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**Leadership Academy 2018**

**Action Learning Project Summary**

**Participant(s):** Na Mi Bang, Ph.D.

**Mentor(s):** Seth Hayden, Ph.D.

**Leadership Academy Class:** 2017 - 2018

**Project Title:** The Experiences and Perspectives of NCDA Graduate Students

**1-sentence Project Summary:**

The project has identified the needs of graduate students to help NCDA make effective plans for the professional development of graduate students and early professionals.

**Objectives of Project:**

The primary goal of my project is to examine the NCDA graduate students’ experiences related to their engagement in NCDA and career development.

* Interviewed graduate students to gain feedback about their experience related to NCDA.
* Analyzed and summarized the interview data.
* Examined the need and expectations of NCDA graduate students for their professional development.
* Explored what NCDA can do to better support NCDA graduate students.

**Connection to** [**NCDA Long-Term Plan**](https://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/asset_manager/get_file/130687?ver=6441)**:**

According to the NCDA Vision 2020, NCDA emphasizes to increase the membership of graduate students and develop strategies to engage them. The main goals of this project are to understand the commonalities among participants and understand the NCDA support systems that will promote their participation. Thus, this project directly reflects on the NCDA Vision 2020, Increased Values of Membership.

**Project Description:**

I have interviewed ten NCDA graduate students over the phone to collect qualitative data. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Participants were encouraged to provide descriptions of their own experiences related to NCDA. A qualitative research method was used to code and interpret the interview data. Based on the results, practical suggestions and implications for graduate students and board members in NCDA were provided. The results indicate the ways in which NCDA would identify the needs of graduate students who will become career professionals and how NCDA can better serve them for their professional growth.

**Results:**

The results of this LA project provide important information for NCDA training programs to understand the unique and emerging needs of graduate students. Below are results that came from interview data.

What NCDA graduate students want to gain from their involvement in NCDA:

* A listserv or online discussion board for graduate students
* A structured networking or mentoring program for graduate students
* Funding support for graduate students
* Research-oriented programs for Ph.D. students
* Opportunities to make connections with other graduate students and professionals
* Support and activities for international graduate students
* Specific guidelines on how to get involved in committee work
* Additional information on constituency groups in NCDA
* More opportunities for graduate students to participate in the NCDA Leadership Academy

**Recommendations:**

**For implementation:**

* Confirmed the importance of providing a mentoring program to help graduate students network with other graduate students and professionals and support their research, clinical practice, or career development.
* Identified the need to develop a graduate student committee that provides support to help guide the NCDA graduate students’ research/scholarship and promote effective communication among the graduate students and other NCDA members.

**For follow-up projects or activities:**

* Develop policies and select a committee chair and members for the NCDA Graduate Student Committee.
* Create an online discussion forum for graduate students.
* Establish a mentoring program for graduate students.

**For related committee, constituency, or task force work:**

* NCDA needs to select/appoint a chair and members who have a commitment to collaborative engagement for the NCDA Graduate Student Committee.
* NCDA needs to design policies, procedures, and plans for a NCDA mentoring program to help graduate students engage in the organization.
* NCDA needs to develop online webinar series for both graduate students and early professionals.

*305 N. Beech Circle Broken Arrow, OK 74012*

*918/663-7060 Fax: 918/663-7058*