

# The Agricultural Biology First Year Graduate Student Survival Guide

## **To-Do ASAP:**

Establish Colorado residency *immediately* if not already a resident. Take the online residency orientation found on [RAMweb](#), obtain a petition, and file the said petition by the strict deadline. The petition includes getting a CO driver's license and registering your vehicle in CO ASAP.

Get your CSU ID card (in the same office space as the First National Bank, to the left) at the Lory Student Center (LSC).

Start thinking about who you will have on your committee. The GS6 form, which lists your members and courses, is due at the end of your third semester (PhD or MS).

## **General:**

The AgBio [Graduate Student Resources](#) webpage addresses many FAQs.

[RAMweb](#) provides many resources including course registration, financial information, graduate student forms and unofficial/official transcripts.

[Canvas](#) is the platform for course information exchange such as assignments and grading.

Janet Dill and Alicia Abbey in the front office (Plant Science C129) are amazing resources if you have questions. See Janet to request for the building, lab, and copy room keys! See Alicia or Janet to reserve any room in the Plant Science for meeting etc.

Every AgBio graduate student (except the weed science major) has an allocated desk space in the graduate student office (Plant Science E003). The graduate student office also has four free-to-use desks that can be used anytime. You can access the graduate student office using your CSU ID card. The weed science major students have allocated desks in the Weed Science Lab.

## **Graduate Student Fees:**

Although GTAs and GRAs are typically compensated for tuition and additionally are provided a monthly stipend, fees are not covered. For 2019-2020, these fees were around \$1113.11 per semester for a CO or non-CO resident graduate student taking 5 credit hours. Government or private student loans may be used to pay these fees. Government loans require a

FAFSA application and CSU loan orientation before loans will be rewarded (note that although you may have been considered a dependent for the undergraduate FAFSA, you are most likely an independent now).

## **Class & Credit Requirements:**

*\*Note: GDPE & CMB students do not have the same requirements!*

See the graduate student handbook for required courses.

PhD students in AgBio are required to take 72 graduate credits, of which 1/3 can be research credits (24 credits). At least 37 credits must be in courses numbered above 500. Courses below 300 do not count towards your degree.

MS graduate students in AgBio are required to have 30 graduate credits, of which at least 16 credits must be earned in courses above 500.

Students can take up to 15 credits per semester and often choose to front load their courses. Three to four courses per semester are recommended, depending on the difficulty of the courses. Definitely try to take STAT 511 ASAP!

## **Technology:**

Printing can be done in the printer room (C023) in Plant Sciences. You will need to request a key from Janet Dill. There is also a printer in the graduate student office, but please use sparingly.

The College of Agriculture offers the following software in Shepardson 227: Office, MATLAB, Strata, Eviews, and JMP. You can use remote desktop with most lab computers that offers additional software (like EndNote).

Free [full version of Microsoft Office](#) and [MATLAB](#) can be downloaded using your eid.

Make sure to take advantage of your free Office 365 account that includes 1 TB of OneDrive space.

The College of Agriculture also has affordable poster printing for presentations in Shepardson 222. [IT help desk](#) is available in Shepardson. (Shepardson is currently under construction, services relocated to [University Services Center](#))

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There is affordable computer diagnostics and even free software troubleshooting offered through ACNS (Academic Computing and Networking Services) and free 3D printing in the library. The library also offers affordable poster printing.

For Skype meetings, Plant Science C123 has a camera hook-up for the flat-screen.

## **Health Care:**

GTAs and GRAs are fully reimbursed for CSU Health Insurance if they are taking at least 5 credits during the semester (including research credits). This money usually goes into your account right before the semester bill is due, and the tax for this 'income' is removed from your first month's paycheck.

This insurance has a \$1,000 deductible and covers 80% of costs until you pay \$6,850 out-of-pocket. Then it covers 100%. It does not cover dental or eye care.

Besides dental and eye care, most services at the CSU Health Center (check-ups, X-rays, PT, counselling, etc.) are fully covered by the student fee and CSU Health Insurance (for grad students taking more than 5 credits). Student also receive \$100/year for services not covered, like eye exams, dental care or massages.

## **Other Health Services:**

The [CSU Health Network Center](#) provides several mental health services, including individual counseling, psychiatry, group therapy, and other workshops. Note that a 15 to 30-minute assessment is required prior to scheduling individual therapy- this can be done in person or over the phone. A counselor or doctor will refer you to a psychiatrist as needed. A 24-hour on-call counselor is available after hours. *There is also a walk-in during the weekday that requires no prior scheduling*

The [Women and Gender Advocacy Center](#) provides services to students who have experienced trauma related to sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking. Support is also available for secondary survivors. All information is confidential unless someone is in danger (including to themselves). A 24-hour Victim Assistance Team is available after hours.

