Psi Chi/UPO Meeting Minutes

11/3/14

Graduate Students Perspectives on Graduate Life

Overview: Six graduate students from various programs presented their perspectives on applications and life in Graduate School.

What does a typical week looks like?

Clinical Perspective

* It varies between years and program.
* Take about 2-3 class per semester. (Which equals about 6 hours)
* All have placements in Clinical Program (such as Madonna)
* All other time is devoted to research in individual and laboratory-based research.

Neuroscience and Behavior

* Research is the main emphasis.
* Very little class time.

Social Psych

* Class requirements that are more tailored to specific research experiences.
* Lab-focused research and meetings are a large majority.

Developmental

* Required to attend seminars throughout the semester.
* Take electives for class work.

Cognitive

* Able to focus on what that you want to study.

Psych-Law

* Balance of research and placement.
* 3 classes per year and research is majority of time.

What do you do to stay socially connected as a grad student?

* Cohorts tend to be good places to meet people.
* Going out and meeting people in the community.
* Orientations and gatherings such as workshops.
* Academia eats up a lot of your time, so there is not a lot of spare time?

Did you have any problems/doubts about what you wanted to study?

* Freedom to pursue interests is more available after you are accepted into a program.
* Make sure that you are really wanting to be a graduate student.
* Be someone who is motivated to work hard.

Does your advisor have an effect on your experience in grad school?

* Mentorship/learning style varies by advisors, so you should know what kind of learning that works well for you.
* Look more at the research and the program focus, rather than cool places to live.
* Also look for personality match with your advisor.
* Get graduate students’ perspectives of their programs. Observe how they are doing in the program.
* It is not only that you are a good fit for your program, but also whether or not the program is a good fit for you.
* It doesn’t hurt to send e-mails to contact Mentors prior to submitting applications.
* Read up on their research before you contact them so you have a more informed conversation with them.

What was the experience like when you applied?

* It varies depending on which program that you are applying to. Some programs invite all applicants, some are only a meeting with your advisor.
* Every interaction during the interview process is part of the interview.
  + Be enthusiastic all of the time.
  + You should also have a small speech (elevator-type) about yourself.

How do you list your lab experiences?

* List your more relevant skills in your personal statements.
* May list what the lab researched in general

Personal Statements

* Start early.
* Have a lot of feedback from various people.
* Format your experiences as more programmatic than chronological.
* Make sure that your interests in the last paragraph make sense as to why you are applying.
* Be succinct (1-2 pages).
* Have a “hook”.
* Delete clichés and those experiences listed in your CV.
* Be upfront about your research interests (don’t lie about them).