HOW TO GET INTO U.S. GRADUATE SCHOOLS

VEF PANEL OF REVIEWERS

Overview

- Getting prepared and what to expect
  - Gina Lee-Glauser (Syracuse University)
- Diversity of degrees and institutions
  - Elba Serrano (New Mexico State University)
- Application: exams, references and timeline
  - Scott Angle (University of Georgia)
- Personal statement
  - Gisele Muller-Parker (National Science Foundation)

Getting Prepared

- Motivation for graduate school
  - Why? What field? What is your career goal?
- Allocate 6 months prior to your application deadlines
  - Research schools – web, contacts, deadlines, availability of financial supports (institutional fellowships, RA/TA, etc.), research facilities
  - If know your field, who is doing interesting research in field and how many faculty in the field of interests
    - Authorship of publications, funding acknowledgements
  - Line up recommendations –talk to professors who could attest beyond your grades
  - Find dates of GRE, TOFLs

Research and Academics

- Get involved in research
- Publish and present results, if possible
- Schedule regular meetings with research advisor

- Continue to get good grades
- Take courses that graduate programs require
- Visit professors after class

- Network with fellow graduate students and faculty, both within field and outside of the field

- **Practice English!**

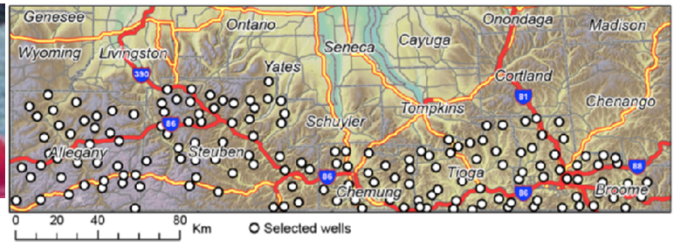
What to expect and what to do

- Expect
  - Lifestyle change
  - Diversity of students
  - Smart students
  - Different culture with different values
- Do
  - Get involved with other students
  - Get involved with graduate student groups/clubs
  - Visit International Student Office – ISO
  - Orientation

- **Speak English!**

This is Syracuse University

Gina Lee-Glauser



Syracuse University Facts

- Officially chartered in 1870 – one of oldest and most comprehensive independent universities in the US
  - SU in NYC, SU in DC, SU in LA
  - SU Abroad Centers – Beijing, Florence, London, Madrid, Hong Kong, Strasbourg (France), Santiago (Chile)
- >21,200 full- and part-time undergraduate and graduate students representing all 50 states and 123 countries
  - 26% of total students is from underrepresented groups
  - 16% first-generation students; 55% women
- >1043 full time faculty representing 11 academic schools and colleges

Diversity of Degrees and Institutions

Finding the Grad School
and Degree that is Best for *You*

Elba Serrano, PhD
Regents Professor, NMSU

Diversity of options requires lots of work on the part of the applicant

1. Finances & Location
2. Your Academic Skills and Scores
3. Types of Degrees
4. Home for the Degree (Program vs Department)
5. Support for International students
6. Professional Development for Students
7. Many Choices

Strategy

1. **START EARLY**. Allow at least 6 months to define your focus area, review websites, gather information, and contact faculty and staff to answer your questions.
2. **USE YOUR CONTACTS**. Talk to alumni and friends to research the program requirements and the atmosphere on campus and environment for student support
3. **CAST A WIDE NET**. Apply to a broad range of schools across the United States where your application will be competitive.

Considerations: Finances/Location

1. With few exceptions, private schools are much more (2-5X) expensive than public (state/land grant schools)
2. Location matters, major cities like New York, Boston, San Francisco are very expensive for daily life
3. Climate and lifestyle vary across the US from bitter cold winters in Boston to tropical Miami and balmy San Diego.

Considerations: Academic Skills and Scores

1. Applications are expensive ($100) - To increase chances, try apply to some schools where your academic credentials are better than average for the department or program you seek.
2. Search webpages or contact the admissions office to find out the average GRE, TOEFL and GPA scores of successful applicants.
   - http://www.princeton.edu/pub/profile/admission/graduate/ 1231 of 10400 applicants (GRE~ 320)
   - Univ Louisiana Lafayette http://gradschool.louisiana.edu/prospective-students/standardized-admissions-tests/gre#Minimum_Expectations (GRE ~ 290)

Considerations:
What Degree for your Focus Area?