If you are having conflict with another person, particularly with a superior, guidance is offered through the [Student Resolution Center](#).

The [Student Case Management](#) office can also help you find appropriate resources, particularly if you need to request a medical absence.

If you are concerned about a cohort or one of your students, you can notify the University anonymously through [Tell Someone](#).

## **College & Department Scholarships:**

AgBio requires an annual evaluation in November. This serves as your application for department scholarships. Janet Dill will email a description of the many other scholarships you can apply for in November. Apply for them!

The College of Agricultural Sciences has many scholarships. Apply for them on [RAMweb](#). Deadline is usually March 1<sup>st</sup>.

We have many other students who have been awarded prestigious national and international scholarships...ask around and check your email!

## **Shared Equipment:**

[Emily Luna](#) (Leach lab) is a great resource for training on equipment and also has a list of shared equipment.

EcoCore provides many analytical services: <http://ecocore.nrel.colostate.edu/>

Proteomics & Metabolomics Facility (PMF) on campus also provides genomics in addition to proteomics and metabolomics.

## **TA-ships:**

The Education Committee, currently headed by Dr. Ruth Hufbauer, will notify grads about open positions. Make sure to read over them carefully and consult with other grad students when choosing a TA position. Note: You might not always get your first choice!

## **Transportation:**

Your CSU ID will serve as a (free) bus pass for any of the bus routes around town, including the MAX.

Free parking can be found a few blocks east of campus by Elizabeth and Matthews (check signs,

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most other parking has 2-hr limit). To load/unload equipment, you can also use the loading dock at the northeast corner of the Plant Sciences. *Most* parking on campus on the weekends is free.

Biking is a culture within Fort Collins and CSU. Buying a bike (if you don't have one already) is highly recommended to get around town. [Recycled Cycles](#), [The Gearage](#), and [The Bike Co-op](#) are great places to check out. Craigslist-ing is definitely a good option as well.

...and don't forget about [Tour de Fat](#) put on by New Belgium (early September)—definitely a biking event not to miss!

## **Seminars**

Check within your subject area for other informal gatherings to discuss our research in addition to the following opportunities:

AgBio [seminars](#) are held Wednesdays at 11:00 AM. Janet Dill will send out emails with seminar speakers for both AgBio as well SOCR. We encourage you to attend seminars, even if they are not in this department!

Plant Super Group is a fun Friday afternoon once a month where students and faculty present research. To get on the listserv, email [Marinus Pilon](#).

We also highly encourage you to enter the graduate student showcase in the fall to present a poster on your research. If not this year, then maybe the next!

## **Fun Stuff:**

Graduate school is taxing, but luckily our department and the town of Fort Collins offer many activities to do in your time outside the office.

AgBio grad student social events will take place each month. This is a great way to meet (and sometimes commiserate ☺) with your fellow graduate students.

If you like beer, you are meant to be here. There are over 15 breweries just within Fort Collins, most within a quick bike ride from campus. Odell, Equinox, and Funkwerks are favorites, but all are worth visiting!

The Front Range is home to beautiful open spaces. Grey Rock, Hewlett's Gulch, Devil's Backbone, Horsetooth Rock, and Arthur's Rock are all great day hikes (or try out mountain biking on some of them) not too far from town. Also check out Horsetooth Reservoir and the Poudre River for some water activities. And of course, there are winter activities just a few hours away. Consider getting the student pass for the Rocky Mountain Super Pass or the Epic Pass to ski/board this winter, but buy early for the best price.

Downtown Fort Collins puts on a lot of great community events throughout the year including First Fridays (an art walk with snacks and drinks every month), farmers markets, and plenty of live music (check out old town Thursday and Friday nights). In addition, the Downtown Business Association puts on many fun events like New West Fest. Fort Collins definitely embodies a strong community feel, and it is wonderful to be a part of it.

## **Important Phone Numbers:**

### **Health and Mental Well-being:**

CSU Counseling Services

Day: (970) 491-6053

24-hr: (970) 491-7111

CSU Health Network

Your call can be directed from here to medical appointments, the pharmacy, the Student Health Insurance Office, etc.

(970) 491-7121

CSU Tell Someone

(970) 491-1350

CSU Women and Gender Advocacy Center

Day: (970) 491-6384

24-hr: (970) 492-4242

### **Other Resources:**

CSU Graduate School

(970) 491-6817

CSU Student Case Management

(970) 491-8051

CSU Student Conflict Resolution Center

(970) 491-7165

### **Safety:**

CSU Police Department Non-Emergency

(970) 491-6425

Fort Collins Police Department Non-Emergency

(970) 221-6540