Graduate Professional Development Conference (GPDC): Program at a Glance

Wednesday, February 21, 2024 – Thursday, February 22, 2024

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Time	Session
10:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.	Registration and Welcome
10:20 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	**Writing a Thesis/Dissertation** From Dissertation to Doctor: Writing Strategies to Achieve Your Academic Goal Managing Large Writing Projects: Tools and Techniques for your Dissertation
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	**Data Management** Five Things UofTCoders Can Help You With Cleaning and Transforming Data with Free Tools: An Intro to Power BI, Power Query, and Open Refine

Thursday, February 22, 2024

Time	Session
10:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.	Registration and Welcome
10:20 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	**Time Management in Graduate School** I'm Not Good at Time Management, But Here's How I Try Plan Your Research Journey Getting Things Done: Time Management for Graduate Students
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	**Navigating the Non-Academic Job market while in Graduate School** Learning through Connecting: Developing Networking and Organizational Skills during Grad School Keeping Up with Industry Key Moves to Plan a Successful Career Within or Outside Academia

Questions? Reach out to the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre: academicskills.utm@utoronto.ca

Winter 2024 GPDC

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

10:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.: Registration and Welcome

10:20 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.: Writing a Thesis/Dissertation

Talk 1: **From Dissertation to Doctor: Writing Strategies to Achieve Your Academic Goal**
Speaker: Monique Kampherm, Sessional Lecturer, Writing Studies and Writing Instructor, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre

Let's conquer the dissertation and complete your doctoral journey! This presentation offers tactical insights and effective writing strategies to empower you with confidence in successfully finishing your dissertation.

Talk 2: **Managing Large Writing Projects: Tools and Techniques for your Dissertation**
Speaker: Paula Nunez de Villavicencio, PhD Candidate

This presentation will give an overview of the tools (bibliographic, time management, and writing programs) and techniques (blocking, co-writing, and expectation management) that were essential to the completion of my dissertation.

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.: Lunch

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.: Data Management

Talk 3: **Five Things UofTCoders Can Help You With**
Speaker: Vicki Zhang, PhD Candidate

You just started your Master of Science degree and your supervisor is asking you to re-organize someone else's messy Excel spreadsheet. Or you are mid-way through your PhD in Psychology and you don't know what visualizations in Python to use for your analysis. Or you are writing your thesis in Mathematics and want to learn LaTeX to write all your equations clearly.
No matter what degree or stage you're in, UofTCoders can probably help with that! We are a diverse group of students and researchers across multiple fields dedicated to learning about and sharing scientific coding techniques and knowledge in an effort to improve technical and computation skills in grad school and beyond. In this talk, Vicki will share five ways that UofTCoders can help you during your graduate degree (some that she has experienced personally). If you are interested in attending our workshops, or getting involved through workshop development or teaching, please reach out!

Talk 4: **Cleaning and Transforming Data with Free Tools: An Intro to Power BI, Power Query, and Open Refine**
Speaker: Magnus Berg, Digital Scholarship Librarian, UTM Library

Preparing data for visualization and analysis is often the most time-consuming aspect of a project. This is particularly true for data that has been collected in an inconsistent manner, data that has been inherited from a predecessor or prior project, and/or data collected from government agencies or organizations that is formatted in an undesirable way. Using free tools like Power BI, Power Query, and Open Refine large datasets can be cleaned, normalized, and transformed with relative ease and with little to no knowledge of programming or query languages. This session will go over some of the key features of these tools and some use cases where those feature may come in handy during your research.

Thursday, February 22, 2024

10:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.: Registration and Welcome

10:20 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.: Time Management in Graduate School

Talk 5: **I'm Not Good at Time Management, But Here's How I Try**
Speaker: Ilapreet Toor, PhD Candidate

The first step to improving your time management skills is to admit you're not good at time management. The second step is trial and error! In this presentation, I share some techniques that have helped (and hindered) my time-management skills, in hopes of inspiring others to develop their own time-managing "toolkits".

Talk 6: **Plan Your Research Journey**
Speaker: Hanlin Zhou, PhD Candidate

This talk focuses on the strategic planning of the PhD career for students who are interested in seeking a research career after graduation. This presenter will draw upon his four-year experience at UTM, offering insights into the key milestones below: coursework completion, comprehensive and proposal exams, data collection challenges exacerbated by the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the concurrent management of my research responsibilities. By sharing the research journey, this talk hopes to provide valuable guidance to the audience, empowering them with a blueprint for effectively mapping out their own PhD careers.

Talk 7: **Getting Things Done: Time Management for Graduate Students**
Speaker: Kerrie Martin, Program Manager and Learning Strategist, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre

This talk will provide an opportunity to discuss strategies for effectively managing the many demands on the time of graduate students. Emphasis will be placed on finding a balance between academic and personal commitments, as well as creating accountability for oneself. Primary points of discussion will include procrastination, prioritization, and personal organization.

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.: Lunch

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.: Navigating the Non-Academic Job Market While in Graduate School

Talk 8: **Learning through Connecting: Developing Networking and Organizational Skills during Grad School**
Speaker: Jatin, PhD Student

Networking and organizing are skills that goes a long way in a student career. I propose to do a lightening talk on how to make collaborations, network, and market one's skills to make the best use of the graduate life opportunities within and outside of academia. Instead of focusing on mere non-academic job market, I shall focus on the skills that students can develop from broader engagement within and beyond academia. I shall provide real-life examples from my own past year experience to elaborate upon how grad students can develop their networking skills.
Through giving illustrations from the South Asian Graduate Symposium I organized last April in collaboration with the Munk School and Department of Religion; as well as the "Caste in Canada: Discrimination and Resistance" panel discussion that I organized with the history department and two other non-academic organizations in the last semester—I can provide a grounded view and in-depth experience of networking and organizing to the other graduate students. I am confident that this lightening talk will help graduate students in enhancing their understanding about how to connect and collaborate with people and organizations in academia and beyond.

Talk 9: **Keeping Up with Industry**
Speaker: Zira MacFarlane, PhD Student

The postgraduate job market is highly competitive, and any edge that can be added to an application is important. Many graduate students have excellent knowledge of theory and specific methods but can lack a wider familiarity with industry standard technical tools and approaches. This can lead to being overlooked when applications are reviewed. This talk will cover my experiences keeping up with the tools and approaches used in the non-academic job market for conservation & ecology.
During my first bouts of grad school, I networked and made connections with industry professionals. I was also able to keep an eye on industry standards and on cutting-edge methods and tools used by these organizations. Training for many of these skills is available through various programs at the university, though the extent is frequently not known to many students. I took advantage of training opportunities for software like ArcGIS and training budgets for courses like Wilderness First Aid, alongside workshops in project management and professional development that helped improve both my research and my employability. This technical knowledge was crucial in securing a professional position as a GIS Analyst with Ontario Nature (a not-for-profit nature conservancy) after my MSc.

Talk 10: **Key Moves to Plan a Successful Career Within or Outside Academia**
Speaker: Carolina Pombo, Career Counsellor, UTM Career Centre

Independently of your aspirations with your graduate degree, a crucial part of your career development is planning it and regularly reassessing your plans. In this session, we will talk about two important moves you can take during that process: clarifying your understanding of the labour market (including domestic and international, academic and industry based), and learning how to weigh your degrees and your transferable skills when building your goals and searching for a job.