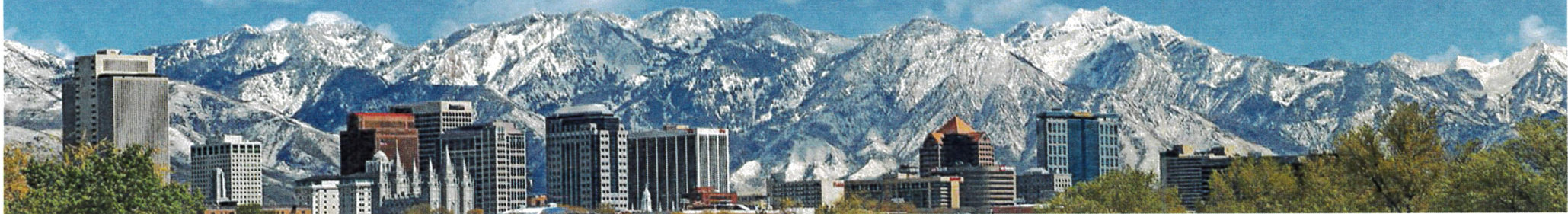


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# Developing a Graduate Student Success Center as a Means of Recruiting, Engaging and Retaining Graduate Students





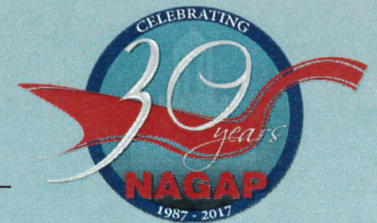
## Presenters

▶ Cyrus Fernandez

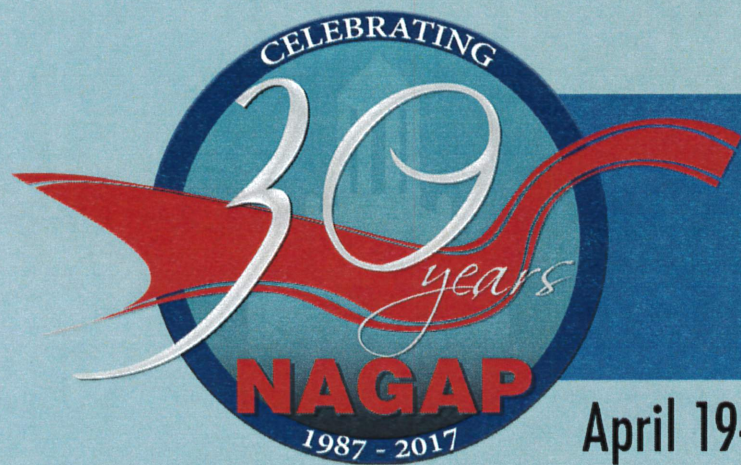
Assistant Director of Graduate Student Success and Professional Development  
The Graduate School  
The University of Texas at San Antonio

▶ John Shaffer

Associate Director of Graduate Student Success and Professional Development  
The Graduate School  
The University of Texas at San Antonio



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## On the Road to Building a Center

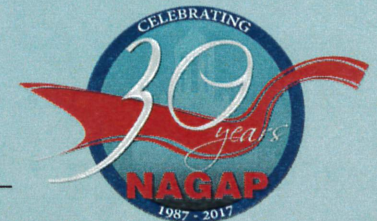
Context and history behind creating a center

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# Current challenges on many campuses

- Interaction with Campus Community
  - Graduate life can be a lonely endeavor
  
- Hub for Current and Prospective Students
  - No central place for graduate student to meet each other
  - No central space for prospective graduate students to attach
  
- “In Between” Spaces
  - The un-programmed spaces with no formal recognition
  
- Conducive spaces for graduate students to work
  - Beyond classrooms, labs and offices, where can a graduate student work?
  - Is it a functional space?
  
- Sense of a Grad Life Community
  - Graduate students do not live on campus
  - Resisting the “Commuter Vibe”



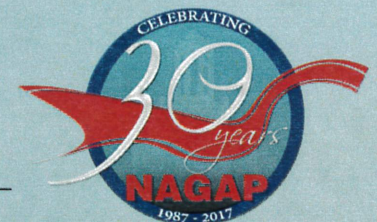
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## Where we started...

