

ATTENDING GRADUATE SCHOOL

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ATTENDING GRADUATE SCHOOL

Attending graduate or professional school may be an option you are seriously considering. If so, your decision should be based on careful reflection and clarification of your work/life goals. The decision to attend graduate school is a very personal one, and the reasons to enroll may vary from individual to individual. This booklet¹ will outline some important considerations you may contemplate as you make your decision, along with information on researching and evaluating graduate schools/programs and completing the application process.

Considerations: Should I go? If so, when?

Since you need an advanced degree to practice law, medicine, and to teach at the college/university level, you may wish to attend graduate school right away. Another common reason to go directly to graduate school is a strong interest in a particular discipline. You may find yourself simply wanting to learn more about your field of interest. If this is true, you are likely to find graduate training a satisfying and rewarding experience.

It is not uncommon for recent college graduates to lack a clear idea of career options; however, going to graduate school to find your focus is not recommended. Graduate schools will expect you to have clearly defined interests leading to an area of specialization. Pursuing graduate school can also be a time-consuming and costly endeavor. If you are unsure about your career options and interests, you may want to first evaluate your skills, goals, and values. There are many ways you can complete this assessment, including meeting with a career counselor, researching different career paths, and/or utilizing computerized assessments. This self-evaluation is critical to a successful graduate program search and for your happiness.

Some employers, including those in management, social work, and elementary/secondary education, recommend gaining practical work experience before pursuing a graduate degree. They believe you will be better qualified with a couple of years of work experience before starting graduate school. Thorough research into your area of interest should provide you with the information necessary to make a wise choice. Work experience before graduate school will also help you gain a different perspective than your undergraduate educational experiences and may help you better understand the theoretical concepts taught in graduate programs. Work experience will also help make your application to graduate schools stronger, especially if you have a low or mediocre undergraduate GPA or graduate entrance examination score.

Some recent college graduates need a break from intensive studies, but are afraid if they don't go directly to graduate school they may never return. If you feel certain that you need a break, don't let this fear prevent you from following your instincts. Many people successfully complete graduate programs after taking time off from study. Many individuals also work while taking graduate courses as their schedule and finances permit. If you do not go right to graduate school, you might still want to take the GRE, LSAT, or other appropriate test during your senior year. The scores remain valid for five years.

The decision to attend graduate school can be a difficult choice. Make certain your choice is based on a thorough assessment of your work/life goals and an appraisal of the advantages and shortcomings of following the graduate school path. Once you have made the decision to pursue graduate/professional school, the next step is to research programs and then apply to your final choices.

RESEARCHING/EVALUATING SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS

Choosing the graduate school and program that best fits your needs is an important process. With so many options, this may seem overwhelming. Graduate programs vary greatly and it will be worth your time to thoroughly research your options. The following are general guidelines to help you identify your needs and narrow your choices for final applications.

Consider values, interests, skills, and goals.

¹ Much of the material in this guide is based on the information in Peterson's Graduate and Professional Programs: An Overview, published by Peterson's, Princeton, NJ.

Ask questions such as: What do I want to do with my liberal arts degree? What do I want to do with additional education? Do I want to go to graduate school immediately after graduation or should I wait a few years? Am I willing to commit the time, effort, and personal and financial resources that pursuing a graduate degree requires?

Think about what is important to you in a graduate program and make a list of your top criteria: field of study, school size, geographic location, financial assistance, faculty (current research and publications), and degrees offered.

You may find it helpful in your self-assessment to write out answers to the following list of questions and then talk about them with friends, an adviser, and/or a counselor.²

- What are my long-term goals? What would I like to be doing in five or ten years? Will a graduate degree help me achieve my long-term goals?
- Do I enjoy this field of study so much that I can picture myself spending most of my time on it for years to come?
- Should I go to graduate school straight from college or work for a few years first?
- Do I have an aptitude for the type of work I will be doing in graduate school?
- Do I have the academic and professional qualifications that will enable me to pursue this degree? If not, what do I have to do to make up for my lack of qualifications?
- Do I have the motivation, self-discipline, self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and persistence required to earn a graduate degree?

Research areas of interest, institutions, and programs.

A visit with your faculty advisor is highly recommended. Your advisor may know popular programs among Luther graduates and make suggestions based on your needs. Some departments have graduate school program guides specific to your discipline. You may also want to contact alumni, current professionals working in the field, and others around the Luther community who can offer insight and information about graduate programs and schools. The Career Center has a complete set of *Peterson's Guides*, which includes information on graduate programs and degrees offered at more than 1,500 institutions. The *Peterson's Guides* offer information on entrance and degree requirements, expenses, financial aid, and faculty research specialties. Consulting professional journals will also help you identify the faculty who are leaders in their field. This could be an important factor in your decision about which graduate program would be best for you. There are also many good resources on-line to help in your search. *Petersons.com* and *GradSchools.com* are both excellent for quickly identifying graduate schools by field of study and by geographic region. The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) provides an on-line tool in which students can plug their GPA and LSAT score to identify law schools where they may be competitive applicants.

Based upon your research, make a list of schools that match your criteria.

This list may include approximately 10-20 graduate programs. If you would like more detailed information about these programs, write to the graduate schools and request their graduate bulletin and other information of interest to you (use the application record sheet at the end of this handout to record your search progress). When you have the information needed, rank the schools, first according to interest and then according to selectivity. It might be helpful to create three categories of selectivity: 1) schools that would be competitive for you to get into; 2) schools that you would have a good chance of getting into; and 3) schools that you would have a very good chance of getting into. You might consider applying to some schools from each category. In the end, you may want to shorten your list of programs to six. If this is difficult for you, talk with advisors or counselors to help narrow your choices for application. You may also want to contact the department chairpersons of graduate programs you would like to learn more about. You can ask about current research by professors and learn more about the focus of their graduate or professional program. A visit to their graduate school may also be appropriate at this point.

The following items can be useful in judging the educational quality of graduate programs:³

² These questions are taken from *Game Plan for Getting into Graduate School*, by Marion Castellucci

³ The following list is quoted with permission from Cornell University Office of Career Services.

