

# **How (not) to Apply to Grad School**

and Survive your First Year

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UDLS

May 7, 2021

James Yoo

“Why, no. Graduate school is not stressful!”  
– Harold, 23



# About me



- 1st year M.Sc. student
- Research area: Software engineering
- Hobbies:
  - Long walks on the beach
  - Warm sunlight on my face brings me to tears
  - Daydreaming about dropping out of grad school

# Why Grad School?

1

**Unparalleled work-life balance**

```
commit 908a47ba11d523fc3255f758aa102fc8e61ddbb1
Author: James Yoo <jyoo980@gmail.com>
Date: Sat Feb 13 00:23:12 2021 -0800
```

adding test runs

```
commit c85878f24fc3d38dd3daba01c403f5bb8fa8b4ef
Author: James Yoo <jyoo980@gmail.com>
Date: Fri Feb 12 22:23:14 2021 -0800
```

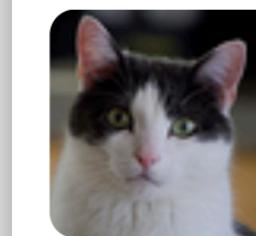
adding instructions for script

```
commit 4d96ace4f93c923d9855c5ddd27d72facac55ad5
Author: UBC Student <yoo@students.cs.ubc.ca>
Date: Fri Feb 12 22:19:23 2021 -0800
```



**james** 🍳 2:34 AM

Hey have time to hop on a call?



**atgeller** 2:40 AM

Dude it's 2am



**james** 🍳 2:41 AM

Did I stutter?

