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Tech Talk

Graduate School Applications

New Mexico State University

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September 17, 2013



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Agenda

- Because Presentations have agendas
 - Graduate Application Advice
 - Resume Tips
 - Career Fair Interaction Advice
 - Questions & Answers

Questions Policy

Ask it when it comes to you!
If we don't finish that is a great thing.

Graduate School App Advice

- Goal : Get in
- Truth : It's a game and a crapshoot.
- Big/Best/Good/In demand programs demand programs receive huge volumes of applications.

Things out of your control

- Number of applicants.
- Mood of your reviewer
- Diversity Quotas (Diversity Blind Admission)
- Tax Situation

Things you Can Control

- Quality of your Application
- Timeliness of your Application
- Who your letters of rec are from
 - MIT tracks students through graduation and flags professors that over-hype failures.
- How easy it is to write a letter of rec for you
 - Lots on this

Application Timeliness

- Your Goal :
 - Finish before Thanksgiving on everything you can (essays, resumes, letter of rec prep*)
- Why?
 - You're not going to make it and your professors are even slower.

Letters of Recommendation

- Getting Letters of Recommendation should be painful for you.
- But easy for your professor/recommender!
- Lets Put ourselves in your professors shoes:
 - Lots of these every year
 - They forgot how awesome you were
 - There is little/no financial incentive for them

Letter of Rec Plan

- Step 1 : The Approach
- Step 2 : Letter Allocation
 - AKA: Fantasy Letter League Draft
- Step 3: Doing the work for them
- Step 4: The Care Package
- Step 5: The follow up

Step 1: The Approach

- First off Ask for a “Good Letter of Rec”
 - Its ok if they say no. You don’t want them sandbagging you.
 - This is the easiest part
- Get a feel for how many letters they can stomach
 - The letter of rec “Care package” may give you wiggle room
- Going in last minute is Rude

Step 2: Letter Allocation

- 4 Professors & 26 Schools is Rude
- Ask professors how many you are willing to do

Then:

- 1.) Rank your schools. #Letters/School?
- 2.) Begin to assign your best letters to your dream schools.
- 3.) Don't forget safety schools.
- 4.) See if you need more letters. Or Drop a fluff school
- Get Nerdy: SPREADSHEETS, COLORS, MATRICES

Step 3: The grind (1/2)

- This piece of advice is the crux of this talk:

You will write the letter for them.

Doing this Hurts a lot. Its not fun or Easy.

- You probably remember all the details better.
 - Your professors really do love you, but they forget how much all the time.
- What you are handing them is “Seed Material”
- I like to call this “Letter of Rec Cheating”
- Be humble about this. Some may not want the help.

Step 3: The grind (2/2)

- Additional Seed Material:
 - Resume
 - Abstracts of All your Academic Wickedness
 - Pictures/Descriptions of your successes

Give them the tools to paint the best picture of you that they can.

Don't leave them hanging.

This is about you and your future.

Step 4: The Care Package (1/2)

- Nice pre addressed Envelopes for mail in's.
 - None of that Licking stuff. Get the sticker kind.
- An Email with all the links they could need for the digital letter applications
- Your New Awesome LaTeX resume
- Separate Summary of your Academic Awesomness
- More ->

Step 4: The Care Package

- Your pre-written letter of recommendation. **Digital** & Paper
 - Copy Paste Saves Time. Deliver in simple text
- Comfort food and Coffee
- A Checklist w/ due dates (if you have a multiple schools w/ this person)
- Deadlines that you have “fudged forward”.
 - Their due date should not be your due date.

Step 5: The follow up

- This is where knowing their office schedule and personal/office/cell phone numbers comes in handy.
- Remember that Letter Allocation Matrix?
 - Now It is a checklist, here are good things to check:
 - 3rd Party email received
 - Letter of Rec Sent
 - Confirmation Received