Faculty

- Academic training
- Research activity
- Research productivity
- Teaching effectiveness
- Concern for student development
- Involvement in program affairs
- Group morale and *esprit de corps*

Students

- Academic ability at entrance
- Achievements, knowledge, skills at time of degree completion
- Professional accomplishments of graduates
- Judgments on program quality
- Satisfaction with various aspects of program
- Group morale or *esprit de corps*

Resources

- Library
- Financial support
- Laboratory equipment and facilities
- Computer facilities

Operations

- Purposes of the program
- Course and program offerings
- Admission policies
- Faculty welfare
- Evaluation of student progress
- Program leadership and decision-making
- Job placement of graduates
- Advisement of students
- Student-faculty interaction
- Internships, assistantships, and other opportunities to gain relevant experiences

APPLICATION PROCESS

Requesting Application Materials

Call, write, or e-mail the graduate school admission department for each school you are considering and request an application form, bulletin, and financial aid information. There is no need to include information about yourself at this point. A neatly typed or handwritten postcard or brief phone call or e-mail is sufficient. Once you receive the application information, read it carefully to determine exactly what you need to provide for the admissions committee and what the deadlines are. If there is a range of dates for submitting the application it is sometimes beneficial to submit as early as possible (the majority of the applications arrive near the final deadline).

Many schools today are offering the opportunity for students to apply on-line. If you apply on-line you will still need to send the fees and official transcripts by mail. Whether you choose to mail in your application or submit it on-line, be sure to send in all the materials as close to the same time as possible. Try to avoid sending it in separate pieces. For some professional schools there are services that help coordinate applications for their member schools (AMCAS for medical school, LSDAS for law school, PharmCAS for pharmacy school, etc.). You send your personal, educational, and employment data to the service and they forward it, along with your test scores, to each school you apply to. They all allow

you to type your application information once and then send that information to multiple schools.

Testing Requirements

The Career Center has GRE, LSAT, and GMAT application booklets available (the MCAT is now available only online – see pages 17-18 for web addresses). You can also access this information on-line (see pages 17-18 for web addresses). Testing requirements vary between programs and institutions so read all application materials carefully. You should also be aware of testing dates and deadlines. Missing any testing deadlines may affect your graduate school application.

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

General Test

This is the most common graduate admission test and is used by many graduate programs. Check with the program/school for requirements. The GRE general test is now only available in the computer-based format. This format is different from the old paper-based format in two basic ways: 1) When you answer a question correctly the next question is at a higher level of difficulty, and when you answer a question incorrectly the next question is at a lower level of difficulty; and 2) It scores each answer as you go so you cannot go back and change an answer. It is highly recommended that you complete some practice tests using the computer-based format. Go to the GRE web site (see pages 17-18 for web address) for both free and paid test preparation materials. The GRE general test is offered year-round at test centers throughout the United States. Tests are usually offered every day of the week but spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis. When making a reservation, be sure that you are able to make it on that date. The Educational Testing Service has significant financial penalties for changing or canceling test reservations. Check the GRE web site to locate a testing center closest to you and to learn about the details concerning the cancellation policy.

Once you have completed the computer-based test you have the option to see your unofficial scores immediately. Official scores are sent to your designated recipients within 10-15 days.

Subject Tests

You may need to take the advanced test in your subject area as well as the general test. The GRE subject tests are still offered only in the paper format. These paper-based tests are offered much less frequently than the computer-based general test. Application must be made four to six weeks in advance. It takes approximately six weeks for your scores to be available. The subject test may be taken as late as December. Check to make sure that taking the exam in December doesn't interfere with application deadlines.

You can select up to three schools to receive your scores for both the general and the subject tests at the time you take them. There is an additional fee to have scores sent at a later date. Your scores remain valid and available for five years.

There are several other admission tests that may be required for graduate or professional school:

- Dental Admissions Test (DAT): used by dental schools.
- Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT): used by almost all business and management schools.
- Law School Admission Test (LSAT): the only test score used for application to law schools.
- Miller Analogies Test (MAT): sometimes used instead of the GRE as a basic aptitude assessment tool.
- Medical College Admission Test (MCAT): the medical school admission test used by all medical schools, including osteopathic medicine and podiatry.
- Pharmacy College Admissions Test (PCAT): used by pharmacy schools.

Again, check to see what is required for entry into your school. Check deadlines!

Transcripts

Official transcripts sent directly from your school's registrar's office are required by most admissions committees. Photocopies are rarely, if ever, accepted. Transcripts usually do not take long to order but you should plan ahead, especially at times of the year when the registrar is most busy.

Letters of Recommendation

A key component to your graduate school applicant will be letters of recommendation from professors, previous work supervisors, and other individuals who are in a position to comment on your academic abilities, work ethic, intellectual curiosity, tenacity, confidence, and other attributes needed for successful graduate study. We strongly encourage you to work on securing your recommendations as the first step in completing your application materials since you have the least control over this process. In approaching faculty/employers, ask if they can write you a strong recommendation. Pick those who know you best and will write an articulate statement about you. At least one of the letter writers should be the head of your major department or a full professor. It is a good idea to solicit one more recommendation than is required just in case one of the letters does not arrive on time.

Once you know who your recommenders are, be sure to give them a copy of your transcript, your personal statement, examples of your work, and a resume or curriculum vita. (A curriculum vita is an academic resume that goes into specific detail about one's educational background). You will also want to investigate how the recommendations can be submitted. If there is an online form that must be completed, make sure to have the email addresses for your reference writers available as you will likely need to supply them to the school so they can send a link and password for the online form to your reference writers. If letters are to be mailed in (perhaps along with an evaluation form), provide addressed, stamped envelopes for your writers to use and any forms necessary.

If you are not required to use a common application system (like AMCAS, LSDAS, etc.), the Career Center would encourage you to consider creating an account with Interfolio, Inc. (www.interfolio.com). This service allows you to create an electronic portfolio in which to store and distribute your letters of reference. There are modest fees for creating an account, but this service greatly facilitates things for you and your reference writers when applying to graduate school. For example, a professor could write and upload a confidential letter of reference into your account which you could then distribute (via email or postal mail) to several graduate programs simultaneously. You know when the letter is written and when the letter is sent. Students are not required to use this service, but again, we would strongly encourage you to consider doing so.

In closing, make sure to advise your writers of any deadlines – and check back in two to four weeks to see if recommendations have been sent. The main idea is to make it as easy as possible for them by providing them with everything they need. Be sure to thank them!

