



A BALANCING ACT: PARENTHOOD AND ACADEMICS

All college students, whether they are undergraduates or graduate students, can agree that school comes with challenges. College life provides more personal freedom, but it also requires more responsibility to find a balance between personal life and schoolwork, such as attending class, completing assignments on time, studying for tests and exams, taking care of oneself, and participating in events.

Imagine dealing with all these challenges while being a parent and teaching a course as a graduate teaching assistant (GTA). **Vivian Asigri** and **Priscilla Owusu-Danquah**, both graduate students in technical communication, are students, parents, and GTAs.

A mother of two, **Asigri** was pregnant with her third child during the second half of the Fall 2021 semester and all through the Spring 2022 semester. She successfully rounded up the semester with the birth of a baby girl. In her own words, “With discipline, focus and determination, anything is possible.”

Asigri highlighted the importance of having a strong support network. She acknowledged the support she gets not only from friends and family members but also from members of the ETC faculty—from constant checkups and words of encouragement to deadline extensions on assignments.

According to Asigri, “Setting priorities helps to keep me motivated, lowers my stress level, and prevents procrastination. I set my priorities by determining what task is important and urgent, important but not urgent, and urgent but not important. And I make sure to complete the different tasks I have in this order.”

Owusu-Danquah is the mother of four, and her daily routine keeps her busy from morning to night. “I am always the first person to wake up in the morning and the last person to

go to bed in my house. My husband and I get the kids ready for school with their breakfast packs. Then I take them to the bus stop and make sure they get on the bus. Then I come back home to make sure lunch and dinner are ready.”

After she prepares the meals and leaves notes, she readies herself for school and walks to campus. “On some days, I attend two classes and teach a class. I usually go to the library afterwards to do my assignments.” She stays at school until her assignments are done.

Having a strong support system is crucial. She appreciates the support she receives from her husband and children. “Their support enables me to balance the demands of my personal and professional life.” She is also grateful for the understanding and support of ETC faculty.