

Chapter II. ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

II. Orientation

Beginning a graduate program and becoming assimilated into the academic and social life of a department takes time and effort. Where programs exist to help students assimilate, the transition into graduate student life at Berkeley goes more smoothly.

A number of departments organize some formal orientation program or establish other ingenious methods of acquainting students with the department and the campus. A sampling of orientation programs is described in this section.

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Graduate Division Resources

- Graduate Student Instructor Orientation and Training Conference (sponsored by the Graduate Division).
- Handbook for New Graduate Students, published by the Graduate Division Publications Office.

Materials are available at 325 Sproul.

Plant Biology: Big Sibling Program

Excerpted from *The Siblings* newsletter
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EASING THE WAY:

PLANT BIOLOGY'S BIG SIBLINGS



"Siblings" Susan Dean and Lauren Hubbard

You've just accepted Berkeley's offer of admission. Where will you stay while you look for housing? Can you rent a liveable apartment and survive on the money you'll be getting? What course load is reasonable?

If you're a new student in the Department of Plant Biology, your "big sibling" can give you advice.

Began in the 1970's in the former Department of Botany, the Big Sibling Program matches first-year students with incoming students to give them a leg up on their new careers as graduate students. With the reorganization of the biological sciences, much of Botany was absorbed into Plant Biology, where the program continues to flourish.

MATCHING UP "SIBLINGS"

Here's how the program works: Graduate Assistant Harry Koga, formerly of Botany, works with the graduate student elected to the department's admissions committee to coordinate the program. Koga gives the names of newly-admitted students to the student rep, who then asks first-year students to volunteer as big siblings. Most are willing to take on the role, having just experienced the benefits of the program first-hand.

Usually, students choose their own adoptive "siblings." First-year student Susan Dean chose Lauren Hubbard, whom she'd met during a departmental visit.

"I knew where she was coming from geographically, and our backgrounds are similar," says Dean. "I knew what she was going to have to adjust to in moving here from southern California."

Once siblings are matched up, Koga sends out a welcoming letter to new students on behalf of all Plant Biology graduate students, letting them know they'll be contacted by a big sibling. He and the student rep also give the big siblings the addresses and phone numbers of their little siblings and recommend that they initiate contact soon.

WHERE TO LIVE, HOW TO BUDGET

Big siblings can give new students valuable advice on what kind of housing is available, the best time to come to Berkeley to look for a place to live, and how to live on the stipend of a Graduate Student Researcher. Those were the topics Dean and Hubbard discussed during their initial phone conversation.

Temporary housing is another perk of having a big sibling. When Hubbard came house-hunting, she stayed with Dean and got to use Dean's answering machine, an "invaluable asset," she says, in the search for housing.

After Hubbard moved to Berkeley, she continued to consult Dean about which courses to take and how lab rotations work.

"The key," she says, "is having at least one person you know and whom you can ask questions."

A PORTABLE PROGRAM

Koga says that the Big Sibling Program seems to have a life of its own.

"I wasn't surprised that it continued in Plant Biology and with students from other departments who had not been part of the program before," he says. "When I explained it to last year's graduate rep, the concept was really clear to her, and she jumped right in. It just keeps going."

Simple and inexpensive to carry out, the Big Sibling Program travels well to other departments. Many students have discovered that having a big sibling can make Berkeley a more manageable and personal place to begin a graduate career. — Deborah Sands Miller



Graduate Assistant Harry Koga

PROGRAM PROFILE

Audience: Newly-admitted doctoral students

Organized by: Harry Koga, Graduate Assistant for Plant Biology, with the graduate student rep on the department's admissions committee.

Cost to Department: Postage

Purpose: To pair entering students with continuing students who can give them advice and information about adjusting to graduate school. Big siblings may also provide temporary housing for new students.

For more information: Harry Koga, 642-5167



(Sample letter for Plant Biology's Big Sibling program.)

