1. Have a commitment to school and research. Recognize that your priorities in graduate school are, in decreasing order of importance: your research, taking classes, and teaching. Your primary “occupation” is a graduate student. This is different from being an undergraduate student, where taking classes was primary. Being a graduate student entails more independence and more intensity.

2. Finish your degree in a timely manner, with at least one field season of data.

3. Complete your research proposal by the end of your first year. The research proposal should contain testable hypotheses, a timetable, and should cite the primary literature.

4. Form an advisory committee and have a meeting by the end of your first year. (Thereafter, students meet once/yr with their committee.) At the first meeting, you will discuss your proposal as well as the classes you plan on taking. Have a list of potential classes (and a few backups) prepared.

5. Be a good departmental “citizen” by attending seminars, thesis/dissertation defenses, and other departmental functions.

6. Become a member of TTUAB.

7. Recognize that your T.A. contract is only a 9-month contract, and I do not currently have R.A. money to support you over the summer. For summer money, you must let Dr. Holaday know (during Spring semester) that you want a summer T.A. You should also apply for summer grant money from TTUAB (another compelling reason to become a member), the TTU grad school (check out http://www.ttu.edu/~gradsch/), and various professional societies. Talk to your fellow grad students for potential summer funding sources. Trying to find summer money is not a trivial issue and should not be left until the last minute. Realize that if you are interested in a career in academia, scrambling for summer funds is something that you’ll be doing the rest of your career (my contract is only a 9-month contract, and I, too, have to seek out summer money from grants, teaching summer classes, or doing other work).

8. Present a talk or poster at least once (and preferably at least once/yr after your first year).

9. Have at least one manuscript ready for submission for publication by the time you defend.

10. Keep me apprised of your research progress on a yearly basis.

11. You must give me at least ONE WEEK time to review a manuscript, grant proposal, or presentation, or to write a letter of recommendation.