Personal Statements

Of all the tasks you must complete when applying to graduate or professional school, writing the personal statement (sometimes called an application essay) is often the most difficult. Nevertheless, this is an important opportunity to express yourself beyond your GPA and admissions test scores. The personal statement usually addresses your motivation and interests for following your particular career path and why you are interested in a particular program/institution. Each graduate program will likely ask different questions and may require a different format. Questions may be very specific and give little latitude for content or they may be quite general giving you greater freedom in your writing. Whatever type of application you are writing a personal statement for, make sure you carefully read the questions and instructions.

Be prepared to spend time on each personal statement. If you are feeling frustrated and stuck, RELAX. This is normal. The first draft won't be perfect. Remember the word "personal" when you begin writing. Your personal statement should portray you as unique and show that you have gone through a thorough self-examination. Try not to sound canned or generic and don't just write what you think the graduate program wants to hear. These are common mistakes by writers. Overall, your personal statement should help persuade the admission committee that you are a good match for their program. You must provide the most compelling reasons, in the format they request, for acceptance into their program. Your advisor and/or someone from the Career Center can help critique your draft. The Career Center has books in its library to help you get started with this process.

You might find the following questions helpful as you initially approach writing your personal statement:⁴

- "What's special, unique, distinctive, or impressive about you or your life story?"
- "When did you originally become interested in this field and what have you since learned about it?"
- "How have you learned about this field?"

⁴ The following questions were taken from Robert Stelzer, *How to Write a Winning Personal Statement*.

- “What are your career goals?”
- “Have you had to overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships in your life?”
- “What personal characteristics do you possess?”
- “What skills do you possess?”
- “What are the most compelling reasons you can give for the admissions committee to be interested in you?”

The following is one possible structure for your personal statement:

- opening paragraph
- paragraph about academic experiences, influences, theories, etc.
- paragraph about related research, fieldwork, internships, work, etc.
- paragraph about why graduate/professional school? why this school?
- paragraph about how graduate/professional school fits with life or career goals
- closing

Below are some of the factors admission committees use to evaluate personal statements:

- motivation and commitment to field of study
- expectations with regard to the program and career opportunities
- writing ability
- major areas of interest
- research and/or work experience
- educational background
- immediate and long-term goals
- reasons for deciding to pursue graduate education in a particular field and at a particular institution
- maturity
- personal uniqueness – what you would add to the diversity of the entering class
- innovation and creativity

Some final suggestions:

- make sure you answer the question(s) asked
- maintain a positive tone
- follow the stated word limits
- type (unless otherwise stated) and meticulously proofread your material
- avoid obvious clichés (e.g., “I’m good with people”); be specific when necessary
- be sure to proofread; have someone else proofread also

Evaluating your Personal Statement

Questions to think about after you have completed a draft of your statement (you can also give someone else a copy of your statement along with these questions to get their feedback):⁵

1. Did my opening paragraph capture your attention?
2. Did you find the statement as a whole to be interesting?
3. Did you find it to be well written?
4. Did it seem positive, upbeat?
5. Did it sound like me?
6. Do you regard it as an honest and forthright presentation of who I am?

⁵ The following questions were taken from Robert Steltzer, *How to Write a Winning Personal Statement*

7. Did it seem to answer the question?
8. Can you think of anything relevant that I might have inadvertently omitted?
9. Is there material within the statement that seems inappropriate?
10. Did you gain any insight about me from reading the statement?
11. Did you notice any typos or other errors?
12. Do you think the statement has in any way distinguished me from other applicants?
13. Do you think my application to _____ is logical?

Interviews, Portfolios, and Auditions

If you are applying to medical school, business school, or selected other professional programs you will most likely have to participate in an interview. As with the personal statement, this is an opportunity for you to give the admissions committee a more personal sense of who you are. Be well prepared, and try to relax and just be yourself.

Students applying to art, journalism, and other similar fields may have to submit a portfolio of your work. “The function of the portfolio is to show your skills and ability to do further work in a particular field, and it should reflect the scope of your cumulative training and experience.”⁶

An audition is usually part of the admissions process for students applying to graduate programs in music, theater, and dance. Be sure to have a clear understanding of what the admissions committee expects for the audition since details will vary from program to program.

Resume or Curriculum Vita (CV)

Complete a resume or a curriculum vita (CV). A resume presents your education, work and/or volunteer experience, work skills, activities, and honors that relate to your job objective. A CV is an academic resume which highlights your degree(s), research experience, teaching experiences, publications, professional associations, and scholarly lectures or presentations. Consult with your adviser or with someone in the Career Center if you have questions. A resume or CV may not be required, but it is better to be prepared!

FINANCIAL AID

Paying for graduate school may seem like an impossible task; however, do not write off going to graduate school because it is too expensive. Conduct your research and apply to as many sources as possible. Just as each graduate school’s application procedures differ, so will the systems for awarding financial aid. You will need to communicate with each school and in some cases directly with the academic department concerning teaching/research assistantships. Basically, there are three ways to finance graduate education – grants, loans, and work. There are several sources of graduate support including federal and state government, educational institutions, foundations, corporations and other private organizations.

No matter what your financial situation, you should spend adequate time preparing a financial plan for graduate school. Consider the following:

Think Ahead

This step consists of setting realistic goals as to whether you will attend graduate school part-time or full-time, and whether or not you will work during your time in school; taking inventory of your assets and liabilities; calculating your need for the duration of your graduate program; creating an action plan for how you will meet your financial needs; and, finally, reviewing your plan regularly.

Live Within Your Means

⁶ Peterson’s Graduate and Professional Programs: An Overview 2008. *Peterson: Princeton, NJ, p. 5.*

Know how much money you are able to live on and be prepared for the strong possibility of having to live on less during your years of graduate study.

Keep Your Head Above Water

Manage the amount of debt you take on by having as clear an idea of your costs as well as resources for the time you are in graduate school. You may be able to minimize your amount of debt by receiving some financial help from family members, by pushing hard with your studies so as to graduate early, or by working more and attending school part-time.

Types of Financial Aid⁷

Fellowships and Scholarships.

These are cash awards given by a department, the university, or an outside organization. They are given primarily according to financial need or academic merit. Some are specifically designated for minority or women applicants, or according to guidelines determined by a particular philanthropist. This kind of award does not need to be paid back and they can range from a few hundred dollars to \$10,000 or more. Students interested in fellowships and scholarships beyond the departmental level will usually have to take the initiative and apply for them.

Assistantships.

