Maximizing Graduate School: Thoughts from Ohio State
Dawn Anderson-Butcher and Graduate Students

Content and Related Experiences:

- Integration of three areas: Research, Service/Outreach, Teaching/Learning
- Make sure to teach and/or co-teach (learn about challenges of teaching, how to deal with difficult students, etc)
- Gain exposure to other disciplines
- Make sure to get experience working in teams, as well as the knowledge of how to work in teams
- Regularly examine your CV, consider your professional trajectory, and figure out what you need to “get more of” – publish, presentations, practice experience, etc.

Initiative:

- Time to start really honing in on what interests you; the initial phase of building your research trajectory Take leadership roles; get out of your comfort zone
- Take advantage of opportunities, even if they seem like too much. Think of them as a double opportunities
- Gain exposure to as much as possible including different research methodologies, different types of research projects, different faculty
- Rely on others and depend on it. For instance, when you are applying, have people help you – review materials, process how to handle situations, etc. – keep people informed on what is going on, people don’t know how to help you unless you keep them updated

Organizational/Political Structure:

- Stay out of drama that might be occurring around you
- Use the resources provided to you, i.e. professional development funds, there’s LOTS of stuff that can be spent on, think BIG (i.e. iphone)!
- Encourage a clear definition of your role/responsibilities
- There will be conflict. Figure out effective problem solving and conflict resolution strategies

Networking and Relationships:

- Meet people
- Find community, campus & department/college research partners that you work well with
- Nurture these relationships
- Attend (and present) at conferences and workshops, even if they are random
- Choose collaborators wisely and build upon existing relationships to foster opportunities for research
- Ask lots of questions; learn from lots of people
- Talk to faculty about their roles, and if they went back, what they would do differently
- Really build your scholarly network – letters of recommendation, relationships get you the job

Publishing/Research:

- The entire publication pipeline, what it is, what is expected, how to maintain momentum
- Keep track of everything you do, both digitally and hard copies, to build your dossier
- Publish, publish, publish.
- Everything you write (even if for community reports, etc.) frame it as much as possible in an easily publishable format so that editing/reformatting for journals is relatively simple. So if I’m writing a paper for class, why not use it as an opportunity to submit that paper for a presentation, or a manuscript? I try to make sure to not reinvent the wheel and get double mileage out of my projects.

Other Take Homes:

- Have fun
- Know when to say NO!