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# Getting into the Graduate School of Your Choice: Process, Resources, and Insider Tips

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Presented by:

David Spivey

Assistant Director

Graduate College

[David.Spivey@nau.edu](mailto:David.Spivey@nau.edu)

# Workshop Agenda

- I. Introductions & Sign In
- II. Are You Ready for Graduate School?
  - Some Things to Think About
- III. Finding the Right Program
- IV. The Application Process
- V. NAU's Programs
- Q & A

# Why Go to Graduate School?

- Helps you keep up with advances in the field
- Broadens/expands your intellectual horizons
- Often required for changes in career interests
- Enhances career or salary advancement
- Required to teach in a community college/university
- Some professional jobs require a graduate degree
- Financial benefits
- Less likely to be unemployed

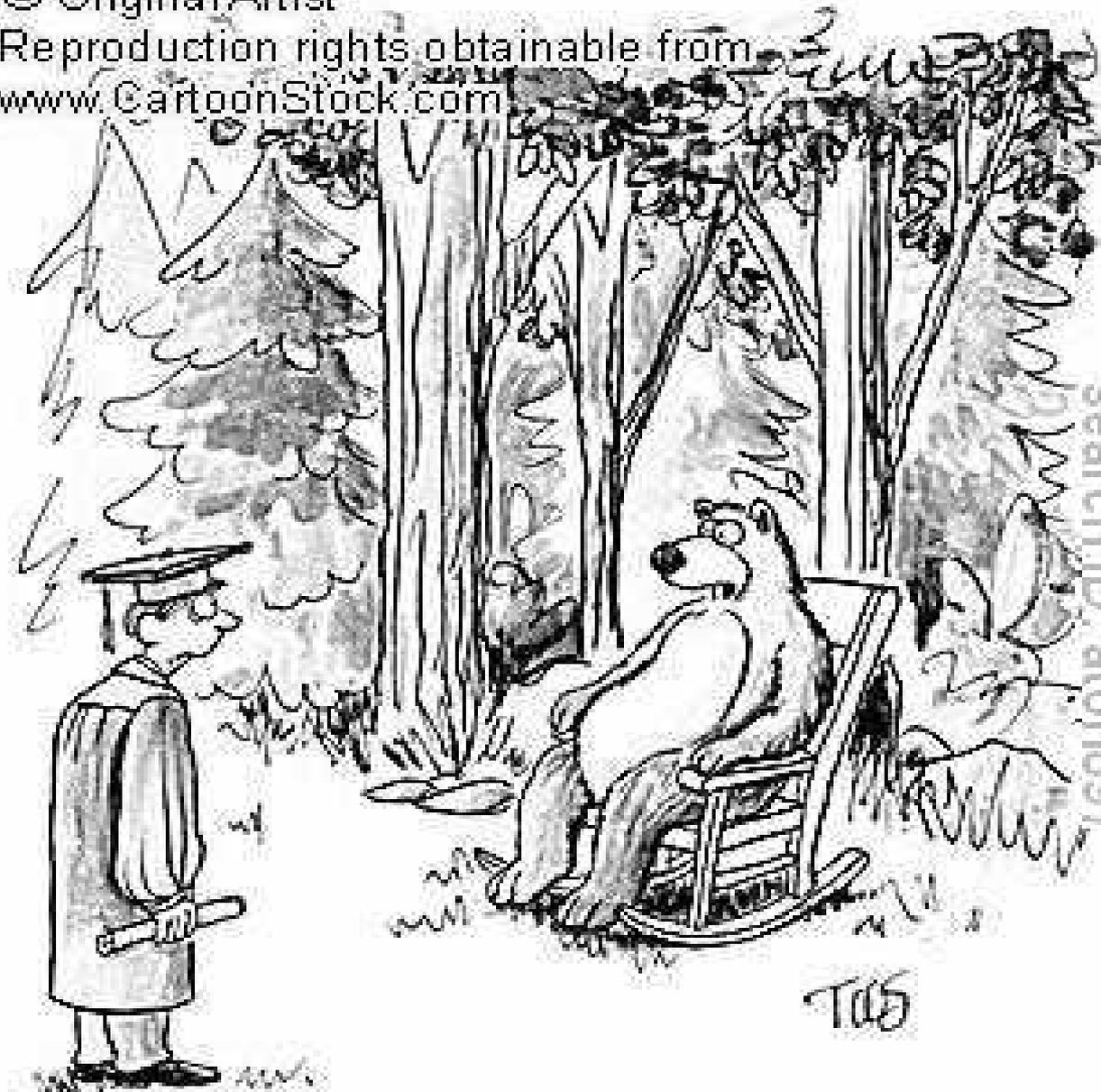
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# IS GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR EVERYONE?

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**"Sorry, but you need at least a Masters  
to get into the Deep Woods."**

# Really, is graduate school for everyone?

(see *blue* & *green* sheets in packet)

- Graduate school is demanding academically and personally
- You are often at a different life stage than undergrad
- High level of professionalism and maturity is expected
- More responsibility on projects that have broader impact on others/environment
- Polished writing and presenting skills often required
- Focused on area of interest
- Requires a lot more study time

# How Do you PAY for Graduate School?

- If you go part-time, generally you pay as you go, get student loans or assistance from your employer.
- For full-time students:
  - Graduate Assistantships
  - Tuition waivers & Scholarships
  - Out of state tuition is almost always waived if you have a graduate assistantship
  - Fellowships
  - Federal Student Loans (interest is low)
- If you have done your research well, the payoffs from the salary increase and the increased job satisfaction make it well worth it.

