



EducationUSA Weekly Update

No. 106, November 17, 2008

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I. Scholarships and Fellowships

We wish you a positive International Education Week. More scholarships and fellowships next week!

II. News you can use

International Education Week- November 17-21, 2008-11-17

On Monday, November 17, IIE will release the data from Open Doors 2008: Report on International Educational Exchange showing that the number of U.S. students studying abroad and the number of international students in the United States are both at a record high. We expect to see press coverage in national, regional and international publications, as well as a special section in the Chronicle of Higher Education on Monday.

We will announce the new numbers at a briefing at the National Press Club in Washington DC on Monday morning, together with the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Assistant Secretary Goli Ameri will make introductory remarks at this event. We have also placed an ad in Monday's Roll Call: The Newspaper of Capitol Hill, highlighting the new numbers and thanking members of Congress for their leadership. The ad appears on page 14 of the print publication, and can be viewed online at: http://www.opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=ThanksAmerica_RollCallAd.

All new Open Doors data is embargoed until November 17, and cannot be published in print or electronic form until then. A preview follows for your information.

The total international student enrollment in U.S. higher education increased by 7% this year, to an all time high of 623,805. There was an even stronger increase -- of 10% -- in the number of "new" international students, those enrolled for the first time at a U.S. college or university in fall 2008. Study abroad by U.S. students is up by 8%, to a record high total of 241,791 in the 2006/07 academic year, and students are continuing to go to more diverse destinations. This latest increase marks a decade of unprecedented growth in the number of American students receiving academic credit for their overseas academic experience, with an increase of close to 150%, from under 100,000 in 1996/97 to nearly a quarter of a million in 2006/07. On Monday morning, the new data, including breakouts by state and by country, will be available on the Open Doors website: www.opendoors.iienetwork.org.

Ten Tips for International Students Wanting to pursue Graduate Study in the United States

New Master's program at Miami University (Ohio)
MS in Applied Computer Science and Graduate Certificates

This article was written especially for Education USA to use during International Education Week.

Ten Tips for International Students Wanting to pursue Graduate Study in the United States
by Dr. Donald C. Martin

Hello from someone who has spent 28 years in the field of graduate admissions, financial aid and student affairs. It has been my privilege to work with thousands of prospective students, applicants, and enrolled students while serving at Columbia University, The University of Chicago and Northwestern University. My travels have taken me to 61 countries on every continent, largely for the purpose of speaking with students/advisors about the graduate educational process in the United States.

That you are considering study abroad indicates that you want to expand your intellectual and interpersonal skills, and enhance your professional and career path. Congratulations!

Contact an EducationUSA adviser near you for guidance on finding and applying to an accredited U.S. college or university
<http://www.educationusa.state.gov/> 1

Here are some tips about pursuing graduate study in the United States. This is by no means an exhaustive list. Rather, it contains the input most often provided by me in working with international students over the years. For more information, and to learn about my book, *Road Map for Graduate Study*: feel free to visit my website: www.gradschoolroadmap.com.

Tip One: Allow a few years to adequately prepare - take your time.

This is very important. You will be faced with many different activities - preparing for the GRE, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT, etc., researching various educational institutions and programs, preparing your applications, determining how you will fund your studies and much more. All of this takes time. You do not want to be or feel rushed. Believing that you do not have enough time will add stress to what can already be an overwhelming undertaking, and lead to making mistakes.

Tip Two: The importance of learning to speak/write in English.

Obviously, your ability to communicate in English, both verbally and in writing, is crucial. As with any skill, learning English takes time. In addition, some individuals have a greater level of ease in learning other languages. Take the time you need to learn the language. If you find that you are struggling, and application deadlines are approaching, wait a year. While initially this may seem like a major set back, taking the time you need to be proficient will reap huge dividends in the long run, and aid you in completing your program of study on time and with good academic standing.

Tip Three: Look beyond the top ten.