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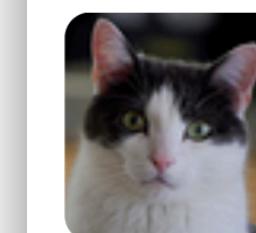
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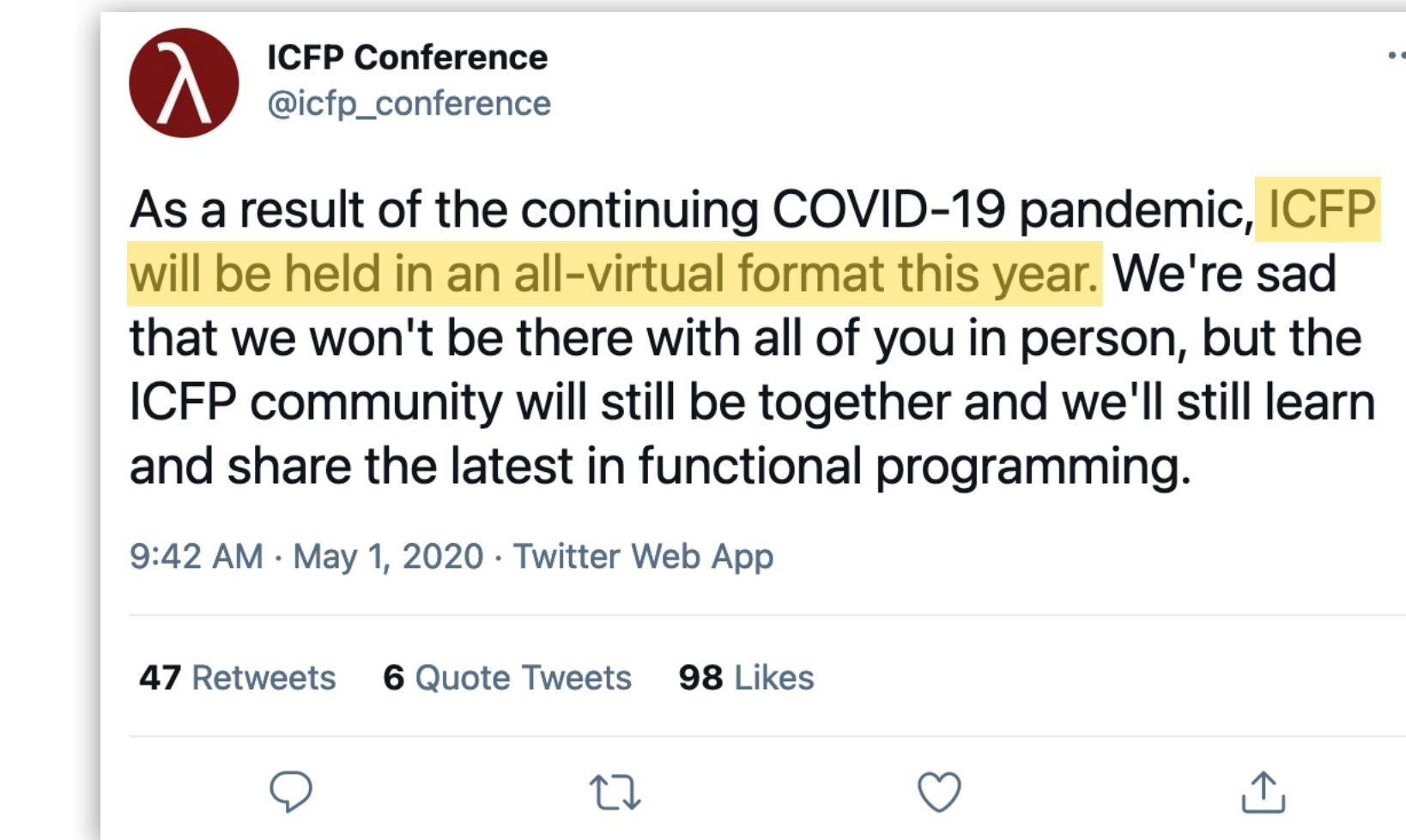
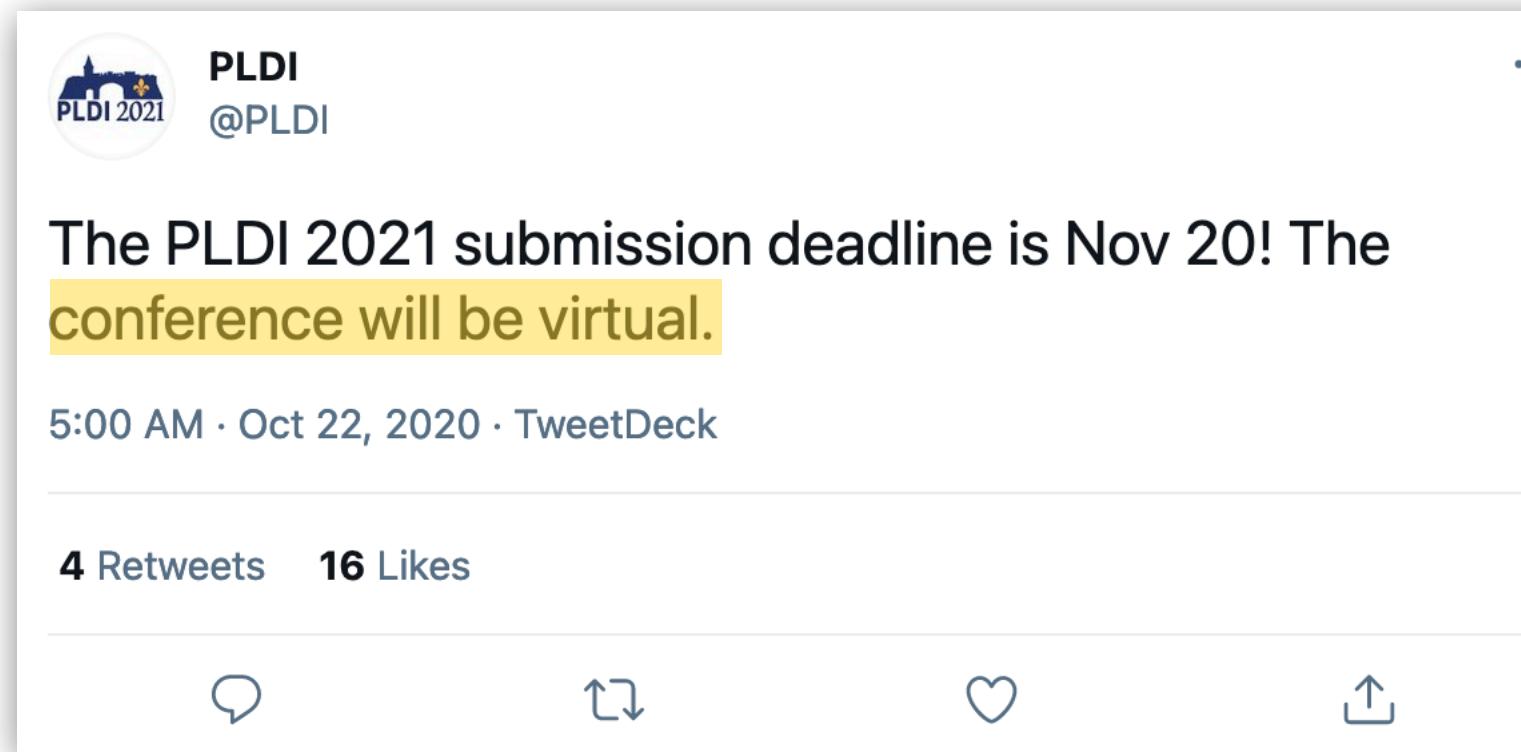


james 2:41 AM

Did I stutter?

2

Frequent travel to exotic locales  
(conferences!)



haha gotem!

3

Plentiful free food

PK

## Paulette Koronkevich

Re: One (1) slice of free pizza in x836  
To: grads@cs.ubc.ca

As this document technically concludes the 24 years I have spent on the pupil side of the educational equation, I will be reluctant to give up using 'but I'm just a student' as an excuse for anything I don't want to do, or pay for; however, I will steadfastly refuse any effort to get me to wear pants of appropriate length, stop evaluating the value of any foodstuff in terms of calories per dollar, replace the one bike shirt I have worn daily for the past 8 years, or make me feel self-conscious while stuffing free food into my pockets at every opportunity.

