Graduate Admissions Updates – November 2008

1. New online ApplyYourself tutorial
   • replacement to annual hands-on training
   • self-paced, access anytime
   • Grad Admissions will provide tech support
   • Available: late November

2. Duluth (& Rochester) campus application expansion
   • cost effective, multi-campus model (umn-grad)
   • only online application and letters of recommendation modules, not online financial certification, decision notification, or appraisal form
   • only new application, not COS/Readmission

3. Revised Grad School online application
   • explanation of each change (see handout)
   • “beta version,” will make changes based on feedback during annual updates
   • contact Dean Tsantir tsan0006@umn.edu with feedback

4. International Recruitment 08-09 – Grad School and OIP
   • Asia: Thailand, Singapore, China (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou), Taiwan, Japan, S.Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam
   • India (Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Delhi)
     Indian student page: http://www.grad.umn.edu/prospective_students/india.html
   • Middle East: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Jordan
   • Follow up - tour spreadsheets (contact info, programs, etc.)
     o Grad School AY email
     o spreadsheets will be available for programs to use
   • programs will be contacted with spreadsheet & recruitment information
   • tour information:
     o Grad School: http://www.grad.umn.edu/outreach/recruitment/
     o OIP: http://www.isss.umn.edu/ProspectiveSt/tour.html

5. Upcoming Race & Ethnicity categories – U.S. Department of Education (see handout)
   • required by U.S. DOE, not Graduate School
   • currently optional, will be required 2010-2011 acad. year
   • PeopleSoft fields currently being created, AY likely change early summer ’09
   • announcement will be made when new category added to online application

6. MyU Graduate School Admitted Student Portal (see handout)
   • launched winter 2008
   • 65% of new enrolled students used portal in 2008
   • 1,692 registered users as of early August
• Grad Admissions will announce access information via dgs-assist listserv before January:
  o will be online or hands-on
  o tutorial document available immediately

7. Document imaging – system wide
• target launch of Fall 2010
• currently information gathering stage – discussions w. Virginia, UNLV - already gone to complete imaging process
• expanded use of imaging both in Graduate Admissions office and among programs for review process
• ideally a combination of AY and ImageNow
• Process: transcripts scanned in Grad Admissions, ‘attached’ to AY material, transcripts/credentials reviewed by Grad Admissions staff (Andy, Laurie, Jim) via ImageNow, scanned files sent to programs electronically, programs review and annotate via ImageNow, electronically send back to Grad Admissions for official decision and record storage.

8. Graduate program staff ‘toolkit’
• where we’ll put all of the above!
• Grad Admissions web page (or MyU space) for:
  announcements, paper application, country sheets, recruitment spreadsheets, AY online tutorial, portal training resources, publications, web links, CGS info, etc.

9. Jim Rowan – new Assistant Director
• 20 + years experience in undergraduate admissions
  o transcript review, domestic and international recruitment, enrollment management, PeopleSoft trainer, imaging, etc.
• Eventual successor for Andy Lucas
Graduate School Application- Revisions/Additions

Consultations/Feedback
- Program faculty and Staff - Reexamining Graduate and Professional School Admissions workshop
- Office of International programs – Assoc. VP and Dean and Director of ISSS
- NAGAP – conference presentation
- 1st Graduate student focus group - COGS
- 2nd Graduate student focus group – DOI summer institute students
- Graduate School Dean– COGS
- Graduate School Deans – UMIT/UMD
- Equity and Diversity
- General Counsel

Major Changes:
1) majority of additions/revisions required
2) no 'prefer not to respond' option

In winter of 2008, Andrea Scott, Patricia Jones-Whyte and Dean Dubrow created a draft of initial revisions and additions to the Grad School's online application. A number of these were based on the existing online application for the University of Michigan's Graduate School.

Over a period of 6 months, the draft was presented to many different groups for consultation and feedback. And after each consultation, the draft was revised based on the input received.

Two significant changes resulted from these consultations

FIRST, it was decided that almost all of the questions would be required, and

SECOND, the 'prefer not to respond' option we had originally included in many of the multiple choice questions was removed

Most of the participants agreed that it was more equitable to require questions of all applicants and to remove the non-response option.

Left is a screenshot of the main menu of the online application.

The highlighted sections contain the new revisions and additions.

In the PERSONAL INFORMATION section, two new questions were added. Both questions were added to gather information about the applicant’s educational heritage and provide an opportunity to demonstrate initiative and motivation to be the first family member to attend graduate or professional school.

Regarding the question about parent or guardian education level, we also felt that the lower levels of education are a measure of disadvantage to be overcome, again demonstrating initiative and drive to overcome a family background where there is no model for higher education. These are not intended as value judgments, but rather an opportunity to collect data and represent the diverse educational experiences and motivations of our applicants.

On the advice of General Counsel, both of these questions are NOT required on the application.
Application Information

If you are applying for a master's degree or certificate, do you hope to continue directly on for a doctoral degree?

☑️ Yes
☑️ No
☐ Undecided
☐ Not applicable

Languages

Please provide the following information about your native language, and acquired language skills based on your own self-assessment:

Native language or languages: ____________________________
(if applicable)

Acquired language(s): ____________________________
☐ Proficient in (check all that apply):
☐ Reading
☐ Speaking
☐ Listening
☐ Writing

In what settings did you gain proficiency?
(e.g., family, school, other formal education, travel)

[WRITING SPACE]

Educational Background

Please indicate if any of the colleges or universities you have attended are (check all that apply):

☐ Community or junior college
☐ Two-year technical institution
☐ Single-gender college
☐ Historically black college or university (in USA)
☐ Hispanic-serving institution (in USA or Puerto Rico)
☐ Tribal college or university (in USA)
☐ Foreign institution (for study abroad and not for degree)
☐ Other [writing space]

In the APPLICATION INFORMATION section, this single question was added to gain a better understanding of the longer term goals of applicants who intend to progress directly from the Masters to the PhD. Faculty indicated that when awarding funding, it would be very useful to know if students plan to continue DIRECTLY ON for the PhD after completing their Masters.

In the LANGUAGES section, this question was added to gain a deeper picture of the language ability of students. Applicants will now be able to indicate a greater spectrum of language skills. This may help programs determine research or teaching assistantship awards, and may also be helpful for those programs using foreign language texts, or collaborating with programs overseas.

We are asking students what setting they gained their proficiency in to gain more life and educational experience information via their language acquisition. For example, it may be useful to know if a 2nd language was learned from growing up in a multilingual household, through the necessity of living in a culture, through formal language education.... or perhaps a combination of these.

Currently we allow space for up to 4 languages, but we’ we will likely expand to 5 or even 6.

This question about institutions attended was the only addition to the EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND section.

While it is possible to tell from a student’s transcript if an institution falls under one or more of these categories, the information collected from this question will give us more specific data to help us target our recruitment and of course provide more background on the student.

(note - a 'none of the above' option has since been added to this section)
**Honors, Awards, Scholarships, Activities, and Certificates**

Please indicate whether you have participated in any of the following programs or activities. (check all that apply)

- Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP)
- Meyerhoff Scholarship Program
- Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC)
- Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program
- Summer Research Opportunity Program at the University of Minnesota
- Summer Research Opportunity Program at another institution
- Undergraduate research (e.g., REU)
- GRE or other test preparation course
- International travel
- None
- Other [writing space]

If you would like to provide additional information, please comment here. [writing space]

*NEW SECTION: Financial Support*

Have you applied or do you intend to apply for a fellowship, teaching assistantship, or research assistantship at the University of Minnesota?  
- Yes
- No

If yes, give the program or department name(s) [writing space]

If you have not applied for, or don't intend to apply for, a fellowship, teaching assistantship, or research assistantship, how will you fund your graduate education?  
- Personal funds
- Family funds
- Employer
- Loans
- Other [writing space]

*NEW SECTION: Financial Support (cont’d)*

Did you receive a United States Pell Grant as an undergraduate?  
- Yes
- No

Did you work as an undergraduate or graduate student while in school in order to fund your education? (check all that apply)  
- No
- 1st year – approximately [#] hours per week
- 2nd year – approximately [#] hours per week
- 3rd year – approximately [#] hours per week
- 4th year – approximately [#] hours per week
- More than 4 years – approximately [#] hours per week

If you wish to provide further detail, please use the space below:  
[WRITING SPACE ]

In the Honors, Awards, Scholarships, Activities, and Certificates section, this question and it’s choice set were added as a result of conversations with different offices and graduate programs. Many of the programs listed provide underrepresented students with specific preparation for graduate study. The items related to undergraduate research also convey information about the level of preparation for graduate study.

And, like previous questions, the specific programs listed will give us a set of data that we can then use to better target our recruitment efforts.

A new FINANCIAL SUPPORT section has also been added to the online application.

We had already been asking this first question, but it’s included here because it leads to the second question about what applicants intend to do if they are NOT awarded funding by the university. This question is intended to be helpful to programs in determining funding awards. Several programs have indicated they want assurance that applicants NOT offered funding will have other financial resources if needed. Also, this question emphasizes to students well ahead of being admitted that they should be thinking about how they will fund their graduate education.

We are asking the Pell Grant question to get a better understanding of the applicant’s economic background. As for the “hours worked” question, this may give an idea of privilege, and could also give programs an idea of the applicant’s ability to balance work and study by comparing the GPA (which is already reported) against hours worked.

This could also be a tool for programs to assess if the student will be able to handle the workload of a TA or RA ship along with their course requirements. A writing space is provided to allow applicants to elaborate more about their work and study experience. For example, perhaps an applicant did not have to work during their studies, but was funded completely through scholarships. Or a student may wish to explain that a lower GPA in a particular year or semester was a result of an increase in work hours. And so on....
Applicant Statements

Statement #1 (formerly ‘Personal Statement’)
Statement #2 (formerly ‘Diversity Statement’)
Statement #3 (new statement)

Finally, some of the most significant changes of the new application are in the applicant statements section. The Personal Statement and Diversity statement are now called Statement #1 and Statement #2.

Statement #3 is a new statement.

All 3 of these statements are, for the first time, required.

Statement #1

Graduate education prepares students for leadership positions in industry, academe, and other sectors - including hybrid careers that span multiple sectors. Please provide a statement outlining your immediate and long-range career objectives in relation to your chosen field. If there is a particular faculty member with whom you wish to study, please give that person’s name and explain why you want to study with that person. You may also wish to include other information, such as any undergraduate research experience, internships, or other experiences you may have had to document your preparation for advanced study in your chosen field.

Statement #2

The Graduate School shares the University of Minnesota’s commitment to promoting and supporting diversity among the student body as central to its academic mission. In graduate study, peer learning is as important as formal classroom instruction. Please provide a statement regarding what you define as your own distinctive qualities, characteristics, and/or life experiences, which potentially will contribute to your graduate program, the education of your fellow students, and graduate education at the University of Minnesota. (please do not exceed 3 pages in length unless your program has provided separate instructions)

The University of Minnesota Graduate School diversity statement can be found at: http://www.grad.umn.edu/commitment_to_diversity.html

Statement #3 is basically the same as what was previously called the personal statement. There was one sentence added to explain why this question is being asked.

Statement #2 is broadening what used to be called our ‘diversity statement’ by moving beyond the traditional definition of diversity itself.

We want all applicants to know that they don’t have to be part of an underrepresented group to be able to contribute to the diversity of their programs.

This question links to the Graduate School’s current diversity statement, which will be further revised in the coming months.
Statement #3

Self motivation is critical to success in graduate school. Please provide examples from your life history that demonstrate your motivation or drive to succeed at past goals you have set. These could include examples of intellectual accomplishments, your work ethic, and/or overcoming life obstacles. (please do not exceed 3 pages in length unless your program has provided separate instructions)

[WRITING SPACE]

Statement #3 addresses self-motivation. During our feedback process, some people expressed that this statement seemed like a repeat of statement #2. But we’ve tried to be clear that this question is about motivation to succeed by asking for specific examples of goal setting and drive. It is still possible that this may overlap with statement #2 or even #1, but our first few submitted applicants so far this admissions cycle have been able to make this distinction.

Instructions:

Statements #1, #2, and #3 in this section of the Graduate School online application for admission are required. Some, but not all, graduate programs may have separate instructions for you to follow in completing Statements #1, #2, or #3. To check if your program requires you to follow separate instructions, please find the program list available at: http://www.grad.umn.edu/programs/select_program.html

Finally, it’s important to note that the instructions at the top of this section indicate that programs may have specific instructions for how they want applicants to answer these questions and a link is provided to the Grad School’s complete list of graduate program websites.

So while these statements are required, programs and departments still have a measure of control over what is being submitted.

To summarize, changes have been made to questions within 5 pre-existing sections of the Graduate School application.

One additional section and one additional statement have also been added.
Please contact either Dean Tsantir or Patricia Jones-Whyte if you have any questions or concerns.

It is strongly recommended that program faculty and staff start a test application for themselves.

You can find links to the online application at the Graduate School's web site. Once you save your login information, you can return to your test application at any time.

Doing a test application will allow you to gain the applicant perspective, as well as provide a comparison with your program application instructions and program application (if you have one).
U.S. Department of Education - new standards for Race and Ethnicity

By Fall 2010, Graduate School Admission Application and Human Resources Employment Application forms will use the following directions.

The information requested below is voluntary and will be used for summary reports required by federal and state laws and regulations and to support institutional affirmative action efforts. It will not be used in a discriminatory manner. You will not be subjected to adverse treatment if you do not provide any of the requested information. The questions below comply with the U.S. Department of Education's new standards for ethnic and racial data collection.

1. Ethnicity: Are you Hispanic or Latino?
   □ Yes
   □ No

2. Race: Please check any or all that apply
   □ American Indian or Alaska Native
   □ Asian
   □ Black or African American
   □ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   □ White

The standard Federal Government ethnicity and racial definitions are described below.

**Ethnicity definition**

**Hispanic or Latino:** A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

**Racial definitions**

**American Indian or Alaska Native:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains a tribal affiliation or community attachment.

**Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand and Vietnam.

**Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

**Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

**White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

11.17.2008
Personal Information

All information on this application is private. To better evaluate your application in a holistic way, we want to know your stories, where you came from, who you are, and where you are going. These questions are intended for all applicants. The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

All information in this application is secure. Your responses will be used by the admissions office and program department which you applied to for identification, to determine admission, and to establish your University academic record if you are admitted. Only aggregate information, which does not identify applicants individually, will be released outside the University to organizations conducting studies on its behalf.

All information requested in this application is required, with the exception of those items marked with an *. Information provided in items marked with an * is voluntary— including birth date and Social Security Number. If provided, this information will be used for positive identification and institutional research. Please note that in the Graduate School's computerized system, date of birth is one of the primary means of identification. Although your application will be considered without a birth date, providing this information will reduce the likelihood of error when matching credentials or correspondence with your application. However, failure to provide a birth date or Social Security Number will have no effect on the admission decision.

After you have submitted your online application, the University of Minnesota will issue you a student identification number referred to as an "EMPLID". Your EMPLID will be displayed below within 3 days after submission of your application.

Student EMPLID: 

The information requested below is voluntary and will be used to generate reports required by federal and state laws and regulations and to support institutional affirmative action efforts. It will not be used as a basis for admission or in a discriminatory manner. You will not be subjected to adverse treatment if you do not provide any of the requested information.

Gender:

Race:

Does not apply to International applicants

Race/Ethnic Group definitions (U.S. citizens and Permanent Residents only)

- WHITE: Persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East (not of Hispanic origin).
- AFRICAN - AMERICAN: Persons having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (not of Hispanic origin).
- ASIAN or PACIFIC ISLANDER: Persons having origins in any of the Far East, Southeast Asia the Indian Subcontinent (includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan), or the Pacific Islands (includes China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines Islands, Saipan).
- AMERICAN INDIAN or ALASKAN NATIVE: Persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.
- HISPANIC: Person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- CHICANO: A person of Mexican-American origin who prefers to be known as Chicano rather than Hispanic.
Spring / Summer 2008
Graduate School Admitted Student Portal Usage

February
Total Unique Logins: 672

March
Total Unique Logins: 1601

April
Total Unique Logins: 2963

May
Total Unique Logins: 3268

June
Total Unique Logins: 3731

July
Total Unique Logins: 4724

August
Total Unique Logins: 4604

September
Total Unique Logins: 263

Grand Total Daily Unique Logins (as of 9.3.2008) — 21,563

Number of registered users (as of 8.4.2008) — 1,692
(65% of new enrolled students)
1. Welcome/Landing Page

2. Finances and Daily Living page

3. Academic Unit page

4. Example program cells:

Default cell

Cell w. info for admit/enrolled students

Portal training sessions will be available January 2009 (online or in-person), tutorial document available now.