1. PhD -
    1. research intensive institution, 4-6 years, private and public institution
    2. Financial support common
2. MS –
    1. Offered by many more institutions, including MS only like the Cal State System
    2. Often not offered at private institutions for basic science fields but more common in business, ag, engr
    3. Offered in public/land grant for many fields that are not covered by private schools
    4. Less financial support than for PhD

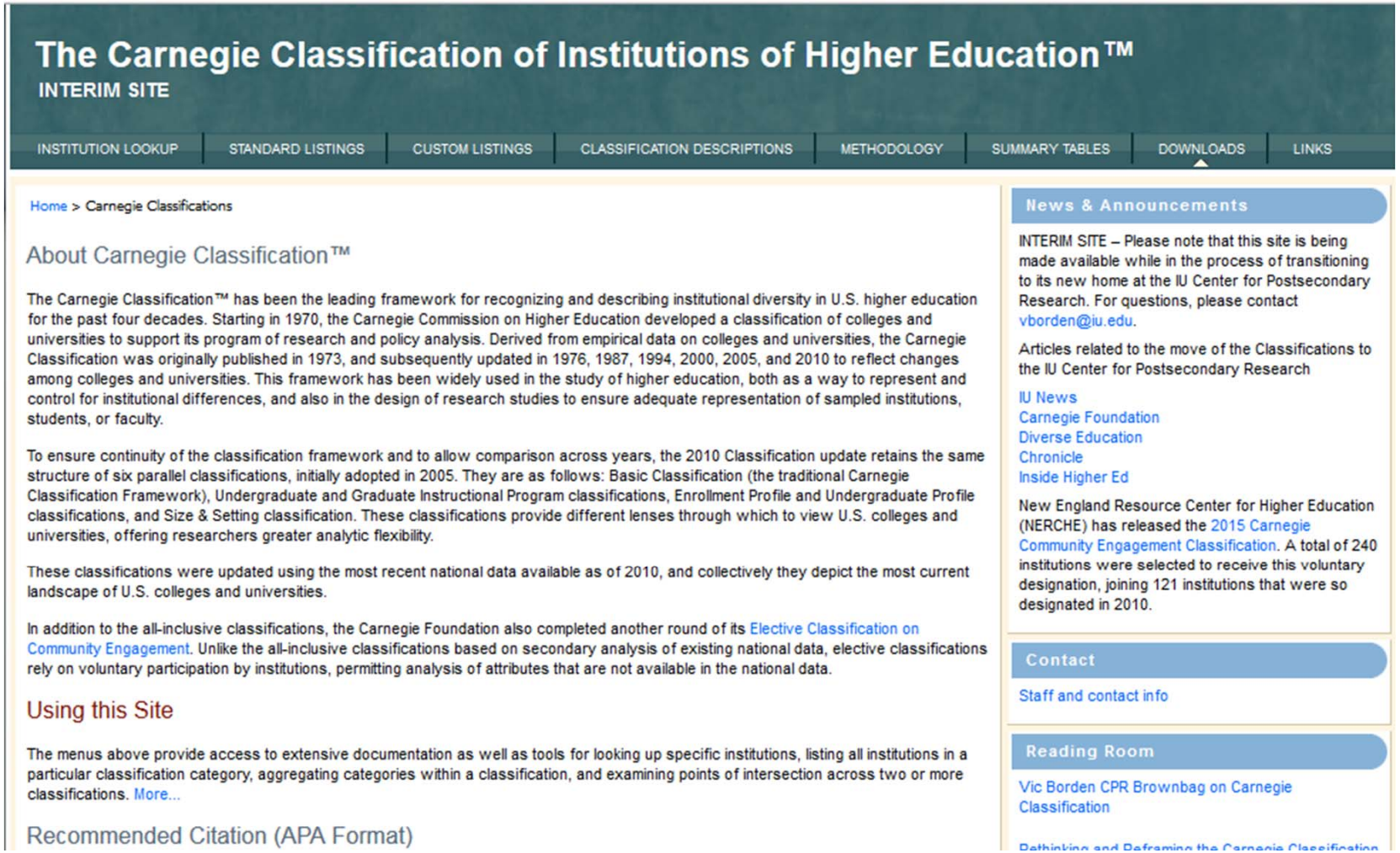
Choices! Over 1000 institutions in 50 states award MS and PhD degrees

Private Institutions, older, expensive, wealthy alumni and donors
State and Land Grant provide affordable education for the people

