

Corey Friend  
6890 November Reflections

November was, to me, the most difficult month of graduate school to date. Considering I managed to thrive through two months of CSP summer boot camp and had a rough bout of culture shock in October, it's saying something that November was the most challenging month yet. Still, there were a great deal of successes to come with the challenges.

One success was that, amidst the craziness and ridiculousness, that was the relationship with one of my supervisors, I was able to have a healthy, confrontational, conversation with that supervisor. During our last meeting of 6890, I was still quite flustered and exasperated by the comments my supervisor had made the two previous days. However, after removing myself from the situation after a few days and calming down, I documented everything that she had said earlier in the week and created a quasi-agenda of topics to be covered with her. I then met with her the week after the initial comments, and addressed those comments, as well as several other issues that had arisen throughout the semester. To this point, she has been much more attentive and supportive, and has begun providing more frequent and helpful feedback. Although the general relationship I hold with her is still lacking, I have begun to foster a better professional relationship with her.

One of the many challenges I've faced this semester has been in doing everything in my power to not burn out. This summer, again, was quite trying, especially considering the amount of work to do in such a short period of time. However, balancing academics with all of the challenges and stressors that come with the internship has been especially exhausting this past month. With finals coming up, staff evaluations, and a heavier workload in study abroad, it's been increasingly difficult to maintain a healthy sleep schedule in light of remaining productive and efficient in my coursework and internship requirements. One way that I've addressed these stressors has been to journal more frequently this month, in order to release some of the stressors. Besides that, I've resigned to the fact that sometimes grad school is something to be gotten through, even if it means bearing down and accepting it.

Another success that I had this past month was in co-planning and facilitating the pre-departure sessions for the students studying abroad this spring. All told, twenty-three students attended the two sessions, each lasting four hours. Though a template and PowerPoint existed from previous years, the graduate intern in my office and I made extensive updates and changes to the template and PowerPoint, in hopes of making the sessions more engaging and efficient. After completing the two sessions, our supervisor deemed that these sessions were, in fact, the most successful and engaging sessions she'd seen in her eleven years. Furthermore, the evaluations we received from the students confirmed that the format and content covered was excellent, and that the sessions in general were incredibly impactful in preparing the students for the challenges and celebrations they could hope to experience while abroad.