

# Cohort Survival Training<sup>1</sup>

## MSW Program – Student Orientation “Surviving and Thriving as a Graduate Student” Suggestions for Student Success

### I. In the Academic Arena

#### *Routinely do the following:*

- ❖ Check your mailbox. The mailboxes are located in the School of Social Work office (Washington Square Hall, Rm. 215). Ask office staff for assistance when needed.
- ❖ **After subscribing to the MSWMail Email ListServe**, check your email for latest MSW faculty/SWGSA information, updates, and announcements. Be careful to set your email “junk” and “spam” filters accordingly so that MSWMail does not get blocked.
- ❖ Know where to find key University ([www.sjsu.edu](http://www.sjsu.edu)) and School information through the websites ([www.sjsu.edu/socialwork/](http://www.sjsu.edu/socialwork/)).
- ❖ Check MySJSU for your academic status, important information, and messages.
- ❖ Familiarize yourself with the academic calendar, especially in terms of university fees, class enrollment, and deadlines.

### II. In the Classroom

- ❖ Please be respectful of your classmates and colleagues.
- ❖ Be on time to class. This demonstrates your commitment and interest.
- ❖ Always have your syllabus and semester-long calendar with you.
- ❖ Textbooks: Know your purchasing avenues, what is recommended vs. required.
- ❖ Adjust to professors’ teaching styles (form your own opinion about each instructor).
- ❖ Be clear about your professors’ expectations (avoid excuses and submit professional work)
- ❖ Participate in class discussions (do not be afraid to ask questions, provide answers, debate, discuss).
- ❖ Acknowledge that your professors’ job is to educate, train, and correct. Do not take criticism personally.

### III. Out of the Classroom

- ❖ When you have a question, refer to your MSW Handbook first.
- ❖ Meet with your advisor and use him/her as a resource. Go to the main advisor when needed.
- ❖ Seek help from staff and faculty if you cannot find the answer to a question.
- ❖ Utilize your professors’ office hours.
- ❖ Internships: Know what role your FFL and FI play in your field education experience.
- ❖ Use campus resources as needed (health services, counseling services, career center, writing workshops, etc.)
- ❖ Become a SWGSA member/cohort representative to enhance your academic experience.

### IV. In The Personal Arena

- ❖ **KNOW YOURSELF:**
  - Time management
  - Listen to your body and take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally
  - Consider therapy for yourself (on-campus counseling services are available)
  - Check out various websites to help you in these areas of self-preservation

And last but not least..... **REMEMBER: YOU’RE NOT ALONE!**

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<sup>1</sup> This handout was developed by Cheryl Aquinde, Lanier Reeves (MSW Class of 2007) and the SWGSA MSW Student Orientation planning committee, in cooperation with the School of Social Work. We thank them for their contribution.

# Time Management<sup>2</sup>

*Whether you believe you can, or whether you believe you can't, you're absolutely right.*  
*Henry Ford*

Effectively managing time is crucial to surviving and thriving in graduate school. Goal setting and prioritizing are key factors in the process of daily academic life. Here are some guidelines that will help every student be more successful in managing his/her time on and off campus.

## Daily, Weekly, and Semester Scheduling

1. **Daily list:** Write down the things you want to accomplish that day, which allows you to modify and prioritize using a simple A-B-C priority system. (A= Highest Priority, B= Moderate Priority, C= Lowest Priority.) A written list that is goal oriented, flexible, and balanced is essential. The list should be somewhere available to you throughout the day.
2. **Weekly schedule:** This method is for those students who need more structure than the flexible list method. By using an hour-by-hour weekly calendar this gives the student a very clear guideline of what to do when.
3. **Semester-long calendar:** This will help lay out all of your major obligations, which clearly defines your goals for the semester.

Be realistic in keeping to the schedule. Don't set yourself up for failure by becoming too rigid and unrealistic. It is important to include free time, recreation, and nurturing your personal relationships.

## A Balanced Life-Style Includes These Six Important Life Areas:

1. Physical (exercise, nutrition, sleep)
2. Intellectual (cultural, aesthetic)
3. Social (intimate and social relationships)
4. Career (school and career goal directed work)
5. Emotional (expression of feelings, desires)
6. Spiritual (quest for meaning)

## Things to Remember

- ✓ Keep and post a list of your long-term goals.
- ✓ Eliminate unnecessary tasks that are not related to your goals or to maintaining a balanced life style.
- ✓ Schedule the most difficult activities when you are the sharpest.
- ✓ Learn to say "No" to people, including spouses, friends, children, and parents.
- ✓ Solicit cooperation from those around you by letting others know about your efforts to manage time.
- ✓ Work towards an individualized approach that makes sense for you.
- ✓ Writing down schedules, priorities, and plans is always helpful.
- ✓ Attend to your needs for spontaneity.
- ✓ Reward yourself for effective time management.

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<sup>2</sup> This handout was developed by Lanier Reeves (MSW Class of 2007) and the SWGSA MSW Student Orientation planning committee, in cooperation with the School of Social Work. We thank them for their contribution. We also borrowed from the following source: [http://www.counsel.ufl.edu/selfHelpInformation/academicAndCareerConcerns/time\\_management.aspx](http://www.counsel.ufl.edu/selfHelpInformation/academicAndCareerConcerns/time_management.aspx).