Support Tips

- **Professional school is a full time endeavor.** The class load is heavy and very different from traditional undergraduate (and even graduate) education because preparation for competence in a profession means that just about everything in every course is important! Courses build on each other and rely on successfully mastering previous content. Most courses require integration with knowledge from previous or concurrent courses. Think about professional education as a full time job and negotiate schedules so the student may dedicate at least 40 hours per week exclusively to his or her studies. That is uninterrupted time where they are the most alert and able to focus completely on their studies! And remember – sometimes they may need to spend more than 40 hours in a week on school work!

- **Professional school is an investment in the student’s and his or her family’s future.** There are some sacrifices involved now in order to reach that future. Dedicating “prime time” to being successful in professional school will make it much more likely that the student will be successful in his or her profession after graduation. Professional school is not a hobby or something to be done “after hours.” Help the student organize his or her life so that studies are given priority whenever possible. Large chunks of time are needed so the student can get in the groove of his or her studies!

- **Negotiate a daily family life routine and stick to it!** Distance students are more successful when there is a predictable routine around them as well as when they establish a predictable routine in their studies. Before the beginning of each semester negotiate routines (i.e. who will grocery shop, mow the lawn, do the laundry, etc. and when) and stick to them. Formally negotiate changes to routines when necessary rather than require the student to constantly adapt to changing demands. Unpredictability in daily life takes away time, energy and focus from studies.

- **Set up a separate and quiet study location at home.** Arrange a quite place in the home to study where he or she won’t be interrupted and which will not interfere with other family members. A separate room with a door is ideal, so distractions can be minimized. If a separate, quiet place cannot be arranged at home, understand the student may need to go to a library or somewhere else to study.

- **Help the student get rest and exercise!** The best students get eight hours of sleep a night, and engage in vigorous activity at least three times a week. This refreshes their bodies and keeps up their energy and attention for School.

- **Be supportive.** Provide a supportive atmosphere for your student to learn and grow. Encourage him or her to keep doing his or her very best work. Help him/her evaluate strengths and difficulties each semester so plans can be put in place the following term. Ask questions – but not too many… Show and interest in the student’s classes… and listen. Be prepared for when your student has had “one of those days” and nothing has gone right. Your student may just need you to listen and not try to solve the problem. Remove achievement pressure – ask about what they are learning, not just about grades.

- **Discuss finances.** Talk about the costs of professional school. Discuss how you and the student will manage professional education finances before school starts.

- **Remember that your student will change during professional education.** Professional education is transformative. Your student will be exposed to
Support Tips

new ideas, will develop new skills, and will look at the world differently. This is natural and can be inspiring. Do what you can to nurture your student’s growth and development.

- **Allow your student to experience discomfort… but remind them of their resources.** Experiencing discomfort allows the student to develop new coping skills and encourages problem solving and risk taking. But don’t let them get overwhelmed – remind them that there are resources available to them on campus, such as Academic Success Counselors, Chaplains, Academic Advisors, and other support staff.

- **Familiarize yourself with the students’ program and the resources available to them as distance students.** Visit the Office of Academic and Student Affairs’ website at http://spahp2.creighton.edu/oasa as a springboard. There you will find links to programs and support services. If your student doesn’t know where to find help, encourage him or her to talk to an Academic Success Counselor by calling (toll free) 1.800.325.2830 ext.3.