RU/VH: Research Universities (very high research activity)	108	26,015
RU/H: Research Universities (high research activity)	99	17,643
DRU: Doctoral/Research Universities	90	13,654
Master's L: Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	413	8,483
Master's M: Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	185	4,249
Master's S: Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	126	2,914

Comprehensive searchable listing of all US institutions: Carnegie

- http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/



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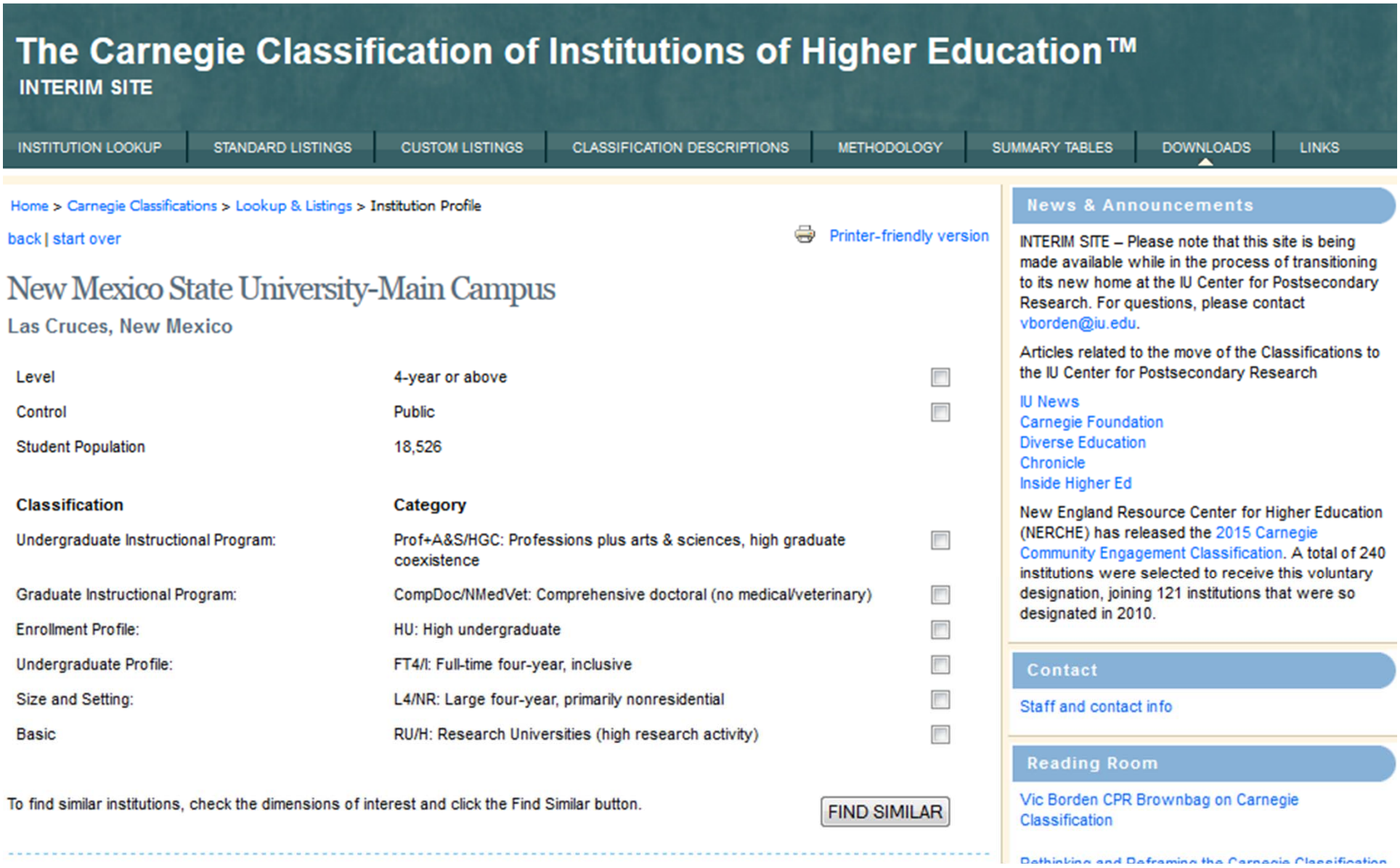

New Mexico State University

All About Discovery!™

Since 1888, a comprehensive research, land-grant university excelling in teaching, research and public service.

Located in Las Cruces, New Mexico, near the Texas and Mexico border

18,000 students from 50 states in the U.S and more than 80 different countries with ~ 1200 international students.

