Tips for Ph.D. in H.S. Success

From our first Ph.D. in Health Sciences graduates Hana Hinkle and Steven Hinojosa:

**Round up support:** “The flexibility and support of my employer made it possible. We set up a memorandum of understanding for data and information exchange,” said Hinojosa. “I have a good support system with a job and family that let me take the time,” Hinkle said.

**Rely on your advisor:** “My advisor was instrumental in helping me meet deadlines, timelines and targets,” Hinkle said of her advisor, Derryl Block, Dean, NIU College of Health and Human Sciences. “She pushed me in a positive way so I could improve as a student,” she added. “Our first face-to-face meeting helped develop a good relationship. If I had a question, she was responsive and supportive throughout my journey,” Hinojosa said about his advisor, Jinsook Kim, NIU associate professor, public health.

**Lean on your cohort:** “One of the biggest things I enjoyed was having face-to-face classes each semester. That made a huge difference and opened up opportunity for collaboration. We would create message groups and webcam meetings to ask questions and exchange ideas,” Hinojosa said.

**Focus on the future:** “This needs to be something you are passionate about doing,” said Hinkle. “It is very intensive. You have to live and breathe your topic while doing your dissertation. This is going to set you up in the future. It continues to motivate you to have an end goal.”

**Get joe.** “Coffee always helps,” Hinojosa said. “It can help make anyone an academic superhero.”

From our Spring 2022 PhD in Health Sciences graduates Michele Crase, Hannah Baker and Olivia Lemberger:

**Strong relationships:** “Form a strong relationship with the other students in your cohort- you will get through the program together!” says Olivia Lemberger. “Nurture your relationship with your advisor. It will be one of the MOST important relationships of your life.” “Take advantage of face-to-face events when you can. Conversations with my cohort members and others in the program helped me feel connected and stay on track,” suggested Hannah.

**Tools for success:** “Attend the dissertation boot camp offered through the writing center,” suggests Olivia. Michele also recommended using the writing center.

**Resource management:** “Be very strategic with your independent study credits – make them count,” says Olivia. “Be mindful of social media use or other rabbit holes that squander your time.” According to Hannah, “There is no "perfect" time for life events that can happen during the program. Marriages, moves, family emergencies, babies, and other things will happen when they happen, and the best way to cope is to roll with it, communicate, and be patient.” “Take time out for self-care and for your family. Life still goes on,” says Michele.