### Our Story Begins...

- ❑ With One Man and a Cart – Fall 2008
  - Established the Student Success Program
  - 10 workshops per year + Orientation
- ❑ Within 2 years
  - 55 separate events per year
  - Increase in Cross-campus Collaborators
- ❑ Within 3-4 years
  - Established 3 Graduate Study Rooms in campus library
  - Established Large-Scale Student Development and Social Programs
    - Graduate Student Appreciation Week
      - 3MT Competition
    - Graduate Student Career Week
    - International Graduate Student Development

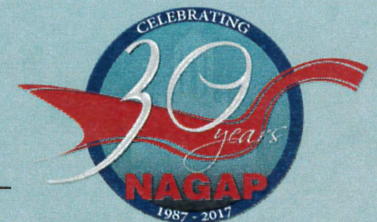


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## The Paradigm Shift....

- ❑ Spring 2015... A New Vision for Graduate Student Engagement
  - Build a graduate student community
  - Prepare our graduate students to be future leaders in industry and academia
- ❑ Summer-Fall 2016
  - Established the Student Success and Professional Development Team (Summer)
  - Rolled out comprehensive and focused programming (Summer – Fall)
    - Repackaged existing programming and established new and unique programming
  - Opened the Graduate Student Professional Development Center (November)
- ❑ Spring 2017
  - Data collection begins
  - Additional new programming launched



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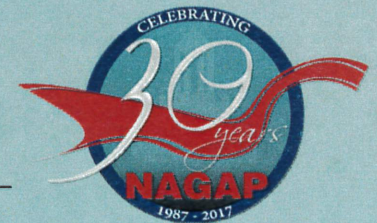
## Where we are...

### □ Student Success & Professional Development Team (Center Staff)

- Associate Dean of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development
- Associate Dean of Research and Professional Development
- Associate Director of Student Success and Professional Development
- Assistant Director of Student Success and Professional Development
- Thesis and Dissertation Officer (Part-Time)
- Student Services Specialist / Customer Service (Part-Time)
- Work Study (Part-Time)

### □ Total Events Fall 2016 – Spring 2017

- 113 + Graduate Student Orientation (2) and TA Orientation



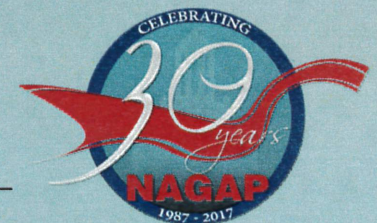
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## Where we are...

### □ Center Services

- Academic. Research. Career. (A.R.C) Professional Development Workshops
- Thesis and Dissertation Formatting
- Teaching and Learning Program (soon to be Certificate Program)
- Summer and Fall Research Grant Writing Program
- International Graduate Student Development Programming
- Spring and Summer Dissertation Writing Camp
- Social and Networking Events



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# Branding The Center

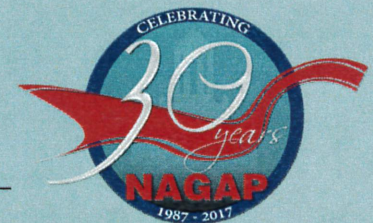
## □ Branding

- Identity and Recognition
- How students understand us and How students WANT to be engaged
- Importance of Cross-Campus Collaboration
- Delivering “on brand”



**UTSA**<sup>®</sup>

The Graduate School  
Graduate Student Professional  
Development Center

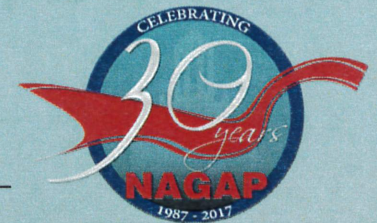


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## A Center as a means of Recruiting and Retaining Graduate Students

- As a means of Recruiting
  - A single entry point to introduce prospective graduate students
  - Advertising additional resources and support
  - Socialization beyond the academic program/department
  - Working with undergraduate populations in the center
  
- As a means of Retaining
  - Centralizing and exposing students to new services, programs and content
  - Intensive writing and research support
  - A conducive and reliable place to graduate students to work
  - A reference point back to the campus community



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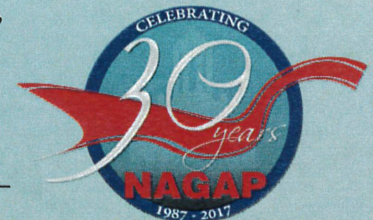


