

November newsletter

A few GSIG updates:

- Don't forget about GSIGs AEJMC MidWinter Conference Call for Papers. [Click here](#) to see the announcement on our website. This conference is a great opportunity for graduate students to get experience presenting their research and networking with other graduate students and faculty.
- AEJMC recently approved a resolution proposed by the Task Force on Bridges to the Profession to bridge the media industry and research. Read more about their initiative [here](#).

As the semester starts winding down and due dates begin to approach, the GSIG board wanted to dedicate this newsletter to managing stress. Below Amanda Bradshaw, the GSIG Vice Chair and PhD student at the University of Florida, shares some tips for de-stressing during graduate school:

“The biggest mistake that graduate students make, which actually hurts productivity, is not taking time to de-stress and unwind. We all fall into this trap; it is tempting to hammer away on papers until the wee hours or spend every weekend locked up in the library. However, we know inherently that these are not the healthiest choices.

Here are five ways I have found to relax and de-stress over the last year or so in a Ph.D. program:

1. **Companionship.** I got a puppy dog! This is a big deal because I have always been allergic to dogs and never had a pet before. However, I found a low-shedding, “hypoallergenic” labradoodle, and he has made all the difference. He forces me to get daily exercise, to pause for cuddles, and to take frequent breaks during the day.
2. **Find your tribe (back home and nearby.)** Weekly phone calls with my grandmother are amazing because I do not spend the whole time talking about my research. She sees me as much more than a researcher, and her stories about family life and the local events in my hometown get me out of research mode and help me to focus on something else and really get a good night's sleep. Also, grabbing dinner with girls from my cohort or seeing a play with my husband can help to relieve pressure as I become immersed in the present and the activity at hand.
3. **Unwind before bed.** Invest in coffee... and chamomile tea! This is another wonderful way to unwind at night after putting all technology away. My bedtime routine these days almost always involves a mug of tea and reading a fiction novel just for fun! If my eyes can't take another moment of reading, I may watch a movie or TV show. The experts say to turn this off half an hour before you actually want to go to sleep, of course!
4. **Make a plan, and set daily goals.** Even in 2018, I still use a paper planner along with Trello and my iPhone calendar to stay organized. Each day has a “Top 3 List” of things I absolutely need to accomplish that day, whether it be teaching a class, cooking a meal, or knocking out a literature review. Since the work literally never ends, it feels nice to set manageable, attainable, tangible goals to knock out each day. Just the practice of making a plan (and sticking to it)

surprisingly relieves a lot of stress, as I feel more focused on which priorities are more time sensitive and which can wait.

5. Don't underestimate the power of nature and self-care. As graduate students, most of us are Vitamin-D deprived and could use a few more hours in the sunshine! In addition to walking my dog, I enjoy weeding the flower beds or even just sitting outside to enjoy my morning coffee-anything to break me out of the zombie-like state behind a computer screen. Additionally, I invest in massages every other month, my own special treat and incentive for accomplishing milestones-big or small! Groupon has some great deals that are friendly to a graduate student budget.

I hope these ideas help you in some way, but note that we all have our own “thing.” My classmates love yoga, for example, or running marathons or participating in extracurriculars unrelated to academia, such as theater! Find your thing, and do it.”



– Amanda Bradshaw, GSIG Vice Chair

*Amanda recently organized a relaxation day for her classmates at UF. For more information on how you could do this in your own program, reach out to Amanda at abradshaw1@ufl.edu or myself at eastonwollney@ufl.edu

Finally, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to reach out to us. We are always looking for suggestions and love hearing from our members.