

CED Graduate Student Discussion Panel Write-Up

Questions and Advise Summary:

What is the difference between an undergraduate and graduate education?

- Graduate school is more specific to a students interests
- More self-directed research

How do you decide if graduate school is right for you?

- Work after an undergraduate education often comes with responsibilities that do not always include a person's interests. Graduate school is an opportunity to immerse yourself in ideas.
- It's the "next step" or "next thing to do"
- Want to further you education in a specific subject or enter a new field

How do you decide what graduate school best suits your interest?

- Look at the rankings for a rough idea of what schools are out there but take the rankings with a "grain of salt"
- Visit schools, look at their website, research their program
- Contact the professors and try to speak with them. They construct the content and quality of your education.
- Talk to the students of the program. Look at their work.
- Call employers near the school. Ask how the graduate program is viewed and whether they have hired students from that program.

What happens in the years between undergraduate studies and graduate school?

- Employment; work for a firm, define your interests and decide whether that line of work is right for you
- Travel

How do you pay for graduate school?

- Fellowships, scholarships, employment earnings, graduate student instructing/ TA, loans, employers (if economy is good and often involves a contract: employers want you back for a set number of years)

What is the social interaction among graduate students like?

- Very close. Get to know all your classmates and spend time with them. You will consistently work and study with them throughout grad school.
- Have the possibility of starting a firm together or working professionally with your fellow graduates

How do you retrieve recommendations?

- Give your professors plenty of time to write a recommendation before applying for grad school or a job; no less than a month/ the more time, the better

- Once written, the recommendation can be saved by your professor(s) or employer(s) to be sent directly to the appropriate place(s) of interest
- If you are not going straight into graduate school, try to keep in contact with your professors and send them your portfolio as a reminder of your work. Get a balanced mix of employer/ professor recommendations for graduate school. Use your best judgment.

On a more personal note, where do the graduate students see themselves after graduate school?

- Undecided. No one truly knew. The overall sentiment was that the exciting thing about a graduate education is that you are qualified to practice many different interests and the serendipity of future opportunities is the most valuable aspect of attaining a master's degree!