The Art of Selling Yourself
What a Graduate Student Needs to Know and Prepare for.....

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“Understand that you need to sell you and your ideas in order to advance your career, gain more respect, and increase your success, influence and income.”

– Jay Abraham, Motivational Speaker

“Selling is not just an art; it is a science.”

– Anonymous
The University of North Texas
A Great University in a Great Location
Discover the Power of Ideas
Overview

- Established in 1890, UNT is a public research university in the State of Texas.

- 3rd Largest undergraduate enrollment and 4th largest university overall in the State of Texas.

- The most comprehensive university in the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

- Over 36,000 Students
Offers a traditional college experience and the quality of a private university

The Princeton Review
“Best of the West”

Affordable: Named one of America’s 100 Best College Buys for 12 consecutive years

Library system designated a major research library by the U.S. Department of Education

Personal: UNT is a student-centered university

Student to Faculty Ratio of 19:1
Dallas-Fort Worth

- Situated at the northern edge of the Dallas metropolitan area.
- Access to the fourth-largest metropolitan area, Dallas-Fort Worth, with an abundance of jobs, internship opportunities, entertainment, culture, shopping and professional sports.
- An express bus service between Dallas and UNT allows commuter students to ride free by showing a valid UNT ID.
Denton, Texas

Located in Denton, Texas, a small, safe, friendly city.

- Situated at the northern edge of the Dallas metropolitan area
- Approximately 100,000 people
- One hour north of Dallas, Texas
- 30 minutes from the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport
- 45 minutes from Fort Worth
- Sunny, warm climate
Our Campus

Library Mall Fountains and Administration Building
Our Campus

EESAT Building
Our Campus

Murchison Performing Arts Center
Our Campus

Pohl Student Recreation Center: swimming pools, fitness equipment, rock climbing wall, soccer fields, basketball courts, and more.
Academics

Student-centered
Student to Faculty Ratio of 19:1
International Students

UNT is a Global University

2,426 International Students from 120 Countries
Selling – what, why and how?

• What do you sell?
  – Ideas
  – Skills
  – Labor
  – Loyalty

• Why do you sell?
  – To obtain an admission to graduate school
  – To seek a mentor
  – To apply for grants and fellowships
  – To publish or present your creative ideas
  – To find a job/career
  – To find a mate 😊
  – To seek upward mobility in your career
  – To find research funding for your ideas
Topic 1

• Selling to Graduate Schools
  – Applying to one or many
  – Statement of purpose document
  – Research interest(s)
    • Matching this to a department and possibly a faculty
  – Seeking a mentor
  – Securing financial assistance
What is Graduate School?

- **Masters (MS, ME, MEng, SM)**
  - Depth of knowledge and skills
  - Combine classroom skills with either industrial or research experience
  - Typically course intensive
  - Directed research under faculty supervision
  - Less than 5% of the U.S. population

- **Doctorate (PhD, DPhil, DSc, ScD)**
  - Independent and specialized research
  - Narrow and focused area
  - Significant contribution to body of science and knowledge
  - Thesis and scientific publication
  - Less than 1% of the U.S. population

- **Graduate Education in Engineering (for instance)**
  - Over 200 schools in the U.S.
  - Among the best in the world
The big questions?

- Why do I want to go to graduate school? Is it for the right reasons?
- What are my career goals? Will graduate school assist me in meeting my career goals?
- Do I know what I want to study? What will I specialize in? What are my interests?
- What is taught in graduate school?
- What is “graduate research”?
- Do I have the motivation for another two to seven years of more school?
- Do I have the academic and personal qualities to succeed?
- Where should I go to graduate school?
- Can I afford to go to graduate school?
- What are my prospects after “grad school”?
- How much time do I need to apply?
Some reading material

• About graduate school admissions
  – http://gradschool.about.com/od/admissionsadvice/a/overview.htm

• What do graduate school want?
  – http://gradschool.about.com/cs/miscellaneous/a/want.htm

• Time table for seniors
  – http://gradschool.about.com/cs/overviewtimetable/a/timetable.htm
Financial Assistance

- **Teaching Fellow**
  - Direct student contact in a formal instructional setting — listed as instructor of record.

- **Teaching Assistant**
  - Do not have primary responsibility for teaching a course — direct supervision by instructor of record.

- **Research Assistant**
  - Engaged in research activities under direction and supervision of PI.

- **Graduate Services Assistant**
  - Administrative responsibilities or other activities that do not fit within TF, TA, or RA job responsibilities.