The most common assistantships are Teaching Assistantships, Research Assistantships, and Administrative Assistantships. This form of financial aid is provided by the department or university and requires that a graduate student work in exchange for a stipend or for a tuition waiver. Teaching Assistants either teach or assist a faculty member with instruction for introductory courses, Research Assistants help faculty members with their research, and Administrative Assistants work in administrative or student support offices.

Federal Work-Study Program.

This program works on the graduate level in the same way as on the undergraduate level. Not all universities participate in this program, but if they do then you may be able to find work in your field of interest.

Internships and Cooperative Education.

Paid internships provide an employment opportunity in the community beyond the university that allows a student to both earn money and work in their field of interest. Cooperative education experiences are similar to internships, except the student alternates periods of work with periods of study.

Government Loans

Stafford Loans

Through this program, the government provides low-interest loans to graduate students. The loans are administered through banks, credit unions, savings and loan institutions, and the universities themselves. Students may borrow up to \$20,500 per year up to a maximum of \$138,500 (this total includes whatever undergraduate loans you have).

Individuals pursuing degrees in the health professions may borrow up to \$224,000 total. There are two kinds of Stafford Loans. The first kind, a Subsidized Stafford Loan, is awarded according to financial need. As long as a student is enrolled at least half-time then the government pays any interest that accrues until six months after graduation or withdrawal. The second kind, an Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, is available to students who do not qualify according to financial need. With this loan, students must pay the interest that accrues while they are in school.

Perkins Loans.

⁷ The following section is based on information presented in *Game Plan for Getting into Graduate School*, by Marion Castellucci.

These loans are provided for students who show exceptional financial need. The individual university is responsible for administering these loans and in some cases will limit this type of loan to undergraduates. Students may borrow up to \$6,000 per year, up to a maximum of \$40,000, which includes undergraduate loans.

Other Loans

There are numerous programs that award private loans to graduate students. These loans are based on a student's credit rating rather than on financial need. There are specific loan programs available for students pursuing graduate studies in general fields as well as specific fields such as business, law, and medicine.

International Students

Student financial assistance from the U.S. government is reserved for U.S. citizens. International students must count on funding from their home country as well as from departmental and university funds from the schools to which they are applying. They must also utilize outside funding sources such as foundations and other philanthropic organizations.

Basic Tips for Financial Aid Application

Application for financial aid is not automatic. You will need to fill out and submit required aid applications before deadlines. Aid application instructions and deadlines are usually clearly stated in each school's application materials. Some schools require you to apply for aid when applying for admission. Other schools require that you be admitted before applying for financial aid.

Be prepared to submit copies of your federal income tax forms and federal aid transcripts from Luther College. You may want to check the status of your aid application if you receive no response within a reasonable time period. Keep copies of all forms.

APPLICATION TIMETABLE

<p>JUNIOR YEAR <i>March to August</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do self-assessment to determine values, interests, skills, and goals. ▪ Research areas of interest, institutions, and programs. ▪ Talk with faculty, alumni, and professionals in your field about possible programs. ▪ Determine testing requirements for the program(s) you're considering applying to and plan for taking tests. ▪ Call or write to the graduate school admission department for each school you are considering and request an application form, bulletin, and financial aid information.
<p>SENIOR YEAR <i>September to October</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><i>November to December</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><i>January to May</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask faculty/employers to write letters of recommendation. ▪ Take required graduate admissions tests if you have not done so already. ▪ Check on application deadlines and rolling admission policies. ▪ Attend Luther's Graduate/Professional School Day (usually held in late September or early October) to talk with graduate school representatives. ▪ Prepare a personal statement of interests and goals. ▪ Complete a student resume or curriculum vita.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send the following to the graduate program(s): application, official transcript (sent by Luther registrar), deposit, test scores (GRE, LSAT, GMAT, MAT, MCAT, etc.), and letters of recommendation. ▪ Visit schools of interest, if possible. ▪ For programs with December deadlines, check with all institutions to whom you have made application to make sure your file is complete.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). ▪ For programs with January or February deadlines, check with all institutions to whom you have made application to make sure your file is complete. ▪ You should be notified about admittance and/or assistantships sometime between mid-March and mid-April. ▪ Visit institutions that accept you. ▪ After receiving word of acceptance and making your decision, send a letter of confirmation to the institution of your choice. ▪ Notify other colleges and universities of your decision so they may admit students on their waiting list. ▪ Send thank-you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letters, informing them of your success.

PERSONAL STATEMENT SAMPLES

The following personal statements are from Luther alumni who successfully matriculated into graduate/professional school. In addition to providing you with the essay, additional demographic data is provided including the student's respective field of study, the institution they attended and the type of degree they pursued, and the applicant's undergraduate major(s), cumulative GPA, and test scores.

Engineering

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Master of Science in Computer and Electrical Engineering

Undergraduate Majors: computer science, mathematics, and physics

GPA: 3.76

GRE: 1190/1600 (verbal and quantitative)

I vividly remember the first time I was introduced to a computer. Granted, it did not even belong to me, and while I was fascinated by this complex machine, I ended up using it only for such mundane tasks as videogaming. This experience, in many ways, served as my introduction to electronics, a topic about which I am quite passionate. However, it wasn't solely electronics that awed me as a child, I also had a keen interest in building and designing new things. While in my youth my preferred medium for creativity was my Lego construction sets, I look forward to further enhancing my skills at the graduate level by studying computer and electrical engineering.

My interest in building and passion for electronics eventually melded into one as I built my first computer from scratch during my early high school years. One might say that this was my first electrical engineering experience, and the joy and knowledge I received as a result I view to this day as invaluable. I went on to build several more computer systems and eventually came to realize that one day I wanted to pursue a career that involved computers and/or engineering.

Upon completion of my high school years, I enrolled in Luther College where I'm presently triple majoring in mathematics, computer science, and physics. I was certain that by choosing this challenging triple major I could gain a broad understanding of physical principles comparable to, and in some ways surpassing, that which a typical undergraduate engineering degree offers. Since Luther College does not offer any engineering majors, I decided to apply for a National Science Foundation (NSF) funded Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) in electrical engineering my sophomore year. I was accepted and spent ten intense weeks at the University of Minnesota working intently with a MEMS group in fabricating self-assembly monolayers (SAM's). Since most of my work involved using equipment in clean rooms, I gained valuable lab experience. In fact, my experience at Minnesota prompted me to apply for a second NSF REU program my junior year of college hoping to continue work in this exciting field. I was quite certain at this point that I wanted to pursue a career in electrical engineering and continue working in the MEMS field. I was accepted to an REU program the second straight year and spent nine wonderful and challenging weeks at Pennsylvania State University this past summer working with another MEMS group in designing an oscillator circuit to be used with a micromachined quartz crystal microbalance (QCM). This second summer experience confirmed my decision to attend graduate school to begin work towards an advanced degree in computer and electrical engineering and perform research.

