

# PACE Fellow Expectations

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Welcome to the Physics & Astronomy Community Excellence (PACE) Program! We are grateful you are interested in joining us in our commitment to bettering our department's community through guided mentorship. Research shows that graduate student mentoring programs like these increase retention rates, lower rates of depression and feelings of isolation, lead to higher levels of productivity, and greater success in achieving leadership roles. As prospective leaders and mentors, we encourage you to review these guidelines. If you do become a PACE Fellow, you will be expected to abide by these.

## Meetings

- **Fire Up Friday (FUF) Mentors** are required to attend the monthly FUF meetings on Fridays between 11:30 -12:50pm (exact dates will be listed on the FUF syllabus). Prior to this meeting will be a short, required meeting between mentors and the PACE program leads to quickly discuss the upcoming topic and align on the FUF structure (**Excelleration-only Mentors** are strongly encouraged to join the short review meetings to stay abreast of their mentee's experiences).
- **Excelleration Mentors** are expected to meet with their mentees at least once a month. Mentors are provided with one Starbucks gift card per mentee to cover the costs of meetings over coffee. Cards are distributed by My Bahn twice per academic year.
- **Excelleration Mentors** and their mentees are encouraged to set a meeting schedule together at the start of the academic year. Making clear commitments early on builds trust, reliability, and accountability.

## Communication

- The PACE program is a departmental effort, which means we abide by the same Code of Conduct currently in place for all members of our community. If you haven't already, please become familiar with the departmental Code of Conduct, available at <https://www.physics.uci.edu/inclusion/conduct>.
- Be proactive in communication with PACE program leads and with your mentee. If you need to cancel or push a meeting, we request that (when possible) you inform respective parties 24 hours ahead of time out of respect for each other's schedule.
- While mentee's are encouraged to reply promptly to emails from PACE Fellows, please don't hesitate to reach out and check on your mentee if you find they have been unresponsive or out of touch. Unresponsiveness is often symptomatic of stress and busyness, so we encourage mentors to practice patience and understanding when their mentees seem suddenly distant.

## PACE Fellow Expectations

- When meeting with their mentees, PACE Fellows also actively follow and embody [Kitchener's Five Ethical Principles](#):
  1. Respect Individual Autonomy
  2. Do No Harm
  3. Benefit Others
  4. Be Just
  5. Be Faithful
- Celebrating wins in graduate school can be few and far between, classically taking form only after passing qual exams, advancement exams, and, finally, the dissertation. In the PACE Program, we believe developing a practice of celebrating small wins leads to a stronger sense of growth and achievement, as well as a healthier work-life balance. We request that mentors encourage their mentees to celebrate smaller, more untraditional wins (e.g. passing a midterm, meeting with a potential faculty advisor, attending a journal club meeting), and to be supportive and empathetic during losses (e.g. sharing if/when you failed an exam or felt underprepared for a TA session). Moments like these normalize the graduate student experience and facilitate resilience for both parties.
- Mentors and mentees are encouraged to set communication guidelines at the beginning of the academic year. Does the mentor prefer the mentee to text them quick questions, or set up a face-to-face meeting for the majority of discussions? Are both parties typically on campus, and is it feasible for the mentee to drop by the mentor's office unannounced?

## Follow Through

- Mentors and mentees are encouraged to review action items / next steps at the end of each meeting or discussion, for each respective party. This will help build accountability and trust in the relationship, as well as reduce the likelihood of miscommunication and oversight.
- Mentors and mentees are both encouraged to underpromise and overdeliver. Human life can be chaotic at times, with last minute items popping up and priorities shifting at a moment's notice. By developing a strong practice of underpromising and overdelivering, both parties can develop more reasonable expectations of the relationship.

## Reflection

- All PACE Fellows are encouraged to reflect early and often on their role in the mentor-mentee relationship, their skills (and skill gaps), and on the expectations vs. realities of the relationship. Self-reflection is a strong habit that will facilitate personal and interpersonal growth. Some example questions that should be reflected upon often as a PACE Fellow include: Am I helping my mentee focus on action, instead of reaction? Am I encouraging my mentee to broaden their mentor network by referring them to other people/resources? Am I *actively* listening to my mentee, making sure to validate their experiences and encourage them to try a different approach?

## Further Information

Resources and materials for reference are provided on the [program website](#), included some suggested topics of conversation for one on one meetings. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Arianna Brown ([ariannb@uci.edu](mailto:ariannb@uci.edu)) or Katy Rodriguez Wimberly ([wimberlm@uci.edu](mailto:wimberlm@uci.edu)) with any additional questions, comments or concerns.