Professional Relationships and Expectations in Graduate School –

aka Conflict management before the conflict

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Student/Advisor Relationship – Intellectual Partnerships

Two aspects to faculty supervision

- Creativity – most critical
  - Stimulate and excite students in the field
  - Select appropriate problems
  - Provide a steady stream of ideas, critiques
- Making appropriate progress towards the degree
  - Maintain a steady presence in the student’s life
  - Develop networks in the discipline

Elements of the Partnership

- Students & Faculty
  - Career Development
  - Gainful Employment
  - Elements
    - Intellectual growth
    - Curiosity
    - Passion for research
    - Time and $
      - Time to degree
      - Likelihood of completion
  - Degree is not the ultimate goal – it’s a career
    - Unique relationship with advisor – not like UG

- Success relies on guidance/familiarity of elements
Communication is Vital

When you talk, you repeat what you already know; when you listen, you often learn something.
- - Jared Sparks
The Framework of the Program – Student Handbook

- Framework provides a shared understanding of the critical elements for success in the program
  - Structure and time in formal coursework
  - Assessing coursework in relation to the program – the core competencies
  - Requirements for rotations/selecting a mentor
  - Expectations for financial support
  - Expectations for Responsible Conduct of Research training
  - Clear description of exam(s) to candidacy – critical thinking
  - Timetable for submitting written work such as original proposals
  - Timetable and expectations for oral presentations
  - Expected timeline for degree and its components above

Do the hurdles meet expectations?
Qualities of a Thesis/Dissertation

Q: What are the quality standards? A: HIGH!
Q: How long should my thesis be? A: Long enough to cover the topic.
Q: How exhaustive should my lit review be? A: Exhaustive!

- Purpose of the thesis in the discipline
- Nature/significance of an Original Contribution
  - Identifying what is the student’s contribution v. team
  - Journals format thesis, copyright, intellectual property
- Components of the thesis
  - Introduction, body of the work, literature review
- Quality of the thesis
  - Examples of quality products, departmental/faculty expectations, preparing the electronic Thesis/Dissertation

Thesis expectations....
Critical Challenges to Success

- **Time is the Enemy**
  - Inexperienced students & time management
  - Perfectionism (student and faculty)
  - Distractions (student and faculty)
  - Faculty funding
  - Poor relationship

- **Early Research is Key**
  - REU or UG research experiences – incoming students
  - Develop research habits early (lab/research/practicum courses)
  - Reading literature – critical reading and thinking
  - Independent research – opportunities to fail and recover
  - Attending departmental seminars – communication skills
  - Boot camp for graduate school
...Haaaaayyy Birthday...?
Too000000... YooooooUuuUu!!

Well, here we are again. Another birthday and still a grad student... This means I've been in school over 88% of my entire life. I've spent almost a fifth of my life just in grad school...

Sigh...

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Critical Challenges to Success

❖ Perfectionism
  ▪ Early timetables
  ▪ Setting and understanding expectations
  ▪ Avoiding the “just one more experiment” trap

❖ Faculty
  ▪ Establish and enforce timelines early
  ▪ Write up what has been achieved
  ▪ Identifying what are the next steps/holes in data
  ▪ Regular reports feed annual reports to funding agencies
  ▪ Encourage weekly updates and oral reporting

Critical Challenges to Success

❖ Distraction and Diversion
  - Students or faculty “hooked” on a new technique or idea
  - Tangents into “interesting observations”
  - Advisor needs to tie these together for students sometimes

❖ Faculty Funding and Accessibility
  - Funding is fluid in research – share the understanding of how funding works.
  - A “half-time” appointment doesn’t mean you only need to work 20 hours a week on the project.
  - Understanding departmental policies on funding for students
  - Communication is critical
    - Rotations provide a “honeymoon” period
    - Understanding expectations is critical to relationship
Different stages of the relationship…

YOUR ADVISOR IS ON VACATION. HOW TO REACT:

YEAR 1 GRAD:
hey now, it's your birthday...!
PARTY LIKE A ROCK STAR.

YEAR 3 GRAD:
will somebody tell me what i'm supposed to be doing?
RUN AROUND LIKE A CHICKEN WITH ITS HEAD CUT OFF.

YEAR 5 GRAD:
really? he's gone?
ACT TOO BUSY TO HAVE NOTICED.

YEAR 7 GRAD:
aaah! if he doesn't sign this, i can't graduate!!
PANIC. RESIST URGE TO COMMIT FORGERY.

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