My plans for graduate study in computer and electrical engineering are to obtain both my master's and doctoral degrees, while conducting research in the MEMS and BioMEMS fields. Purdue University possesses a very strong Computer and Electrical Engineering program and a state of the art facility where to conduct this research. Upon completion of my academic training, I would like to perform research and development for a major corporation either in the public or private sector. Furthermore, I would also strongly consider starting my own company that specializes in designing and manufacturing MEMS and BioMEMS devices.

I am confident that my undergraduate studies and research experiences have prepared me well for entering the engineering field and for graduate study. I'm a highly ambitious and strongly motivated individual with high standards, a strong sense of intellectual curiosity, and a passion for complex challenges. I am confident that I will thrive in a research environment and in graduate studies at Purdue University.

Music

Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio

Master of Music in Oboe Performance

Undergraduate Majors: music, Spanish

GPA: 3.75

GRE: 1210/1600 (verbal and quantitative)

I glance at the clock, it is ten minutes to seven in the evening, and I begin my ascent. I am in a remote indigenous village, hidden in the Sierra Norte of Puebla, Mexico. As I climb the mountainside on the steep, cobbled road, I watch carefully for broken glass and animal droppings. I greet the locals in the native tongue, Nahuatl, as I weave my way around horses, potholes, chickens, turkeys, and dogs. The townspeople know me now, I have been living among them for over a month, voluntarily directing their small community band and teaching lessons, especially oboe lessons. The sound of barking dogs fills the air and the roosters call to one another, each one rousing the next until they deafen the entire town. The children play barefoot in the street, and I hear the rhythmic clapping of their mothers making tortillas. At last I reach the building where we rehearse. A single light bulb dangles from the ceiling, it sheds light on two chairs and a well-used wire music stand. Already, the students are lined up on a bench against the wall, eager to learn. Tonight, my first student is a small girl, only seven years old. She has the plastic student model oboe assembled, so we take our seats under the light bulb as the other children sit and wait patiently. After fifteen minutes, the next student takes the seat beside me, and I teach until all of the children have had one or two lessons apiece. Out of the corners of my eyes, I see them practicing their fingerings while I teach their brothers, sisters, cousins and friends.

In the city of Puebla and its outlying villages, the students realized what an opportunity it is to have an education. To them, an education is truly a privilege. As a result, these students were very focused during our lessons, and had strong convictions about improving their abilities. In Mexico, music was life. Music was important religiously and socially; the entire town showed up to our band concerts. My students also understood that music was a career, a way of improving their quality of living. They practiced constantly and worked hard, absorbing the concepts I put in front of them. In only a few months, my Mexican students achieved more than I ever dreamed. These students were a refreshing change to my teaching experiences with middle school students back in the U.S. Their motives for being involved in band were primarily social ('because my friends are in band'). As a result, lessons, rehearsals, and performances were often half-hearted and lacked the spirit and conviction that I experienced in Mexico. For me, teaching oboe was not enough. If I was to teach oboe in the future, this experience crystallized my need to work with inspired, focused, and dedicated students.

My students in Puebla reminded me, in many ways, of my experience at Luther College. They were focused, determined, and were willing to put in the time and effort to learn and grow as musicians. I always knew that music would be a part of my life, but my time in Mexico helped to define my goal of becoming a professor of oboe so that I can continue to perform, bring the gift of music to others, and work with inspired students and faculty. Once I have my career in a more balanced place, I would hope to travel again to Central America to teach individuals who may not have the resources or opportunities to study music.

At Luther I have studied with Dr. Jennifer Gookin, Dr. Susan Hatch Tomkiewicz and Dr. Heather Armstrong. Having three professors in the course of four years taught me how to be flexible and to adapt to different teaching techniques. I learned three distinct approaches to musicality, technique, and reed making. I have been a longtime member of the Concert Band under the direction of Mr. Frederick Nyline, playing principal bassoon as well as principal oboe. We have toured domestically and internationally to Japan and China. I participated in the Symphony Orchestra with Dr. Daniel Baldwin as conductor, we just recently completed a month long residency in Vienna. I was the principal oboist in the Chamber Orchestra, though I have also been a member on the bassoon. Luther has been a great place to study, since it has allowed me to take many classes outside of music and to study abroad twice in Puebla, Mexico. Though I was not studying oboe, I did participate in the Orquesta de la Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla (a public university orchestra) as a member and as a concerto soloist, along with the Orquesta Normalista de Puebla, and on occasion appeared with the Orquesta Sinfonica de Puebla.

As I prepare for graduate study, I am particularly interested in advancing my solo playing and ensemble playing, as well as picking up teaching styles. My primary reason for applying to Bowling Green State University is the oboe faculty. Dr. Susan Hatch Tomkiewicz taught oboe last year at Luther College, and I was thoroughly impressed with her ability to teach oboe, as well as the amount of knowledge she possessed. I only studied with Susan for one semester, but that one semester advanced my oboe playing more than any other semester under another professor.

In closing, I am certain the faculty, graduate students, and performance opportunities in the Master of Music degree program at Bowling Green State University will bring me one step closer to my goal of becoming an oboe professor. If selected to join the program, I will bring the same tenacity, commitment, and enthusiasm that had guided me thus far.

Thank you for considering my application.

Pharmacy

University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

Doctor of Pharmacy

Undergraduate Major: biology

GPA: 3.71

PCAT: 437 (96th Percentile)

“Stop messin’ around or I’ll knock your heads together!” my Grandma Sally would yell at my cousin Ryan and me as we ran around her house. While at times this may have been deserved, my Grandma Sally never followed through. Despite the 160 miles that separate us, we still see each other several times each month. Whenever I make the pilgrimage to her home in Washington, Iowa, we always find time to chat and play a game of spades. This sensitive yet stern and stubborn woman has played an instrumental role in my decision to pursue a career as a pharmacist. At the age of 70 she developed Type II Diabetes. Three years later she broke her right hip (and then her left hip at age 82). These incidents, coupled with a few broken bones, seizures and ulcers, might lead one to believe that my grandmother is Wonder Woman. Unfortunately she’s not, and to help manage her depleting health, her collection of prescription drugs has steadily grown over the past 16 years. To date, she takes more than 11 medications a day, and even others on a periodic basis. Compared to other people, this regimen is manageable. With more drugs on the market today than ever before, and with more people taking prescribed medications, the demand for well-trained, ethical, and professional pharmacists is high. With my strong interests in healthcare, helping others, and the sciences, it is with great enthusiasm that I seek a career in pharmacy.

