Vice Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies Vision Seminar

Dr. Venkat Allada
Friday, February 24, 2023

UC RIVERSIDE

Leading Graduate Division into a New Era of Innovation, DEI, and Urban Impact

My guiding framework:

Place student interest front and center

and

let student success serve as the North Star.

-- Venkat Allada

"UCR is changing the conversation about higher education by excelling in diversity, social mobility, access, affordability, and research."

-- Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox

Three Topics

- Opportunities and challenges facing graduate students and their success over the next several years.

- Specific opportunities and challenges you see at UCR.

- Your vision for the Graduate division at UCR and how you would work towards achieving that vision.

Opportunities and Challenges facing graduate students and their success

- Student well-being: Physical, financial, and mental

- Mental health of graduate students (anxiety, depression, social isolation, impostor syndrome)

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belongingness

- Rising student costs (e.g. housing costs shot up post-Covid)

- Competitive graduate student funding packages

Opportunities and Challenges facing graduate students and their success

- Internship, and job placement opportunities

- Preparing students for alternate career pathways, career uncertainty, and the value of graduate education

- Mentorship

- Interdisciplinary focus (to address larger socio-technical problems facing the world)

- Time-to-degree

Opportunities and Challenges facing graduate students and their success

- Big demographic and social changes

- Catering to various market segments including non-traditional students and non-linear learners, life-long learners

- Meeting students where they are and help them realize their full potential (e.g., hybrid learning, stackable credentials, competency-based education, etc.)

- Advocacy for graduate students & post-docs

Specific Opportunities at UCR

- Reviewed the UCR website and UCR 2030 Central Campus Strategic Initiatives document

- **Caveat:** Will need to conduct a "deep dive" listening to truly understand the **nuanced** needs, wants, and aspirations of various stakeholders such as academic deans, department chairs, faculty, graduate students, graduate staff, employers, Vice Provosts, upper administration, etc.

Specific Opportunities at UCR

- Graduate Student funding model; how to achieve financial stability

- Defining the graduate education and research mission and developing ground-up strategies/tactics for managed and sustainable graduate growth

- How to develop competitive student financial packages?

- Work with GradSuccess and mentorship team @UCR and identify ways for continuous improvement and expansion

- Provide support for faculty to apply for more training grants

Specific Opportunities at UCR

- Increase the number of Master's programs and Master's enrollment (through deep consultation and market studies); 4+1;3+2 Master's programs

- Increase graduation rates and decrease equity gaps

- Work with various stakeholders to develop implementation plans to recruit and retain doctoral students and post docs.

# Specific Opportunities at UCR

- Opportunity to **collaboratively** chart a vision and strategy for the future of the Graduate Division.

- Eliminate barriers for underrepresented groups from pursuing grad education

- Lead a talented group of professionals in the Graduate Division with a student-centered, and faculty-responsive focus

- Help fuel the UCR's research engine by working in lock-step with the efforts of VCRED and academic deans

Vision for the Graduate Division at UCR

- **Caveat:** Will need to conduct a "deep dive" listening to truly understand the **nuanced** needs, wants, and aspirations of various stakeholders such as academic deans, department chairs, faculty, graduate students, graduate staff, employers, Vice Provosts, upper administration, etc.

- Buy-in is critical at all-levels and various stakeholders.

House of UCR Graduate Division
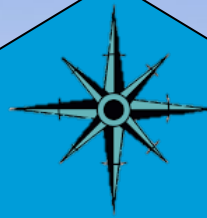
- **Premier R1 Graduate School; AAU status**
- **Enhanced Student Success (Graduate Promise)**
- **Urban Impact**
- **"Destination of choice" for students/faculty/staff**

Mission Pillars

1. Best Student Experience & Care

2. Innovative, Impactful, Interdisciplinary, and Immersive (4 I's) graduate programs

3. Embrace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

4. Align with Research mission and **UCR 2030**

5. Student-centric & faculty responsive graduate school services

Bedrock

- Graduate Students and post docs Advocacy
- Student Post-docs & Staff Professional Development
- Strong Collaboration with Colleges, Schools and academic units, Graduate Council, Graduate Student Government, and Faculty Senate across UC
- Transparency, Agility, Calculated Risk (fast fail, fast learn attitude), and Earned Trust
- Global/Local Strategic Partnerships
- "Team Sport" Thinking

How would I work towards achieving that vision?

- I would use the Entrepreneurial thinking mindset 3C model as my basic operating framework by:

  - **Staying Curious:** Active listening, asking questions, etc.

  - **Making connections:** Connecting with people/units

  - **Creating value:** Creating "value" from various ways of connections

How would I work towards achieving that vision?

- Work with VCRED, Deans, VPDUE, VPIA, VCDEI, VCUA, and others on common initiatives that impact the graduate culture, graduate growth, and funding opportunities at UCR

- I do not claim to have all the answers which forces me listen to people, seek their input, and collaborate with people.

- I have successfully led the creation and implementation of the graduate division strategic plan at my institution.

How would I work towards achieving that vision?

- I fully recognize that this is a "team sport" and buy-in from various stakeholders is very critical for success.

- Bring various "voices at the table" and let the 2+2 =7 magic happen.

- Transparency, open lines of communication, proper delegation, people empowerment, being vulnerable.

- Use data-driven approaches in decision making

Questions?

▶ Thank you for attending this session.