In my experience, one of the biggest mistakes prospective students (in the USA and abroad) make is determining, before doing any substantive research, where they want to apply/attend. Often these decisions are based on the ranking/prestige of an institution, and the student's or his/her family's belief that the most important thing is "getting in to the top school." This is truly a myth. For one thing, rankings fluctuate. Secondly, no two rankings are the same. Thirdly, there are hundreds - yes, hundreds - of outstanding graduate programs in the USA that are overlooked every year because they are not in the "top ten." In the end your success is not dependant on where you attended, but on who you are and the skill set you bring to your employer. Start your graduate school search with an open mind - look at 20 or 30 programs before determining where you will apply. Often you will be pleasantly surprised with some of the options you discover.

Tip Four: How you are treated as a inquirer/applicant is extremely telling.

This is huge! If you are welcomed, thanked, appreciated and helped as an inquirer or applicant, it speaks volumes about how you will be treated as a student. And conversely, if you are ignored, demeaned, belittled and confused by those with whom you communicate, believe me, nothing will change once you are enrolled. *Having a successful graduate school experience is about FIT* - you and the institution you are attending complimenting each other. Do not trivialize bad behavior toward you as a prospective student and applicant. It is a very strong sign of what you will experience if you enroll.

Tip Five: Follow directions in the application process.

Please do this! Resist the temptation to prepare essays that are longer than requested, to include more recommendation letters than asked, to leave a question unanswered, to apply a few days after the deadline, or send information that is for one admissions committee to another one. Any one of these does not provide a good first impression and in cases where the application process is very selective, can result in what might have been an admission decision ending up as a letter of denial. There is a whole chapter in my book on being successful in the application process. This chapter was added primarily because of my experience reviewing applications that could have been strong, but were greatly weakened because of not following directions. It happened more often than you might think.

Tip Six: Do not obsess about academic performance before or after enrolling.

In the end, your success in life is not correlated to your grades. While doing well academically is certainly something for which every graduate student should strive, obsessing about having a perfect record can greatly lessen your chances of having a rewarding, fulfilling and fruitful graduate school experience. Do your very best, but if you get a few B's, it is not the end of the world. My undergraduate GPA was 3.10. The average undergraduate GPA for millionaires in the USA is 2.79. Your ability to succeed in your chosen career path will depend on two major qualities: Persistence and Determination. If you practice these, you will accomplish your goals every time.

Tip Seven: Do not take your standardized test over and over again.

Many graduate school applicants are not the best test takers. This can be disconcerting, due to the misguided perception that one's test score and make or break an application. There are a few institutions where this is the case, but most admit applicants with varying test scores. As Director of Admissions at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business I often admitted applicants with GMAT scores below 600, sometimes even below 500. And by all means I was not alone. Many admissions committees realize that test scores are by no means the only predictor of academic success - they are just one part of the application. . . If you take your respective standardized test and do not do as well as you hoped, by all means take it a second time, maybe a third. But do not keep taking the test! It looks worse for you as an applicant. Taking the test once or twice more indicates that you tried to do your best, and were willing to take the test an extra time or two. Taking the test 5 times, 7 times, or 10 times makes you look desperate and careless.

Tip Eight: While there are financial resources available to you, they are not limitless.

During my years working with financial aid, it seemed that many international students had a perception that institutions in the United States are extremely wealthy, and have unlimited financial resources to help students fund their education. This is not true. Yes, there are scholarships, fellowships and assistantships available, but there are most always not nearly enough of them to help every student. In nearly every instance graduate students will need to have quite a bit of their own funding available. This is why planning well ahead is so important. Financing your education is very possible, but it takes planning, effort, creativity and researching all of the financial options available at the institution and beyond. More about this at the end of this article.

Tip Nine: If at all possible, relocate to your new institution/home early.

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Moving to a new home is a chore even if you are doing so in the same city, county, province or country. Moving to a new country is a major undertaking. There will be huge adjustments. Added to the responsibilities of a graduate program, the adjustments are compounded. If you are able to relocate even one month before your studies begin (two to three months is ideal), you give yourself time to gradually settle in and be more relaxed. This is especially if others are relocating with you. You can move your belongings, set up your finances, get acquainted with the area you will be living in, do some shopping, and familiarize yourself with the campus on which you will be spending most of your time. By the time orientation and classes start, you will already know your way around.

Tip Ten: YOU CAN DO THIS!!