REID HOLMES

– Reid Holmes, *Pragmatic Software Reuse*

**Unparalleled work-life balance**

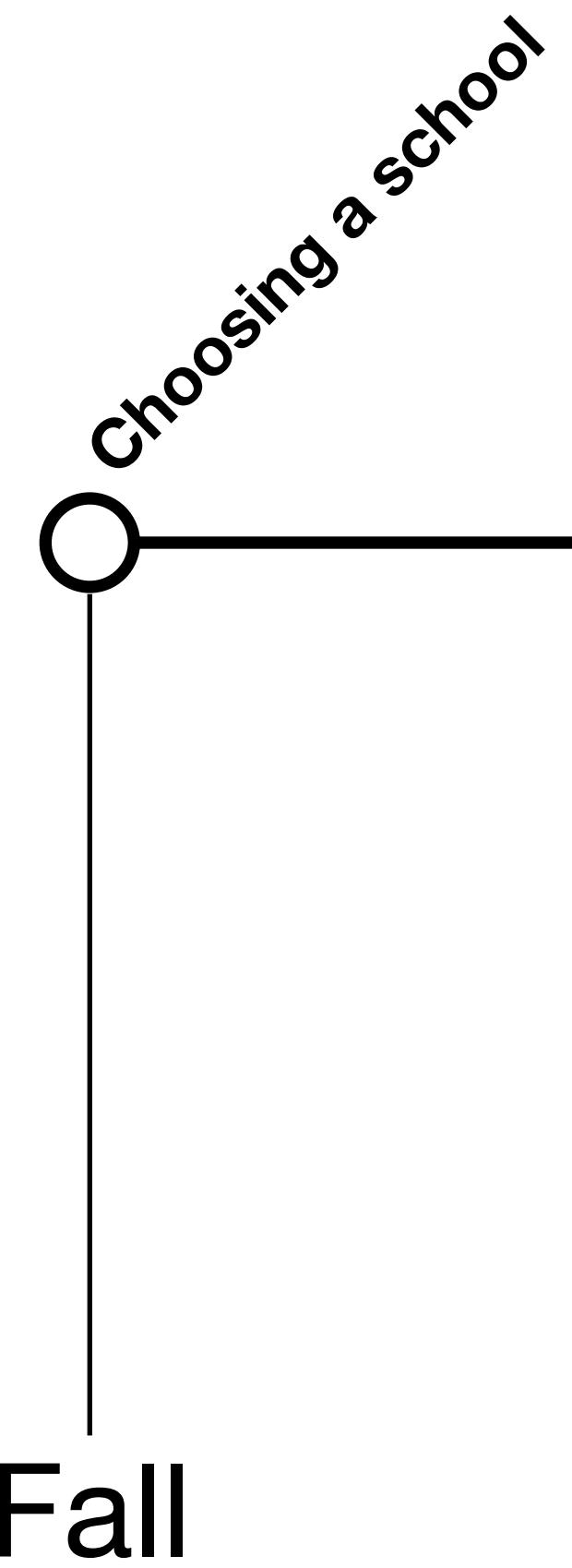
**Frequent travel to exotic locales**

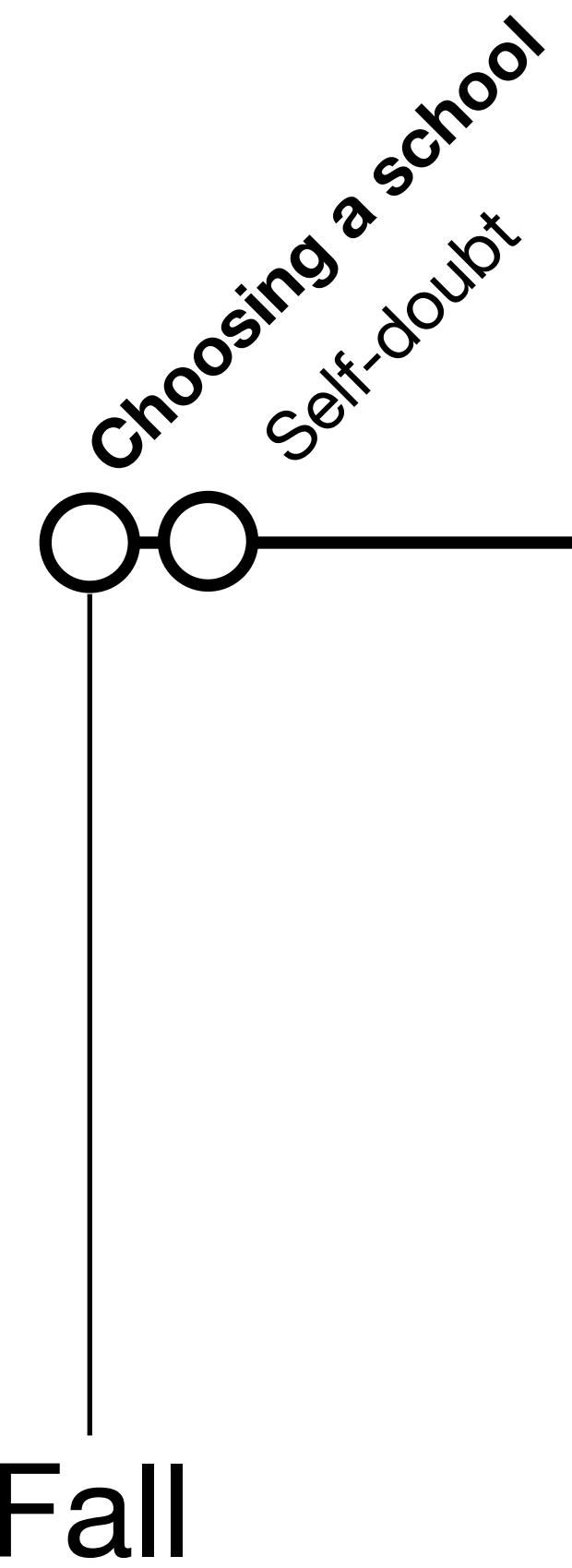