# National Comparisons by the Numbers

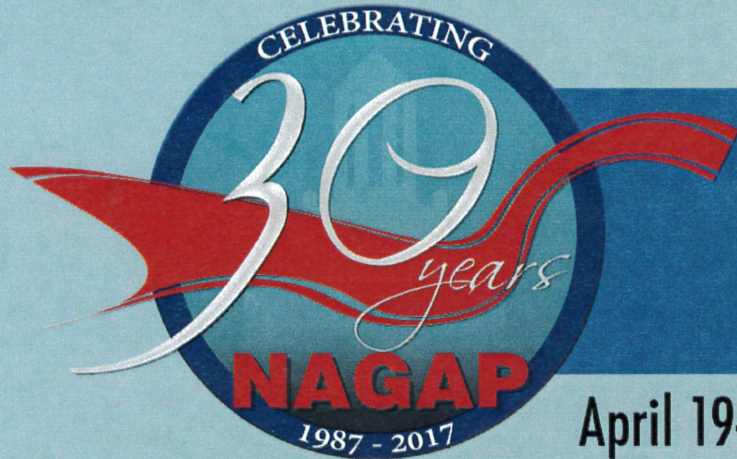
## (Council of Graduate Schools)

- How many “Centers” are there nationally?
  - Institutions offer graduate student professional development (Council of Graduate Schools, 2015)
    - 93 institutions
  - Offer professional development program in a centralized format (Council of Graduate Schools, 2015)
    - 53 institutions
  - Operate as a “center”\* dedicated to graduate students and professional development
    - 8 institutions: Baylor University, Oregon State University, UC Santa Barbara, University of Arizona, University of Central Florida, University of Pennsylvania, University of Toronto, The University of Texas at San Antonio
  - Within the state of TX
    - 2 institutions: Baylor University and UTSA (HSI)

\* “Center” defined as a physical space dedicated to graduate students BEYOND a study space, lounge, meeting space, career development center, office space or reservation center. MUST house professional development program.



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## Physical and Technological Infrastructure of The Center

Physical and Technological aspects of a Graduate Student  
Center

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# Physical Infrastructure

## 4,000 sq. ft. Center

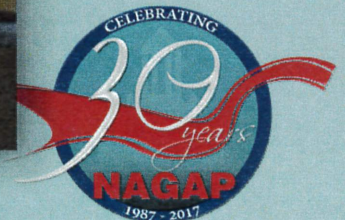
### Lounge: 589 sq ft

- Seats 12
- 7 tables
- Front Desk Staff



### Multipurpose Room: 605 sq ft

- Seats 36 in Classroom Set-up
- 18 tables with built-in plugs
- Branded Podium

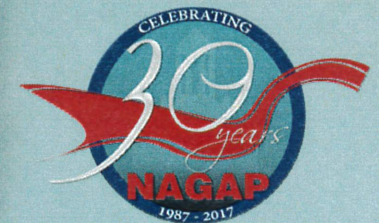


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## Physical Infrastructure Cont.

### Statistical Computer Lab: 401 sq ft

- 18 Computer Stations
- Teaching Console
- Drop-down screen
- Overhead projector
- Glass writing boards



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## Physical Infrastructure Cont.

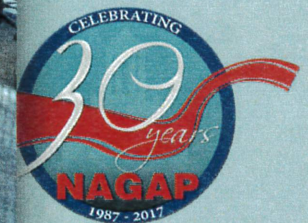
### Small Conference Room: 120 sq ft

- Seats 6
- Conference table
- Glass writing boards



### Large Conference Room: 421 sq ft

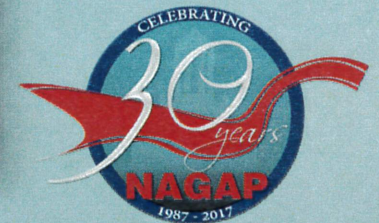
- Seats 8
- Conference table



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# A Space to Feel Welcome

- Social networking events
  - First Fridays
  - Graduate Student Appreciation Week
  - Welcome Week
- Center Staff Accessibility
- 24 pieces of a unique artwork curated by University Art Curator



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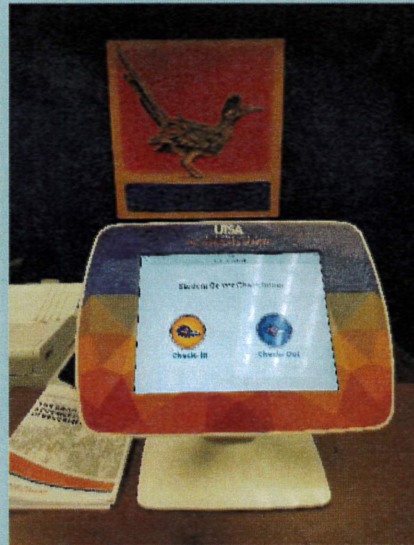
# Technological Infrastructure

