153-6 - MAKING THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM TRANSPARENT THROUGH 1ST YEAR COURSES FOR GEOSCIENCES GRADUATE STUDENTS

Wednesday, 28 October 2020

2:45 PM - 3:00 PM

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Abstract

Thriving in graduate school and preparing for the next career stage requires skills and strategies that many students have not learned through their undergraduate experiences. These skills not not only include scientific writing and teaching, but also navigating professional relationships and ethics. Strategies for developing the non-technical skills and insights necessary for succeeding in graduate school are sometimes called the 'hidden academic curriculum'. We cannot assume that all students enter their graduate programs with the knowledge or the background to figure out this hidden curriculum. If under-prepared, the bumpy transition to graduate school can derail students. A graduate course for entering students that addresses the hidden curriculum promotes equity and inclusion by equalizing the playing field and ensuring that all students are equipped to navigate graduate school. All students, regardless of their background, identity, and socioeconomic status, can benefit from increased preparation for the major shift between undergraduate and graduate education, which is substantially less structured and emphasizes critical evaluation of research and creation of new knowledge over learning established material.

Many science departments have recognized this gap in preparation and offer first year graduate courses that teach students how to navigate graduate school and academia in general. Here, we compare notes and share the ways that programs at seven different universities have worked to make this hidden curriculum transparent. For example, many of our courses include discussions of imposter syndrome, publication authorship, time management, networking, career preparation, implicit bias and field safety. A centralized course allows students to explore these issues together and develop a cohort that they can turn to as they navigate graduate school. Some of our courses assign writing an application for external fellowships, improving students' competitiveness for these awards and benefitting both the students and the

university's reputation. In this presentation, we provide examples of materials and activities to include in such seminars, a map of how the different topics are covered across the seven programs represented and best practices from our experience with the material.

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Authors

Michele L. Cooke
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Christopher J. Bell
The University of Texas at Austin

Mya Breitbart
University of South Florida

Emily Cooperdock
University of Southern California Earth Sciences

Naomi Levin
University of Michigan Earth & Environmental Sciences

Anita Marshall

Nathan A. Niemi
University of Michigan

Liane Stevens

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David D. Mrofka[1], ***Peter J. Berquist***[2] *and* ***Becca Walker***[1], *(1)Department of Earth Sciences and Astronomy, Mt. San Antonio College, Walnut, CA(2)Geology Department, Thomas Nelson Community College, Williamsburg, VA*

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