2014-2015 PREP Workshop Series: Collaboration

Workshop series sponsored by The Graduate School, Ph.D. Career Services, and Teaching Assistant Programs

Designed for Michigan State University graduate students and postdocs, these workshops focus on collaboration across a range of areas: teaching, research, and professional development. Pre-registration is required. For full descriptions and registration information, go to grad.msu.edu/workshops. For more PREP programs, other transferable skills, and career and professional development resources, visit careersuccess.msu.edu.

Workshop: Developing Communication and Conflict Management Skills for Successful Collaborations
Friday, October 3, 2014 and Friday, February 6, 2015
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
The Graduate School, Chittenden Hall

This interactive workshop is uses short videos of conversations between faculty mentors and graduate students/postdocs to facilitate discussion of strategies to set expectations and avoid conflicts in research teams. The strategy showcased for both setting expectations and managing conflicts is an interest-based approach of negotiation, that is, an approach that focuses on interests (i.e., core values and needs) rather than individual positions, when setting expectations or managing conflicts. The workshop also discusses how anger and other strong emotions can affect the outcomes of negotiations and how different decision making styles can affect group dynamics in research teams.

Teaching Seminar: Cultivating an Inclusive Classroom
Thursday, January 22, 2015
4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
A218 Wells Hall

The primary responsibility of instructors and teaching assistants is to do their best to maximize the learning outcomes for ALL of their students in a classroom. In this workshop, participants will be provided with a framework to help them think about how to be most inclusive in their expectations for learning, pedagogical choices, and assessment of learning outcomes. Participants will leave the workshop with tools to help them negotiate the opportunities and challenges that arise when teaching in a classroom that is comprised of a diverse student population. Participants will be encouraged to think about how their own expectations about how students should communicate or respond to instructors and peers, be assessed for achievement of course goals, and/or demonstrate active participation in class (among others) will have a direct impact on the extent to which each student maximizes his or her potential in the course.
Conference: Leading Through Teamwork: How to Be a Successful Professional  
Saturday, January 31, 2015  
8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
The Graduate School, Chittenden Hall

This interactive workshop for graduate students and post-docs will focus on identifying the skills underlying successful collaborations and learning to put them into practice. Studies of new faculty indicate that although they are hired for their individual expertise, their job satisfaction and promotion often depend on how quickly they learn to be collaborators in research, teaching, and service. In non-academic settings, many projects evolve as group efforts. Some psychologists have even argued that the most important new ideas are the product of “group genius,” not individual brilliance. Through a range of activities, presenters will engage participants in learning about how the so-called “soft-skills” or “professional skills” of teamwork and leadership come into play in academic and non-academic settings. By the end of the workshop, participants will know concrete strategies for creating and sustaining collaborations in academia and beyond, managing teams, and communicating effectively across diverse environments. The morning sessions will focus on collaborations in research and collaborations in the workplace; afternoon sessions will look at research on collaboration as leadership in higher education, and at studies of team diversity and its effect on innovation, creativity, and collaboration. In these interactive sessions, participants will identify opportunities to foster their own leadership development and effective teamwork in their current and future settings, and they will learn strategies to manage and leverage diversity within collaborative teams to enhance team effectiveness.

Teaching Seminar: Facilitating Discussions that Work  
Wednesday, March 18, 2015  
4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
A224 Wells Hall

Discussions “work” when we facilitate well through questioning. Careful planning, clear goal setting, and adept facilitation can turn a conventional recitation into an active learning experience, transform “tennis-ball” exchanges into in-depth discussion, and foster our students’ further inquiry and interest. But becoming an artful, provocative, and productive questioner is difficult. Fortunately, it’s also a teaching competency that we can improve right away. Workshop attendees learn to develop good interpretive questions that will advance their classroom objectives and increase students’ participation.

Teaching Seminar: Involving Undergraduates in Your Research  
Thursday, April 9, 2015  
4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
A218 Wells Hall

Each spring, many people find themselves gearing up to mentoring undergraduate research assistants over the summer months. In this lunchtime workshop, graduate students and postdocs will have the opportunity to learn about (and share) best practices in mentoring undergraduate research assistants. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and share strategies about the most effective way to both provide students with an excellent learning experience and get their own work done.

Persons with disabilities should contact the Graduate School at 517.353.3220 to request accommodations no later than two weeks prior to the session date. Requests received after this date will be met when possible.