

## **Transcript: PEN Orientation Closing Remarks**

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*This document is a transcript of the second of two videos of Dr. Laura-Ann Petitto's remarks to new students entering Gallaudet University's Ph.D. in Educational Neuroscience program. In this, a companion to her Welcoming Remarks video, she discusses what new students should expect while in the program, and the program's expectations of them as they progress through their studies.*

Hello again! I'm back! Now, we'll take a few moments to discuss the science and your role as a graduate student here. What does it mean to be a graduate student?

First, this is a time of many transitions and changes. First, you are moving from being a novice to being an expert. Second, you're moving from being a college student, or M.A. student, to being a doctoral student. These are very different experiences, not the same at all. You are moving from having some research experience, to doing focused, intensive research.

So, life will not be the same anymore. Sometimes it's not paradise. You will have many basic assumptions that will be wrong. And your experiences will differ from your previous experiences. So, how do you adjust to this new life? What is expected of you in this new life? How do I conduct myself in this new life? We will try to touch on a few things for you to remember and be mindful of.

So, some of the things that are different now than before. In your previous studies, you were very focused on your grades and getting that A. Now, that won't be your focus. Instead, the big focus will be on your research. That is the big deal. Research should be primary, compared with "getting my A" in a course. We expect you will do well – Graduate students do well in courses. But research trumps all.

Second, a very important element is what we call the apprenticeship model – the apprenticeship model. This is tremendously critical. So, what is this apprenticeship model? This is where you will work with another person in the field, a scholar in the field, and you learn from your work with that person. Then when you are knowledgeable and well trained with this person in their research, then you will transition to doing your own work and research and developing your own ideas for continuing your studies.

Of course, that isn't a perfect model. But that has been done since Aristotle – it's very old, and we learn and use that in the medical sciences, in the natural and physical sciences, biological sciences, social sciences, and neuroscience. All these sciences use that model. So, we in neuroscience use that apprenticeship model. Again, it's not a perfect model, of course. But it has at its core the function of promoting fundamental learning. Also, we use the principles of learning here in the PEN program. These principles come from VL2's science of learning – now 10 years old – and the total of many principles of learning that we've discovered. We applied those to the design of the PEN courses and research, and the PEN program itself. So that's another amazing benefit of the PEN program – that it is designed with the principles of learning. And using those principles of learning involve the fact that you need to be malleable while learning things during your studies and that you expand on those topics with your own insight and ideas. So, our program is designed in this way so that in addition to the apprenticeship model, our program is built with the basic principles of learning and how humans learn.

What about your time? "How should I plan out and commit my time?" We suggest that you really devote a third – approximately a third of your time – in apprenticeship related with your lab. One third of your time, we suggest you spend in the development of your own Ph.D. thinking, research, and ideas. A third of your time focusing on your coursework. So, you see, we don't recommend that you focus all your time on your coursework and "getting my A." Really, you should divide your time equally among the three, and also, I stress the importance of understanding that this one-third of your time in the apprenticeship model is why you have your graduate assistantship. This is where we are paying you to participate in this learning and training, and this is where you get your graduate assistantship from.

So, it's important that each person understand that you're not finished with your day just because you're done with your classes. One is not done when the course is done. This raises the key idea of residency.

Residency ... is it simply the number of months during which your courses are in session? No. Or is it simply like punching a clock, counting the number of hours, days, minutes, like grains of sand? No.

Residency extends beyond your time in classes. This is very important to adjust that thinking, for graduate students. It's more than the number of minutes in your course. Instead, it involves summer, your residency involves your summer time. That is specially designed to promote your learning about research and gaining mentorship in your lab. We focus on the whole person, whole training, and we engage in that collaborative reasoning during that time in which you learn through collaborative thinking in a group sharing ideas and stimulating growth together, and that requires time in a lab. You will not get this kind of learning through leaving and saying, "I'll e-mail you." It's crucial to be in the lab, solving problems together. That is apprenticeship learning and that also involves your peer learning, too.

What about taking vacation leave? Of course, you can take vacations. It's important that you communicate, always communicate with your adviser, with your program. Please don't just disappear. The best thing to do is communicate openly that you need to leave.

So, I want to leave you with this quote. "There are many things in life that will catch your eye, but only a few will catch your heart ... pursue those." Seize those. Go with passion. Study, learn, enjoy, and have passion.

Don't wander alone on the sands. If you get lost, please ask us for help. Stay connected with us. Stay connected with your peers, friends, other students. We are here to help, support, and encourage you.

So, in closing, we wish you exciting horizons, discovery, wonderment, and ... fun!

*Video produced and edited and transcript developed by Tara Schupner Congdon, VL2 Manager of Communications.*