UC Davis BME: The Student Perspective

Biomedical Engineering Student Association (BESA)
THE TECHNICAL STUFF
Courses, program requirements, finding a lab
Degrees and Units

- Research PhD (40 units)
- Thesis MS (I) or Coursework MS (II) (28 units)

4 Core Courses (17 units)

- Cell Biology (BIM 202)
- Physiology (BIM 204)
- Signals (BIM 281)
- Statistics or Design of Experiment (BIM 284/289c)
- Teaching experience (TA, guest lecture, lead a lab, etc.)

Electives

- Tissue engineering, imaging, immunoengineering, biopolymers, etc.
- Can be outside of BME department

Quarter system
Two required examinations for PhD

1. Qualifying Examination (QE)
   - Oral exam on research proposal
   - 5 committee members (4 BMEGG, 1 outside)
   - Required for “Advancement to Candidacy”

2. Dissertation Defense
   - Oral exam following written PhD dissertation
   - Minimum 3 committee members
   - Required to put that “Dr.” in front of your name 🎉
Finding a lab

- Start by checking lab websites
- Talk to current students (ask the “real” questions)
- Attend lab meetings (great way to see PI-student interactions)
- Meet with the professor and ask them about…
  - Rotations
    - Not required
    - BMEGG funds first two quarters so you can rotate
  - Funding
  - Expectations for graduation
- Be open minded!

- Expectations to graduate
- Hands on or hands off?
- Where are the alumni now?
- Funding?
- Conferences?
Funding opportunities

1. **Graduate Student Researcher (GSR):** you are paid by your professor’s grant(s)

2. **Fellowships & Grants:** you, the individual, are independently funded
   - External
     - NSF GRFP, NDSEG, NIH F31
     - NIH Training grants (T32) on campus
     - HHMI, AHA
   - Internal
     - ARCS, Schwall Dissertation, etc.

3. **Teaching Assistant (TA):** you are paid by the department to help teach
GRADUATE STUDENT LIFE

Will I have a life outside of lab and classes?
MISSION OF BESA:
Provide a community for graduate students in biomedical engineering at UC Davis
To do this, BESA…

- Acts as a channel between students and faculty
  - Executive committee membership
  - Special council membership
- Helps new students transition into grad school
  - First-year mentoring program
- Plans events
  - Student-faculty lunches
  - Camping and cabin trips
  - IM sports
  - Outreach (community & industry)
  - Student-run conferences
BMEGG BBQs
Student-Faculty lunches and coffee hours
San Francisco trip
Cabin trip
Camping trip
Intramural (IM) sports
Community outreach
Industry outreach
BMEGG Symposium
Other fun
Recruitment and orientation
First Year Mentoring Program

- Pairs incoming grad students with current BMEGG grad students
- Helps with getting oriented in Davis and in the program
- Pre-orientation picnic
- Events throughout first year
Professional development programs outside of BESA

- FUTURE Career Exploration program
- Designated Emphasis programs
  - Biotechnology
  - Biophotonics
  - Translational Research
- Professors for the Future
- Business development fellowships
- Leaders for the Future
- Science Communication fellowships
- & more!
LIVING IN DAVIS
City of Davis, cost of living, housing discussion, traveling
City of Davis – claims to fame

Bikes!
- Regularly named as the most “bicycle friendly” town in the US
- Most convenient way to get around downtown
- Green belt bike path

Farmer’s Market
City of Davis – claims to Fame

- Downtown
- ARC
- Arboretum
- Manetti Shrem
- Mondavi
Living in Davis

Which best describes where you live?

- North Davis: 18%
- East Davis: 23%
- South Davis: 27%
- West Davis: 14%
- Woodland: 2%
- Sacramento: 2%
- El Macero: 2%
- Central/Downtown: 2%
- UC Davis Campus: 2%
- Dixon: 5%
- Woodland: 2%
- Sacramento: 2%
- El Macero: 2%
- Central/Downtown: 2%
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- North Davis: 18%
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- UC Davis Campus: 2%
- Dixon: 5%

How would you describe your housing?

