

## Making the Most of Your Graduate School Experience

As virtually every current or former graduate student knows, the experience of being in graduate school is both rewarding and trying. Most graduate students learn quickly to cope with the rigors of coursework, exams, and, ultimately, writing their dissertations alongside teaching or other such duties. Many graduate students find that some of the chief difficulties of graduate school lie not in these formal elements of graduate study, however difficult and demanding they in fact are, but which are also, after all, what drew us to the field in the first place. Most of us embarked on a program of graduate study from a passion for Graeco-Roman Antiquity, a desire to learn about and research the world of the Ancient Mediterranean at a high level, to make a meaningful contribution to scholarship, and to impart the knowledge of this world, which we find so valuable, to future generations of students. Instead, what many of us find uniquely challenging in addition to the formal demands of our programs are the informal ones: the psychological, the social, the unspoken but important norms of a given department, and of the field at large. Anxiety about meeting unclear expectations of the profession, self-doubt in a competitive environment, feelings of isolation while researching in a specialized field, fear of the academic job market, and the like can hamper the success of an otherwise brilliant budding archaeologist, philologist, historian, etc. The aim of this panel is to help graduate students not only to succeed in their given programs of study, but to thrive while doing so by addressing some of these informal pressures of graduate school. Presenter 1 will open the panel with a discussion of the unwritten rules of the profession, which can be a source of great anxiety to students. She will discuss the reasons for approaching graduate study as an apprenticeship to the profession, and the proper boundaries and etiquette that this entails. Presenter 2 will expand upon this foundation by examining departmental citizenship and professional service during one's graduate

career, with particular attention to effective prioritizing of one's time commitments and creating a culture of participation and responsibility among one's peers. Presenter 3 will illuminate yet another means of promoting thriving in graduate school by sharing from her personal experience of creating a dissertation support group among her peers that has become a flourishing community dedicated to supporting one another both emotionally and intellectually. She will discuss the benefits of creating such a group and offer advice and strategies to graduate students interested in forming such groups at their own institutions. Presenter 4 is a mental health care professional who will address yet another important aspect of thriving in graduate school: mental health. He will share his insight into common mental illnesses encountered in graduate school, how to recognize these illnesses, how to get help, and preventative measures. Finally, Presenter 5 will expand the topic in a new direction by discussing his experience in a career outside of college and secondary level teaching: teaching Classics in a continuing-education environment, in the hope that a greater awareness of alternative careers in the field can help allay anxiety about the current job market. We hope that these talks will encourage and promote overall well-being among graduate students, which we believe has the double benefit of both fostering success in graduate students' professional goals as well as improving graduate student quality of life in the here-and-now of graduate school.