

Building Scholarly Communities by Dr. Candy Martinez

I've broken down different ways for building relationships, and exchanging feedback with other scholars in grad school

Writing groups: Spaces (whether in person or online) where graduate students work quietly with other graduate students. Students often time themselves and share the process they made. See El Colibri Writing Circle: <https://writingcenter.ucsc.edu/voces/index.html> Some graduate divisions have a certain amount of funds allocated towards funding writing groups that include snacks or bringing in a workshop speaker; however, writing groups are mostly underfunded and since they can be organized remotely, they don't require money.

Writing retreats: Periods dedicated strictly to writing that last between a week or two usually held at a particular location where scholars work with other scholars on a writing project either collaboratively or individually [think of it as a scholar's vacation, except instead of only hanging out at the beach, you're writing the whole time] Funding for writing retreats varies. You may be invited to participate in a writing retreat as part of a research program (See LUNA program: <http://iwri.org/research/luna/luna-program-overview/>). More than often, writing retreats are self-funded.

Mentor spaces: Spaces where graduate students may obtain support from more seasoned scholars (often first year Assistant Professors or tenure track professors). I have not participated in such a program but see ALLA Mentoring Program <https://twitter.com/AnthropoLatina/status/1399788923836977155/photo/1> Mentor spaces may be funded by an institution, university, or professional organizations. Availability and funds for mentor spaces vary from one year to the other.

Academic conferences or symposium: If you present at a conference, you will be expected to give a 15-20 minute presentation on a 10-20 page paper on a topic that you're still developing. During the conference, you'll have participants ask a whole range of questions about your paper. You will also have the opportunity to network with other colleagues in your fields. During a conference, you will informally or formally meet with acquisition editors (people who might help you publish your book). It's important to always carry business cards with you and present yourself in an amicable demeanor. Also, there's some unofficial rule about networking in academia where you don't want to hold a conversation for more than 5 minutes with a single individual unless you schedule a timed meeting with them. This is something that I will never understand but read *The Professor is In* by Karen Kelsky if you want to know more. Typically, graduate programs have a small fund for academic conferences. However, each graduate program's conference package varies.

Colloquium: Organized spaces where scholars may raise concerns or questions around a particular topic. For instance, my former graduate department (LALS) has a colloquium for their students. Each week LALS graduate students meet for two hours with planned activities or invited guests. Sometimes the activities are centered around a discussion of an LALS grad student's work in progress (similar to a writing workshop).

Writing workshops: A writing workshop is an organized space (usually led by an institution) that invites a scholar in one's field to lead a discussion about one scholar's manuscript/dissertation chapter. There may also be additional participants (fellow graduate students or faculty) who review one's chapter ahead of time. If you are a writing workshop participant, you are expected to carefully read the chapter you have been assigned ahead of time. During the actual workshop, you raise your comments with the author of the chapter. If you are the author of a writing workshop chapter, you will be expected to give the participants of your workshop one-two weeks to review your work, and you will write a paragraph about what your work is about, and what type of feedback you want to receive. During the actual workshop, workshop participants take turns to give the author feedback and the author has time to respond to critiques. The goal of a workshop is to obtain feedback about your work in progress so that you can revise it..

Workshops may require funding given that an invited scholar is frequently given an honorarium to look over your work, provide you written feedback, and give you verbal feedback during the actual workshop meeting. For instance, my American Philosophical Society fellowship benefits included a writing workshop. Not all fellowships have the benefit of receiving a writing workshop but if you have the opportunity to invite an outside scholar to review your work, it certainly helps your growth. See another example of a workshop organized by an institution, the MALCS Writing Workshop: <https://journal.malcs.org/about-clc/opportunities/>

Writing center: Graduate students benefit from having as many people assess their writing skills (organization, structure, grammar, clarity). Besides using Grammarly, it really helps to have an extra set of eyes to look at your writing. I would especially suggest having people outside of your field take a look at your work. In the last two years, UCSC has opened up a writing center to graduate students. UCSC's VOCES writing center consists of graduate students who are trained to edit and proofread students' work in any field. See:

<https://writingcenter.ucsc.edu/voces/index.html> It helps to get in the habit of receiving feedback from people you do not know very well considering that scholars receive anonymous feedback when they publish their articles/books.

Facebook groups: There are many Facebook groups that first generation Latinx or POC scholars can join. Some examples include: Binders Full of Women and Nonbinary People of Color in Academia: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1714923798729292>

Oaxacan Scholars: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/491812064267764>
Latinas Completing Doctoral Degrees-

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/LatinasCompletingDoctoralDegrees>

You can post questions about anything graduate school related here (just know that some of your mentors might also be members of your groups so I'd recommend being careful about not confusing the discussion boards as a confidential space). In the past people have asked for advice about certain Institutional Review Board processes and/or have requested feedback for certain grant application statements on the discussion posts. Discussion boards are also a really good space to recruit potential research participants as people always post their research study flyers on Facebook posts pretty frequently.

Academic Jobs Wiki: https://academicjobs.fandom.com/wiki/Academic_Jobs_Wiki

Academic Jobs wiki is a space where graduate students can post any updates about dissertation fellowships, post-docs, tenure track jobs, and adjunct jobs. It gives graduate students a good idea about the fellowships and jobs that are being offered out there. As a good way of promoting good karma, share any job postings out there with other people who you think might be a good fit.

Tip #1: offer your immediate colleagues and the graduate cohort ahead of you help and ask for help (exchanging syllabi, grant applications, IRB protocol, etc...). At the same time, you should know that sometimes people might not feel comfortable sharing their grants and IRB protocol.

There's a lot of rejection that takes place in the world of academia on multiple levels. There's rejection of fellowships, jobs, and journal submissions. One of the best things that you can do about rejection is revise your material with the help of your peers and people who care about your success. Workshops, conferences, and writing groups help you to get in the habit of reading your work aloud, asking questions, re-articulating your arguments, and finding opportunities for collaboration.

What next? After you finish your Ph.D. it may seem like you might not need to continue collegial relationships with your graduate school peers. On the contrary, it's useful to think about the help you might be giving to your fellow graduate peers in terms of mock interviews, syllabi exchanges, C.V. proofreading, and/or advice about unexpected teaching or colleague situations. It's useful to cultivate graduate school friendships for years to come.