Tips for Surviving Graduate School

Graduate school is much more than undergrad 2.0. At this point, many people are more than simply students. They are parents, spouses, employees, and interns. Additional stressors like career-related issues, finances, higher academic standards, and expectations of self-initiation & reliance may necessitate different stress-management skills and study habits. Here are a few tips to help you succeed in your graduate program at CSUMB.

1. **Get connected**

It can be challenging to develop a support network during graduate school. By connecting with classmates and professors, you can feel a sense of togetherness with those who understand the stress and pressures of the graduate school experience. Through these connections you are also developing relationships with future colleagues and employers.

1. **Focus on learning rather than grades**

While there is a minimum GPA requirement for earning your graduate degree, be aware of your perfectionist tendencies. Is earning that perfect score worth the extra stress? Does it negatively impact your career advancement? If not, aim to focus on gaining skills and knowledge, as well as networking with future colleagues and employers.

1. **Read smarter, not harder**

Instead of reading word for word, read with a purpose. Look at the organization of the piece – headers, chapter titles, bullet points, and sidebars. This will help you decide where to focus your attention. Find a system that works best for you, including note taking, highlighting or underlining important content

1. **Make yourself a priority**

Be sure to schedule in time for rest and relaxation. Your mental wellbeing is just as important as getting ahead on that assignment. Include exercise, family time or coffee with a friend as part of your schedule. Staying hydrated, getting good sleep and eating regularly all support focus, learning, retention and ability to manage stress.

1. **Ask for help (even if you don’t think you need it)**

Need help formulating an assignment? Not understanding something about the course content? Reach out to classmates or a professor. It takes a little extra time and planning, but will be well worth it. Also, the **Personal Growth & Counseling Center** (PGCC) is available to assist you with mental health challenges, relational concerns, stress management and more. Even when you feel alone, there are lots of people wanting to help you succeed.

For more information about PGCC services:

