Applying to Graduate School
A Panel Discussion

Nina Abramson
Harvey Leff
Hector Mireles
Applying to Graduate School

I. Graduate school or no graduate school?

II. Ph.D. or M.S. degree?

III. Field(s) of physics & related areas

IV. Geographical area restrictions

V. Financial considerations

VI. Ways to identify suitable schools.

VII. Application procedure

VIII. Visiting prospective schools

IX. Timetable

X. Final decision
I. Graduate School or No Graduate School?

A. Why go to graduate school?
   - Learn more physics
   - Do high-level research
   - Obtain credentials for research or university position

B. Differences between graduate and undergraduate experiences
   - Course work - advanced courses (C is failing)
   - Qualifier exams - written & oral
   - Research - dissertation
   - Creativity and independent work

C. Read: Planning for Graduate Study - AAPT
   http://www.aapt.org/Resources/Planning-for-Graduate-Studies.cfm
   See also:
   http://dept.physics.upenn.edu/undergraduate/gradschool.html
Check out local graduate schools

From: Stephan Haas <shaas@usc.edu>
Date: October 10, 2004 11:03:31 AM PDT
To: Harvey Leff <hsleff@csupomona.edu>
Subject: Re: Cal Poly Physics Seminar - Oct. 15, 2003

Thanks for this announcement. Although I won't be able to come to this presentation, I am interested because I direct the graduate program and admissions at USC's Physics & Astronomy Department. If there is an interested group of upper division physics majors, I would gladly meet them sometime, either inviting them to USC or coming for a visit to Cal Poly. Please let me know whether this sounds good to you.

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UCR Graduate School Information

Graduate School Preview Day

Friday, November 5th 11:30AM to 4PM

✓ Admission Requirements
✓ Fellowships
✓ Research Programs
✓ Tour of Research Labs

RSVP to Prof. Kenneth Barish
e-mail: Kenneth.Barish@ucr.edu
Tel: (951)827-5023

Refreshments provided, some travel assistance available.
II. Ph.D. or M.S. degree?

A. Time Considerations

B. Money Considerations

C. Career opportunities
III. Field(s) of physics & related areas

A. Related areas (partial list)
   Chemistry
   Medicine, dentistry
   Patent law
   Engineering
   Computer science
   History, philosophy

B. If physics, which type?
   Experimental physics?
   Theoretical physics?
   Computational physics?
## C. Specific research field?

### Partial list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMOP</th>
<th>Quantum optics</th>
<th>Elementary particles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Astrophysics</td>
<td>Biophysics</td>
<td>Relativity &amp; gravitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear physics</td>
<td>Condensed matter physics</td>
<td>Applied physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space physics</td>
<td>Low-temp physics</td>
<td>Polymer physics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surface physics</td>
<td>Statistical physics</td>
<td>Chemical physics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electronics</td>
<td>Electromagnetism</td>
<td>Computational physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plasma physics</td>
<td>Atmospheric physics</td>
<td>Physics education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nonlinear dynamics &amp; chaos</strong></td>
<td>Medical physics</td>
<td>Energy sources &amp; environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoustics</td>
<td>History of science</td>
<td>Accelerator &amp; beam physics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluids &amp; rheology</td>
<td>Space physics</td>
<td>Geophysics</td>
</tr>
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IV. Geographical area restrictions

A. Inside and/or outside California?

B. Climate restrictions, allergies, …

C. Urge to travel
V. Financial considerations

A. Tuition and other costs
B. Travel for visits
C. Financial need
D. Graduate teaching or research assistantships
E. Fellowships (local and external -- e.g., NSF)
VI. Ways to identify suitable schools.

A. AIP Directory
   Online searching
   http://www.gradschoolshopper.com/

B. Cal Poly faculty

C. Recent graduates
VII. Application procedure

A. How many schools? (Application cost: $60 - $120 per school)

B. GRE (http://www.gre.org)


C. Letters of recommendation

D. Neatness and punctuality
VIII. Visiting prospective schools

A. Admissions people
B. Physics faculty
C. Visit classes
D. Facilities
E. Living accommodations

F. Physics graduate students
IX. Timetable

A. Junior Year
   Begin to investigate summer research opportunities
   Nov-Jan: Complete applications for summer research

B. Summer Between Junior & Senior Years
   Prepare for GRE & decide when to take it
   Build relevant bookmarks for grad schools

C. Senior Year
   Fall: Obtain/complete applications for grad schools
   Take GRE subject exam

   Winter: Plan school visits
           Firm up visitation plans as acceptances arrive

   Spring: Compare list of possible schools
X. Final Decision

A. What’s most important?
   - School reputation
   - Research fields
   - Department size
   - Geographic location
   - Other considerations

   **Potential advisors**

B. Discuss with others

C. **Decide!**
The End

http://www.csupomona.edu/~hsleff/ApplyingGradSchool.pdf