Pursuing Higher Degrees:
Applying for and Being Accepted to Graduate School

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Agenda and Goals

• Who We Are
• Why Pursue Graduate School
• Writing a Personal Statement
• Letters of Recommendation
• The Application Process
• Finding the Right Fit – Program, Location, Mentor
• Funding Opportunities
Who We Are

• Kay - education and work experience
• Fara - education and work experience
• Oklahoma Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation
  – Funded by the National Science Foundation
  – Supports minority students majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines
  – Main goals include research experiences and graduate school preparation
  – Currently, 50-60 scholars at OSU; ~200 scholars state-wide
  – Since 2009, ~52% of graduates have attended graduate school
Why Pursue Graduate School

• Greater Earning Potential
• The Bachelor’s degree is no longer “good enough”

![Average Yearly Earnings Graph]

- Bachelor’s: 52200
- Master’s: 62300
- Doctoral: 89400
- Professional: 109600
Why Grad School – The Need for More Mentors

Science and Engineering Doctorates Awarded in 2009

- White: 14,552
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 1,947
- Black: 1,041
- Hispanic: 1,098
- American Indian/Alaska...: 120
- Other/Unknown: 1,802
Writing a Personal Statement

- Grammar
- *Tell your story*…..
- Have multiple people read statements
- Writing *process* - *grammar*
- Reuse but also tailor
- Always proofread once more before submitting – GRAMMAR, headings, etc.
Letters of Recommendation – Who to Ask

• High rank vs. close relationship

• Different aspects of you
  – Research abilities and experiences
    • Academic Year Assistantships
    • Classes
    • Internships
  – Leadership skills
  – Academics
  – Work ethic and other skills

• Have an “emergency” recommender
Letters of Recommendation – How to Ask

• Ask, but find someone else if:
  – They are busy or don’t have time
  – Don’t feel comfortable
  – They are hesitant for any reason

• Provide a copy of recommender format/topics
• Provide a copy of your resume
• Provide a deadline
  – Give yourself a time buffer
The Application Process

• Application Deadlines
  – One to be considered
  – One to be accepted
  – One for full financial consideration

• Minimum GPA
  – One to apply
  – One to be considered
  – One to be accepted
Finding the Right Fit

• Your goals and interests vs. the program
• Possible mentors and advisors*
• Location
• Community
• Costs
• Financial aid and funding sources*
Finding the Right Mentor

Professional AND Personal Match

You will need someone who:

- Guides and advises
  - Right level of supervision
- Supports and challenges
  - Right balance of “push” and “nurture”
# Funding Opportunities

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<th>Types</th>
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<td>Government (NSF, NIH, DOD, Tribal)</td>
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Review

• Personal Statement – Writing Process
• Letters of Recommendation – Who and How
• Application Process – Deadlines and GPA’s
• The Right Fit – What to Consider
• Funding Opportunities - Resources
Get Started

• Keep organized
  – Make lists / spreadsheets
  – Create files
  – Use a tote box, binder, file cabinet...

• Included in today’s handouts:
  – Helpful tip sheets
  – Samples / templates

• Sample “tool box” available for inspection
Questions?

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