



Training for Graduate Advisors, Graduate Faculty, and Graduate Advisor Support Staff

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A G E N D A

- Introduction and Background
- *Win-win*: Examples of how to support advisors, staff, and faculty
- Q & A

Introduction and Background

- First: My background and interest in this topic
- Next: I have some questions for us:
 - How many of you have been graduate program advisors?
 - How many received training on how to be a graduate advisor?
 - How many of you received training on mentoring graduate students during your PhD program?
 - How many received training on how to mentor graduate students when you were new faculty members?

→ *Learning as we go by “trial and error”*

Support for Graduate Advisors, Staff, and Graduate Faculty

- Several articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*, in addition to books on advising and mentoring graduate students, suggest that we get very little training.
- In addition, my experiences and many conversations with graduate faculty and advisors motivated me to create new resources and workshops for advisors, staff, and graduate faculty (in collaboration with our Faculty Development Director).
- Today, I will provide some examples of how to support advisors, staff, and faculty.
- **Providing support and resources is “win-win” + supports enrollment/recruitment and retention**

Examples of Onboarding and Support for Graduate Advisors and Staff

- Examples of workshop topics for new advisors and staff
 - Tips for Effective and Efficient Advising
 - Exploring the Funding Landscape for Graduate Students
 - Panel of graduate advisors, sharing their advising superpowers (e.g., innovative recruitment and retention strategies)
- Canvas/Blackboard/other LMS training site for advisors and staff
- Resources on websites
 - Short videos for onboarding
 - List of FAQs



WORKSHOP EXAMPLE

*(Imagine being a new
advisor or staff
person...)*

10 Proactive Tips
for New Graduate
Advisors and Staff



Tip #1: Regularly Share Proactive Emails and Resources

- Tip of the month
- Lists of FAQs
- Checklists
- Email **templates** to easily update each semester
 - Welcome to the semester
 - Defending this semester?
 - Advising tips before registration



Tip # 2: Create Centralized Resources

- Provide a centralized location for graduate student resources e.g., a Canvas site, webpage(s), and/or handbooks (“one stop shopping”), e.g.,
 - FAQs: Planning coursework
 - Important campus offices
 - Student learning outcomes
 - General tips for success in grad school
 - Time management
 - Research and writing
 - Career resources
 - Counseling Center



Tip #3: Familiarize Yourself with Graduate College Resources

- The Graduate Catalog
- Graduate College website tabs
 - Thesis and Dissertation Guides and Videos
 - Events
 - Graduate Advisor Resources, admissions (e.g., Slate), grading policies, etc.
 - Recorded webinars for graduate advisors



Tip #4: Enroll in The Graduate College new Graduate Student Orientation Canvas Site*

- The **NGSO Canvas site** is not for students only! It also orients advisors and support staff
- It gives advisors and staff a sense of potential student FAQs.

*Some of you might already invite advisors to new grad student orientation

Tip #5: Read Graduate Council Minutes

- Read the Graduate Council minutes from the last year or so.
- Get a feel for what we discuss in Graduate Council meetings.
- Learn about some changes that have been implemented over the last year.



Tip #6: Watch - - Recorded Professional Development for Graduate Students

Yes, professional development is for students; however...

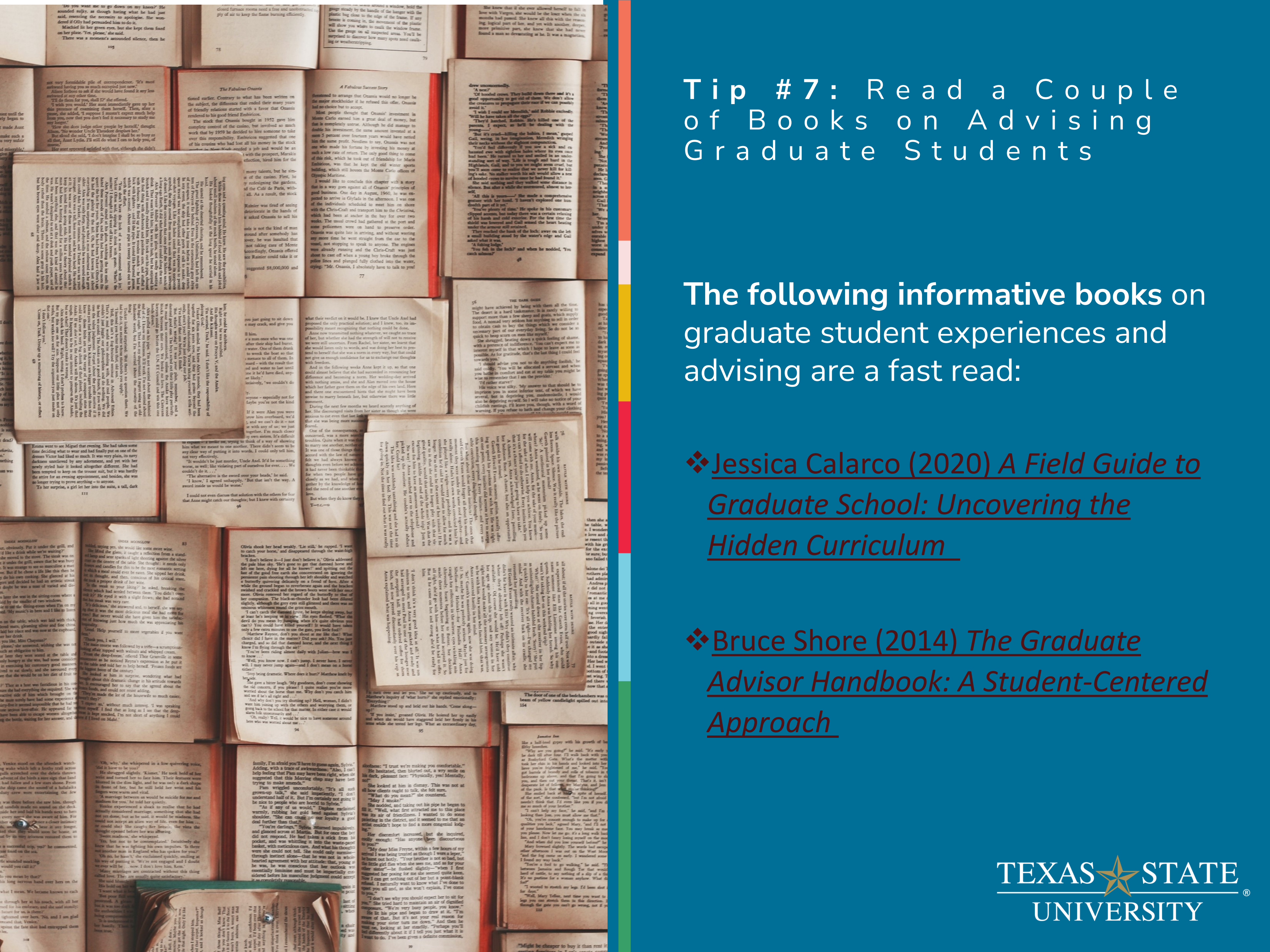
- graduate advisors and support staff can learn a lot about student resources and experiences by watching recordings
- advisors and staff can share what they learn with students