In the midst of my final year at Luther College, I can say with confidence that I am graduating with more than a degree in biology. The interdisciplinary nature of the liberal arts at Luther has forced me to examine global issues from different perspectives. For example, to fully understand the state of healthcare in our country, one must take into account the medical, sociological, political, and economic agendas that influence private and governmental agencies. This perspective, coupled with a strong foundation in the sciences, has well prepared me for my studies in pharmacy school. I have greatly enjoyed (and at times toiled with) the academic challenges that have been presented to me. I look forward to even greater intellectual and academic challenges, and the opportunity to apply this expertise in a field that affects many people’s lives.

Beyond the classroom, I have had several opportunities to become actively involved in the Luther and Decorah communities. As a two-sport athlete, a volunteer, a coach, and an intern, I have further refined and developed many skills that will serve me well in pharmacy school and beyond. Whether through my role as captain of the Luther College Woman’s Basketball Team or as a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity and the Red Cross, I have refined my skills as a leader, problem-solver, and team member. As a volunteer translator with the Decorah Food Pantry, I have developed my skills as a translator and communicator. As an intern, I developed a more sophisticated understanding of the role of a retail pharmacist. Through this experience I observed the importance of client-pharmacist relationships and the critical role that teamwork plays off the court. The combination of these skills and experiences will serve me well as a pharmacy student and future practitioner in this field.

As a prospective student, I am very excited by the progressive nature of the pharmaceutical industry. Whether it is the research and development of new medications or the introduction of new drugs on the market, the innovative and scientific minds behind these discoveries are inspiring. Furthermore, retailers are developing new methods to help their clients manage their medications more efficiently and safely. For example, Target recently launched a new bottling and labeling system that color-codes medications and provides more space for warning labels. This degree of innovation will help minimize risk and provide overall better healthcare for our society.

Whether I find myself working for a retail pharmacy or a long-term care facility, I am excited about the opportunities that await me. While I continue to harass my grandmother about her need to regularly monitor her blood sugar (and often times help prick her finger), I know I can only help her for so long. She is getting older and, even though I hate to think about it, she will one day be gone. When that day comes, my memories and her spirit will continue to inspire me as I serve others and society through my work as a pharmacist.

Religious Studies

University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
Master of Arts in Religious Studies
Undergraduate Major: religion
GPA: 3.93
GRE: 1550/1600 (verbal and quantitative)

Ever since I was a child, I have had a strong interest in scholarly insights about religion. I vividly remember dinner-table conversations with my mom, who was then in seminary, about topics ranging from the philosophical difference between “fact” and “truth” to the myth of Lilith and the importance of feminist reconstructions of biblical narratives. From these discussions, framed in the context of her call to pastoral ministry, I learned to pursue the ethical implications of interpretation and theology – or, as one professor later called them, the “so what?” questions. This interest continued throughout high school, where it led me to many discussions with peers about the ethical manifestations of their beliefs, and it became the driving force for my studies as a religion major at Luther College. I hope that I will be able to pursue answers to these important questions as a graduate student in the Religious Ethics program at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

At Luther College, I have immersed myself in the classes offered by the religion department. In addition to the required components of the religion major, special topics courses – including a study abroad experience in Brazil during January of 2006 – have allowed me to examine contemporary issues in significant depth. A course examining “Wo/men and the Pauline Tradition” allowed me to use feminist theories to see the ethical implications of the kyriarchical structures which continue to shape the world today. My 2006 internship at the Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual in Washington, D.C. gave me the opportunity to put these theories into practice.

As I have encountered the work of feminist and liberation scholars from other countries, I have also become critical of the effects of globalizing forces upon marginalized groups. My experiences in Brazil and in “Hunger for Justice,” a course in Christian ethics and globalization that I took the following spring, were particularly influential in stirring my interest in globalization and poverty, as I was able to encounter both grassroots and scholarly responses to the effects of globalization and to analyze their effectiveness. I was particularly interested in the ways that, as Miguel De La Torre points out, women are often among those most adversely affected by the negative aspects of global capitalism. It is at the intersections of these areas – of gender and sexuality, and of globalization and poverty – that my interests lie. The courses I have taken at Luther have allowed me to examine these issues in significant detail. The depth of my work in contemporary issues has led me to an interest in the traditions upon which modern scholars draw, and I look forward to studying some of these foundations of contemporary religious reflection.

In my work at Luther, I have encountered several situations in which variations in translations can have significant impact on interpretation and theology and thus on their implications for contemporary ethics. To facilitate my understanding of the work of fellow scholars, I have attempted to gain a basic level of fluency with the primary biblical languages. Luther’s strong biblical language program has allowed me to study both Greek and Hebrew. These languages, combined with the significant study in Spanish I completed in high school, will provide an excellent foundation for the further language study I will need to undertake at the graduate level. While I have no background in either French or German, I am confident that I will learn them with a similar ease.

My interest in graduate study began to emerge during my second year at Luther with class presentations in Christian Theology and Wo/men and the Pauline Tradition. I discovered that I enjoyed the process of preparing and presenting the material to my fellow students, and was encouraged to consider becoming a professor. In the fall of 2005, my experiences in Christian Ethics helped me to articulate my interest in an ethical perspective. In addition, introductory courses in Confucianism, Taoism, and Shintoism and later in Islam allowed me to see that contemporary ethical struggles in Christianity are also present in other religious traditions. My studies at Luther culminated with a senior paper examining the responses of the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to issues surrounding premarital sexuality. I found both the process of research and the subject deeply engaging, and I hope to build on this work in the future.

Perhaps the most influential factor in my decision to pursue the study of religion at the graduate level has been my work as a peer mentor. As a mentor, I have provided both writing assistance and informal guidance to students, and I have worked closely with professors to help make classes more engaging for students. In the process, I have honed my own teaching, writing, and research skills. In my sophomore and junior years, I worked with students in a first-year seminar, helping them to develop college-level writing and to learn the skills of research in an academic library. This year, I have served as a peer

mentor to two sections of a Christian Ethics class, composed entirely of upper-class students. This has encouraged me to better understand the conceptual frameworks of Christian ethics in order to be able to explain them to others. I hope that I will continue to build upon the skills I have developed as a peer mentor through the University of Chicago's teaching assistantship program.

