

# Nuts & Bolts of Navigating Graduate School at Upstate

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A yellow paper airplane is positioned at the top left, and a grey paper airplane is at the bottom right. A white dashed line path starts from the bottom left, loops around the grey airplane, and points towards the yellow airplane, symbolizing a transition or journey.

# Transitioning to Upstate

- ▶ Peer Mentoring Program:
  - ▶ Incoming graduate students are matched with a senior student or peer mentor. Matching is based upon your personal preferences and expectations of mentorship as well as other shared interests that you find most important.
  - ▶ Upon acceptance, you will receive a **survey in May to start the matching process and will then be connected with your peer mentor over the summer** and meet them in-person during Orientation!
- ▶ **New Student Orientation is August 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>** – more information will be coming over the summer!

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# Your First Semester

- ▶ First day of class is August 28<sup>th</sup>
- ▶ Students will be **automatically block registered in mid-July** for all required first year courses, including: your lab rotation, an introductory foundations course, journal club and experimental design.
- ▶ Course descriptions available in the [Course Selection Book](#) online and in [My Upstate](#)
- ▶ More **in-depth Curriculum Review during Orientation with your first-year course directors**
- ▶ Courses generally scheduled in WSK3113 in the morning to allow time for rotation work in the afternoon

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# Your GA Appointment

- ▶ All PhD students are appointed as Graduate Assistants and receive **a full assistantship, which equates to approximately 20 hours/week** of research in the laboratory.
- ▶ Your **appointment will be effective August 24<sup>th</sup>, renewed annually** through graduation; pending you are in good academic standing and identification & retention of a dissertation advisor.
- ▶ Covered by a bargaining unit Graduate Student Employees Union - **you will connect with your union representatives during Orientation**. Offer professional development funding, social gatherings, etc.

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# Your Student Stipend

- ▶ Current stipend: \$32,000
- ▶ Paychecks are received biweekly (every other week)
- ▶ First paycheck will be 9/13/23\*
- ▶ Stipend subject to annual increases per the GSEU Contract

\*contingent upon satisfactory completion of all pending tasks as assigned



# Your Student Benefits

- ▶ Graduate Assistants are **eligible for the “affordable” Graduate Student Employee Health Insurance Program**
- ▶ Coverage includes: medical services, hospitalization, prescription drugs, and mental health, dental, and eye care.
- ▶ **Cost is deducted from your stipend check:**
  - ▶ \$29.03 biweekly for individual enrollee
  - ▶ \$182.78 biweekly for family
- ▶ Designated health benefits administrator who will be available to you for questions or concerns in coverage or eligibility

# Our Alumni

- ▶ Recent graduates have gone on to complete academic postdocs at Yale, Harvard, Dartmouth, Columbia, Notre Dame, UNC, Cornell and more!
- ▶ Graduates go on to exciting careers in industry, grant writing, scientific writing, teaching, law, medicine, etc.
- ▶ We **connect current students with alumni for career mentoring and networking** (Distinguished Alumni Day, Biomedical Sciences Retreat, Career Development, etc.)
- ▶ Currently offer roughly 20 career development workshops, expanding services in the coming year.
- ▶ Students are not required to teach, but opportunities are available for those who are interested



# Lab Rotations

- ▶ First lab rotation **begins in late September after the first Foundations exam**. Second and third rotations are in the spring.
- ▶ Utilize your peer mentor, your first year advisor, specific social events designed to introduce you and connect you with faculty recruiting students.
- ▶ You can start looking early, but **formal identification of your lab rotations wont occur until after the fall semester starts**.
- ▶ More specific information about the process will be shared during Orientation.





# Housing

- ▶ Geneva Tower is Upstate-owned housing complex
- ▶ Most students do live off-campus
  - ▶ Housing within walking distance: Madison Towers & Jefferson Towers - most popular, Westcott, Downtown, Fayette Street, LeMoyne area, SU's south campus, etc.
  - ▶ Commuter friendly options: Lyncourt, Eastwood, Sedgewick, Jamesville-Dewitt, East Syracuse Minoa, Camillus, Liverpool, Strathmore or Onondaga Hill, etc.



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# Enrollment

- ▶ Foundations course schedule will be shared with you during Orientation
- ▶ In your **first year students are required to take a minimum of 9 credits.**
- ▶ In your second year and beyond students are required to take a minimum of 12 credits.
- ▶ Formally, we only have a spring and fall semester.
- ▶ Grant writing is required of all students! Students take it in their second year in preparation for their qualifying exam.

# Outside the Lab

- ▶ Campus Activities boasts a ton of clubs and organizations - some research and science based, others strictly by recreational activities and interests - in addition to student government:  
<https://campuslife.upstate.edu/>
- ▶ Students here have reported leading happy and productive lives. They are able to find work/life balance. Some get married and even have children while here.



# Your Next Steps

- ▶ If you haven't already make sure you secure your spot in the incoming class!
- ▶ You will be receiving an email with information on how you access My Upstate where you will be able to view your list of outstanding tasks to be completed. Pay close attention to this list and make sure that you complete all actions in a timely manner - pay attention to deadlines, if appropriate.
- ▶ Once you accept our offer, be on the lookout for additional information from myself and Gabriela regarding your next steps.

