

# TIMELY TOPICS

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## Spring 2026 Faculty & Administrative Tracks



## TIMELY TOPICS

Timely Topics is a series of opportunities to engage with subject matter experts on topics relevant to graduate education. Every session is open to all who wish to attend, however, The Graduate School highlights three tracks (student, faculty, and administrative) to help registrants identify which sessions may be most relevant to their interests. This flyer includes sessions designed for faculty and for staff and faculty who hold an administrative role. Sessions for the student track are listed on the [Timely Topics](#) webpage, along with slides, recordings, and resources from past sessions.

## REGISTRATION

All sessions are virtual. To register for any of this semester's Timely Topics sessions, click the registration link below.

**[REGISTRATION](#)**

## AT A GLANCE

### FACULTY TRACK

- Graduate Student Trends and Patterns: Insights from the Ombuds Office (February 12)\*
- Strategies for Navigating Sensitive Topics In and Out of the Classroom (February 26)
- Graduate Student Data Resources (March 12)\*
- Using GradSlate CRM for Graduate Recruiting (April 2)\*

### ADMINISTRATIVE TRACK

- Setting Up For Success: Key Policies and Procedures for Graduate Assistant Hiring and Reappointment (January 29)
- Graduate Student Trends and Patterns: Insights from the Ombuds Office (February 12)\*
- Graduate Student Data Resources (March 12)\*
- Using GradSlate CRM for Graduate Recruiting (April 2)\*
- Graduate Admissions 2025-2026 Cycle Debrief (May 14)
- Preparing for Fall: Graduate Assistant Payroll Procedures (May 28)

*\*session appears on multiple tracks*

## CONTACT

### THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Whetten Graduate Center

[gradschool@uconn.edu](mailto:gradschool@uconn.edu)

[grad.uconn.edu/timely-topics](https://grad.uconn.edu/timely-topics)





## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

### SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS: KEY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANT HIRING AND REAPPOINTMENT

#### ADMINISTRATIVE TRACK

The goal of this session is to provide you with everything you need to know about GAs upfront as you recruit incoming grads and prepare to reappoint continuing GAs. We will cover eligibility and stipend level criteria, what information is included in the offer letter (and what needs to be addressed separately), guidance around remote work and supplemental employment, resources TGS provides to help you with these processes, and more. Anyone involved in the recruitment or hiring process for GAs may find this session helpful. Bring any GA-related questions you might have!

**DATE:** Thursday, January 29, 2026

**TIME:** 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

**FACILITATOR:**

**Megan Petsa**, Director of Graduate Student Administration, The Graduate School

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### GRADUATE STUDENT TRENDS AND PATTERNS: INSIGHTS FROM THE OMBUDS OFFICE

#### FACULTY TRACK

#### ADMINISTRATIVE TRACK

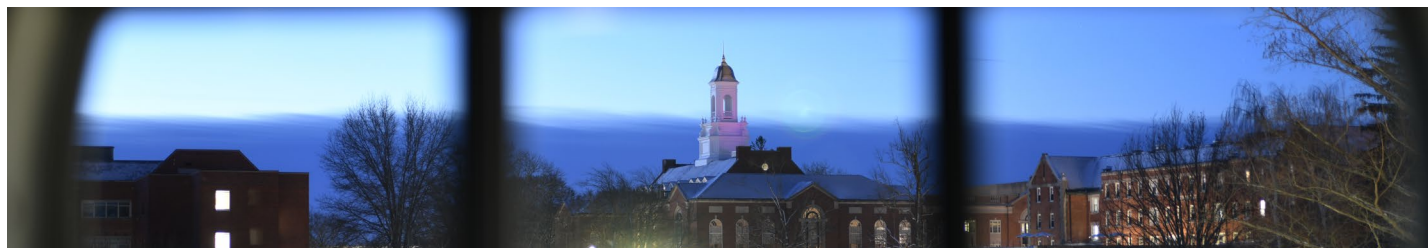
The Ombuds Office shares insights from their work with graduate students and trends and patterns regarding the graduate student experience as it relates to graduate faculty, discuss different resources for graduate faculty as they navigate their work with graduate students, and facilitate conversation around effective practices currently being implemented around UConn.

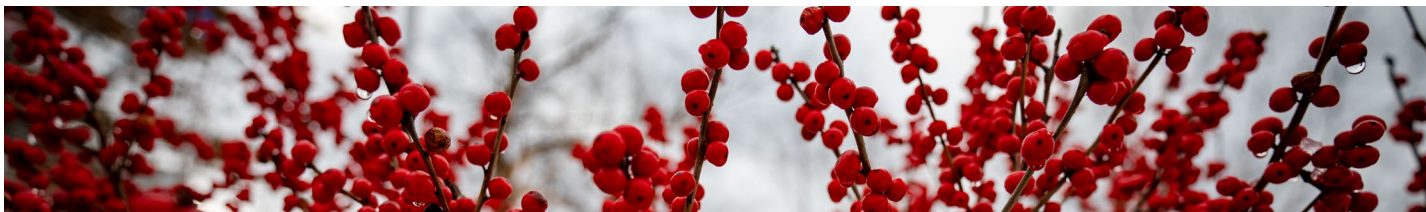
**DATE:** Thursday, February 12, 2026

**TIME:** 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**FACILITATOR:**

**Cinnamon Adams**, University Ombuds, Ombuds Office





## STRATEGIES FOR NAVIGATING SENSITIVE TOPICS IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

### FACULTY TRACK

Join Stephany Santos and David Embrick for an engaging conversation on navigating sensitive topics within today's polarized climate. Drawing from their own teaching experience and expertise, they will share practical strategies to engage in meaningful dialogue around challenging topics while fostering an inclusive and respectful classroom environment.

