NAVIGATING GRADUATE SCHOOL:
Keys to Success

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OVERVIEW OF GRADUATE EDUCATION AT USF
ASSOCIATE DEANS

• Graduate School
  – Dean: Dr. Karen Liller
  – Associate Dean: Dr. Richard Pollenz

• College
  – Arts and Sciences: Dr. Robert Potter
  – BCS: Dr. Catherine Batsch
  – Business: Dr. Charles Kronke
  – Education: Dr. Harold Keller (Dr. Diane Briscoe)
  – Engineering: Dr. Rafael Perez
  – Marine Science: Dr. Ted Van Vleet
  – Medicine: Dr. Michael Barber
  – Nursing: Dr. Mary Evans
  – Public Health: Dr. Deanna Wathington
  – The Arts: Dr. Barton Lee
IMPORTANCE OF CHAIN OF COMMAND

1) Faculty and/or Major Professor

2) Program Coordinator

3) Program/Departmental Chair

4) College Associate Dean

5) Graduate School
• Academics
• Accounting
• Admissions
• Graduate Student Success (GSS)
• Marketing and Recruitment
• Operations
• Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC)
• Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA)
• School of Global Sustainability (SGS)
NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

KEYS TO SUCCESS
AND
AVOIDING BARRIERS
ACTIVE vs. PASSIVE EDUCATION

Many faculty place much greater expectations on graduate students because all have at least a Bachelor’s degree.

Graduate students are expected to TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE in all aspects of the educational experience and ask for meetings when appropriate.

Innovation, Inquiry, Independence
TIME EXPECTATIONS

9-5 is a baseline

Many faculty put in 60-80hr. weeks

“Do what needs to be done”
GRAD IS NOT UNDERGRAD!

MATURITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Collegial Respect

Responsibility for Actions

Quality of Work and “Passion for Success”

Time Management
Graduate students are expected to **TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE** in all aspects of the educational experience and ask for meetings when appropriate.

If students are not asking questions or attending meetings, the assumption may be that all is well.

If a student has been given a task to perform, the expectation will be that it has been done.
BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

• Time management
• Funding for my education
• Procrastination, (time man)
• Communication, networking people skills
• Where are the resources
• ADVISOR ☹ COMMITTEE
• Doing it all on your own
• Doubt
• Definitive in decision making
BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

• Poor Mentoring
• Poor Work Ethic and Lack of Passion
• Poor Writing and Speaking Skills
• Not Understanding the Trajectory of the Discipline
• Inability to Publish
• Lack of Funding
• Not Using and Understanding the University Resources
• Flying Solo
KEYS TO SUCCESS

• Research Prior to Selecting a Major Professor
• Develop Short-Range and Long-Range Plans
• Stay Organized and Work From Benchmarks
• Establish a “Mentoring Network”
• Read all Communications from GS and Program
• Know where to find Graduate Information
• Understand key Graduate Policies
• Attend Seminars and Thesis/Dissertation Defenses
• Attend Professional Development Workshops
• Cultivate a “Passion for Success”
RESEARCH BEFORE SELECTING A MAJOR PROF.

- Can be the most important decision in your graduate career
  - As important as deciding on a life partner!
- Use all resources at your disposal
  - Websites
  - Current and Former Students
  - Faculty
  - Program Graduate Coordinator
  - Gut Feeling
- Never make the decision without a face-to-face meeting
- Know the policy about changing a major professor
  - USF Graduate Policy (section 8)
The Major Professor serves as the student's advisor and mentor. Students should confer with the department to confirm the internal process and timeline for the selection and appointment of the Major Professor.

The student must identify a major professor and receive that person’s agreement to serve as major professor.
RESEARCH BEFORE SELECTING A MAJOR PROF.

GRADUATE POLICY (section 8 of Grad. Catalog)

The selection of the Major Professor must be approved and appointed by the department as soon as possible, but no later than the time the student has completed 50% of the program.

Students must have a major professor in order to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress.
RESEARCH BEFORE SELECTING A MAJOR PROF.