**Plentiful free food**

**Still interested?**

**Get some help.**

# The Application Process

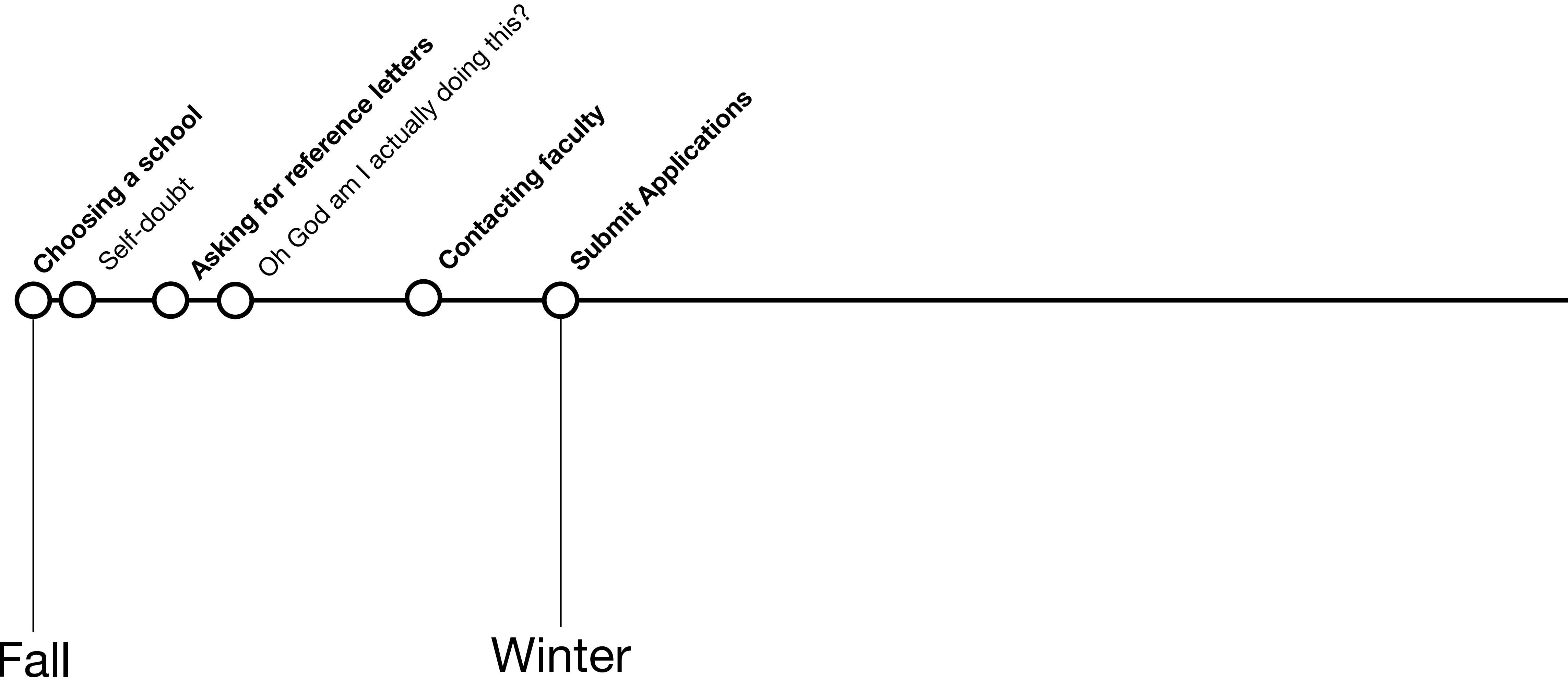


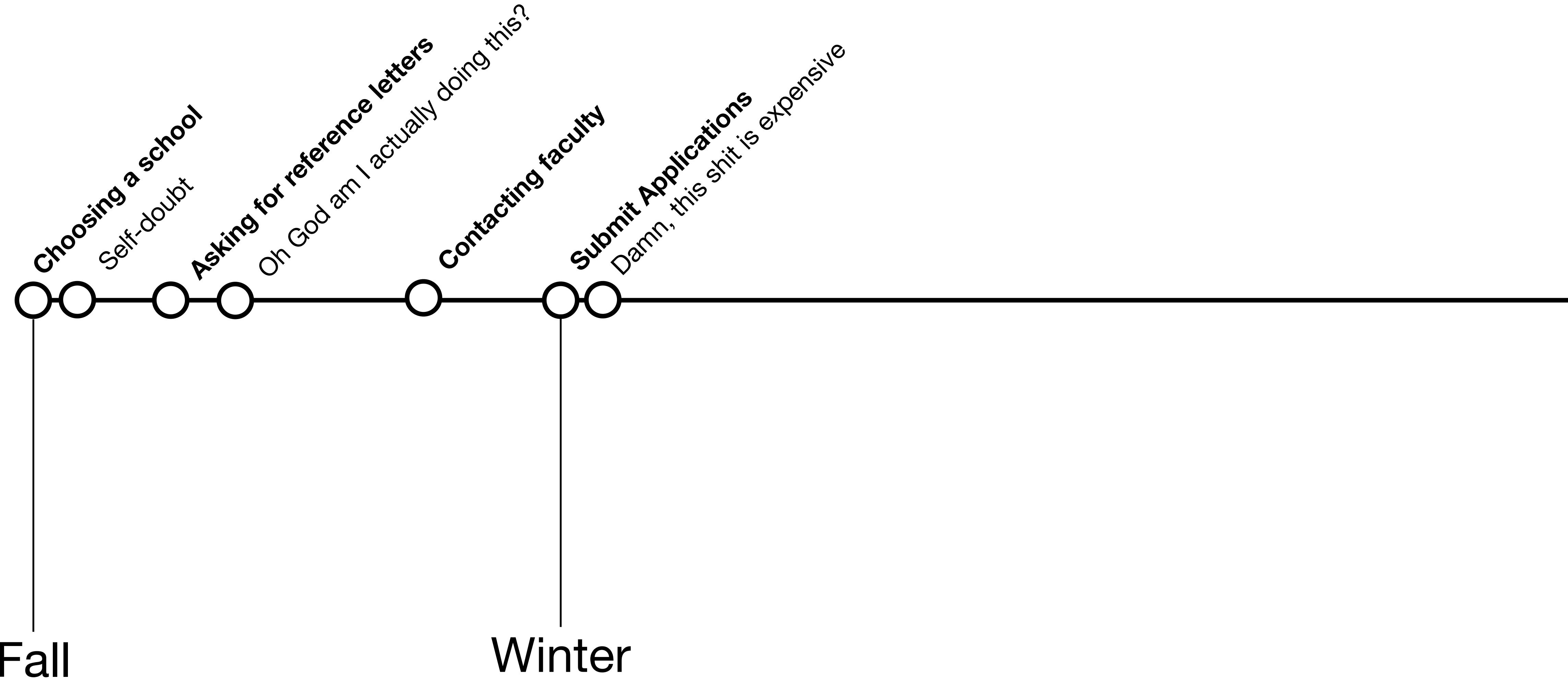