As a graduate student at the University of Chicago, I look forward to drawing upon the excellent resources of the faculty. My contacts with William Schweiker have proved very informative about the comprehensive nature of the A.M. program, and I am excited by his work responding to current global dynamics. Martha Nussbaum's work, particularly in the area of gender and sexuality, will certainly be influential for my own. Similarly, I find Kathryn Tanner's work with feminist theology and with the intersections of economics and theology particularly interesting, and look forward to working with her. More generally, I look forward to the courses in the Study of Religion sequence; they will provide a broad foundation of knowledge that will both supplement my undergraduate education and provide a foundation for my own work as a graduate student.

As I prepare to undertake the study of religion at a graduate level, I am confident that I am both motivated and prepared to handle the challenges of graduate study. I look forward to continuing to ask the "so what?" questions of ethical reflection as a graduate student at the University of Chicago and to participating in the academic study of religion as both scholar and teacher.

Veterinary Medicine:

Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa

Doctor of Veterinary Medicine

Undergraduate Major: biology

GPA: 3.97

GRE: 1420/1600 (verbal and quantitative)

On more than one occasion, my Grandma had the misfortune of walking into her bathroom to find her bathtub and sink crawling with toads. The best part about summer visits to my grandparents' lakefront property was that they offered a marvelous opportunity for my sister and me to collect as many toads as we could get our hands on. All of the toads had names and were showered with attention, becoming so mellow that they would eat food right off of our fingers. Utterly transfixed by these little animals, I devoted myself to learning as much as I could about their care and took pride in my ability to keep them healthy.

Toads were not the extent of my childhood animal family. While I have had the privilege of owning a cat since I was eight and adding a second cat, a rabbit, and a few hamsters since then, I could never get my parents to consent to the menagerie that I had in mind (dogs, horses, guinea pigs, ducks...). I took matters into my own hands and acquired a number of makeshift pets each summer including frogs, salamanders, turtles, minnows, and, in desperate times, earthworms. I am almost embarrassed to admit that this odd childhood pastime persisted until I was in high school and only stopped there because I was committed to my school activities. I am certainly not one of those people who decided to become a veterinarian in a blinding flash of light at the age of seven, never to waver from that plan; however, my unusual preoccupation with animals has long indicated to me that veterinary medicine would be a natural vocation.

While in high school, I landed my dream job at a local pet supply store. Here I was finally able to put my enthusiasm for animals into my work. I was excited to have the opportunity to learn about the different products and to care for the various pets that were for sale; however, what was perhaps the most satisfying (and certainly most challenging) part of the job was the opportunity to interact with customers. I saw the entire spectrum of pet owners and, while this did include dealing with some difficult personalities, I found that I loved talking with people about their animals, whether explaining how to care for a new hamster or just listening to a customer share anecdotes about her charismatic parakeet.

It was at this point in my life that I first experienced the medical sciences. My interest in the work that I was doing at the pet store encouraged me to take a closer look at the possibility of veterinary medicine, so I took a course in anatomy and physiology at my high school. This class made me more excited than I had ever been about any subject that I had taken before; the complexity of the animal body and the logic of its inner workings astounded me. I threw myself into the work not because it was particularly difficult but because I could not get enough of it.

I enrolled at Luther College intending to pursue a major in biology and found the same thrill in my college studies that I experienced in that high school course. Each discipline was interesting to me in its own way, but the areas of physiology and microbiology stood out as the most satisfying. I wanted to continue to deepen my knowledge of the medical sciences

and was happy to find that a career in veterinary medicine would allow me the opportunity to continue to develop my understanding of biology for the course of my lifetime.

In search of first-hand exposure to the veterinary profession, I pursued and obtained a position as a kennel assistant at Bloomington Veterinary Hospital (BVH), a large, busy practice. The bulk of my time was spent caring for the numerous dogs and cats that boarded there, and I quickly discovered that every day would be an adventure that tested my patience. I frequently left work bitten, scratched, and covered in paw prints, with the barks of dozens of dogs still ringing in my ears. Still, I found that everyday I looked forward to going to work because I felt a keen responsibility to keep the animals comfortable and safe.

My experiences at BVH encouraged me to apply for a position as a technician assistant at Wolff Animal Hospital. Wolff was much smaller than my previous place of employment, thus enabling me to participate in most of the happenings at the hospital and to learn many practical technician skills including several laboratory tests, animal restraint for different procedures, and taking and processing radiographs. I also was able to interact with the clients since I was trained as a receptionist in addition to my work as a technician assistant. It was here that I got my first taste of euthanasia when I was given the unenviable receptionist's task of taking care of the payment. In addition, my time at Wolff allowed me to develop an appreciation for certain essential elements of a veterinary hospital not directly related to the medical care itself, such as an effective system of communication with clients and trust and respect among co-workers.

While in college I also completed an internship at the Decorah Veterinary Clinic, a mixed animal practice. This was an exciting experience because I saw living illustrations of the biological concepts that I had been so captivated by up to that point in my college education. I spent some of my time observing the small animal veterinarian and technician in the office, but the majority of the experience was spent responding to veterinary calls to local farms. Here I saw a variety of things including routine herd health checks, surgical correction of a displaced abomasum, equine dental care, and several days of enlightening work at the local sale barn. This experience illuminated for me how very different the role of the production animal veterinarian is compared to that of the companion animal veterinarian. I was struck by the culture of the farmers themselves and watched as the veterinarian changed his demeanor in between his pet visits and farm visits.

In an attempt to better understand the plight and values of the farmer, as well as the behavior of food animals themselves, I decided to spend some time on the dairy farm of a family friend. This experience not only gave me greater confidence in working with dairy cattle, but I also developed a great appreciation of the values, work ethic, and lifestyle of the family farmer.