Academics

- 7 academic colleges with more than 20 doctoral programs, 50 master degree programs and 80 bachelor degree programs.
  - College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
  - College of Arts and Sciences
  - College of Business
  - College of Education
  - College of Engineering
  - College of Health and Social Services
  - Honors College and the Graduate School

- Certificates, licensure programs and associate degree programs are available from the colleges in Alamogordo, Carlsbad, Doña Ana County and Grants, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Graduate School in Las Cruces.

Member of HACU

International Student and Scholar Services

- Application and admissions support for all degree seeking international applicants;
- Assisting international students in maintaining their legal status as foreign students in the United States;
- Conducting outreach programs which benefit our campus and local community, including two city-wide cultural events per year;
- Connecting students with clubs and organizations; and
- Linking students to academic and personal support services.
- **Contact us: http://isss.nmsu.edu/,**

  Email: isss@nmsu.edu, Phone: (575) 646-2834

www.facebook.com/isss.nmsu

Applying to NMSU & VIED/MOET Program

- It is advised to applicants, regardless of their level of education, that they begin the application process at least 6 months before the semester they wish to enroll in classes.
- Each year NMSU agrees to provide up to four (4) individual VIED/MOET fellows a tuition discount that reduces the current out-of-state tuition rate to in-state tuition. Students must meet admission and eligibility requirements.

For more Information Contact:

VIED/MOET
Contact: Pham Quang Hung, Director General
No 21 – Le Thanh Tong Street
Hanoi, Vietnam
Phone: (84-4) 39335831
http://www.vied.vn

ISSS-NMSU
Contact: Mary Jaspers, Director of ISSS
P.O. Box 30001- MSC-3567
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001
Phone: 575-646-2018
Email: ISSS@nmsu.edu
Website: www.isss.nmsu.edu

NMSU

We look forward to helping you further your career. If you have any questions about the application process please contact an admissions advisor.

Mary Japsers: marjaspe@nmsu.edu
Liliana Barraza: lilibarr@nmsu.edu

Degree Home: Programs versus Departments

1. Programs
    1. Faculty in many departments
    2. Advantage of more faculty choices and multidisciplinary
    3. Can be hard to establish relationships with other students in program
2. Departments
    1. Fewer faculty
    2. Disciplinary limits
    3. Strong connections to other grads in your cohorts
3. Medical Schools, great for postdoc but can be isolating for grad student

What else does the university, program or department offer? Questions to ask…

1. What relocation support do you provide for international students?
2. What financial support will be available (teaching and research assistantships)?
3. What professional development do you offer your graduate students in career pathways, scientific communication, interview skills, running a lab etc.?
4. Do you use an individual development plan as part of graduate training?
5. Is there support for conference travel?
6. How long do students take to complete the degree?
7. Do you have partnerships with the business sector for student training or internships?

The University Admissions Process

Scott Angle

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

International Application Information

- ✓ **Persons holding a baccalaureate degree, or a foreign equivalent, from a regionally accredited institution are eligible to apply for admission to Graduate School.**

- ✓ **Most schools require that applicants should have ranked in the upper half of their undergraduate class and should have completed the equivalent of an undergraduate major in the field in which they propose to study.**

International Application Information

Typically:

- ✓ **Admissions specialists evaluate all international credentials in their office.**
- ✓ **All required academic records must be submitted directly to the Graduate School.**
- ✓ **They do NOT accept evaluation reports from external evaluation agencies.**
- ✓ **Applicants should contact academic departments regarding any supplemental information tat may be needed.**

International Application Information

- ✓ **International applicants must submit the following additional materials:**
  - **Official TOEFL or IELTS scores sent by testing agency**
  - **Certificate of Finances form (found on Graduate School website)**

- ✓ **Many schools will accept satisfactory scores on either the TOEFL or IELTS language proficiency examinations for admission to graduate programs. Test scores must be submitted directly from the testing agency.**
  - **If submitting the TOEFL to UGA: a minimum score of 213 (computer-based) or 550 (paper-based) or overall score of 80 with at least 20 on speaking and writing (internet-based).**
  - **If submitting the IELTS: a minimum overall band-width of 6.5, with no single band (score) below 6.0**

International Application Information

- ✓ **Applicants whose primary language is not English must submit official TOEFL or IELTS scores that are not more than two years old.**
- ✓ **All international students must pay the U.S. government required Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SE VIS) fee of $100 before entering the United States.**