COLLEGE OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DEPARTMENT OF PLANT BIOLOGY
(415) 842-9999

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720

May 25, 1990

Dear ,

On behalf of the Plant Biology graduate students, we would like to welcome you to the UCB Department of Plant Biology. The grad students look forward to meeting you, and we would like to offer our assistance in getting settled here. You will be contacted by a continuing graduate student (if you haven't already been) who has volunteered to help you upon your arrival in Berkeley. He or she will be able to put you up for a few nights in his or her home if you need a place to stay while looking for a place of your own.

It is wise to arrive in Berkeley well before the semester begins, because housing can be very difficult to find. The University housing office has listings of available apartments and share rentals — please bring your letter of admission from the Graduate Division. If you will be employed by the University as a teaching assistant or research assistant, you will also have access to the faculty/staff housing service for a \$45.00 fee per client; if you are interested in it, please ask Harry (see below) for a letter confirming your hire. The University housing office is located at 2401 Bowditch Street (at Channing Way) and is open 9:00-4:30, Monday-Friday. There are also several commercial agencies in town which provide listings for a fee, for example, The Berkeley Connection or Homefinders. Ask your "big sibling" for advice on prices and locations of available housing; it can make a difficult task a lot easier. In addition to helping you negotiate the housing market your big sibling will introduce you to members of the department, which includes 20 active faculty members, about 40 graduate students, an undetermined number of postdocs, and a helpful staff of around 20.

Upon your arrival, you should talk with the graduate assistant Harry Koga, who is located in 111E Genetics and Plant Biology Building (GPBB). Harry is an important contact providing you information on registration and other deadlines. Please sign up for an appointment with a first-year graduate advisor to discuss your classes for your first semester here. You will need to consult a graduate advisor prior to scheduling classes. The dates for in-person registration for fall semester are August 21 (A-K) and 22 (L-Z). It is best to come to campus and talk with Harry by about August 15 if at all possible.

Specifically, fall semester registration fees, and if applicable, nonresident tuition and health insurance premium must be paid by August 22. You will be

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able to elect to pay by an installment plan. Several sorts of small loans are available to students if you find yourself with a cash flow problem at the beginning of the semester. Some of these are interest-free and require no co-signer. The office of Financial Aid in 201 Sproul Hall has application forms and more information. (Call before going there as their hours of operation are not particularly standard.) Keep in mind that housing costs usually include first and last months rent in addition to a substantial deposit. All of this can amount to between \$800 and \$1,500 depending on your housing.

In order to receive your first paycheck you will need to meet with Adrienne Grimes, our departmental administrative assistant in charge of hiring students and non-academic personnel. She is located in 111D GPBB. She will have you fill out the necessary paperwork. Please note that your first paycheck might not be issued until October 1, 1990.

It will be necessary for those of you who are not California residents to begin working on establishing residency as soon as you arrive, because tuition for California residents is significantly less than for non-residents. The typical steps involve obtaining a California driver's license, registering to vote, and opening a bank account. Keep dated records of all these transactions so you can prove your resident status to the residency office in Sproul Hall (sign up in Room 120) in the spring by filing a petition there. They may also ask to see airplane ticket stubs or other dated receipts that show when you arrived in California.

As you are aware, three lab rotations are required of all new graduate students. We will hold a day-long departmental information conference on Friday, August 24 to help familiarize you with the various labs. At this conference each lab will present a brief overview of their research, and lab members will be introduced. The conference will also serve to introduce you to the departmental staff and to associated research facilities. Please plan on spending the entire day at this conference.

Once again, we all look forward to seeing you soon. Have a good summer.

Sincerely,

April Zilber
Graduate Student Representative

AZ/LF/hk

Lewis Feldman
Head Graduate Advisor

School of Social Welfare: Orientation to Research and the Research Process

Research in Social Welfare

While most departments organize library tours for their entering graduate students, the School of Social Welfare has taken the idea a step further. As part of the orientation for new students, the School of Social Welfare has traditionally offered SW 287, "Library Research in Social Welfare," to introduce students to the network of library resources on campus. In 1991, however, the doctoral course was expanded.

