

# Interviewing and Professionalism

*Graduate School Conference*

*March 2, 2018*

# Workshop Agenda

- **Learning outcomes for today**
- **Your Preparation**
- **Sample Questions**
- **Interview dress**
- **Next steps**
- **Your additional questions and topics**

# Why do schools interview?

- **They want to know you!**
- **Applications and test scores only show so much . . . what other competencies do you bring? How will they see these:**
  - *Communication skills, Teamwork, Resiliency, Cultural awareness, Social skills, Reliability, Critical Thinking, Capacity for improvement, etc.*

# Preparation is Key

- **Arranging Interview – Prompt & professional responses**
- **Travel - Costs, time**
- **Do your research**
  - **School websites, professional associations, forums, professional journals**
  - **Use networking skills with current faculty, students and alumni**



# Preparation contiued

- **Know your own application thoroughly**
- **Be prepared to participate**  
(verbal & non-verbal communication)
- **Practice Questions\***
  - *The common and the challenging*
  - *What you ask can be just as important*
  - Practice your answers, use mock-interviews
- **Wardrobe\***



\*More details later

# Interview Day—What To Expect

- Length of time
- Presentations, poster sessions, tours, social activity?
- Time with students
- Food and water – snack before & between
- Minimize distractions – especially your phone
- Attend the “Meet & Greet” the night before
- Know your schools format (1on1, small group, etc?)



# Interviewing Formats

- Traditional Interview
  - Open or Blind?
- Panel Approach
- Situational Judgement Test  
(pre-interview with CASPer, sample)
- Group Problem-Solving
- Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI)



# Introductions and Common Questions

The two most common interview questions...  
What do you think they are?

- *Tell me about yourself*
- *What are your research interests?*



**Don't be fooled by the ease of these questions!**

**Icebreaker: The 30-second elevator speech**

# Other Common Questions

They can and will, draw from your personal statement, experiences, and research

Know your research (and other writings)!

- *What is your particular interest in our school?/Why is our [school/program](#) a good fit for you?*
- *What strengths or characteristics will you bring to the program?*
- *How do you adapt to change?*

# Behavior-based Questions

Questions about you, your experiences, your capabilities.

Know your application and use the STAR technique:

- *Tell me about a time when you needed to confront peers because of their behavior or lack of action.*
- *Share with me a time when you had to work with someone whose views on the topic were quite different than yours.*
- *Describe a time when you feel you didn't work up to your potential.*
- *Give an example about a time you needed to persuade a person or group make a change.*

# Questions About Extra-curricular Activities

What are schools really trying to find out?  
What did you contribute and gain.

- *Why did you choose to get involved in...? What did you gain from joining...?*
- *Tell us about your involvement in ..... What did you contribute? What did you learn about yourself?*
- *Are there clubs or activities you look back and wish you would have joined? What did you miss?*

# That dreaded question...

## Which question are you dreading the most?

- Know the weaknesses in your application
- Be prepared to possibly address them
  - *Academic rough starts (freshman year), valleys or poor marks along the way*
  - *Police, campus police, residence hall, honor code, and/or academic violations*
  - *Lack of, or less experience than typical applicants, in any particular area*

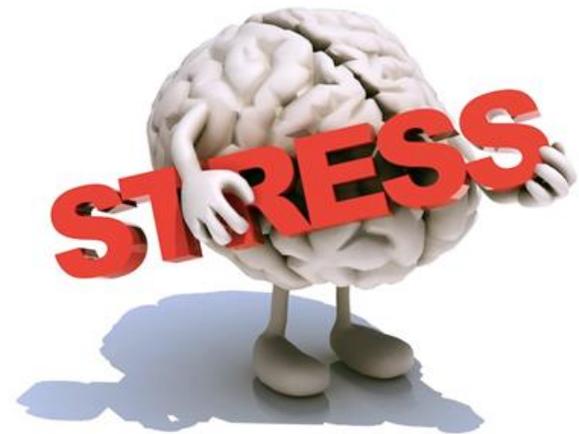
# Questions For You to Ask

If you could ask only one question of your interviewers,  
what would it be?

- You are interviewing the school, too
- Don't ask what is easily available on the web
- Never be caught without a thoughtful question – *prepare & write down 5-10*
- Know who to ask what questions
- Think about some of the most important elements in evaluating a school (to you)

# Stress Management

- This is not an easy process.
- What can you do to help yourself?
- Make a plan to manage your stress:
  - Effective planning and note taking
  - Mental perspective
    - Remember... *They like you!*
  - Physical perspective
    - Exercise, breathing
  - Visual success



# Thank You's and Follow Up

- Yes they are important and noticed!
- Committee vs. individuals
- Email and hand-written notes
  - Reference specifics from interview



# Dressing for the Interview

- “The Interview Suit”
  - Skirt suit, pant suit; must match
- Fabric, patterns
  - Dark colored; solid or SUBTLE pattern
- Tailoring – *worth the money*
  - *Hem; sleeves; buttons; tags & labels*
- What doesn’t matter:
  - price, designer, pleats vs. flat front, cuffs or straight hem



# What NOT to wear.

Have you ever made any of these non-professional fashion "fopeaux"?  
Use this guide to find out what's NOT appropriate to wear in any professional setting.  
Don't be embarrassed by making any of these mistakes at your next Job Fair or interview.



# Dressing for the Interview, cont.

- Shirt or blouse – *White is safe; smooth texture*
- Ironed and neat
- Dress shoes – *Heel height appropriate & comfortable; clean and use shoe polish for blemishes*
- Socks/hose/stockings – *Wear & match them*
- Belts – *Remember: leather matches leather*
- Ties and scarves – *Style, but not too much*
- Hair and accessories – *Keep it simple and clean*
- No Scents – *distracting and allergies*

# Preparations & Precautions

- Be prepared for ANYTHING!
  - Shoes for the campus tour
  - Dress for the weather – *Outerwear*
  - Luggage – *Don't check it*
  - Back-up clothes
  - Lint pad
  - Sewing kit, tape



"Before anything else, preparation is the key to success."

~ Alexander Graham Bell

# Reminders

- If you are invited, they are interested
- How you look and feel affects how they see you
- You will interview best:
  - *if you are prepared and have done your homework*
- Make your answers clear and thoughtful
- Interviewing is two-way: *Be prepared to converse*



# Other Resources

- University of Cincinnati Graduate School: <http://grad.uc.edu/>
- University of Cincinnati Career Coaching: <http://www.uc.edu/careereducation/coaching.html>
- NIH: Preparing for Graduate School Interviews: [file:///C:/Users/rothsa/Downloads/Slides-12\\_13\\_2010.pdf](file:///C:/Users/rothsa/Downloads/Slides-12_13_2010.pdf)
- Peterson's Graduate Admission Tips: <https://www.petersons.com/articles/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-tips-interview>
- APA – 5 FAQs about interviewing for Grad School: <http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psn/2015/01/interviewing-grad-school.aspx>
- GradSchools.com: <https://www.gradschools.com/get-informed/applying-graduate-school/graduate-school-interview/graduate-school-interview-questions>

# Your Questions?

*Explore – Prepare – Apply*