- **Fellowship**
  - Prestigious, competitive award that provides financial support to a student who is pursuing graduate studies. No employment.
Selecting and working with a mentor

• Primary mentor
  – Intimately involved in career development
  – Not scientifically overshadowed by you working on the proposed project
  – Wants you to succeed

• Communicate with mentors
  – Interested in your research
  – Work in their lab
  – Collaborate
  – Helps to improve your writing skills

• They want to help you, so, seek their advice
Topic 2

Developing and Selling your Research Ideas

- Research Plan
- Proposal
- Journal Paper
- Thesis
- Dissertation
Developing Ideas

- Read, read, read….particularly the discussion section of any paper you come across very carefully

- Often, you can find potential research ideas when reading between the lines and combine it with your research background

- Work in a new area that takes advantage of your background and potentially combines multiple disciplines

- Approach current problems using your background

- Find a concept that can be applied in a new area
Developing your research ideas

• Use your background and the target solicitation to define boundaries within which you can develop a sound hypothesis.

• Develop aims that can independently test your overall hypothesis.

• Develop goals that will be used to demonstrate proof of the hypothesis and aims.

• The discussion section of publications is usually the best way to develop new frontiers in which to work.

• Continuously fine-tune your hypothesis by reading literature.
Writing your ideas

- **Hypothesis**
  - State the overall question in one sentence
  - State how the rationalized approach will impact the target problem or field

- **Aims**
  - State how the detailed approach will affect a specific issue that greatly impacts the overall problem
  - Each aim should be independent
  - Interdependency between aims is okay as long as their synergy strengthens the research plan

- **Goals**
  - Define specific results that will prove the hypothesis and aims
  - Goals can build on each other
Research Plan

• Introduction and Specific Aims
  – General introduction
  – Rationalize overall hypothesis
  – Come up with 3 or more specific aims
  – Summarize approach for each aim
  – Get to the point early
  – Provide sound literature review
  – Cite recent articles on the topic area
  – Outline your work
Research Plan

• Background and Rationale
  – Rationalize hypothesis, aims, and goals
  – Compile notes from the literature
  – Write this section keeping in mind that it will change as proposal develops
  – Transition this section from the introduction to your preliminary results
  – Bibliography software is worth purchasing to make this section easier to write
Research Plan

• Preliminary Data
  – Evidence-based section
  – Shows that aims are attainable
  – It is best to have preliminary data for each aim
  – Transition from background to rationale and approach
  – Keep figures and images uncluttered and clearly labeled
Research Plan

• Strategies and Approach
  – Use flowcharts to present a study design
  – Outline detailed methods that will be used to obtain goals
  – Provide sufficient detail such that approach is clear
  – Present the aims like a research paper
  – Present additional information
    • Anticipated problems
    • Alternative approaches
    • Expected results
Research Plan

• Projected Impact and Innovation
  – Present the significance of your work
  – Describe the inventions produced from the work
  – Describe the innovative features of your approach
  – Describe how your approach can innovate other fields of research
  – Suggest future areas of research that could stem from the proposed work
Topic 3
Why choose a research career?

- Passion and interest
- Be engaged in science and technology applications
- Interest in innovation and intellectual property generation
- Willing to share and mentor
- Contribute to humanity and society at large
- Make an impact
Research Career Trajectory

• 1-2 years of Masters education
  – Gain foundational research experience
  – Work as analysts, scientists and engineers in industries, consulting, national labs, and/or government agencies

• 3-5 years of PhD level training
  – Topical expert in a cutting-edge and innovative area
  – Employment opportunities include –
    • Post-doctoral trainee
    • Academia
    • Industry
    • National labs
    • Think tanks
Topic 4
Developing a portfolio
Depending on the position that you seek:

• **Industrial, consulting and private sector**
  - Short and sweet resume (not to exceed 2 pages)
  - Stick to your background, training and skill sets only
  - A strong cover letter indicating your job interest, your knowledge of the company, perceived fit, your willingness to learn and adapt (not to exceed 1 page)

• **Government and public sector**
  - Short resume and biodata (mostly online)
  - Strong cover letter
  - List of references
• **Academic and research entities**

  – Detailed curriculum vitae (don’t go overboard)
    - Education; experience (teaching and research); publications; presentations; grants and fellowships; awards; professional memberships and activities; service activities
  
  – A statement of research interest (1-2 pages)
  
  – A statement of teaching interest (1-2 pages)
  
  – A strong cover letter indicating your interest, fit and potential contribution to the institution or department
  
  – List of references (at least 5)
  
  – Sample publications (most recent and relevant ones upto 2-3)
Some common deadly mistakes

- Lack of research about the organization and/or the individuals affiliated with it
- Typos and grammatical errors
- Very verbose and flowery prose
- Too many acronyms and jargons
- Fancy fonts and very small font-size
- Too many highlights, bold and underlined text
QUESTIONS?

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