

Tips for grad school hopefuls

By Betsy Stewart

Even if you're not absolutely positive you want to go to graduate school, you should consider the possibility and do some investigation, Dr. Lyn Aubrecht, Meredith professor of psychology, said in a speech Friday. His topic, "How to Apply to Grad School," was presented at the career center. "Just because you're here doesn't mean you've made the decision to go," Aubrecht said, and he encouraged students to apply to programs that interested them, and then make their decision about enrolling after the acceptance letters come in.

Aubrecht cited several reasons for seeking a graduate degree. The first was economic, and he stated the more education one has, the more money one will earn in a lifetime.

The second reason was employability. There may be jobs you can do without a bachelor's degree, Aubrecht said, but you may not even get an interview for those jobs if you don't have that degree. "The longer you stay on the education train," he added, "the better off you will be. With a bachelor's or master's degree you are at the top of the hill, and you can get any job anywhere down the hill."

Aubrecht's third reason for attending grad school might be considered unorthodox, and he admitted that "some people really hate it when I talk about this." He said, "Maybe you don't know what you want to do with the rest of your life and maybe you haven't met the man of your dreams." Going to graduate school may enable to meet people you're interested in knowing, he said. Even though we have a high number of Ph.D.s in the triangle area, if you're not on campus you probably won't have a chance to get to know them. If you're on campus, you will, he added, and you'll meet people you like being with.

Once he finished discussing the why, Aubrecht talked about the how. He suggested that a student honestly rate herself on her academic ability and then research the programs available. Use the reference materials in the career center, he advised, and talk to your academic adviser.

The next step is to rank those schools with programs that fit your goals. A very high ranking would include schools from which an acceptance letter would be a miracle. A very low ranking would include schools you wouldn't attend even if you were accepted.

Apply to these and all those in between, Aubrecht said. How many schools should you apply to? "Not fewer than 20," Aubrecht said. "Yes, it's a lot of forms to fill out; yes, it's a lot of recommendation letters; and yes, it's a lot of money in application fees, but it will pay off in the long run," he added.

"When you get your acceptance letters, don't say yes to anybody," Aubrecht said. "Go visit the schools. Don't bother to write and tell them you're coming, just go." Spring break is a great time to go, he said, as long as school is in session at the campuses you plan to visit. When you get there, talk to students who are in the program you've applied for. He advised, don't talk to the faculty—talk to the students. "Take them out for coffee or lunch," he said, but not together. Talk to at least three and talk to them one at a time. They will tell you the truth about the school." He added that it's important to find a place where you feel comfortable and where you think you will fit in. You can't know that by reading brochures, Aubrecht said, you must go see the school and talk to students.

In relating what schools look for when assessing applications, Aubrecht said they first look at grades. He recommended that students look at their GPA in different ways. If your overall GPA isn't as high as you want it to be, Aubrecht advised, calculate your GPA for your junior and senior years, or look at your GPA in your major. He added that students should present the best picture they can in making their applications.

Aubrecht's second tip was to study and prepare for the GRE, LSAT, MCAT or any other entrance exam you are required to take. Go to a book store,

look at all the study guides, select the one you think is best, and take it home and use it. "You want to get the highest score you can," he said, "and you can improve your score with preparation."

Finally, Aubrecht said, get good letters of recommendation. "Don't just ask professors if they can write you a letter, ask them if they can write you a good letter." He suggested that students get themselves in a position to get good recommendation letters by getting to know the faculty and becoming involved in clubs and honor societies associated with their major. "The smallness of Meredith can be a disadvantage," he admitted, "because some schools may not have heard of Meredith College. On the other hand," he said, "Meredith's size can be an advantage because students have an opportunity to get involved in their department and they can get to know people who can help them."

Aubrecht's speech is the first in a series of events being offered by the career center. At 10:00 a.m. on Friday, November 17, Dr. Jean Jackson will discuss "How to Write Winning Graduate School Applications."

A Graduate and Professional School Expo sponsored by the Cooperating Raleigh Colleges will be held Monday, November 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the NCSU McKimmon Center. Representatives from more than 90 graduate programs will be there.

Attention Meredith Students:

Have you heard about the network services (E-mail and Internet) available on campus? If you are registered for 3 or more credits, please call 829-2363 and register for your network training class.

Classes offered by the office of Technology Services.

After Five comes alive

By Carol Swink

"After5," an evening program established in August that enables women working during the day to enroll in college courses, should increase Meredith's non-traditional student population, said Madra Britt, "After5" Evening Program Coordinator.

"Women who worked were being penalized by not having the chance to come at night and earn a degree," Britt said in an interview.

Because 51% of women work full-time, Britt believes the "After5" program is an extension of Meredith College's mission to educate women.

This type of evening program was researched with other colleges and universities where the program was successful, such as Greensboro College, Guilford College, High Point University and Campbell University, Britt said.

"Everybody is trying to start this program," Britt said. "It is timely and a lot of competition. Meredith has the uniqueness of a woman's college and the same appeal to working women as well as traditional age."

Twelve students, 23 years of age and older, are enrolled in the "After5" program this semester, Britt said.

The "After5" classes are divided into two eight-week terms with hour and a half classes three days a week.

Classes such as speech, sign language, music, theater, politics and business are offered, Britt said.

Traditional-aged students will not be affected by the late classes, Britt said. Traditional-aged students may register for an evening class in the program, Britt said.

The "After5" program is different from the re-entry program because "After5" students work during the day and attend college at night, while the re-entry students attend classes in the day and evening, Britt said.

Britt said that the "After5" program was "a challenge to get off" and expects a successful program at Meredith since "we've just planted the seed."