Building Community Through Transformational Professional and Personal Development Experiences for Graduate Students
Community is important to graduate students

The graduate student experience goes far beyond that of the academic realm.

It’s our belief that the graduate student experience is multidimensional and inclusive of the development of professional skills, the strengthening of mental and emotional health, the discovery of leadership ability and much more.
At an annual symposium in 2009, Scott Collard and Lucinda Covert-Vail from New York University suggested there is no such thing as “a single graduate student type.” The presenters found the needs of graduate students vary but, in general, converge around the areas of community, student services and space.

Graduate students no longer want to be confined to a few study rooms at the campus library; they want resources that support their learning both inside and outside of the classroom.

Because of the importance of “community” and its positive influence on student satisfaction, universities are encouraged not to consider graduate students as outliers and to intentionally program events and efforts to bolster their sense of community.

Developing space requires a financial investment. However, the investment is important to help graduate students feel connected to the campus and to give them a place to call home at the university. Online graduate students could also benefit from having a cyber café for their program area to post messages, share photos and videos and forward interesting news and information.

...though graduate students may be more inclined to infer they “didn’t come to graduate school to make friends,” they may still use language such as a desired “connection with my classmates and faculty” or “build my network” instead of the classic term “community” to describe their sentiment.
What “non-academic” (professional and personal) characteristics are essential for graduate students to develop while pursuing their degree?
Creative problem solving

Step 1: Each person selects an identity from the grid you are provided.

Step 2: How would this person/character/entity approach the following:

What experiences would you create to build community among graduate students?

Step 3: Share at your table how each of you responded to the prompt.

Step 4: Capture your best ideas and prepare to share a few of them with the entire room.
Who are/will be your campus partners to assist you with building the graduate student...
Trails to Success
Transformational Professional & Personal Development for Appalachian State Graduate Students

Our program mission is to provide inclusive, comprehensive and transformational professional and personal development, to promote the advancement of transferable skills and ongoing success, for a diverse graduate student community as they contribute within a global society and workforce.