

## **Purpose of the Fair**

The Graduate & Professional School Fair is an excellent opportunity for you to explore and discuss different graduate and professional degree programs with representatives from a variety of schools. It also provides you with a chance to develop valuable contacts with important individuals that may help you with the application process in the future. Your reasons for attending this event may include: (1) researching what programs are offered by various schools, (2) comparing different schools' objectives, philosophies, and curriculums, (3) learning about what preparation you may need before you apply, (4) evaluating whether to begin graduate school right after USF graduation or to wait 1-5 years, and (5) acquiring information to help you make decisions about when and to whom you might apply for graduate school.

## **What to Do**

- Research the list of participation schools on our Web site ([www.usfca.edu/career/](http://www.usfca.edu/career/)) and decide which schools you want to target.
- Fill out School Inquiry Cards for schools in which you are interested. Bring extra cards as you may encounter additional interesting schools.

## **At the Fair:**

- Bring something to carry all the materials that you collect (bag or backpack).
- Gather as much information as possible.
- Have a list of questions that are important to you. Bring paper to write down the representatives' responses.
- Plan to take the lead in the conversation.
- Be prepared to talk about your current educational program, your related volunteer, internship or job experience, and your future academic and professional goals.
- Become acquainted with schools that you may not have considered originally.
- Request more information by giving representatives your completed School Inquiry Card.
- Obtain the school representatives' business cards and follow up with a letter to those schools from whom you would like more information.

## **Suggested Questions To Ask:**

1. What is unique about your campus? Your programs? What kind of student is successful at your school?
2. What is the diversity of your campus? Geographically? Racially? Socially? Economically?
3. What is the academic profile of a competitive applicant for admission to your college? What are the average GPA and test scores (GRE, GMAT, LASAT, MCAT)? What other tests do you require for admissions?
4. How many letters of recommendation do you need? What type and length of personal statement do you require?
5. What additional experience (volunteer, internship, work) do I need to be competitive? How many years?
6. Do you provide scholarships? Fellowships? Teaching assistantships? Other financial assistance?
7. Do you offer housing for graduate students? What percentage of graduate students live on-campus?

## **Questions about the field of study:**

1. How big is the department/program (faculty and students)? What is your average class size?
2. How long does it take a student to graduate from your program on average? What is the attrition rate?
3. What type of careers/jobs and salaries are available to graduates of your program? Do you offer career counseling and job placement assistance?
4. What advice would you give someone who wants to apply to your school/program? How might I improve my chances for admission?
5. Who may I contact from the department to learn more information about the program (faculty, student, alumni)?

### **Future Questions to Ask:**

1. Would you attend your alma mater again for your degree?
2. Has your graduate or professional degree made a difference in your career?
3. Would you hire other graduates of the program?
4. Were your professors well prepared and accessible?
5. Did the school provide support (e.g., academic, financial aid, counseling, and placement assistance)?
6. Did you like and respect your classmates?
7. Were you challenged intellectually?
8. Did you enjoy it?

### **Questions to ask yourself before you borrow to finance your degree:**

1. What can I do now to prepare for the cost of my education?
2. What eligibility requirements (e.g., GPA, units) must I meet in order to obtain financing for my degree?
3. What financing options are available to me at the school(s) I am considering attending?
4. What is the purpose of financial aid, and what do I need to know about the process?
5. How do I apply for financial assistance, and when are the financial application deadlines?
6. Will my parents need to provide their financial information and/or contribute to the cost of my education?
7. What is done with the financial information that I (and my parents) provide?
8. What should I know about the financial assistance I am offered (e.g., grants, loans, or work study)?
9. What can I do to reduce the amount that I have to borrow while still attending the school of my choice?
10. What can I do, once I arrive on campus, to minimize how much I borrow?
11. What options will I have for working while obtaining my degree?
12. What impact will the loan(s) I borrow have on me after I complete my education?

### **Timeline for applying to Graduate School:**

#### **Six months prior to applying:**

1. Research areas of interest, programs, and institutions.
2. Talk to advisors about application requirements.
3. Register and prepare for graduate admission tests.
4. Investigate national scholarships.
5. Obtain letters of recommendation from professors, employers, and internship or volunteer supervisors.

#### **Three months prior to applying:**

1. Take required graduate admission tests.
2. Write schools for application materials (for university and specific department, if applicable).
3. Write your personal statement, autobiography, or application essay.
4. Check on application deadlines and rolling admissions policies.
5. For medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry, or law school, you may need to register for the national application or data assembly service most program use.

#### **Fall – one year before Matriculation:**

1. Obtain updated letters of recommendation from professors, employers, and internship or volunteer supervisors.
2. Take graduate admission tests if you have not already done so.
3. Apply to graduate or professional school program and include all relevant documents (applications(s), application fee, transcripts from all colleges and universities attended, personal statement, letters of recommendation, and any other necessary items)