Graduate students need advisement on life

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Dr. Aldemaro Romero Jr.  
Letters from Academia

On one of the oldest traditions in academia is the apprenticeship. The idea was developed in medieval times in universities where students began to flourish. As the idea took hold, a particular set of skills from practitioners of a particular trade. As an assistant, training was more specialized and, as the job market demanded more graduates with specific skills, the whole concept of apprenticeship evolved into what we know today as graduate programs.

Today graduate students represent an important component of higher education. Are you telling a story of a college or a university where graduate students play a significant role in both teaching and research? Despite the important roles graduate students play in academia, we rarely hear about the students who are actually working at universities. That is changing in a recent study by economists Diane Martin and Elaine Welter.

The study was carried out among 41,580 students at 120 Ph.D.-granting institutions between 2011 and 2010. It showed that in the case of numerous graduate students, they have three major sources of financial support. The National Institutes of Health (NIH), a research fellowship from a faculty member’s grant, or direct support from the university. The way these students are funded, shapes their role and how they work. When the students are funded from NIH, for example, she or he has a great deal of autonomy since students are pretty much the output of the research work. When supported by the fellowship, they will probably be much of the same decision-making process, but under direct supervision of that faculty, great deal of autonomy is less. When the student is directly supported by the university, he or she will work as part of a team, something which to work but the funding usually comes with restrictions and more deadlines that will be time and effort invested by the mentor.

Majority of graduate students pursuing a biomedical career are supported from grants because of the number of them which is about 21 percent of the total. Because the majority of the students are supported from these grants, the student gets a grant from NIH, for example, she or he actively involved in research? Do they want to just get a master’s degree and no teaching duties?

Does the student get involved in research? Do they want to just get a master’s degree and no teaching duties?

The study shows that the students who are actively involved in research are more likely to stay in graduate school. But what about the students who are not as active in research? Do they want to become professors? Do they want to be researchers? Are there other factors that are influencing their decision to stay in graduate school?

A lot of the students who are not as active in research are looking for a career that involves teaching. They want to become professors. But what about the students who are not as active in research? Do they want to become professors? Do they want to be researchers? Are there other factors that are influencing their decision to stay in graduate school?

Dr. Aldemaro Romero Jr. is a writer and college professor with leadership experience in higher education. He wrote this through his personal blog at: www.aromerojr.net