

PACE

Fire Up Fridays

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Class Information	One Friday of most months (see detailed dates below), [Insert Zoom Link here]
Office Hours	By Appointment Only
Website	https://uci-pace.github.io

Introduction

The goal for Physics and Astronomy Community Excellence (PACE) Fire Up Fridays is to provide regular meeting space and programming that is designed specifically in the interest of supporting and developing incoming graduate students in our department. This includes both structured and unstructured activities that will foster a sense of community and inspire resilience within our community of graduate students.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. feel a sense of belonging to a diverse and inclusive community within their cohort and the department as a whole,
2. identify and engage their mentoring network,
3. identify and reduce stress using specific, effective, and productive tools & methods
4. firmly establish and develop their own individual definitions of success and wellness

How to Succeed

Attend each meeting ready to critically evaluate your habits and opinions towards the topic for that session. Be open to adjusting, and hopefully improving, your outlook and toolkit for success in grad school.

Assignments

Students will be expected to complete a survey at the start and end of the year to help better inform the impact of the program throughout this and future years. This survey will serve as part of the completion grade. Additionally, each FUF will have an anonymous 'exit ticket' to gauge effectiveness of that particular session. Lastly, mentors and mentees will submit a small report once a quarter on their 1-1 meetings to promote accountability and communication. There will be no other assignments for this class as our goal is simply to build community and foster excellence through mentoring and professional development. *Additional relevant resources will be shared with students prior to our meetings, as well as posted to the website for further exploration.*

100% Attendance

The grade for this course is entirely based off attendance - so come to the meetings. There will be a sign in sheet at the start of each meeting.

How to Properly Contact The Instructors

Please send your correspondence to the program leads, LITs, and/or Faculty mentor and include in the subject line 'PACE' or 'Fire Up Fridays'. We encourage you to use proper guidelines and email etiquette.

Resource:

<https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087#.1xcuo9rvq>

Confidentiality, Conduct, and Behavior in Class

Students must agree to keep any personal information/discussions which occur at these meetings or in their mentoring groups confidential - *the single exception to this is Title IX and other such legal reporting requirements.*

As this is an inclusive community building class, all students will be encouraged but never required to speak from personal experience and no student will be denied the reality of their lived experience. Remember, no one person is a full representation of a larger group to which they identify. **Each person in the classroom will be cognizant of how much and how long**

they speak, and make a deliberate effort to hear typically silenced voices. Students will display mutual respect and will treat disagreements respectfully.

Adopted from:

<https://www.hastac.org/blogs/danicasavonick/2017/08/28/community-guidelines-fostering-inclusive-discussions-difference>

UCI Physics & Astronomy's Code of Conduct

<https://www.physics.uci.edu/inclusion/conduct>

Disability Services

Accommodations for students eligible for disability services will be arranged for and provided by the Disability Services Center (DSC). Please, contact them to make the appropriate arrangements. If the DSC cannot accommodate you, and you feel comfortable doing so, please discuss accommodations with the instructors.

Tentative Schedule

Date	Lecture Title
September 24	Welcome Orientation - What is PACE/mentorship really all about?
September 30	Time & Goal Management
October 30	How Funding Works in Our Department
November 20	Working Out & Working In
December 4	(Optional) Destressing Session
January 22	Career Path Exploration
February 12	Demystifying the Qual Exam
March 5	Personal Wellness with Dr. Phong Luong
April 9	Building Your Mentor Map
May 7	Finding and Fostering Healthy Relationships with Advisors
June 4	Summer Professional Materials Development

Session Descriptions

While all of our sessions cover specific topics, they also each tackle the broader themes present in our learning outcomes, including prioritizing personal health and wellness, normalizing and mitigating the stress and struggles of graduate student life, as well as building and using a broad support network.

Time & Goal Management - This session is about balancing grad student responsibilities. We will review some methods for time and schedule management. In small group settings, students will share their personal experiences in time management, including successes and failures.

How Funding Works in Our Department - This session is about the funding schemas within our own department. We will review sources of funding, pay schedules, and some common funding scenarios/hurdles to be aware of. We'll discuss them further in small group discussions, and highlight resources outside the institution that we use to save and/or make money. There will be a faculty member present for this discussion to clarify any technical questions.

Working Out & Working In - This session is about promoting your own physical health. We will review ways to incorporate and prioritize movement, healthier dietary choices, and regular sleep schedules. In small group settings, students will share their personal experiences and hindsights, including successes and failures.

(Optional) Destressing Session - This session is the last day before exam week. It is optional, and there is no structured activity. Instead, there will be a guided relaxation or yoga (likely led by Dr. Phong Luong), and maybe some additional activities such as coloring books, etc.

Career Path Exploration - This session is about gentle exploration of the variety of career paths available to you post-PhD. We will brainstorm some of the skills and experiences that impact these potential paths, and identify some resources/experiences you can use now to help you (a) further explore and (b) be more competitive on the market later on.

Demystifying the Qual Exam - In the first half of this session, faculty members of the qual committee will join for open Q&A. In the second half, senior grad students will share their personal experiences surrounding the qual exam.

Personal Wellness with Dr. Phong Luong - This session is about revisiting personal health, with an emphasis on mental health practices. We will explore as a group some methods of stress reduction - or rather stress expression - to use for when times get rough. This includes discussions that facilitate the normalization of our struggles.

Building Your Mentor Map - This session is about the importance of building your own professional and personal support network. We will review what it means to have multiple mentors, the difference between mentors and advisors, and how to acquire mentors. In small groups, students will share their personal experiences and hindsight in building a mentor network.

Finding and Fostering Healthy Relationships with Advisors - This session is about developing healthy perspectives on the grad student - faculty advisor relationship. We will review ways to upwardly manage your relationship and to set boundaries/expectations. In small groups, we'll discuss different dynamics and approaches to these relationships.

Summer Professional Materials Development - This session will serve as a time to discuss tackling conferences and self promotion over the summer. We will discuss balancing intense research time with developing important professional skills/materials such as personal websites, CVs, posters, etc.