- Condo: 51%
- Apartment: 47%
- House: 2%

How do you primarily commute?

- Drive (Parking pass): 51%
- Bike: 47%
- Walk: 2%

Which best describes where you live?

- UC Davis Campus: 41%
- North Davis: 14%
- East Davis: 45%
Housing

How much are your monthly living expenses?

- <$400: 7%
- $400-500: 2%
- $500-600: 2%
- $600-700: 10%
- $700-800: 36%
- $800-900: 7%
- $900-1000: 27%
- $1000-1200: 27%
- >$1200: 2%

How many people live with you?
(Housemates and/or roommates)

- 0 (I live alone: 36%
- 1: 27%
- 2: 27%
- 3: 7%
- 4+: 2%
How many people do you share a room with?

- 0: 16%
- 1: 84%

Is a housemate or roommate your significant other?

- Yes: 75%
- No: 25%

How would you describe your "household"?

- Single-sex: 66%
- Co-ed: 34%
Housing

What about pets?
- I can and do have a pet: 7%
- I can and don't have a pet: 23%
- I can't and don't have a pet: 48%
- I can't but do have a pet: 23%

Have you moved since starting the program?
- Yes: 57%
- No: 43%

Do you think you'll move again?
- Yes: 59%
- No: 14%
- Maybe: 27%
Housing

• In general, it's good.
• Living in Davis is best if your lab is in Davis. I lived in Sac for a year, and while it's cheaper, the drive is infuriating.
• Find housing with friends! Supportive roommates are important for graduate school.
• Housing in UC Davis isn’t bad... if you can find it. If your lab is away consider it. It is probably worth the price of parking.
• The commute across the causeway to Sacramento is really not fun, but it does create more options than living in Davis.
• Not a lot of rent control. Be prepared to move or pay anywhere from 3-10% increase in rent annually.
• Reach out to us to go to showings early (most places make you go to a showing before signing a lease).
• Craigslist is more helpful here than other cities I've lived in. Don't be afraid to reach out to other grad programs to find living arrangements.
• Housing is relatively pricy in Davis. Living close to campus is ideal, but not necessary if you have a car. On campus parking is awful though as it is often difficult to find an available spot.
• Start housing search early, be sure to check by word of mouth about living experience/landlord issues. Housing has been steadily getting more expensive.
• It's hard to find cheap housing past April, so either start early or remember that you can always move later!

Major Takeaways

1. Housing can be expensive in Davis and there is no rent control
2. If you work in Davis, it's more convenient to live in Davis
3. Don't be afraid of Craigslist
4. Don't underestimate the influence of roommates
5. Sort of a crapshoot your first year

Bottom line: we all make it work
Take a break nearby…

- Napa Valley
- Sacramento
- Lake Tahoe
- San Francisco
- Golden1 Center
- Lake Berryessa
Take a trip to get away…

Highway 1

Santa Cruz Boardwalk

Monterey Bay

Yosemite National Park
More fun places “not so nearby”

Seattle

San Diego

Redwood National Park

Los Angeles

Portland
Summary

Grad school can be difficult in many ways…

…but BESA serves to build a strong community to make it easier (and more fun!)
Find us!

BMEGG website: bmegg.ucdavis.edu
BME website: bme.ucdavis.edu
BESA website: besa.ucdavis.edu

@UCDavisBMEGG

Biomedical Engineering Student Association

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This presentation will be here!
Questions

- Can you explain what the BMEGG is again?
- How many hours do you usually work a week?
- Do you get health/dental insurance?
- Is your stipend enough to pay bills and enjoy life?
- What’s your work-life balance like?
- What’s the hardest part about transition to graduate life?
- Do any of you have pets?
- Are there seasons here?
- What hobbies do you have?