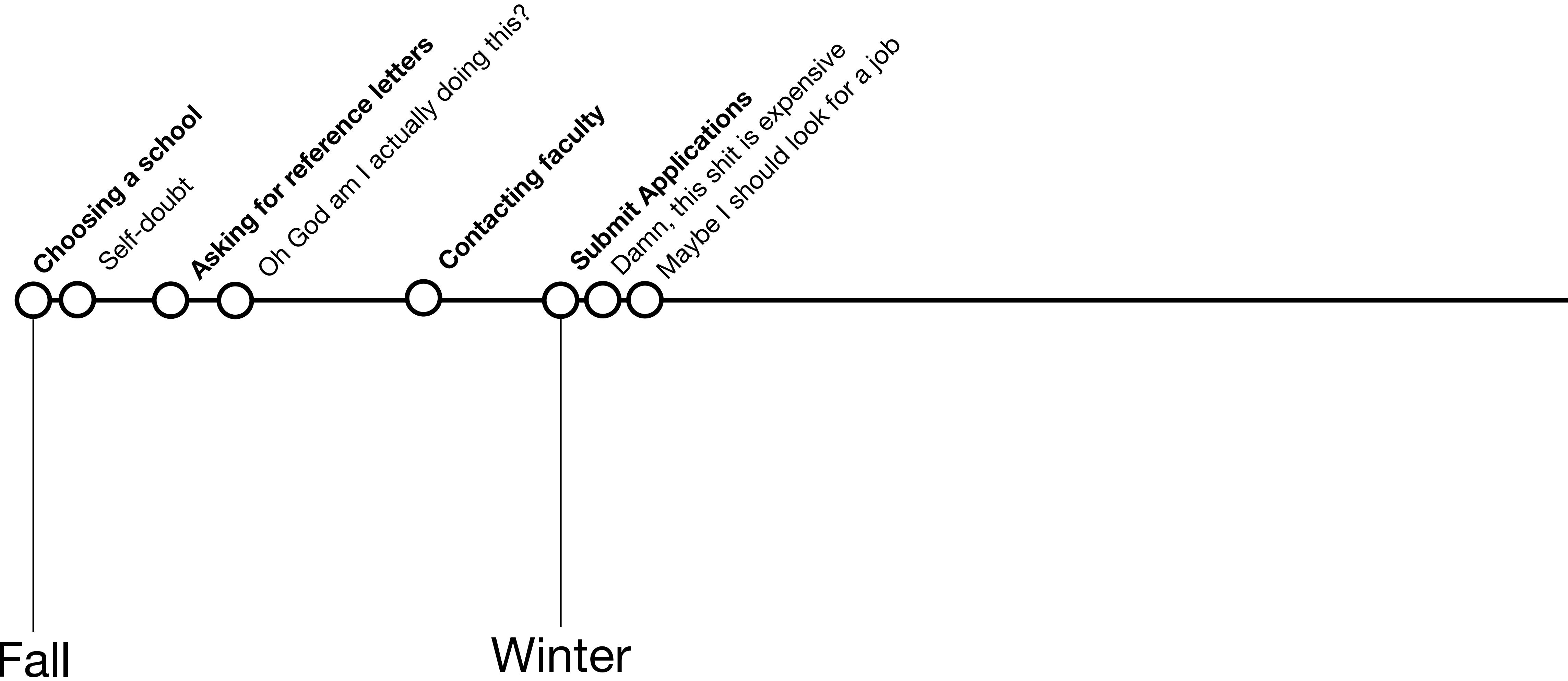


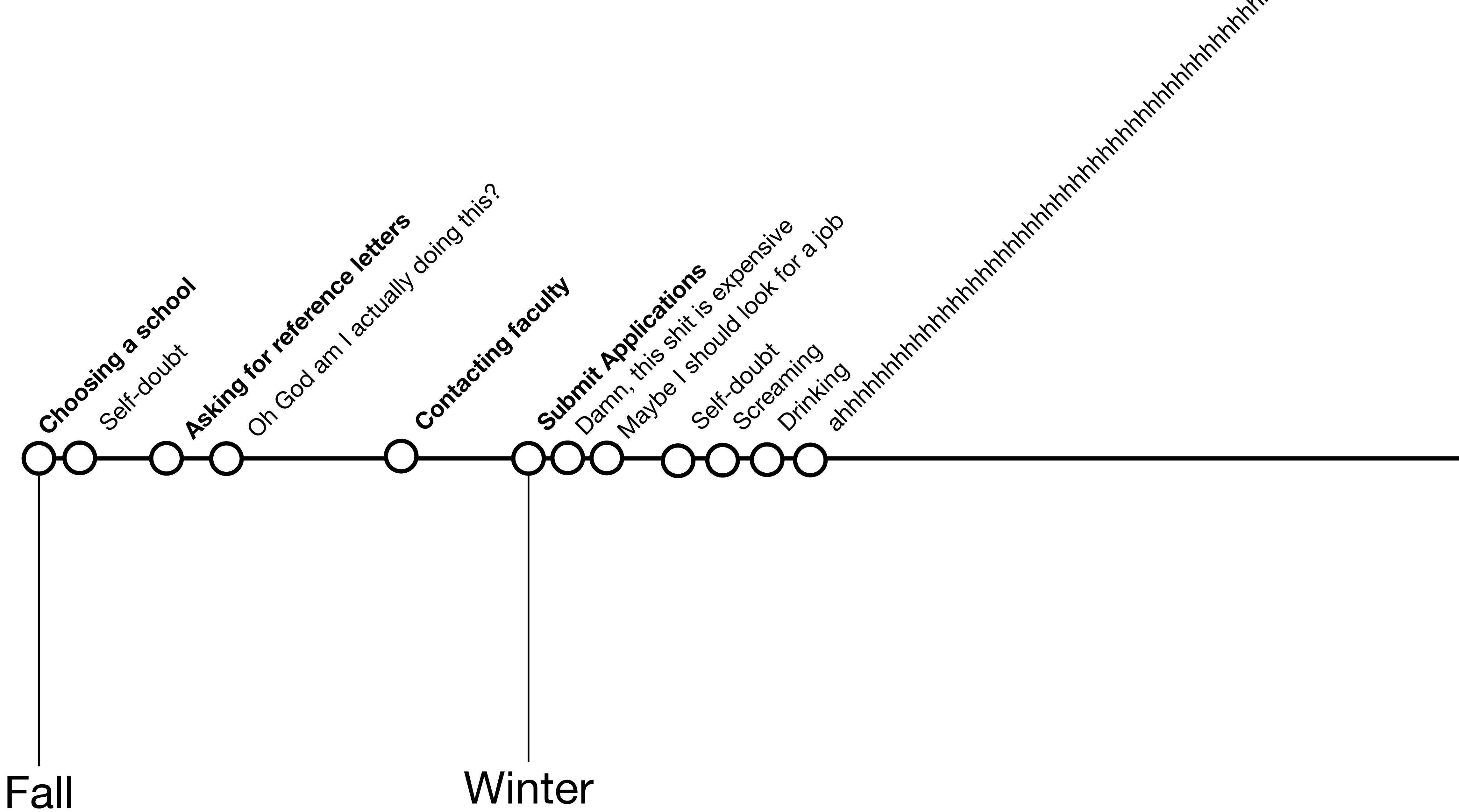


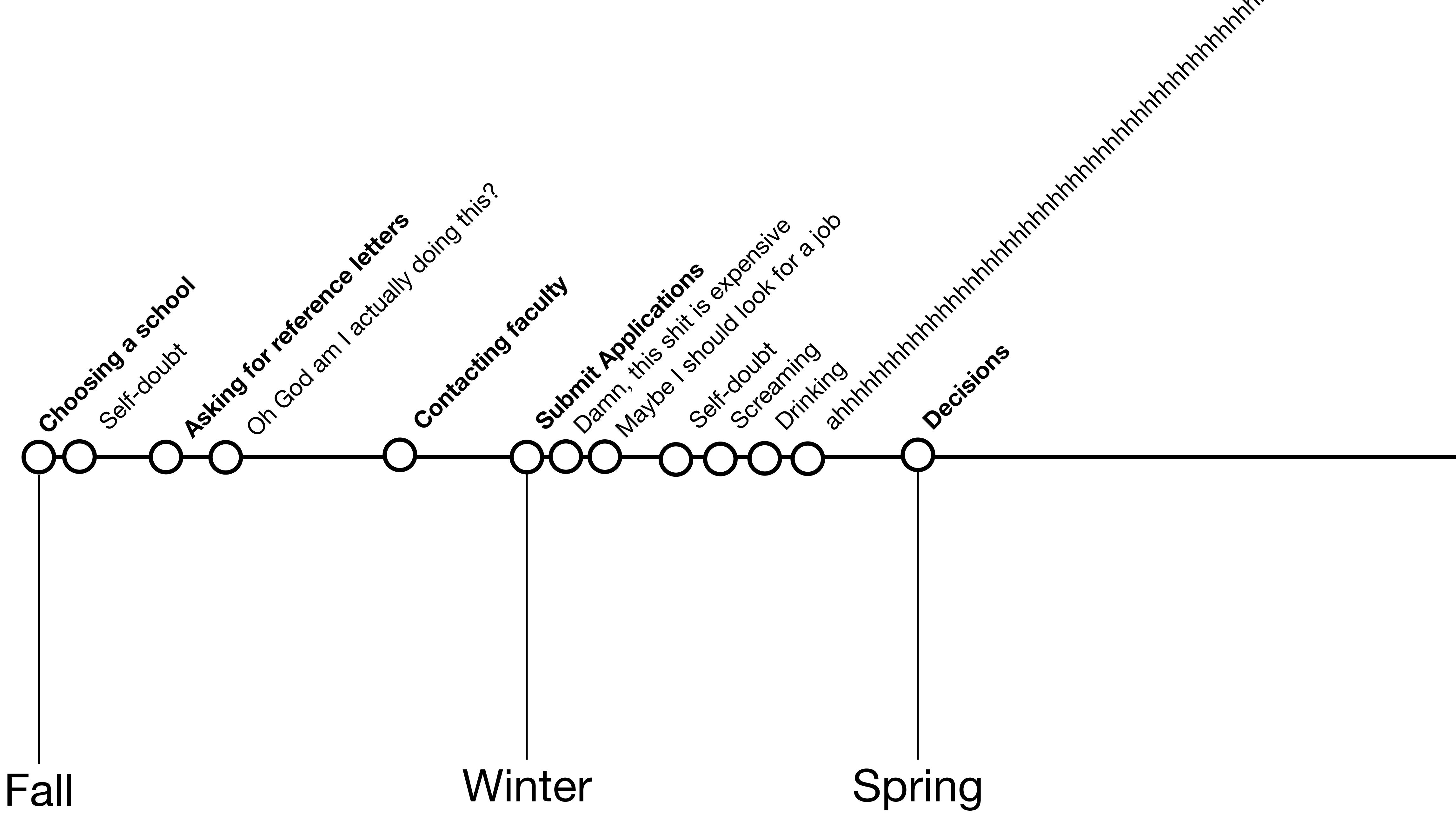


