

Graduate School
Linda Welters with Sarah Lockrem & Megan Martinelli, URI
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Summary by Tina Senechal

Graduate school should come with a warning label, “Not for the faint of heart.” Here, students should expect late nights consisting of numerous papers, endless research and wishing to receive coffee intravenously. Although graduate school involves having a very demanding schedule, the outcome in the end will be beneficial for a professional career. The two types of degrees a person can graduate with are a Masters, in a certain field of study, and a Doctor of Philosophy. Two current graduate students lent their time to the class, speaking of the steps they took to get into graduate school as well as the type of work they are doing currently.

To be accepted into a graduate program, one must be able to get through the admission process, which is very selective and requires a lengthy application. A standardized test known as the Graduate Record Exam should be taken prior to applying for schools. Similar to the SAT’s, the score is a requirement for admission, but schools vary on the importance of it. Most schools prefer an undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 or higher. Then there are letters of recommendations needed, so it is important to keep in touch with professors or advisors. Lastly, an adequate undergrad preparation will help set great study habits. When selecting a graduate school, a student must consider several key factors such as the reputation of the school, how well known the professors are, what programs are offered and do the graduates get job offers. While the reputation of the school is very important, so are the reputations of the professors. The relationship is much more substantial with a graduate professor than with an undergraduate one. When searching for a “good” professor, a student must consider a few things like, are they a strong researcher, are they good to work with, do they respond in a timely fashion, are they retiring soon, and are the professors on good terms with each other at the university. Finally, a student must figure out how they are going to afford graduate school. Two options are, becoming a teacher assistant, which involves helping a professor teach or teaching your own class, or finding a research assistantship that is grant funded.

The first graduate student to present to the class was Sarah Lockrem. She is a second year University of Rhode Island graduate student from California. She graduated from California State Long Beach in 2008 and decided she wanted to grow more in her career, which led to her applying to the URI grad program. After following the standard application process of passing the GRE and letters of recommendation, she was accepted to URI in 2011. With the help of her advisors at URI she was able to land a summer internship with Loubutin as a US sales manager and sales executive in the wholesale department. Finding inspiration through her internship, she developed a thesis based on the research and analysis of the luxury industry.

The second graduate student was Megan Martinelli. She graduated from Providence College with a Bachelors degree in English literature in 2008. She began

the URI grad program in 2010 and interned last fall for the Rhode Island School of Design's museum. Her tasks included curating and assisting on exhibits. Her thesis involves a research plan based on E. McClung Fleming's material culture object analysis model for which she has received numerous grants.

If a student wants to further their education or feels like there is no growth in their current career path, then graduate school may be the destination for them. The application process is lengthy and when accepted the hard work never stops. But in the end, graduate school has much to offer and room to grow professionally.