

## Graduate School in Biology and Environmental Science

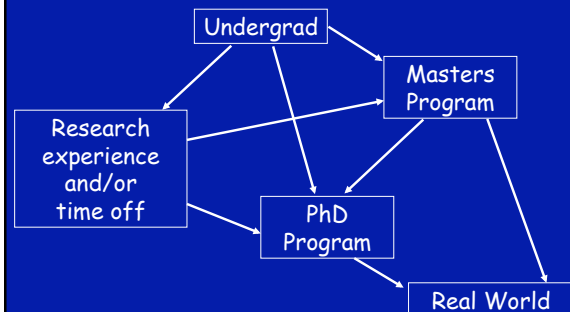
## What does graduate school entail?

- Research training not job training and certification (professional school)
- Focused study (thesis/dissertation) on a specific topic
- Preparation for a career in:
  - Research (academia, industry, government, non-profits)
  - Teaching (academia, non-profits)
  - Policy (government, non-profits)

## Is Graduate School For Me?

- What do I want to do with my degree?
- Do I want a thorough and deep understanding of my field?
- Am I highly self motivated?
- Should I go to grad school now or later?
- Should I pursue a Masters a PhD or both?

## Paths to and through Graduate School



## Grad School Basics

1. Apply - Interview - Acceptance
  2. Immersion - Form Committee
  3. Propose - Qualify
  4. Execute - Analyze - Defend
- Course-work is front loaded
  - Most positions are funded (RA, TA, Fellowship)
    - \$12,000 - \$20,000 stipend
    - Tuition waiver
    - Health Insurance
    - May include research/travel funds

## Applying to Graduate Programs

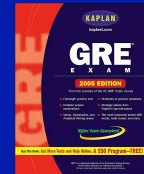
- Grades
- GRE Scores
- Research Experience
- Letters of Recommendation
- Personal Statement/Cover Letter
- Choosing an Advisor (or two)
- University Grad School vs. Department

## Grades and courses

- Do well.....'nuff said!
  - 3.0 or higher
- Take a stats/experimental design course (or two)
- Be aware of minimum GPA's
- Pre-requisites

## The GRE (www.gre.org)

- General test has three sections
  - Verbal (200-800)
  - Quantitative (200-800)
  - Analytical Writing (0-6)
    - Present a perspective on an issue
    - Analyze an argument
- Offered year-round via computer
- Become familiar with format.....practice!!!
  - [www.learningexpresslibrary.com](http://www.learningexpresslibrary.com)
- Consider a prep course
- Scores often used in ranking applicants
  - Within department
  - University Fellowships



## Research Experience

- Determine whether you enjoy doing research.
- Learn what is required to see a project through from start to finish.
- Undergrad research is one way of showing a potential grad advisor that you are familiar with research
- NSF REU & other summer research experiences
- Independent research at Rowan
  - Lab/Field Research
  - Volunteer and get involved in projects that may be ongoing

## Letters of Recommendation

- Develop personal relationships
- Use a variety of academic sources
  - Advisor
  - Research mentor (s)

## Personal Statement/Cover Letter/Letter of Interest

- Clearly and perhaps emphatically articulate your interest in the particular field
  - Potential research areas
    - Concepts & questions
    - Systems
    - Organisms
- Describe your research experience
- Articulate your preparedness

## Curriculum vitae (CV)

- Latin for "course of life"
- Academic resume
- Includes:
  - Degrees earned
  - Relevant positions held
  - Research experience and interests
  - Publications & presentations
  - Grants, honors, & awards
  - Outreach activities
- Often submitted with a cover letter

## Choosing a School and Advisor

- Determine general field of interest (ecology, genetics, cell biology)
- Recognize/minimize geographic constraints
- Browse departmental web sites
  - Info for prospective grad students
  - Grant-funded training programs
  - Faculty research interests
- Contact Faculty
  - Very briefly describe experience and your interest in their lab
  - Inquire about space and funding
- Identify grad student positions
  - Subscribe to listservs in your field of interest

## The application

- On-line vs. hard copy
  - App. form
  - All transcripts
  - GRE Scores
  - Letters of recommendation
- "Other information indicative of your academic and research abilities"
  - Personal statement/letter of interest
  - CV
  - Reprints and meeting abstracts

## Approximate Timeline

- Freshman Year
  - Do well in classes, identify interests
- Sophomore Year
  - Focus interests, identify prof's to work with, apply to summer research programs
- Junior Year
  - Take practice GRE's, carry out research, apply to summer research programs, contact potential grad advisors
- Senior year
  - Fall semester
    - Take GRE's, send applications
    - Many deadlines are in December
  - Spring Semester: Interview