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UCLA Academic Preparation and Educational Partnership (APEP) Committee Mtg.  
Wednesday, 25 May 2011
A. Graduate Admissions at UCLA

UCLA Graduate Schools are very popular and competitive.

- 22,464 applications for Fall 2010 (excludes Medicine, Law, and Dental)
- 6,339 offered admission (28%)
- 3,436 entered in Fall 2010 (54%)
B. Graduate Student Support

UCLA graduate students received $363M in financial support in 2009-10

- 10% controlled by Graduate Division
- 39% controlled locally (departmental funds, RA, TA, extramural, private)
- 46% controlled by Financial Aid Offices
- 5% controlled by other campus offices
C. Fellowships

Candidates are encouraged to apply for fellowships before entering graduate school.

- NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program
- Ford Foundation Pre-Doc Diversity Fellowship
- Jacob Javits Fellowship
- Paul and Daisy Soros New American Fellowship
D. Writing a Statement of Purpose (see Handout)

#1. General Guidelines

- Your voice to the Admissions Committee
- Your opportunity to stand out among many similarly qualified candidates.
- Length: Approx. 600 words or 2 pages
# 4. Demonstrate **maturity** about what you hope to pursue and why

Avoid simply stating: “I want to go to grad school...

- because I love to read.”
- because I love to learn new things.”
- because I want to make a difference.”
# 5. State what you have to offer?

- What makes you different?

- How do your interests match the faculty’s

- Mention faculty by name
# 7. Demonstrate your understanding of research methodologies

(e.g., qualitative, quantitative, narrative, exploratory, empirical, primary, secondary)

Have you participated in undergraduate research? (e.g., summer research programs)

“I documented detailed field notes, collected and coded a variety of student work samples, and conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with students who participated in the State Survey of a Chicano-American Literature course.”
# 9. Discuss **relevant** academic, volunteer, and employment experiences

- Highlight but don’t regurgitate your resume in your statement

- Instead, include your resume as a separate document
# 16. Explain how you can contribute to the university’s diversity imperative

- Display **drive and motivation** to persist and succeed in spite of barriers
- Describe **service efforts or programs** to increase participation of groups historically underrepresented in higher education
- Understand the barriers facing women, domestic minorities, students with disabilities
- Bring knowledge of **non-traditional backgrounds** to their research
Tips for Writing a Statement of Purpose

1. **General Guidelines:**
   - Your voice to the Admissions Committee
   - Your opportunity to stand out among many similarly qualified candidates.
   - Length = approx. 600 words or 2 pages

2. Understand that expectations for the statement of purpose vary by field, department, and faculty reviewer.

3. Demonstrate your knowledge of and familiarity with the department or school to which you are applying. Do your homework!

4. Demonstrate maturity about what you hope to pursue and why.

5. **State what you have to offer to the department. Convince the committee that you are qualified:**
   - What makes you different?
   - What makes you fit well with the established program?
   - How do your interests match the faculty’s?
   - List the faculty by name.

6. Express your interest in a particular topic/period/policy question. Speak to the general but also to the specific and convey that although you may have identified a particular research topic, you are open to others within the broad area.

7. **Demonstrate your understanding of the methodologies used for researching your questions (qualitative, quantitative, narrative).**

8. Make your statement personal but not too personal. Don’t divulge your full life story.

9. **Discuss relevant academic, volunteer, and employment experiences.**
   - Highlight but don’t regurgitate your resume
10. While some would argue that applying to undergraduate school requires showing your “well-roundedness,” getting into graduate school is more about showing your preparation for in-depth research.

11. Show some modesty.
   • Identify your strengths and don’t pretend to be the expert unless you have proven expertise
   • Show a willingness to be taught and to learn from the faculty

12. Be consistent and coherent in your presentation of ideas. Make sure there is a solid beginning, middle and end to your statement.

13. Compose a strong, captivating first sentence and paragraph. You want to entice the reader.

14. Describe your career trajectory/goals for life after the doctorate. How will you utilize your degree?

15. Avoid negativity. Explain in a positive and mature manner, anything unusual in your academic journey-hiatus, jobs, and scholastic transfers.

16. **Explain how you will contribute to the university’s diversity imperative**
   • Service or programs
   • Understand the barriers
   • Drive and motivation
   • Research and understanding

17. If you use a source, then cite it. Don’t plagiarize.

18. Don’t be sloppy. Have someone proofread.
• NSF Grad Research Fellowship Program
  o The NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program funds graduate students pursuing research-based master’s and doctoral degrees. The fellowship provides three years of funding to be used over a span of five years. While fellows are on tenure, they may receive a stipend of up to $30,000 and a cost of education allowance of up to $10,500. The program seeks to increase achievements in science and engineering, but has expanded to include some social sciences.
  Website: www.nsf.gov/grfp

• Ford Foundation Pre-Doc Diversity Fellowship
  o The Ford Foundation Predoctoral Diversity Fellowship is open to graduate students committed to a career in teaching or research at the college or university level. The fellowship is open to doctoral students in most sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The program seeks to increase diversity in higher education by funding students who:
    ▪ Respond to learning needs of students from diverse backgrounds
    ▪ Engage in communities that are underrepresented in the academy
    ▪ Are likely to use diversity as an educational resource.
  o The fellowship provides up to three years of funding including a $20,000 annual stipend and $2,000 towards the cost of education.
  Website: http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA_047958

• Jacob Javits Fellowship
  o This fellowship is both merit-based and need-based. The program is open to doctoral students and Master of Fine Arts students in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Fellows may receive a stipend of up to $30,000 and cost of education allowance of up to $13,755, the latter of which is subject to changes in national fees. Since the fellowship is also need-based, fellows must submit financial aid paperwork each year to demonstrate financial need. The need assessment is the basis for the stipend and cost of education allowance calculations for each fellow.
  Website: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits/index.html

• Paul and Daisy Soros New American Fellowship
  o The Paul and Daisy Soros fellowship is a privately-funded award open to first- and second-generation Americans. The fellowship is open to all fields of graduate study for use over two years. Awardees may receive up to $25,000 in maintenance grants and up to $20,000 in tuition support. Candidates must demonstrate “creativity, originality and initiative” in one of more aspects of his or her life and demonstrate commitment to the values expressed in the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.
  Website: http://www.pdsoros.org/

For more information regarding these fellowships please contact:
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