GRADUATE POLICY (section 8 of Grad. Catalog)

If a major professor cannot be identified or in the event a major professor is unable or unwilling to continue serving on the student’s committee, the student is responsible for finding another major professor.

Students who are unable to find a replacement major professor should confer with the Program Director for available options (including converting to a non-thesis program if available.)
GRADUATE POLICY (section 8 of Grad. Catalog)

If no other options exist the student may be requested to voluntarily withdraw from the program or may be honorably withdrawn in good academic standing.

The student and major professor should plan a program of study which, when completed, will satisfy the degree requirements specified.

A copy of this program, signed by the student and professor, must be maintained in the student’s department file.
RESOURCES TO HELP

Choosing a Mentor & Research Topic Workshop:
Wednesday, August 11, 2010
MSC 2708, 5:30 – 7:30 pm
THIS SESSION IS SOLD OUT

THIS WORKSHOP WILL BE OFFERED AGAIN IN THE
SPRING 2011 SEMESTER
DEVELOP PLANS AND BENCHMARKS

PROCESS

Work backwards from an expected goal/benchmarks to establish short-range and long-range plans.

Benchmark Examples:

Graduation, Conference Presentation, Publication, Research Benchmark, Assignment, Research Proposal, etc.
STAY ORGANIZED AND WORK FROM BENCHMARKS

USE OUTLOOK OR OTHER ORGANIZATION TOOLS

Set weekly, monthly and yearly calendars with recurring and one-time events.

Time Management

Block off specific times so that progress can be visualized.
When do you work best?
Add duties/tasks to the calendar at times when you will want to do them.
STAY ORGANIZED AND WORK FROM BENCHMARKS

ALWAYS DOCUMENT YOUR PROGRESS

The calendar is a great way to document your progress toward goals and benchmarks.

If you are working from “hard-copy” items (i.e. research data etc.) keep a record of the dates and outcomes even if the experiments have not been a success.

Most programs require some type of Annual Report. Keeping track of progress will facilitate the preparation of a report.
STAY ORGANIZED AND WORK FROM BENCHMARKS

PREPARE YOUR RESEARCH PROPOSAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

A detailed research proposal is one of the best ways to establish tangible goals/benchmarks and track progress.

A detailed document can also be used as the framework for writing the thesis or dissertation, especially if some effort has been placed on the review of literature.

Where appropriate with the discipline, this document should always be produced in consultation with the major professor.
STAY ORGANIZED AND WORK FROM BENCHMARKS

HAVE AN AGENDA

The best way to stay on task in meetings and assure that important issues are covered is to have an agenda.

Agendas can be used to take notes and record the outcomes for tracking purposes.

These documents can be saved for review and evidence that specific issues were addressed.
STAY ORGANIZED AND WORK FROM BENCHMARKS

EFFICIENCY AND TIME MANAGEMENT

One of the single biggest keys to success is efficiency and time management.

In graduate school, time can move quickly so it is essential to develop strong time management skills to assure that progress is being made.

Use the planning tools as outlined in the previous slides to cultivate this ability.

YOU WILL NEED THESE SKILLS WELL BEYOND GRADUATE SCHOOL!
EMAIL

Emails will come from:

- Faculty
- Program Coordinators and Chair
- Graduate School
- USF Senior Administrators

Policy changes, deadlines, funding opportunities, seminars etc.
READ ALL COMMUNICATIONS

OTHERS

Newsletters

Campus Mail

Video Boards

Websites
Failure to know about policy changes or deadlines

IS NOT AN EXCUSE

to expect waiver to the rules!
TOUR OF WEBSITE

www.grad.usf.edu

Many links to other sites
UNDERSTAND KEY GRADUATE POLICIES

All information about Graduate Policies can be found in sections 3-9 of the current Graduate Catalog.