Twofold Course Objectives

First, through site visits to selected libraries, the course will introduce students to the vast and sophisticated network of library resources on campus. Individual assignments require students to delve into these sources on their own. Second, in order to provide an introduction to the research process through the experiences of distinguished research faculty, students will attend a faculty research presentation every other week. Faculty members will present their main area of research, discussing current projects and relating their own experiences doing research.

Human Perspective

The department hopes that this new structure will orient new students to campus library resources, give them the human perspective on completing research, and help them more easily identify faculty with whom they are interested in working.

Biological Sciences: Annual Picnic for Graduate Minority Students in the Life Sciences

Annual Picnic

The Office of Affirmative Action for the Biological Sciences and the Scientists of Color co-sponsor an annual picnic for graduate minority students in the life sciences. The picnic, typically held the third or fourth week in August as graduate students arrive for the fall semester, is a way for entering minority students to meet other new and continuing students. In this informal social atmosphere students can socialize and share practical survival tips, information about program requirements, and "unspoken expectations."

Invitations

During the summer, all incoming minority students get a letter of invitation. When they arrive at Berkeley, they get a flier in their orientation packet or from the graduate secretary giving them the date, time, and place. In addition, continuing students personally invite new arrivals and offer transportation.

Cost

The hosts estimate that the food for the barbecue costs about \$150, and the park reservation fee is about \$10.00.

Electrical Engineering and Computer Science: Research Faire

Research Faire

Since first-year students are not assigned to a research adviser but must choose an adviser by the end of their first year, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS) hosts a Research Faire. The Research Faire provides new EECS graduate students with the opportunity to become acquainted with professors and their research.

Seminars

The Faire is a day of seminars during which professors give 15-minute presentations on their research. Presentation summaries are distributed to student participants, and a free lunch is served mid-day. In addition, the EECS/ERL Research Summary catalog is available for purchase.

Adapting the Format

For large departments, a seminar of 15 minute presentations over the course of a day might work well. Smaller departments might follow the example of the Architecture department (see next page) and offer a semester-long seminar featuring one faculty presentation per week.

Graduate Assembly: New Graduate Student Orientation

The Graduate Assembly offers a New Graduate Student Orientation at the beginning of each fall semester. All graduate students are invited to this all-day event featuring a series of workshops on campus resources and survival skills.

The orientation schedule and list of workshops from the Graduate Assembly's invitational flier follow.

(Sample)

New UCB Graduate Students are
invited to attend the Fall 1991

New Graduate Student Orientation

**Friday
August 23, 1991
Pauley Ballroom
M.L.K. Jr.
Student Union**

sponsored by the
Graduate Assembly

Orientation Schedule

9:00-9:30 **Registration/Breakfast**
Pauley Ballroom, M.L.K. Jr. Student Union

9:30-10:00 **Welcome Address**

10:10-11:00 **Workshop Session I**

11:10-12:00 **Workshop Session II**

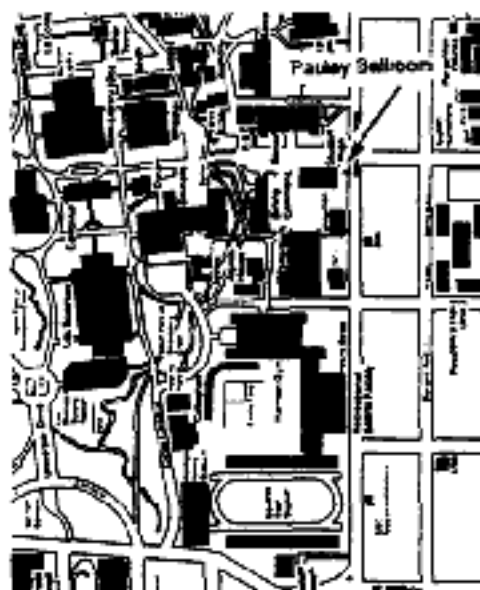
12:10-12:40 **Lunch**

12:40-1:00 **Anything Goes Q & A**

1:10-2:00 **Workshop Session III**

2:10-3:00 **Workshop Session IV**

3:10-5:00 **Reception, Anthony Hall**



(Sample)

Workshop Topics

Nothing But the Basics

information on housing, child care, parking, and campus transportation

The Hunt Is on: Finding the Right Fellowship

information on grants, fellowships and other merit-based aid.