## Lounge:

- 60" HDTV
- iPad Check in/out Station

## Small Conference Room:

- 40" HDTV
- VGA/HDMI Wall Jack



## Multipurpose Room:

- 60" HDTV; 75" HDTV
- Back Wall and Forward Wall Camera
- Tables with built in plugs / USB ports
- Ceiling Microphones
- iPad Check in/out stations

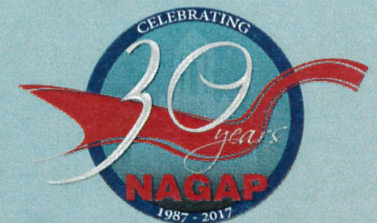
## Large Conference Room:

- 75" HDTV
- Front Wall Camera
- Central Room Microphone/Speaker

## Statistical Computer Lab:

- 18 24" All-in-One Touch Screen HP Computers
  - iPad Check in/out Station
  - Back-Wall Camera / Ceiling Microphones
- SAS, SPSS, GraphPad, JMP, ArcGIS, Mendeley, Endnote

*\*\*All parts of the Center are outfitted with "Air Rowdy" campus WiFi*



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# Salesforce Integration

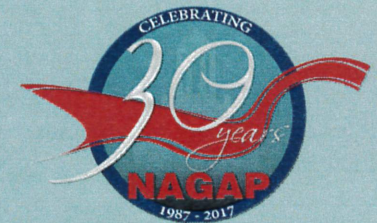
- Integrated with our application system
- Manages events, reports and email communication
- Houses all survey tools for The Center
- Continuous flexibility overtime

## So what...

- Monitors Check in/outs
- Tracks Interaction between Center Personnel
- Allows students to provide a reason for their visit
- From Application to Graduation, we can track all student's activity at Center

## Post Graduation Mapping with HEDA software integration

... to see if there is any effect of professional development to career placement

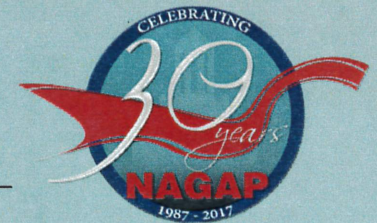


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## So how are we doing?

- Since November 2016
  - 1041 students have visited the GSPD Center
  
- Students logged in 1935 hours in The Center
  
- Average stay in The GSPD Center: ~2 hours (1.8 hours)
  
- Median Stay in the Center: 1 hour and 17 minutes
  
- Longest Stay in the Center: 9 hours and 12 minutes
  
- Grant Writing Program
  - Submissions: 30
  - Awarded: \$1.75 million



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# Building Support for a Graduate Culture on Your Campus

*Graduate Student Engagement cannot simply mimic or mirror undergraduate engagement*

## Small Scale Efforts

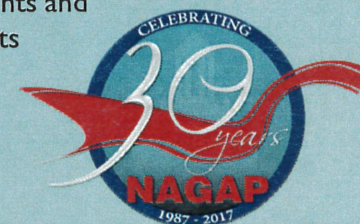
- Deliver Graduate Student Specific workshops
- Build collaboration between Departments for prospective students
- Facilitate Socialization among Graduate students beyond Department
- Highlight focal points on a Campus for prospective students

## Medium Scale Efforts

- Press for a physical space for Graduate students on campus ex: study rooms, lounges, Work areas
- Cultivate and Advocate for a Graduate community
- Connect Faculty to professional Development planning
- Expose graduate students to Different resources

## Large Scale Efforts

- Push for a functional Grad Center that facilitates Work, Collaboration and Community
- Centralize relevant services to such Center
- Create a center that is an entry Point for prospective students and A space for current students



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# THANK YOU!

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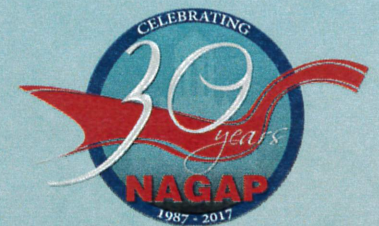
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