

Lula Chen
Illinois Political
Science Math Camp
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*All suggestions and
comments are my own.

Making the most out of your graduate school experience*



You are a **student**.



You are a **teacher**.



You are a **scientist**.



You are a **colleague**.

So what's this grad school thing?

Some specific suggestions...

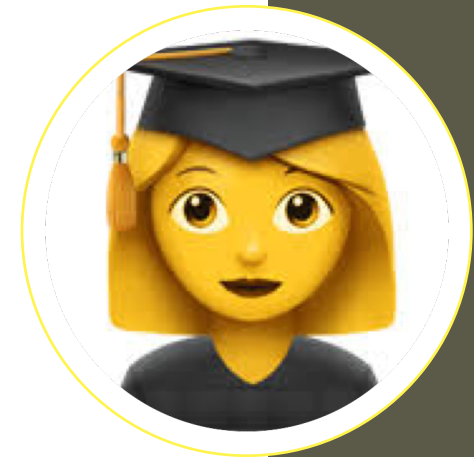
Success as a student

- Be curious.
 - Read actively. Come to class with questions about the articles.
 - Start thinking about your research questions early – you'll write a better paper.
 - Go the extra mile to learn and receive additional training. Now is the time to do it!
- Work together.
 - Whether in quant, prepping for comprehensive exams, or writing papers, it is very helpful to talk with others about your ideas.
- Learn to teach yourself.
 - We are given basic tools, but much of what we learn is through working on our own.



Success as a student - Resources

- Seek out the methods training that you want to use.
 - Interested in statistics and machine learning? Talk to Wei Zhong wzhong8@illinois.edu.
 - Stats Dept: Stat 400, 420, others
 - Econ Dept: Econ 532, 535, 536
 - Interested in formal theory? Talk to Ekrem Baser (your Methods TA), baser2@illinois.edu.
 - Interested in experiments? Talk to Chris Grady, cdgrady2@illinois.edu.
 - Interested in computational modeling? Talk to me, nchen3@illinois.edu.
- Check out certificates on campus that are relevant to you.
- Read through Graduate College emails. There are lots of helpful resources on these emails.



Success as a teacher

- Take your students seriously.
- Proactively improve your teaching.
 - Obtain at least one teaching certificate.
 - Teaching is a performance. Have fun with developing your style.
 - Give yourself enough time to produce good class material.
- Set standard practices for grading.
 - Give yourself enough time to grade.
 - Use grading rubrics.
 - If several of you are TAing the same class, grading in a group can help with the consistency of the grading.



Success as a teacher - Resources

- CITL
- Interested in pursuing a teaching career? Talk to Julian Scheirer (scheirr2@Illinois.edu).



Success as a scientist

- Practice your communication skills.
 - Practice writing and presenting.
- Develop good data habits and a clear and transparent workflow.
- Take advantage of the research pool, labs, and workshops.
- Engage in thoughtful and constructive feedback.
 - Ask for feedback about your work.
 - Give constructive criticism.
 - Receive criticism well.



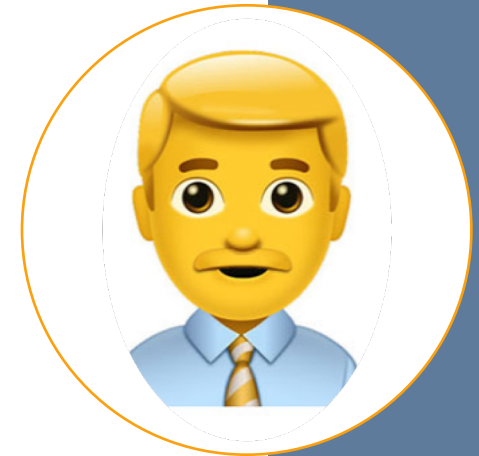
Success as a scientist - Resources

- Discipline-wide listservs (Polmeth, EPSA)
- Talks, workshops, research pool for lab experiments
- Blue Waters, Keeling, and clusters for computational work
- Github, Asana, or other software applications for workflow
- If you want your own website, you can create a microsite on publish.illinois.edu



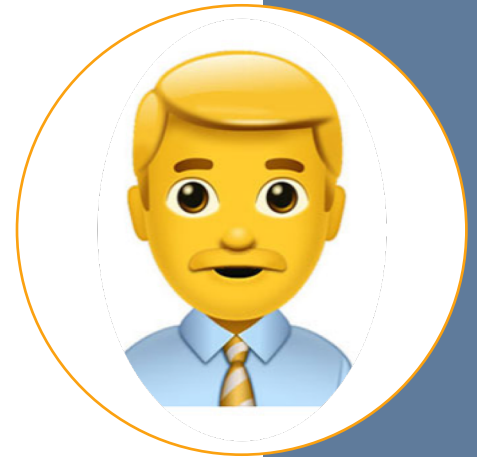
Success as a colleague

- Treat the department as a professional workplace.
 - Be respectful of the physical space.
 - Be cognizant of the norms of the department. If you don't know what to do in a situation, you can always ask another graduate student and see what others are doing.
- Be respectful and cognizant of your peers.
 - We are a multi-cultural and diverse department. We all have implicit biases that can negatively affect how we treat each other – try to be aware of them and avoid acting on them.
- Participate actively in the department.
 - Help out Brenda and Kate, help set up for events, attend department-related social events, etc.



Success as a colleague - Resources

- PSGSA, publish.illinois.edu/poliscigsa
- Women's Resource Center
- GEO



Some general suggestions...

Time management

- Learn about your own pace of work. Schedule your days to take advantage of your most productive hours.
- Protect your time. Just because you don't have a meeting or have to teach does not mean that you are available. Block out time during the day for writing and reading.

Work/life balance

- Give yourself breaks. We all burn out at some point in grad school. Take Thanksgiving and Spring Break off.
- Participate in social activities in the department, around campus, around town, etc.
- Participate in the larger community of Urbana-Champaign.

Work/life
balance:

Activities in
Urbana-
Champaign

- www.visitchampaigncounty.org/events
- Taste of Champaign-Urbana is this weekend!
- Music festivals
- Volunteering:
 - CU One-to-One Mentoring
 - Humane Society
 - Eastern Illinois Food Bank
- Sports leagues
- Arts and Culture
 - Krannert Center
 - Virginia Theatre
 - Station Theatre

Attitude matters a lot

- Be curious
- Work hard
- Persevere
- Respect each other's work
- Have fun!