

Welcome, and Welcome Back!

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To: cals-students-graduate@list.arizona.edu <cals-students-graduate@list.arizona.edu>

Dear CALS Family,

As we celebrate a new academic year, I want to welcome first-time College of Agriculture and Life Sciences graduate students and to welcome back all returning students. I hope you have the opportunity over the next few weeks to explore campus and connect with old, and make new, friends. CALS is the most diverse STEM college at UA, and I recommend that you get to know your colleagues across these diverse programs.

Please familiarize yourself with the [resources and services offered across the university](#) to support you during your time here. Our CALS *Master the Month* mailings aim to help you bring your best selves to your degree program by highlighting these resources, events, and career development opportunities.

I am reminded daily that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves. We are part of an unbroken chain since 1885--generations of students, faculty and staff investing their knowledge, curiosity, and drive into our university and into their hopes and dreams for themselves and their families. I am deeply grateful that I am a small part of this legacy. I am so very proud to work alongside our talented faculty and staff who will provide you with the excellent research, education, and other experiences and opportunities you are seeking.

I know you will be juggling many serious commitments in addition to your graduate degree. These can become overwhelming. Please know we are all committed to helping you succeed. We do understand the financial stress on grad students is very real. Last December [we announced](#) that, effective July 1, 2022, all CALS graduate student teaching and research assistants would be paid at an annual rate that exceeds the highest average rate being offered by any UA-peer university within their discipline. Note also that if you are doing a PhD by research, *your salary is guaranteed by your academic department or school for up to 5 years, provided you remain in good academic standing and make satisfactory and timely progress toward your degree, regardless of the extramural funding your major professor/principal investigator has or hasn't been granted.* If you are accepted into any CALS graduate research program, you should never be asked to worry about where the money for your salary is coming from: *if you are, please email me immediately.*

You are a vital component of our future. You start your advanced degree program learning from us; by the end we will be learning from you. Hone your strategic thinking. Together, the skills and knowledge you gain through your program must prepare you to be extremely employable, to do jobs that haven't even been invented yet, and to go out and create new jobs for others.

Please remember to invest in yourselves. Some days, this might be professional development, and some days this may be mental wellness self-care. While all students need support communities during completion of their graduate degree, these needs are different for each of you. Please think about the types of community groups that will help you be successful in obtaining your goals and contact [Assistant Dean for Graduate Education Kirsten Limesand](#) with your input.

The CALS Graduate Student Council represents you and provides you an indirect voice. Your September *Master the Month* mailing will include the names of council representatives. You can also directly

contact [CALs Assistant Dean Limesand](#). Either way you should feel that you can make tangible changes that will help you and other CALS graduate student colleagues.

I want to remind you of our single most important thing:

We have zero tolerance for discrimina. on of any kind, at any time and in any place. We must tolerate no less than 100% fairness, equity, and inclusion.

Let's all ensure that your college is always somewhere where you can pursue your academic goals, grow as a person as you want to grow, where you are always without fear of anything, without any discrimina on and certainly without any fear for your physical safety. Any and every form of prejudice and discrimina on must find no home within our family.

I look forward to seeing you throughout the year ahead.

Have a great fall and **Go Cats!**

Shane Burgess

Shane C. Burgess

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We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Commi ed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.