Why Go to Graduate School?

Gearing Up for Graduate School

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What am I going to talk about?

• Differences between Graduate Education and Undergraduate Education

• Results of a Graduate Education

• The “Problem-Solving” Glass Ceiling

• Short-term vs. Long-term Vision

• Fun!
Your Undergraduate Education

- Considered by most Universities as an education that prepares the individual for greater success in life.

- Broad goals of an undergraduate education focus on producing better “citizens” - i.e., produce a well-rounded individual who specializes in one area of study, but is broadly prepared to take on a variety of tasks in life.

- Assessment is required.

From these goals/requirements - GE, majors, minors, core courses, prerequisites, required courses, final exams, etc.
So.....

• The undergraduate curriculum focuses on the literacy -- learning of fundamentals, with assignments to enable practice or for evaluation purposes.

• Problem solving, critical thinking, ability to work collaboratively. These skills are not developed well.

• The University works in 10 week increments. After Fall-quarter finals are over....

Undergraduate education focuses on short-term learning through 10-week courses, with little emphasis given to integrating the knowledge you have acquired.
And...

- Most undergraduate students work from quarter to quarter, or semester to semester, with little coherency in their curriculum.

- Most undergraduates do not get the opportunity to learn the skills necessary to solve or address the fundamental/landmark problems of our time.

This is why a graduate education is so important.
How do you solve problems in real life?

• Focus is on the problem - and how we will solve it!
  - Airline scheduling problem
  - Augmented Reality

• What skills are needed?
  - Critical thinking
  - Problem solving
  - Collaborative work with teams
  - Interpersonal communication skills
How do you solve problems in real life?

• These are the things that undergraduate education does not do well!

• Where do you learn these skills?

IN GRADUATE SCHOOL
What Do You Get in Graduate School?

• You get to explore the field of your choice.

• You get to join a team of faculty, staff and fellow graduate students, who are all working on solving state-of-the-art problems.

• You get to work on the most interesting problems in your chosen field.

• You get a lifestyle that is the envy of most working people.

• You get paid to do this.
You get to explore the field of your choice!

- Classes focused on your discipline and specialized area
- Program of study designed to enable you to learn material that can help solve “open” problems in your area of choice.
- Significance of grades or assessment is minimized.

Everything is oriented toward enabling the student/faculty teams to solve “open” problems.
Join a team working on interesting problems!

- Faculty members at Research Universities are all working on interesting/new problems in their fields.

- Difficult problems are hard to solve!
  - Teams of researchers are working on these problems

- You get to join these teams!
  - Learn to work collaboratively
  - Learn to help solve “difficult” problems
Working on the most interesting problems!

• Faculty at the University of California must be at the forefront of research in their chosen fields...

• Faculty address problems with their graduate students.
Lifestyle ... the envy of most working people!
You get paid to do this!

- Research Assistantships
- Research Internships
- Teaching Assistantships
- Teaching Associate-In
- Fellowships
What Can You Expect As a Result?

- You will get better job opportunities!
- You will get to work on the most exciting problems available from your employer.
- You will receive the notoriety commensurate with your work.
- You will make more money!
- You will have more fun!
Think About It!!!

- Success, opportunity, praise and distinction, money, and the sense of mutual accomplishment from working with others to contribute to the state of the art in your field.

What could be more fun than this?
The Glass Ceiling

• There is a glass ceiling out there!!!!

“I am thinking about returning for graduate school. I now work at Intel and desperately want to work on the design of the new architectures here. However, I find that with just a Bachelor’s Degree, I will never have the qualifications to join these groups.”
Now or Later?

YES!
Ask Me Questions!

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