**DATE:** Thursday, February 26, 2026

**TIME:** 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

### FACILITATORS:

**David G. Embrick**, Professor in Sociology and Africana Studies, Director of Research and Community Engagement, UConn Hartford & **Stephany Santos**, Assistant Professor in Residence, Biomedical Engineering, Executive Director & Endowed Chair of the Vergnano Institute for Inclusion

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## GRADUATE STUDENT DATA RESOURCES

### FACULTY TRACK

### ADMINISTRATIVE TRACK

The University has several powerful reporting options for graduate student data. Which option is the right choice depends on what question you're hoping the data will answer for you. This session will discuss reports and data available from Institutional Research, the Office of the Registrar, and GradSlate, as well as TGS's WebFOCUS reports. Come learn about the Graduate Dashboard and how it can help you identify trends over time, the Registrar's Student Data Reporting page and custom reporting options, GradSlate queries that can help you refine your recruiting strategy, and how TGS's WebFOCUS reports can be a helpful tool to support your grads.

**DATE:** Thursday, March 12, 2026

**TIME:** 1 :00 PM - 2:00 PM

### FACILITATORS:

**Lenora Barnes**, Systems Administration and Reporting, Office of the Registrar, **Joe Daniels**, Senior Data Warehouse Developer, Institutional Research, **Joseph Fontanarosa**, Data Analyst, Institutional Research, **Lisa Pane**, Director of CRM & Data Management, The Graduate School, **Megan Petsa**, Director of Graduate Student Administration, The Graduate School & **Brian Rockwood**, Senior Associate Registrar, Office of the Registrar





## USING GRADSLATE CRM FOR GRADUATE RECRUITING

FACULTY TRACK

ADMINISTRATIVE TRACK

The GradSlate system contains tools which can help your graduate recruitment and admissions efforts beyond reading and processing applications. Join this session to get an overview of Slate's CRM (customer relationship management) tools which can help you collect information, communicate, and facilitate connection with potential inquiries and applicants through email campaigns, event registration, inquiry forms, and more.

**DATE:** Thursday, April 2, 2026

**TIME:** 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

**FACILITATOR:**

**Paula Steele**, Assistant Director of CRM & Data Management, The Graduate School

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## GRADUATE ADMISSIONS 2025 - 2026 CYCLE DEBRIEF

ADMINISTRATIVE TRACK

Join the Graduate Admissions and GradSlate teams to debrief the recent admissions cycle and hear updates regarding the next cycle. We will go over changes and best practices for graduate admissions, and we will preview and request feedback on new developments. Please bring your observations, questions, and items for your "wish list".

**DATE:** Thursday, May 14, 2026

**TIME:** 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

**FACILITATORS:**

**Holly Brunette**, Graduate Admissions Specialist, The Graduate School

**Meg Buckley**, Director of Graduate Admissions, The Graduate School

**Shirley Fiasconaro**, Graduate Admissions Specialist, The Graduate School

**Katie O'Keefe**, Graduate Admissions Specialist, The Graduate School

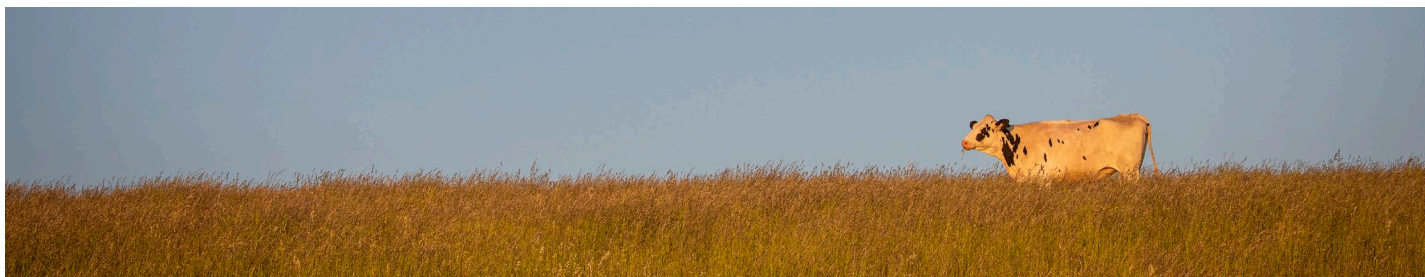
**Lisa Pane**, Director of CRM & Data Management, The Graduate School

**Sarah Shore**, Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions, The Graduate School

**Paula Steele**, Assistant Director of CRM & Data Management, The Graduate School







## PREPARING FOR FALL: GRADUATE ASSISTANT PAYROLL PROCEDURES

### ADMINISTRATIVE TRACK

This session will outline everything you need to know to successfully process graduate payroll transactions for this fall, including how to close out your GA offer letter workflow in GradSlate. We'll cover SmarHR templates, important dates and deadlines, outline the payroll audit process, and discuss common mistakes and ways to prevent them. We will also review policies and procedures related to remote work, supplemental employment, and other information you'll need to know as you prepare for fall.

**DATE:** Thursday, May 28, 2026

**TIME:** 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

**FACILITATORS:**

**Kacey Baer**, Graduate Payroll Manager, Payroll Department & **Megan Petsa**, Director of Graduate Student Administration, The Graduate School

**To register for any of this semester's Timely Topics series, click the button below.**

**REGISTRATION**

