What to Consider While Considering Graduate School
What is Graduate School?

Advanced programs of study - post bachelor’s degree

- Masters of Art (MA)
- Masters of Science (MS)
- Masters of Fine Arts (MFA)
- Masters of Education (MEd)
- Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD)
- Doctorate of Education (EdD)

Professional Degrees
- Doctor of Medicine (MD)
- Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)
- Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM)
- Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D)

*Some can be joint Bachelors/Masters
How is it different from undergrad?

UNDERGRADUATE

- Broad Knowledge
  - Told what to learn
  - Study, repeat knowledge
- Variety of Supported learning options
- Class sizes are 20-400
- FT = 12 credits
- Develop skills

GRADUATE

- Specialization of knowledge
  - Asked what you are learning and create knowledge by studying, critiquing, and applying the knowledge
- More independent work and less direction
- Class is “cohort”- usually 5-20 people
- FT= 9 credits (normal)
- Strengthen skills and develop higher orders of thinking (analytical, lateral, critical)
What should I consider if I am considering graduate school?
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What to consider…

• What funding opportunities exist?
• Full tuition and stipend are common
• Half tuition and stipend
• Out of state tuition waiver plus stipend
  • Travel costs
  • Cost of living
• Just monthly stipend
• Stipends come in form of:
  • Graduate Research/Teaching/Support/Rotating Assistantship
What to consider…

- What is my field of study?
  - Marine Biology- institution by the coast
- Is this a place I see myself living in for 2-6 years?
  - Weather
  - Demographics (of city and program)
  - Distance from personal community
    - Additional costs associated
  - Non-resident costs
  - Nature, social events, etc.
  - Offered online?
Consider…

- Is my research interest a research interest of the program?
- Are there faculty working on my research area? Or is it listed and there are no current faculty researching the area?
- Are there students currently working in similar areas?
- Does the research align with my future goals?
- Can I contribute to the knowledge and can they contribute to my knowledge?
- Are there enough faculty for my committee? In and out of dept.
- Is majority of faculty new or tenured?
Consider...

- Is the program newer?
  - Benefits & challenges
- What is the program known for?
- Does prestige matter to you?
  - Does the program make the student or does the student make the program?
- Does the program have partnerships with who you hope to be your future employer?
- Where do their graduates end up?
- Partnerships?
- Average graduation length?
- Final exam format?
  - Exam, Dissertation/thesis, Portfolio, internship
Consider…

Why do I want to go to grad school?
• Do I need to go or want to go?

Why do I need to go?
• Make more money in my field
• Job I want requires it

Why do I want to go Full time?
• Can I do it part time while working?
• Is now the time?

Is MY why going to make the challenge/expectations worth it?
• Social
• Health
It is ok to go because of these reasons…but it might be more difficult…

- Not sure what to do with your life
- **Avoid personal or financial responsibility**
- Avoiding difficult job hunting
- An excuse to relocate

Grad School Choice

WHY
It is ok to go because of these reasons…but it might be harder to finish…

- Not sure what to do with your life
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My advice: love the subject to decrease the hardships
It is ok to go because of these reasons…but it might be harder to finish…

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And remember: you made the best decision for you at that time
I highly recommend graduate school as a way to avoid the real world for 2 to 5 additional years.

**Questions?**

When you answer your first question in grad school hoping not to embarrass yourself.

**WITH THE KIDS, WORK, AND GRADUATE SCHOOL**

**I HARDLY HAVE ANY TIME TO RANDOMLY BREAK INTO SONG ANYMORE**
All good presentations cite sources…

- https://blog.linkedin.com/2014/10/10/what-it-takes-for-a-young-professional-to-get-hired-today
- https://www.vox.com/2014/5/20/5734816/masters-degrees-are-as-common-now-as-bachelors-degrees-were-in-the-60s
- https://www.campusexplorer.com/college-advice-tips/2CF6C616/Ten-Things-to-Consider-When-Choosing-a-Graduate-School/
- https://www.naspa.org/careers/graduate/factors-to-consider-when-applying-to-graduate-school
- https://www.usnews.com/education/best-graduate-schools/articles/2012/04/20/ask-7-questions-before-applying-to-graduate-school
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Thank you
Factors to Consider when Applying to Graduate School

- What type of a program interests you most? One with an emphasis in student development? higher education administration? counseling? public policy? or, another related field (i.e., community college, multicultural emphasis, etc.)?

- Are you interested in full-time or part-time study? Do you want to take classes during the day, in the evening, or on weekends? Are you interested in classes that are primarily online, campus-based, or a mixture of both?

- What type of institution would you like to attend? Public or private? Urban, rural, or suburban? Residential or commuter? Research or comprehensive?

- Where do you want to study? In a particular part of the country, or particular state? Are you willing to move? Or, do you want to stay close to home?

- What types of assistantships and/or professional experiences are available to students? Research opportunities? Publication opportunities? Assistantship and/or internship opportunities? Professional presentation opportunities?


- What are the faculty members’ areas of expertise or research interests? Are they involved in professional associations? What is the availability and quality of mentor/advisor relationships?

- What are the program’s academic requirements? Course requirements? Electives? Does the program require oral or written comprehensive exams? A thesis or dissertation? Are internships/practicums available? How many years does it “typically” take students to complete the degree?

- What are your personal career goals? Do you want to work in a particular functional area (i.e., Greek life, residence life, assessment)? Does the institution have student affairs departments in those areas?

- How important are peer and classmate interactions? Are your peers recent college graduates or have they been in the field for a number of years?

- What types of positions have most recent graduates of the program taken? Is there an active alumni network?