Key Policies to Know:

- Academic Integrity and Disruption
- Grievance Procedure
- Late Drop of Courses
- Leave of Absence
- Time Limit Extension
- Doctoral Candidacy
UNDERSTAND KEY GRADUATE POLICIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY OF STUDENTS (sect. 8)

Reference USF Regulation 3.027

http://generalcounsel.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf3.027.pdf

“One Strike”

No statute of limitations
UNDERSTAND KEY GRADUATE POLICIES

DISRUPTION OF ACADEMIC PROCESS (sect. 8)

Reference: USF Regulation 3.025

UNDERSTAND KEY GRADUATE POLICIES

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES (sect. 8)

Reference: USF 10.002


Very specific time lines on when the grievance can be submitted
UNDERSTAND KEY GRADUATE POLICIES

LATE DROP OR WITHDRAWAL (sect. 5)

Most programs **DO NOT** have an automatic drop for lack of first day attendance. Students must drop the course themselves within the first week to avoid being financially responsible.

Graduate student **MAY NOT** drop courses following the 10th week of the semester unless “exceptional” circumstances can be DOCUMENTED.

**NO GRADE FORGIVENESS!!!**
UNDERSTAND KEY GRADUATE POLICIES

LATE DROP OR WITHDRAWAL (sect. 5)

a) Illness of the student of such severity or duration to preclude completion of the course(s) as confirmed **in writing by a physician (M.D.)**.

b) Death of the student or death in the immediate family (parent, spouse, child or sibling) as confirmed by documentation (death certificate, obituary) indicating the student’s relationship to the deceased.

c) Involuntary call to active military duty as confirmed by military orders.

d) A situation in which the University is in error as confirmed by an appropriate University official.

e) Other documented exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the student which precluded completion of the course(s) accompanied by explanatory letter and supporting documentation.
LEAVE OF ABSENCE (sect. 8)

Can be granted for up to two years

Freezes the time to degree and age of courses

Protects student from converting to “inactive”

Must be approved by program and college
UNDERSTAND KEY GRADUATE POLICIES

TIME LIMITS (sect. 8)

Masters: __________yrs

Doctoral: __________yrs

A Time Limit Extension (TLE) can be requested ONE TIME to allow for the completion of the degree.
UNDERSTAND KEY GRADUATE POLICIES

INCOMPLETE GRADES

When an incomplete grade is assigned, the student and professor must complete the “incomplete Grade Contract” and submit this document to the Graduate School.

The student must complete the missing work within ONE SEMESTER.
ATTEND SEMINARS

It is essential to attend as many seminars and thesis/dissertation defenses as possible.

Even if the topic is not of the greatest interest, it is possible to learn new presentation techniques, learn what is good and bad as well as observe how the individual is performing during the event.

IN NEARLY ALL DISCIPLINES, THE ABILITY TO PRESENT AN EFFECTIVE ORAL SEMINAR AND TEACH IS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS.
The Graduate School offers numerous Student Success and Professional Development Workshops each semester.

http://www.grad.usf.edu/workshops.asp

Most research conferences also offer sessions that provide information on professional development.

Developing Oral Skills
Developing Writing Skills
“You treat your research as if it is life and death!”

*Graduate student comment to Dr. Pollenz*

The research, teaching or administrative activities carried out by faculty **IS THEIR JOB!**

Most successful faculty are successful because they are passionate about what they do.

If your graduate degree is going to be used as a springboard for your career, you must show the same passion.
NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

DEVELOPING A MENTORING NETWORK
MENTORING

When graduate students are asked about the barriers to success or why they have been successful, good mentoring is always one of the top answers.

However, it is often assumed that the major professor is the sole individual who should provide the mentoring.

Studies show that the most successful students develop “Mentoring Networks”.

USF Graduate School - Celebrating 30 Years of Growing Global Leaders One Student at a Time
WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring means that there is a relationship between the mentor and the mentee. There is true vestment of the mentor in the success of the mentee. This is very different from advising that is typically less personal and more related to successful academic progress.

No two students are the same in what they need in a mentoring relationship.
WHAT DEFINES GOOD MENTORING?

