

ADVICE FOR GRAD STUDENTS

Intellectual Life

- Participate in seminars, discussions, brown bags, job talks, etc.
- Get to know your peers & colleagues. Don't get tunnel vision.
- Other graduate students will be your most valuable source of info, help, ideas, and support.
- Grad school can be stressful. At times you'll feel alone, overwhelmed, or utterly unproductive. First, realize you're not the only one who feels or has felt this way. Second, reach out to labmates, friends, faculty. Third, know that it will (hopefully) pass.

Faculty & Staff

- Feel comfortable relating to faculty & staff as your peers. They will generally treat you as a colleague.
- Get to know Mrs. Brady in the department office.
- Get to know Ms. Sawyer at the office of grad studies (OGS).

Progress

- You are responsible for your progress, paperwork, forms and goals. Ask for advice, but do it yourself.
- Keep photocopies of all paperwork: something is bound to get lost between you, your committee, and OGS.
- Communicate -- with your advisor, labmates, committee Communicate.

Committee

- YOU pick your committee. Make sure they get along. Pick people who you think will be of assistance to your research. Don't pick people who will be a problem.
- Don't be afraid of changing your committee along the way. They won't mind.
- If your advisor isn't working out, change your advisor. It should be a win-win relationship. If you're not happy, people will support your decision.

Comps

- Clearly discuss the scope and goals of comps with your committee.
- Study comps by going to others. Then study what your committee suggests, for a month before taking comps.
- Talk with grad students who have been there. They can be a great source of tips.

Classes

- Classes are important if you need the info or if you want to expose yourself to the subject.
- Fulfill requirements early: core courses, hours, language and tool skills.
- Don't take more than 3 subject courses per semester. Sign up for only the courses you need, plus thesis/project hours to fill your schedule. Only take 2 subject courses if you're a TA.

Outside the Lab

- Take a PE class like yoga, tai chi, aerobics, or basketball (tuition is waived); go to the gym; go walking or jogging; join a league like soccer, volleyball, swimming, or ultimate; go to concerts. Do something in town regularly to maintain your sanity.

Acknowledgement: Biology Graduate Student Association, University of New Mexico
(http://biology.unm.edu/graduate_programs_Frameset.htm)

Compiled by Ethan H. Decker from a panel of senior grad students for new graduate student orientation, August 1999