When pursuing experiences in the field of veterinary medicine, I intentionally sought out different experiences and veterinary practices with the hope that I would obtain a more accurate and complete representation of the profession as well as a richer background from which I could begin to shape my own ideas and aspirations. My goals at this point (although ever developing) are to co-own a companion animal veterinary hospital, known for its warm atmosphere, a commitment to the education of pet owners, and for exceeding the expectations of clients with exceptional service. I want to establish a cooperative relationship with clients in order to focus on a proactive, preventative approach to their pets' healthcare, emphasizing wholesome nutrition, proper training and socialization, and regular wellness exams, vaccines, and dental cleanings. I look forward to being a member of the veterinary profession, committed to continuous self-assessment and improvement, as well as upholding the highest standards of ethics, service, and medical care.

GRADUATE SCHOOL WEBLINKS

General

Association of American Medical Colleges (www.aamc.org). Information on education, research, and health care.

Law School Admission Council (www.lsac.org). Search the Official ABA Guide to Law Schools as well as identify schools where your GPA and LSAT scores will be competitive.

Graduate Management Admission Council (www.gmac.com). Tools to get ready for an MBA.

Medical School Interview Feedback (www.interviewfeedback.com). Database of questionnaires containing information about medical school applicants' interviews at U.S., Canadian, Puerto Rican, and other medical schools and schools of osteopathy.

Medical School.com (www.medicalschool.com). Articles, tips, facts, and links pertaining to medical school programs.

Peterson's (www.petersons.com). Extensive website for researching all aspects of higher education.

Princeton Review (www.review.com). Information on schools, tests, and more.

Financial Aid

Business School (www.finaid.org/otheraid/business.phtml). Financial aid information and links for students considering business school.

FAFSA on the Web (www.fafsa.ed.gov). A website for filling out or renewing your FAFSA.

Finaid.org (www.finaid.org). A complete website for issues of financial aid.

Graduate School (www.finaid.org/otheraid/grad.phtml). Financial aid information and links for students considering graduate school.

Law School (www.finaid.org/otheraid/law.phtml). Financial aid information and links for students considering law school.

Medical School (www.finaid.org/otheraid/medical.phtml). Financial aid information and links for students considering medical school.

Grants and Fellowships

FastWeb (www.fastweb.com). A database that allows you to get information on over 600,000 grants and fellowships.

Grants and Fellowships (www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Grants/menu_Grants.html). Links to information on grants and fellowships.

Jacob Javits Fellowship (<http://www.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits/index.html>). For students in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. The award goes with the student to whichever program they attend.

The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (<http://www.woodrow.org/fellowships/index.php>). This foundation offers a suite of fellowships in a number of disciplines.

The National Academies (www.nas.edu/subjectindex/fel.html). Information about and links to a variety of fellowships in the sciences and engineering.

National Science Foundation (<http://www.nsf.gov/funding/>). Searchable directory for funding opportunities in the sciences.

Personal Statements

Personal Statements and Application Letters (http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/personal_statement.shtml). Advice on personal statements.

The "Personal" Side of Graduate School Personal Statements (http://www.psichi.org/pubs/articles/article_165.asp). Resource from Psi Chi, National Honor Society for Psychology.

Tests

Educational Testing Service (www.ets.org). Information on a variety of entrance exams.

Foreign Service Written Exam Contents (www.state.gov/www/careers/rexamcontents.html). Information on the Foreign Service Exam.

GMAT (www.gmac.com). Graduate Management Admission Test information.

GRE (www.gre.org). Graduate Record Examinations test information.

LSAT (www.lsac.org). Law School Admission Council advice on the LSAT and choosing and applying to law school.

Prepmaster Review: LSAT Preparation (www.prepmaster.com). Developed by graduates of the University of Texas School of Law.

Online GRE Tutor (www.mygretutor.com/). Sample questions and advice for the GRE.

TOEFL (www.toefl.org). Test of English as a foreign language programs and services.

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES IN THE CAREER CENTER

Books — General

Game Plan for Getting Into Business School (Peterson's), Michele F. Fornegay.
Game Plan for Getting Into Graduate School (Peterson's), Marion B. Castellucci.
Game Plan for Getting Into Law School (Peterson's), William G. Weaver, J.D., Ph.D.
Game Plan for Getting Into Medical School (Peterson's), C. S. Jewell.
Getting into today's highly competitive U.S. Medical Schools, Andres Jimenez.
How to Get Into the Top Law Schools, Rochard Montauk, J.D.
How to write a great CV, Paul McGee.
Law School Buzz Book, Vault Publications.
Law School Confidential, Robert H. Miller.
Medical School Admissions Adviser, Kaplan/Newsweek.
Pfizer Medical School Manual, Mike Magee, M.D.
The Graduate School Handbook, Richard Jerrard and Margo Jerrard.
Ultimate Guide to Law School Admissions, Carol L. Wright, J.D.

Books — Directories

ABA-LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools, Law School Admission Council.
ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools, American Dental Education Association.
America's Best Graduate Schools, U.S. News & World Report.
Graduate Study in Psychology 2008, American Psychological Association.
Medical School Admission Requirements, American Association of Medical Colleges.
Peterson's Culinary Schools – 2000
Peterson's Graduate Program Directories 2008 (6 volume set), Peterson's.
The Top American Research Universities 2006 Annual Report, The Center for Measuring University Performance.

Books — Financing Graduate School

Ferguson Career Resource Guide to Grants, Scholarships, and other Financial Resources, Ferguson Publications.
Paying for Graduate School Without Going Broke (Princeton Review), Peter Diffley and Joseph Russo.
The Financial Aid Book: The Insider's Guide to Private Scholarships, Grants, and Fellowships, Internships, Competitions, and Loans, Student Financial Services, Perpetual Press

Books — Personal Statements

Business School Essays That Made a Difference (Princeton Review), Nedda Gilbert.
Essays that Will Get You into Medical School, Adrienne Dowhan, Chris Dowhan, and Dan Kaufman.
Essays that worked for Business School, Edited by Boykin Curry, Brian Kasbard, and Emily Angel Baer.
Essays that worked for Law School, Edited by Boykin Curry and Emily Angel Baer.
Essays that worked for Medical School, Edited by Stephanie Jones and Emily Angel Baer.
Graduate Admissions Essays - Write Your Way Into the Graduate School of Your Choice, Donald Asher
How to Write A Winning Personal Statement, Richard J. Stelzer
Law School Essays That Made a Difference (Princeton Review), Eric Owens.
Medical School Essays That Made a Difference (Princeton Review), The Princeton Review Staff.
Perfect Personal Statements, Mark Alan Stewart.

Books — Testing

LSAT Premier Program, Kaplan.
New MCAT Premier Program, Kaplan.