PREPARING MASTERS’ AND PH.D. STUDENTS FOR FINANCIAL FREEDOM AT COLUMBIA

REVISED JULY 29, 201
THE PROBLEM:

Administrators at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Arts & Sciences (GSAS) wanted to partner with an experienced and unbiased educator to develop a holistic workshop series that would help Masters’ and PhD students manage their personal finances. Additionally, GSAS wanted to provide foundational knowledge to help address unique tax nuances of graduate students, including how to account for stipends and fellowships; however, the university was constrained in its ability to offer individual tax advice to its students.

THE SOLUTION:

Shahar partnered with the GSAS to create a customized financial wellness program that addressed the unique financial circumstances of Master’s and Ph.D. students.

Workshops included:
- Implementing A Successful Financial Plan
- Investing For The Future: How To Grow Your Wealth
- Preparing Your Taxes Before And After Graduate School
- Workplace Benefits: Setting Yourself Up For Success

The dynamic sessions used video clips, anecdotes, and case studies to help graduate students develop healthy financial habits, including:
- Techniques to manage lump sum stipends/payments
- Frameworks for how to manage student debt
- Strategies to develop and maintain good credit
- Guidance on how to file tax returns as a graduate student
- Advice on how to invest successfully for the future
RESULTS:

Shahar's workshops have been extremely well-received both by students and the Columbia administration. He was asked to return for an expanded program in the 2016-2017 academic year.

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<th>Recommend To A Friend Score</th>
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TESTIMONIALS:

“Fantastic! A much needed addition to help grad students navigate financial situation.

– Columbia Masters’ Student

This is excellent and I would highly recommend it. I am normally very scared of financial planning and this made it accessible.

– Columbia Masters’ Student
Fantastic workshop and Shahar was very flexible about accommodating to our needs and interests.

– Columbia Ph.D. Student

“Had initial concern I’d find it boring after 2 hours because I’m not a finance person (or difficult to understand because I have about zero background in this), but I was SO wrong. Thank you for making it enjoyable and easy to understand for a noob like me!”

– Columbia Masters’ Student

Great workshop that answered a lot of my questions and directed me towards really good information. Eager to attend future sessions.”

– Columbia Masters’ Student

This was super helpful! I knew very little of this and it was great to learn.

– Columbia Ph.D. Student

“I loved that the advice is backed up by research and also appreciated that the advice is concrete and actionable”

– Columbia Ph.D. Student

“Thank you very much for this great presentation. This was very helpful --> clear structure, easy to follow for people like me who have no finance/business background!”

– Columbia Ph.D. Student

CONCLUSION:

The needs of Masters and Ph.D. students differ from undergraduates on several key dimensions. Understanding and creating customized financial sessions to address them is critical for any graduate program looking to implement a financial wellness program.