1) Provides an explanation about Graduate School and demystifies the procedures and expectations.
2) Involves students in conversations and empowers them to offer opinions.
3) Provides constructive criticism to enhance performance but always treats students with respect.
4) Provides encouragement in academics and research.
5) Gives of self and looks out for the best interests of the student. Provides “personal touch.”
6) Works with other mentors and assists in networking.
MENTORING

DEFINING THE MENTORING THAT YOU NEED

It is rare that a single individual can supply all of the mentoring needs that a student may require.

In addition, no two students are the same in what they need in a mentoring relationship.
MENTORING

DEFINING THE MENTORING THAT YOU NEED

Mentoring in the Discipline
(explanation of the trajectory, history, literature base etc.)

“Skill” Development Mentoring
(oral skills, computer, writing, reasoning, leadership, etc)

Career Consultant Mentoring
(advice and networking on careers)

Teaching Mentoring
(advice, training, evaluation, opportunity, etc)
1) What type of mentoring have I received in the past?
2) Was there a mentoring “relationship” or more advisory (apprenticeship)?
3) Did the previous mentoring provide a benefit? What was good and what was lacking?
4) How does the mentoring I received differ from what I have seen others receive? Are any of the differences due to race, gender, age, etc.?
5) Would the type of mentoring I received in the past work for me now? What are my mentoring expectations in graduate school?
DEVELOPING MENTORING NETWORKS

SEEK OUT THE SPECIFIC MENTORING AND WORK FROM THERE

Cultivate multiple mentoring relationships.

It is best to approach a potential mentor by knowing what you would like to obtain from them.

Do not force the relationship, but allow it to grow.
DEVELOPING MENTORING NETWORKS

IMPORTANT ADVICE IN CULTIVATING MENTORS

1) Believe in yourself and your worth.
2) Be available and visible in the Dept. Don’t make others track you down!
3) Engage in conversation and ask questions during seminars and lab meetings.
4) Be professional at all times and speak in disciplinary terms.
5) Let mentors know how much you appreciate them.
6) Take responsibility and show leadership.
NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

GETTING INVOLVED AS A GRADUATE STUDENT
GETTING INVOLVED

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL (GPSC)

The council consists of elected officials who serve to foster interaction between graduate and professional students through community service, social and academic events.

The Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) provides a voice for graduate and professional students through representation on university wide committees and advocating student interests to the administration.

http://www.gpsc.usf.edu/
GETTING INVOLVED

There are multiple opportunities for graduate students to engage in the administrative function of their college, the university and the Graduate School.

Participation in student organizations and committees can facilitate networking and is an exceptional opportunity to see how decisions are made that impact graduate education at USF.
GETTING INVOLVED

BLACK GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL (BGPSC)

To provide academic and social support to minority graduate students, promote and encourage interest in graduate education amongst the undergraduate population, give minority graduate students the opportunity to fellowship and bond through social outings and activities, and contribute to the enhancement of the cultural experience in the USF community.
GETTING INVOLVED

DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONS

Many graduate programs have graduate student organizations that foster networking, organize social events, discuss research projects, provide students for departmental committees, etc.
GETTING INVOLVED

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

Nearly all college and university committees have a slots for graduate students.

Consult with you Graduate Program Director and/or Chair about submitting your name.

Do not volunteer unless you intend to participate!
NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

WORKSHOPS
AND OTHER
STUDENT RESOURCES
The Graduate School offers numerous Student Success and Professional Development Workshops each semester.

http://www.grad.usf.edu/workshops.asp

Most research conferences also offer sessions that provide information on professional development.

Developing Oral Skills
Developing Writing Skills
UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

USF Career Center (http://www.career.usf.edu/)

USF Counseling Center (http://usfweb2.usf.edu/counsel/)

USF Writing Center (http://usfweb2.usf.edu/learning/Redirect.html)

Center For 21st Century Teaching Excellence (http://www.c21te.usf.edu/)

Graduate Certificates (http://www.gradcerts.usf.edu/)
THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?