Maintaining a work/life balance as a master’s student

Morgan Furr talks soccer, building connections with your cohort and the importance of sticking to a schedule

Morgan Furr, a native of Memphis, Tennessee, first found an interest in Latin culture when studying abroad in Costa Rica in the summer of 2019.

The experience spurred Furr, who graduated from the University of Memphis in 2020 with a B.S. in sport and leisure management and a minor in international business, to look for a top master’s program where he could continue his studies on both Latin America and business.

“I was attracted to the school’s reputation, the dedicated career services staff, the cohort diversity and the location – who doesn’t love the beach?” Furr said.

Furr, now a Master of International Affairs (MIA) student with a focus on international management, explained in a Q&A what it’s been like to manage the program’s rigorous coursework, how staying active has been key in helping him maintain a work/life balance and what his plans are after graduation.

What do you like most about the master’s program so far?
My favorite part of the MIA program is the connection between the course syllabi and current events, and my favorite part about being a master’s student in general is the quality of my classmates. It is motivating to learn and work with such insightful individuals that have a variety of experiences and perspectives.

What’s been your favorite class so far and why?

My favorite class so far has been Marketing with professor Uma Karmarkar. I really enjoyed her teaching style as she managed to keep the entire class engaged, despite being on Zoom. In addition, I think learning how human tendencies can be used to generate profit in a corporate setting is an invaluable skill in the current job market.

Is there a facet of the program that has been most challenging? What is it, and why?

The most challenging part of the program is time management. Daily readings and frequent assignments can pile up if they’re all left to the last minute, so making a sleep-schedule-friendly agenda and sticking to it is key.

Is there a particular person at GPS that has made a big impact on you?

I could not imagine GPS without Stephanie Boomhower in Career Services. She personally gave me a tour of GPS when I randomly showed up on campus in March 2020, just before the COVID-19 outbreak. She is also from Tennessee, and I consider her one of my first friends at GPS. She goes above and beyond to help all GPS students, whether they are looking for summer internships or need some
reassurance after midterms.

What advice do you have for admitted GPS students?

I would tell admitted GPS students to anticipate being challenged, but prioritize a comfortable study-life balance. The first year curriculum can be particularly demanding, but making an effort to build connections within your cohort makes classes easier and free time more fun.

Amid your rigorous academic schedule, what steps do you take to strike a work/life balance?

I play intramural and pick-up soccer with other UC San Diego and GPS students about once a week. After soccer, we usually relax on the beach or grab some lunch or drinks nearby.

Tell me about some of your interests outside of school.

I am interested in traveling and sports. The next two places I would like to travel to are Vietnam and South Korea. My favorite professional sports teams are the Memphis Grizzlies, Pittsburgh Steelers and Manchester United.

After graduation, what do you hope to do?

I plan to stay in or near San Diego because I have really enjoyed living here for the last year and a half. Long term, I hope to work at the Olympic Training Facility in Chula Vista, but until then, I plan on working part-time while enjoying everything San Diego has to offer.