Tip #7: Read a Couple of Books on Advising Graduate Students

The following informative books on graduate student experiences and advising are a fast read:

❖ [Jessica Calarco \(2020\) A Field Guide to Graduate School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum](#)

❖ [Bruce Shore \(2014\) The Graduate Advisor Handbook: A Student-Centered Approach](#)





Tip #8: Read the grad student newsletter

- The newsletter arrives in your and your students' inboxes once a week
- The GC automatically subscribes new graduate advisors, support staff, and graduate students
- Remind your students to read it

Tip #9: Create a List of Important Contacts

Keep a **list of important contacts** and email addresses at your fingertips. For example:

- International Student and Scholar Services Office
- Your program's degree audit specialist
- Your program's graduate admissions specialist
- Counseling Center
- Dean of Students
- Writing Center

And now...for **Tip #10: Take care of yourself!**

- It's easy to “over work” when we are passionate about supporting our students.
- Listen and offer support but remember that you are **one person**. Most of us are not trained counselors.
- Figure out your boundaries, including how and how often to meet with students. Be familiar with resources around campus that you can mention to students.
- Remember: For some students, it's their first time to receive one-on-one support from a faculty member
 - Thus, some students might want frequent reassurance from you (“Do I belong in graduate school? Do I have what it takes?”) or share mental health issues and traumas with you.



Win-win: Benefits of training

Advisors and staff can be...

- more prepared to talk to and support prospective and current students
- more efficient in advising vs. “learning as they go”
- better able to manage their workload (especially faculty doing teaching, research, and service)

Students...

- feel supported
- increase their understanding of the academic world
- are more aware of resources they need
- can be more successful



Examples: Support for Graduate Faculty

Examples: Faculty Professional Development workshops*

- Having Difficult Conversations with Graduate Students
 - e.g., “You’re not ready to defend. You cannot graduate this semester.”
- Helping Graduate Students Deal with Procrastination, Perfectionism, and Mental Health Issues
 - i.e., the combo or impacts of imposter syndrome, overachieving, inner critic, etc.
- Successfully Supervising Graduate Students’ Theses and Dissertations
- Supporting International Graduate Students
- Mentoring Graduate Students: Best Practices
- Providing Effective Feedback on Graduate Student Writing

****Can collaborate with faculty development and other offices, and invite faculty to serve as panelists***

Example: Website on Mentoring Graduate Students

- Best practices, “do’s and don’t’s”
- Advice on clarifying expectations (e.g., how and when to provide feedback, when to meet and in what modality)
- What mentors do (ideally), noting different mentoring styles and different mentee backgrounds, needs, and capabilities
- Council of Graduate School resources on mentoring, e.g., Resources on Culturally Aware Mentoring
- Articles from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*
 - “Why Don’t We Teach Ph.D.s to Be Mentors?” (Maria LaMonaca Wisdom; September 21, 2021)
- Articles from *Inside Higher Ed*
 - “Dear Faculty: You Matter More Than You Know” (Brandon Busted; February 24, 2019)
 - “Students Need Mentors, and More Help in Making Those Connections” (Melissa Ezarik; October 27, 2021)



Win-win!

- Supporting advisors, faculty, and staff helps them to do their work more effectively and efficiently (and even love it!)
- Can directly and indirectly improve recruitment and retention
- Ultimately, students benefit--
 - They get the resources and support they need
 - They don't feel like "outsiders"
 - They will be more successful



Thank you!

- Please share some of your strategies with us for supporting advisors, staff, and faculty!
- What are other resources or forms of support that we can offer?
- I welcome questions and comments.