

Graduate Advising Philosophy

Xiaoli Nan

The primary responsibility of an advisor is to help students achieve their intellectual and professional goals. I expect students to develop short-term and long-term goals early on in the program and openly communicate their thoughts to me. As advisor, I work closely with students to set goals that are of high standards, compatible with personal interests, and feasible.

Successfully meeting all degree requirements is expected of all graduate students. As advisor, I ensure that students receive necessary mentoring and assistance in selecting courses, preparing plan of study and comprehensive examination plan, developing dissertation prospectus, and completing dissertation. Both students and advisor should be knowledgeable of department, college, and university stipulations concerning all degree requirements.

I encourage students to aspire to be a leading scholar within their areas of specialization and to pursue tenure-track faculty positions at research universities upon graduation. To that end, I strongly encourage students to start engaging in independent and collaborative research upon entering the program. Students should aim to produce quality research that leads to conference presentations and, ultimately, peer-reviewed publications. As advisor, I take it as my responsibility to mentor and assist students in all the above activities and, whenever possible, involve students in my own research projects.

I expect students to be self-starters and take charge of their own graduate studies. Students should be proactive in ensuring they are making good progress toward degrees and in developing their own research programs. Under no circumstance will I be hovering over students to keep them up to speed.

I seek to develop an advisor-student relationship that is professional, trusting, and friendly. I consider my role as advisor professional in nature and therefore do not advise on personal issues. However, if a personal problem impedes a student's professional performance and progress, I would want to be informed of the circumstance and take it into account in my advising activities.

In the end, I seek to work closely with students to foster a graduate school experience that is intellectually stimulating and professionally fulfilling for students, and to build research collaboration with students in and beyond graduate school.