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Making Your Graduate Application Stand Out

Theresa Culley
Biological Sciences

Cheri Westmoreland
McNair Scholars Program

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Applying

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Do everything early!

- Gather information
- Tests – GRE
- Applying
- Essay – Personal Statement
- Request Letters of Recommendations

Applying

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Contact Potential Graduate Advisors!

- Ask UC faculty for suggestions
- Read current literature
- Google your interests
- Send introductory email

These are your advocates on the inside!!

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Letter of introduction:

- Address it specifically to advisor

  NO FORM LETTERS!

- Ask if space is available
- Give your research interests
- Describe applicable experience and/or classes
- KEY: research, publications, presentations

Review your personal information online - Facebook, etc.

Tests

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- GRE is standard for graduate school
  - (Quantitative/Verbal/Written or Subject)
  - But check as some programs are no longer requiring GRE

- TIPS:
  - Study!!
  - Practice tests, GRE testing materials
  - Accommodations for verified disabilities

Essay – Purpose Statement

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- Purpose for attending graduate school
- Your educational background
  - Research
  - Work experience
- Your Professional background
  - Associations
  - External opportunities
  - Scholarships and awards
  - \
- Lessons Learned

Essay – Purpose Statement

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- Reflect on the uniqueness of your background
- Be specific about your goals
- Connect your experiences, education, and motivations to the program you have selected
- Check spelling & grammar!

Letters of Recommendation

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- Start early
- Don’t blindside people
- Talk
- Provide a letter, resume, personal statement, and information about the graduate programs

Best Letters of Recommendation

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- Have worked with you closely – ***Faculty Mentor***
- Have known you long enough to write with authority – ***Academic Advisor***
- Have relevant expertise – ***Professors***
- Are senior and well-known – ***Departmental Chair or Dean***
- Have a positive opinion of you and your abilities
- Have a warm and supportive personal style

Advice on Letters

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- Give your writers plenty of time
- Give them a well-organized, thorough packet of materials
  - Resume/Purpose statement
  - Any forms that are supposed to be submitted with letter
  - A cover letter
  - Information on graduate program or scholarship
  - Supporting documents

Reminders

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- Waive your rights to see recommendations – confidential letters tend to carry more weight with admissions committees
  - Some faculty will only write confidential letters
- Follow-up to remind them to write/send your letter
- Have a clear deadline
- Drop them an email or a verbal reminder a week before your deadline
- Thank them! Card or email

While you are waiting…

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- Double check everything
  - Confirm that all pieces have arrived successfully
- Possible interview (phone/Skype)
  - Be prepared to impress the committee with your passion for your field, your reasons for pursuing a graduate degree, and your qualifications.
- Fill out FA forms, if applicable

The Offer Process

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- Most programs will admit a first cohort of students
  - Additional students maybe admitted as space/funding remains
  - Some admitted to MS instead of PhD
- Recruitment Visit
  - Many programs will pay for you to come visit
  - If not, ASK!!
  - Opportunity to meet with potential advisor, talk with current grad students

Choose the school that…

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- Has the best graduate advisor(s) for you
- Matches your research interest
- Has the best program for your needs
- Best fits into your budget
- Has the best campus
- If no school matches your criteria perfectly, bend a little

If you are not admitted…

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- Improve references, test scores, and essays
- Apply to Master's programs rather than PhD
- Apply as a non-degree student
  - But be careful in Ohio because of 174 graduate credit hour limit
- Apply to different schools or reapply to your current choices next year

Resources on Campus

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Ronald E. McNair
POST BACCALAUREATE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

University of CINCINNATI | GRAD SCHOOL

Learning Commons

AWC
ACADEMIC WRITING CENTER

NCA
Nationally Competitive Awards

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
experiencereflectintegratetransform