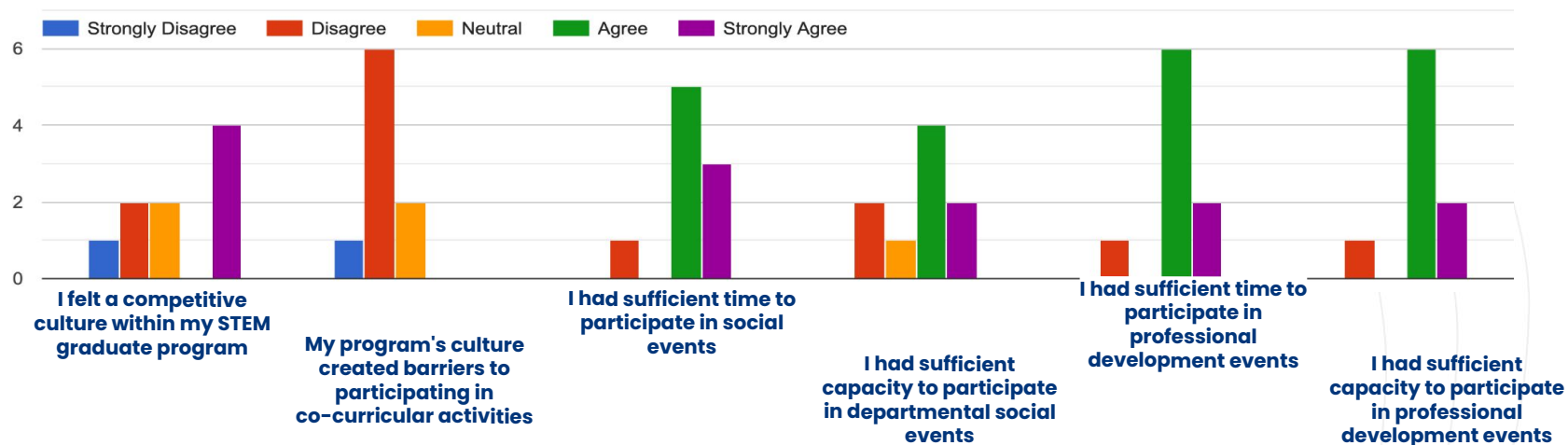
Interview

- Semi-structured virtual interview
- Approximately 30 min. Interview
- 8 questions about graduate priorities and preferences
- Used Gemini for transcriptions
- Each transcription was stripped of identifying information and deleted after analysis

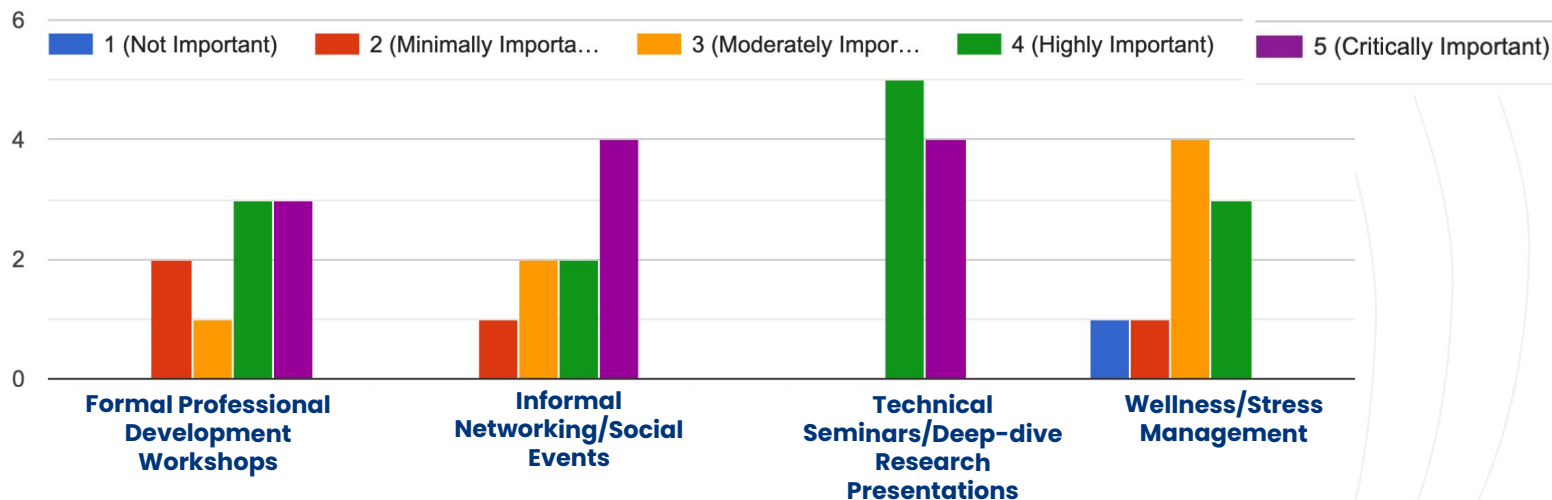
Survey Findings



4. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your graduate school experience:

