



# APPYING TO GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

---

Office of Career Services  
SUNY College at Brockport

WOODY 11/17/2003



# Today's outline

---

- The decision to attend
- Researching
- Application process
- Funding considerations
- Final decision



# The Decision: work or grad school?

## Pros/cons for GRAD SCHOOL

---

- PROS:

- Higher degree needed in field
- Well-thought out career plans

- CONS:

- Escaping job market
- Indecision about career and life direction



# The Decision: work or grad school?

## Pros/cons for WORKING

---

- **PROS:**

- Unclear about direction
- Work provides good perspective on content
- Employers like experience
- Earn money to pay for school
- Ready for a break

- **CONS:**

- Difficult to return after making money
- Reentering classroom may be difficult



# Research: how do I find information about different programs & schools?

---

- Talk with professors and graduate students
- Seek out the advice of professionals
- Career Resource Room, 101 Rakov
- The Web
- Request information from schools
- U.S. News & World Report



# Research: how do I evaluate all the different programs & schools?

---

- Faculty quality, including research interests
- Courses, emphases related to interests
- Prestige of institution
- Costs, financial aid, work opportunities
- Geography
- Opportunities for experiential learning
- Placement rates
- Accreditation of school
- Can I meet the admissions criteria?



# Questions to ask any graduate program...

---

- What do you teach here?
- What is the largest and the most typical class size for a graduate class?
- What are the criteria and selection process for selecting teaching assistantships, research assistants and fellows?
- I will probably need financial assistance. Can you tell me how most students fund their studies here?
- Will I get to develop my own topics or will I be expected to work on a professor's ongoing research?



# More questions....

---

- What is your attrition rate? Of those that don't finish, what are their reasons?
- What kind of student thrives in your program?
- What is the age, race, gender balance, ratio of married/single, and geographic origin or graduate students in the program?
- Can you tell me about your placement rates and types of jobs obtained by recent grads?
- How can I be a strong candidate for a program like this?



# What are the school's admissions criteria?

---

- Undergraduate Grade Point Average
- Major, minor, coursework
- Admission test scores
- Letters of recommendation
- Evidence of genuine interest
- Relevant work or research experience
- Interview
- Essays



# The Application Process: what are some of the things I need to do?

---

- Have transcripts sent
- Register for exams, send scores
- Ask for letters of recommendation
- Pay attention to deadlines!
- Write essays
- Apply to several schools (six is usually considered a prudent minimum: two safe schools, two middle of the road schools, and two reach schools).



# Graduate Exams

---

- Graduate Record Exam (GRE)
- Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT)
- Law School Admission Test (LSAT)
- Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)
  
- Career Services has teamed up with Kaplan to offer free practice tests available each semester.



# Essay Considerations

---

- **Questions to ask yourself:**
  - What work experiences have led you to want to pursue graduate education?
  - When and how did you become sure of your career direction?
  - How will graduate education help you in this regard?
  - How have you prepared yourself to succeed in graduate school?
  - What personal attributes make you likely to succeed in graduate school and your career?



# Ingredients of Strong Essays

---

- Great opening lines or paragraphs
- Convey glimpse of applicant's personality
- Substantial academic preparation and knowledge of subject matter
- Understanding of challenges and rewards of career
- Sense of maturity, teamwork skills, stamina, leadership
- Demonstrating how applicant plans to use graduate education, and understanding of 'big picture'
- Career Resource Room has a variety of books with examples and additional tips.



# Funding Considerations

---

- Contact schools for specific information on...
  - Work study
  - Assistantships (teaching, research, administrative)
  - Grants, fellowships, scholarships
  - Loans from banks, government, or institution
  - Information for financial assistance available in the Career Resource Room, 101 Rakov



# The Final Decision

---

- Review many of your prior considerations: Pros & Cons, funding, geography, career goals, professionals' advice, program quality, students' input...
- Eliminate options using criteria
- Trust general feel, intuition, first impression



# QUESTIONS?

---

Office of Career Services

101 Rakov

395-2159

[www.brockport.edu/career](http://www.brockport.edu/career)