International Application Information

- ✓ **Applicants should submit unofficial transcripts from all institutions attended as part of the online application. Official transcripts are not required during the review process and will only be required for applicants who are offered admission. Do not mail official transcripts until offered admission.**
- ✓ **If the original language of the record is not English, a certified translation ¡n English must be attached to the original application. Any translated record should be a literal and not an interpretive translation.**
- ✓ **Most colleges require at least three letters of recommendation ¡n support of each application for admission. List the names of recommenders ¡n the fields on page three of the application along with their e-mail addresses. They will receive a link to access a secure page where they can submit your recommendation quickly and easily via the Web.**

International Application Information

Certificate of Financial Support for International Applicants

- ✓ **Often, International applicants recommended for admission must submit the Certificate of Finances form and supporting documents. The Certificate of Finances form is not required with the initial submission of application materials.**
- ✓ **To qualify for a visa to study in the United States, you must provide the United States consulate or embassy with substantial proof of adequate funding for the entire course of your study ¡n the U.S. According to U.S. government regulations, the University may not issue the Form l-20 or Form DS-2019 without having proof of funds sufficient for the first year of study.**

International Application Information

Information Specific to Vietnam

- ✓ **Required Academic Transcript: Documents must be submitted in both Vietnamese and English. The Vietnamese language must bear the original institution stamp. The English translations must bear the original institution stamp or the original stamp/signature of the certified translator.**
- ✓ **Required Proof of Degree: An official copy of the Bang Tot Nghiep, which bears the original stamp of the issuing institution. An English translation is required and must bear the original stamp of the issuing institution or the original stamp/signature of the certified translator.**
- ✓ **U.S. Bachelor's Equivalency: A four-year Bang Tot Nghiep from a recognized institution.**
- ✓ **TOEFL or IELTS scores are required.**
  - **Notarized copies are not considered official academic records.**
  - **Do not submit your original proof of degree, as we cannot return it to you.**

The Graduate School
THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Typical International Application Information

- ✓ **Application Deadlines**
  - **Fall Semester – April 15**
  - **Spring Semester – October 15**
  - **Summer Semester – February 15**

- ✓ **Tuition Rates (does not include fees): Fall 2015 and Spring 2016**
  - **1-11 credit hours: $1,004/hr.**
  - **12 or more credit hours: $12,045**
  - **Additional Mandatory Fees per year estimated at $1,129**

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

- 400 graduate students
- 17 Masters offerings
- 11 PhD offerings
- 9 academic departments
- 3 campuses

caes.uga.edu

Athens, GA

Sanford Stadium

Tate Student Center

Herty Field

UGA Arch

Conner Hall - erected 1908

The Graduate School
THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Visa Documentation and Application online at:

grad.uga.edu/

Office of Graduate Admissions
The University of Georgia
210 S. Jackson St.
Athens, GA 30602-1777

Your Personal Statement

- Tell a story: who are you?
- Why do you want to go to graduate school?
- What research experience do you have?
- What are your goals?
- What do you know about this University / Department?

Who are you?

- Why do you want to go to Graduate School?
- What experience(s) lead you to this?
  - Favorite class?
  - Motivating Person?
  - Research experience
- What are your long-term goals?
- Other interesting things about you?

Relevant Experience

- Describe your research / training /professional experience
  - What was the project?
  - What was your part of the project?
  - Where was this research done?
  - Advanced course work

- Why was this project worth doing?
  - How did your part of the project fit into the whole?

Future Goals

- How have your experiences shaped your goals?
- Why this particular field for further training?
  - Well thought out, connected to previous experiences
- What are your immediate / short-term goals?
- What about your long-term goals?

Why this school?

- Provide evidence you have read and understand information on our web sites
- How does the school / program / department to which you are applying help you meet your goals? (customize your statement for each school)
- Are there specific professors whose research you are particularly interested in?

Rules to Remember

- Strive for depth rather than breadth: focus on one or two key themes, ideas, or experiences
- Try to tell the reader something that no other applicant will be able to say
- Provide the reader with insight into what drives you
- Be yourself, not the “ideal” applicant
- Get creative and imaginative in the opening remarks
- Address the school's unique features that interest you, including professors
- Focus on the positive in the personal statement; consider an addendum to explain deficiencies
- Evaluate experiences, rather than describe them
- Proofread carefully for grammar, syntax, punctuation, word usage, and style

THANK YOU!

Q&A