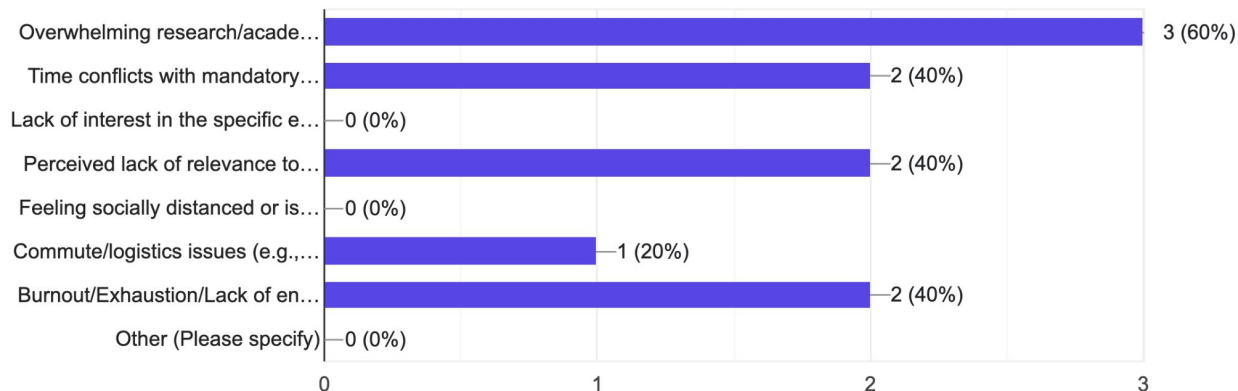


5. On a scale of 1 to 5, how important are the following types of events to your overall academic/professional development?



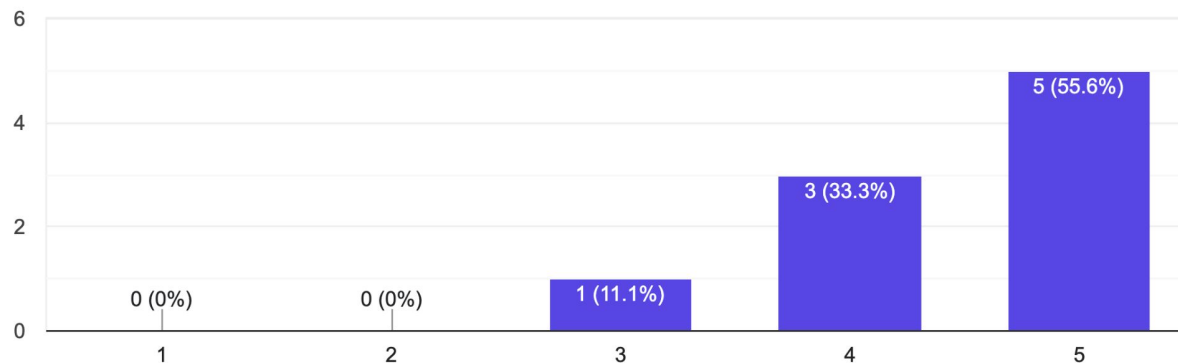
8. If you experienced limited engagement in SIParCS social or professional development events, please select the primary reasons:

5 responses



9. Thinking about future interns, how valuable do you believe high-impact programs and social engagement are for a holistic internship experience?

9 responses



Interview Findings



"I didn't really feel that I was getting I guess a lot of support from my program or from my cohort or so forth in navigating that and like in that sense **I feel like we grad students kind of we struggle by ourselves sometimes.**" -

Daria

"PhD students, like, especially the PhD students advisors, would buy into SIParCS a lot more if this was almost like a, how do you get a paper out of this? The only line on my CV benefit from SIParCS would be as if it led to a paper. **But professionally, all the real currency here for me is publishing peer reviewed literature.**" - Jackson

Interview Findings



"I think this is just the nature of the program because half of us are undergrads and half of us are grad students, but like everything I guess all of the events are for undergrads and like I'm more talking like the like professional development events or like stuff within work hours, not like social events. ... **It is hard to have anything geared towards grad students and if it's going to be geared towards anybody, it's going to be the undergrads because there's more of them.**"

Samantha

"Typically deadlines and being too stressed out and I feel like I shouldn't use that hour. **I might have done a little more using that hour so typically I don't go and and mostly it's like I feel like I'm my social battery is too low to really have fun**" - Jesse

Lack of Diversity

- Unaware of the physical demographic of all participants
- 3 out of 4 interviewees were the same race and gender
- Lack of diversity + extremely small sample size= less confident findings

Limited Time & Resources

- Only had 3-4 weeks to conduct interviews and complete presentation
- 20% or less of my internship description involves completing a project
- Human Subject Committee timeline
- Lack of incentives (i.e. gift cards)

Potential Biases

- Those who participated in my study may be more likely to engage in co-curricular activities
- Those who may be less likely to engage may not have answered the survey
- Results may be skewed

Future Recommendations



1. Implement separate PDWS sessions for topics that more align with graduate students needs and interests.
2. Plan & execute targeted networking events & career fairs for graduate students who are looking to move to the next step in their career.
3. Send out a survey to incoming interns asking what co-curricular events they would like to see throughout the program.

If I could expand/change this study I would...

- Open the study up to graduate students from other programs/other schools
- Compare the social and professional experiences between STEM undergraduate and graduate students especially from the lens of competitive culture
- Further diversify my participants (i.e. race, doctoral university level, home life, etc.)
- Conduct a long term study on the same students from undergraduate journey to their graduate journey.

Acknowledgements



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Thank you to my study participants!

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Questions?