

GCG Annual Conference 2026

“Trailblazing Graduate Education”

**Building Community  
Amongst Students Across  
Backgrounds**

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# Insights from the Field

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***What is it that you sit  
on, sleep in, and brush  
your teeth with?***

# Agenda

- Valuing Diversity
- Graduate Student Community
- Know Your Why?
- Student Organizations
- Strategies for Community Building
- Thoughts?

# Valuing Diversity

***Being able to work with a diverse group of people in a manner that enables them to reach their full potential, in pursuit of organizational objectives without anyone being advantaged or disadvantaged by irrelevant considerations.***

# The Graduate Student Community Variety

- ❑ The Graduate student community consists of a great variety of backgrounds (demographics, nationality, geography, undergraduate education, work experiences, upbringing, and thought)
- ❑ As a result, graduate student groups are formed that are a mix of differences that needs to be curated to build community.
- ❑ We have learned from students that those who feel isolated/different tend to try and acquiesce to the norms of what they perceive as the primary group.
- ❑ Creating a community that engages all students must be purposeful. Students who bring their authentic selves define the best student communities.

**"When you know your why,  
your what has more impact  
because you're walking in or  
towards your purpose."**

*Michael Jr.*



# Student Organizations

- What are some key Student Orgs on your campus?
- Student Orgs are engaging in reflection across our institutions
- How they see their role in student community building
- Graduate Student Government
- Department/Major Student Groups

# Strategies for Community Building

- ❑ Be careful with sending messages that you have one job and that is all that matters.
- ❑ Checking in with students is critical. Ask students what they need from the group/leader. Checking in should not be a one-time activity.
- ❑ Avoid falling under the trap that what works for one, works for all.
- ❑ Recognize and embrace communities outside the standard group as strategic partners that aid in the development of an authentic and engaged student (RSOs, Affinity Groups, departments, etc.)
- ❑ Remember – none of this requires a great deal of extra effort.

# *“Building Community...”*

## **Some Final Thoughts:**

- *Personal Philosophies*
- *Track & Field Analogy*

***Questions?***