# Finding the Right Program

(see *lemon yellow* sheet in packet)

- Geographical restrictions, where can you live, not live
- Admission criteria
- Financial support available (assistantships, waivers, scholarships)
- Degree requirements
- Potential for employment
- Accreditation of program, university
- Talk to your professors re: good program matches for you
- RESEARCH, READ, START EARLY
- Make appointments to visit programs

# Finding the Right Program (con't)

- [www.gradview.com](http://www.gradview.com)
- [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)
- [www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com)
- <http://www.gradportal.org>
- <http://www.mba.com/mba/thegmat>
- [www.gre.com](http://www.gre.com)
- <http://www.lsats.com/>
- <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/>
- **NEW!!** <http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/grad>

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# The Application Process

*(orange-yellow, pink, and purple sheets from packet)*

# What Are Admissions Committees Really Looking for????

1. Academic Aptitude for Graduate Study
  - GPA – undergrad mainly but some schools will also look at grad work
  - GRE, MAT, LSAT, MCAT, etc. – be sure to sign up to take it well in advance of the deadline
2. Relevant Life Experience
  - Short-term and Long-term goals
  - Self Awareness
  - Aspects of Life that Relate to Experience
3. Work-Related Experience
  - Paid
  - Volunteer

# Admission's Committees (con't)

## 4. Potential to Contribute to the Profession and to the Program

- Professional Activities

- Association memberships

- Offices held

- Papers presented

- Publications

- Honors received

- Certificates

- Licenses

### b. Letters of recommendations

- At least two from professors, if possible

- Strong recommendations

## 5. Goodness of Fit for the Program

## 6. Writing ability

# What If I Am Not Strong In All Areas?

- Do all you can to enhance other areas:
  1. Join professional associations
  2. Get a paid or volunteer position
  3. Get help with writing
  4. Take a class or pay for a tutor on the GRE
  5. Get on someone's research team
  6. Have someone proof your writing

# Not Strong in All Areas (con't)

7. Get to know professors and ask for **STRONG** recommendation letters and if the recommender is not willing, look for a different recommender
8. Take some graduate courses—get recommendations, possible research team, bring up GPA
9. Research college, department, and professors and make sure your interests align with programs to which you are applying

# Be Sure To:

- Meet deadlines.
- Read and answer questions accurately.
- Ask for **STRONG** recommendations and if recommender can't give one, get another recommender
- Start with recommendations as soon as you've chosen the programs to which you want to apply. You cannot control this aspect!

# Be Sure To (con't)

- Make sure recommenders know the deadlines.
  - Make sure they know whether it's a form or if they have to draft a letter.
  - Estimate for them the time it should take to complete.
  - Provide helpful information such as the semester and year that you began your acquaintance with the recommender, bulleted points about you, perhaps your transcripts, your resume or vitae, copies of papers you did in the professor's class that include her/his comments, etc.

# Be Sure To (con't)

- Ask for notification of when forms or letters were sent by recommenders and provide your e-mail address. Better yet—make a 15-minute appointment with someone who has agreed to recommend you strongly and ask her or him to fill out the form or write the letter, put it in an envelope, sign across the seal, and give it to you so you can send it in with the rest of your application packet (make sure that's allowed by the program to which you are applying)

# Be Sure To (con't)

- Many programs have on-line application processes now where recommenders send letters and you can log in and track the completeness of your application file.
- No matter how good a writer you think you are, have a professor or friend who is an excellent writer edit your essays and statement.
- Do not list current personal problems and only refer indirectly to past personal problems if relevant to the application (e.g. application to psychology or counseling programs)

# Be Sure To (con't)

- Find at least two professors to write recommendations—preferably three.
- If it says write an essay up to a page, write a page or only 1-2 lines shorter.
- Read about the program in which you are interested and the college in which it resides.
  - Try to understand what the departmental and college goals are and use your essay to show how your goals are a good fit with the department and college.

# Be Sure To (con't)

- Look through professors' vitae and see who is doing current research that you are interested in. Best if more than one professor does work in that area.
- Look at the Program of Study and look up the classes in the on-line graduate catalog so you can describe what kinds of knowledge and skills you are expecting to obtain in the program.
- Use above POS to answer the “What kinds of skills do you think you need to improve upon” or “What are your weaknesses?” questions.
- If your instructor holds a doctorate, refer to her/him as Dr. (not Mr. or Ms., or by first name) unless indicated otherwise by the professor.

# NAU's Programs

- <http://home.nau.edu/gradcol/>
- Apply online:  
<http://home.nau.edu/gradcol/apply.asp>
- You must apply to NAU and to the specific program
  - \$65 application fee
  - Contact each program for deadlines

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# Q & A

Please fill out the **salmon** colored workshop evaluation sheet!