Nuts and Bolts: Planning Ahead Is Good for You

surviving graduate school and getting the job you want

Health Wise

how to combat the stress and strain of graduate school

Library Services

information on UCB's library system

Beyond and Within These Walls

how to create a social life within and outside the university

When You Gotta Find a Job

employment opportunities for graduate students at UCB

Women's Experiences

the climate and resources for graduate women at UCB

Money Matters

information on loans and other need-based financial aid

continued on reverse panel...

Berkeley: A Tradition of Social Concern

opportunities for social activism among graduate students

The People of Color Experience

the climate and resources for students of color at UCB

How to Work the UCB Computer Systems

Information on accessing the campus' various computer systems

Apple Computer Demonstrations

information on Apple hardware, software and purchasing specials for UCB students

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Students

campus, climate and resources

International Students

information pertinent to international students at UCB

Blueprint for Graduate School Success

a seminal workshop on how to navigate through graduate school

Re-Entry Students

Information pertinent to students re-entering university life

AGSE

information on working conditions for graduate students

and more...

Other Orientation Activities

Architecture: Integrated Introductory Seminar

This two-hour seminar meets once a week for a semester. The seminar introduces all entering doctoral students to the Architecture Ph.D. program, provides a general introduction to the different areas of emphasis, and presents work in progress of faculty and current Ph.D. students. Faculty, students, and staff present the various seminar sessions.

Entomology: Noontime Colloquium

The Entomological Students Organization initiated this faculty colloquium series. The colloquium series is an effective way to introduce graduate students--especially new graduate students--to individual faculty members and their research interests. Faculty give informal presentations on their academic backgrounds, interests, and/or research. In addition, students have an opportunity to present their own research in the spring seminar series.

Forestry: Weekend Orientation

With two departmentally managed research properties, the Department of Forestry has a perfect setting for its fall orientation for new graduate students. Beginning with the drive to one of the properties, the weekend orientation gives new graduate students a chance to become acquainted with each other and with faculty, staff, and continuing grads. The formal program begins Saturday morning, a picnic lunch and research tour of the property follow, and, after afternoon recreation, students present an evening slide show or other entertainment. The cost is minimal since attendees share the cost of the food and are housed on-site.

Mechanical Engineering: The Lowdown from Underground

The Graduate Office and the Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student Council organize a series of seminars designed to provide useful information to new and continuing graduate students. Continuing graduate students will speak about their experiences: how to make the graduate experience fulfilling--what works and what doesn't; life outside of Etcheverry Hall; student activities; who to turn to for help. Faculty members will talk about their own and their colleagues' research, and staff members will talk about academic procedures: degree requirements, taking the preliminary and qualifying exams, and finding financial support. The seminars meet weekly from 4 to 5 p.m. at LaVal's subterranean room for six consecutive sessions.

Molecular and Cell Biology: Genetics Division Annual Retreat

All MCB Genetics Division faculty and their labs, students from the Graduate Group in

Genetics, and all first-year graduate students admitted to MCB are invited to attend a weekend retreat at Asilomar. Each laboratory in the Division presents its research in talks and poster sessions, and there are talks by students and faculty of the Graduate Group in Genetics. In addition, students can enjoy social events and ample free time for informal discussions or for exploring the Monterey area. The retreat offers students and opportunity to learn more about current research in the Genetics group and to get to know newly-admitted graduate students.