Your Doctoral Program Survival Guide

Entering a doctoral program can throw life as you know it out of balance. This workshop will provide tips and skills to maintain balance and successfully persist in your graduate program. Topics will include:

- Satisfaction equaling success
- Mentoring and networking
- The final push through dissertation research

First ask yourself, “Why am I doing this?” Find that passion for your topic and hold tight because passion = sustainability

Satisfaction and Success
Factors that contribute to satisfaction during graduate school include:
1) Social support
2) Optimism related to education and goal setting
3) Perceived balance

Family Support
Research shows those students with full support are more likely to complete their program and graduate. So, you need family buy-in and consistent and continuous support to be successful.
- At the beginning of each semester have a family meeting and discuss time commitments
- Touch base frequently
- Make them apart of the process

Peer Support
Get to know your cohort because they are one of the few groups of people who know what you are going through. They will also be the ones that drive you.
- Consider integrating family, friends, and your cohort
- Rely on your cohort, “It takes a village to raise a graduate student.”

Create a Life Balance
Create a life balance between work, family, school, and you. Make sure to:
- Stay healthy with your diet, exercise, and sleep
- Take time to socialize and have fun
- Combine smaller tasks together
- Set aside time for yourself to refresh and refocus
- Say no once in awhile… it’s ok!

Mentoring and Networking
A good relationship with an involved advisor can statistically affect your success in your program. Get to know your faculty for a potential dissertation chair/advisor. Nurturing these relationships can lay the groundwork for future:
- Opportunities for research
- Collaborations and co-authoring
- Presentations at conferences
- Letters of recommendation

Dissertation Research Tips
- Choose dissertation topic and have rough proposal before hitting dissertation hours
- Search for dissertation research funding at least 1 yr. prior to start of research
- Save your research in multiple places
- Challenge: Narrowing research topic
- Take advantage of workshops/events that focus on dissertation completion
- Meet with Dissertation Officer in The Graduate School for preliminary draft formatting review and information on final submission requirements

To sum it up:
- Understand and embrace the commitment and sacrifice
- Cultivate family and peer support
- Find that life balance
- Engage your faculty
- Dissertation: Keep your eye on the prize