

Mastering graduate school

By Michael Grayson

Graduate school may just be the gateway to a successful future and a loftier income. Dr. LaDelle Olion, Dean of Fayetteville State University Graduate program suggests. Dr. Olion, does not recommend students obtain a second undergraduate degree. However, he suggested students advance directly into graduate studies. With various areas of study, financial aid made accessible, and a foundational base of the most prominent professors, Dr. Olion, suggested that FSU Graduate School is the way to go.

So what does it take to be admitted into FSU's graduate program? "It's simple", says Dr. Olion. Admissions differ throughout schools. A grade-point-average (GPA) ranging from 2.5 -3.0 is one of the requirements for full admission. Letters of recommendations, prior work experience and for some departments GRE or GMAT tests are all components of the potential requirements. However, students who do not meet the basic GPA standards may be admitted on professional development terms. This allows students to "prove themselves" by taking graduate courses until their department's required GPA is

obtained. "Don't let financial problems be a wall", Dr. Olion, suggested. Financial-aid is available to students who maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Taking into consideration that a 3.0 is the minimum allowed to continue studies in the program, most students are covered by some type of financial aid. Forty assistantships are awarded to students through their various departments. The criteria for these sponsorships are based largely on income and GPA.

For the students who are undecided between attending graduate school and pursuing a second undergraduate degree, Dr. Olion, offered some advice for students. Attending school for a second undergraduate degree as opposed to pursuing a master's degree "Is not a good idea". About 99 percent of individuals who do get a second undergraduate degree comes back to get a master's degree anyway, so you might as well get it the first time. Many students may choose to obtain a second undergraduate degree because the classes are cheaper. However after you have paid for and taken those courses, you are still only left with an undergraduate degree.

Mrs. Kaity Parsons University Program Specialist also added, "If you decide to contin-

your studies and pay more money, it's just more logical to pursue an advanced degree".

Dr. Olion emphasized the importance of consulting with your advisor before making any decisions.

Statistically, Dr. Olion suggested that students who will enter the graduate program are prone to succeed. About 90 percent of all students who are formally accepted into the program are successful in obtaining their degree, said Dr. Olion. Most students usually complete their masters within two to four years, and students seeking their doctoral degrees usually finish in four to six years.

FSU's graduate program has a total of 24 master degree programs, and seven licenses and certificates programs.



At right: Dr. LaDelle Olion, Dean of FSU Graduate program



Photos by Antonio Monroe