Yes, you can do this. Many have done it before you, and you will pave the way for others who follow you. There will be ups and downs, but with your ability to focus on the end result - completion of your degree program and the doors it will open for you - and practice Persistence and Determination, there is virtually unlimited opportunity for you. Your dreams and goals are out there, waiting for you to grab hold of and achieve them. The possibilities are endless. And you will be successful, one day at a time.

There you have it: Ten Tips to consider about graduate study in the United States. May your journey as a graduate student prove to be exciting, rewarding, and exceed your expectations many times over!

****Should you purchase *Road Map for Graduate Study* by December 1, 2008, and send Dr. Martin an email message indicating that you have done so, you will receive a copy of his Ten Tips for Financing Your Graduate Study (dmartin@gradschoolroadmap.com)**

New Master's program at Miami University (Ohio)

Miami University in Oxford, Ohio is now offering a multidisciplinary research-oriented Master's degree in Computational Science and Engineering. This program has three tracks: one in Computational Mechanics for students with a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical or Manufacturing Engineering; one in Communication Systems Modeling and Simulation for students with a Bachelor's degree in Electrical or Computer Engineering; and a third in Bioinformatics for students with a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science. Students in all three tracks graduate with the degree of Master of Science in Computational Science and Engineering.

The application deadline for this new program for Fall 2009 is February 1, 2009. Acceptance into the program is determined by evaluation of transcripts, three letters of recommendation, the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, and statement of purpose. In addition, proof of English proficiency (TOEFL or IELTS) is also required of international students whose first language is not English or who have not earned their first university degree from an English-language institution. More information can be obtained on-line at: <http://www.miami.muohio.edu/graduate/> or by contacting the Graduate School at intlapp@muohio.edu.

MS in Applied Computer Science and Graduate Certificates

Apply for Graduate Studies in Computing at the University of West Georgia! We offer a M.S. in Applied Computer Science and Graduate Certificates in four areas. Our program is open to all individuals holding undergraduate degrees in all disciplines. Financial support and job placement are available. For more information, please visit: www.cs.westga.edu.

Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation

<http://www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu/>

The Harvard Kennedy School's Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation has the worthy goal to foster "creative and effective government problem-solving." The Institute uses research, education, international programs, and government innovations awards to affect such problem solving. The homepage is divided up into four sections, "Innovations in American Government," "Global Network," "Knowledge Building," and "Teaching and Training." To read some of the publications the Institute puts out, click on "Institute-Wide Publications" at the bottom of the "Knowledge Building" section. Along with the "5 Year Report" and the "2008-2009 Course Guide", "The Ash Institute Resource Guide" and "Communique: Ash Newsletter" are in PDF format here. In the "Innovations in American Government" section on the homepage, clicking on "Innovations News" will lead you to a three-part documentary that shows the presentations of the finalists for the 2008 Innovations Awards in front of the National Selection Committee. Just click on the link to "Part 1, Part 2, Part 3" at the bottom of the 2008 Innovations Winners section. It's sure to have you on pins and needles.

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The Royal Society: Podcasts

<http://royalsociety.org/page.asp?id=7476> From The Scout Report, Copyright Internet Scout Project 1994-2008. <http://scout.wisc.edu/>

The Royal Society, based in the United Kingdom, is not only 350 years old, but is also not about the royal family. Rather, The Royal Society is all about science--influencing science policy and debating scientific issues, with other scientists and the public. Their website is loaded with resources, such as their "News" section which has articles on science, education, industry and the environment culled from the major daily newspapers. Click on the "Library and Archives" section to be catapulted into a virtual room of resources such as the "Science Policy Collection", "Digital Journal Archive", "Biographical Information on Fellows", and "Picture Library". The Library events podcasts are easy-to-listen-to and wide-ranging, though many are about the history of

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science, and include video and audio podcasts. Podcasts about scientific failure, apothecaries, and the taming of electricity are just some of the titles available from the past two years of library events. Visitors shouldn't miss using the unique search feature called "Select an Audience" at the bottom of any page of the site that allows them to choose what information is viewed based on who they are, i.e. teacher, student, policymaker, researcher, media, scientist, or fellow. Such a feature really helps to make a large website, such as this, much more accessible and easy to navigate. From The Scout Report, Copyright Internet Scout Project 1994-2008. <http://scout.wisc.edu/>