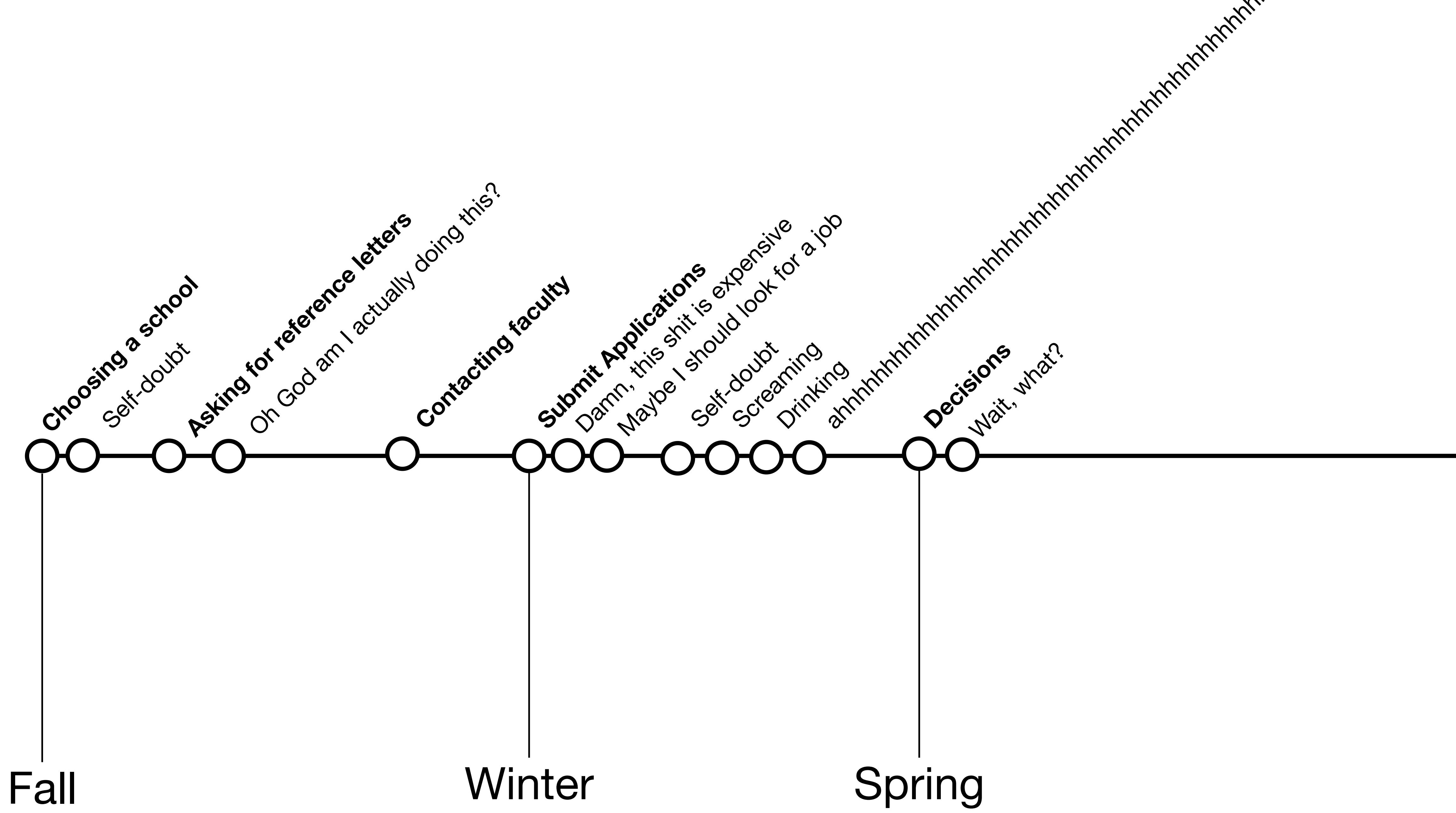


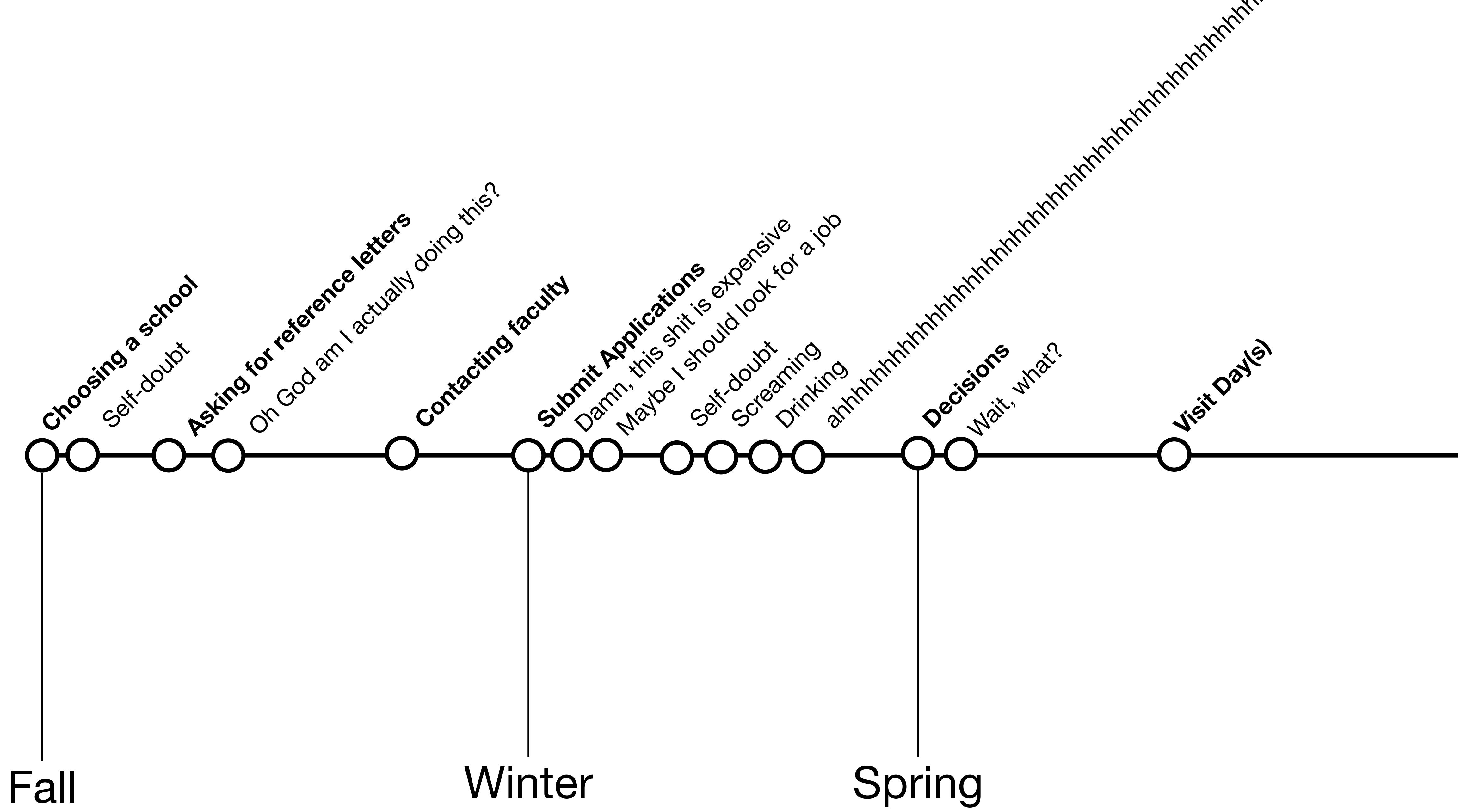


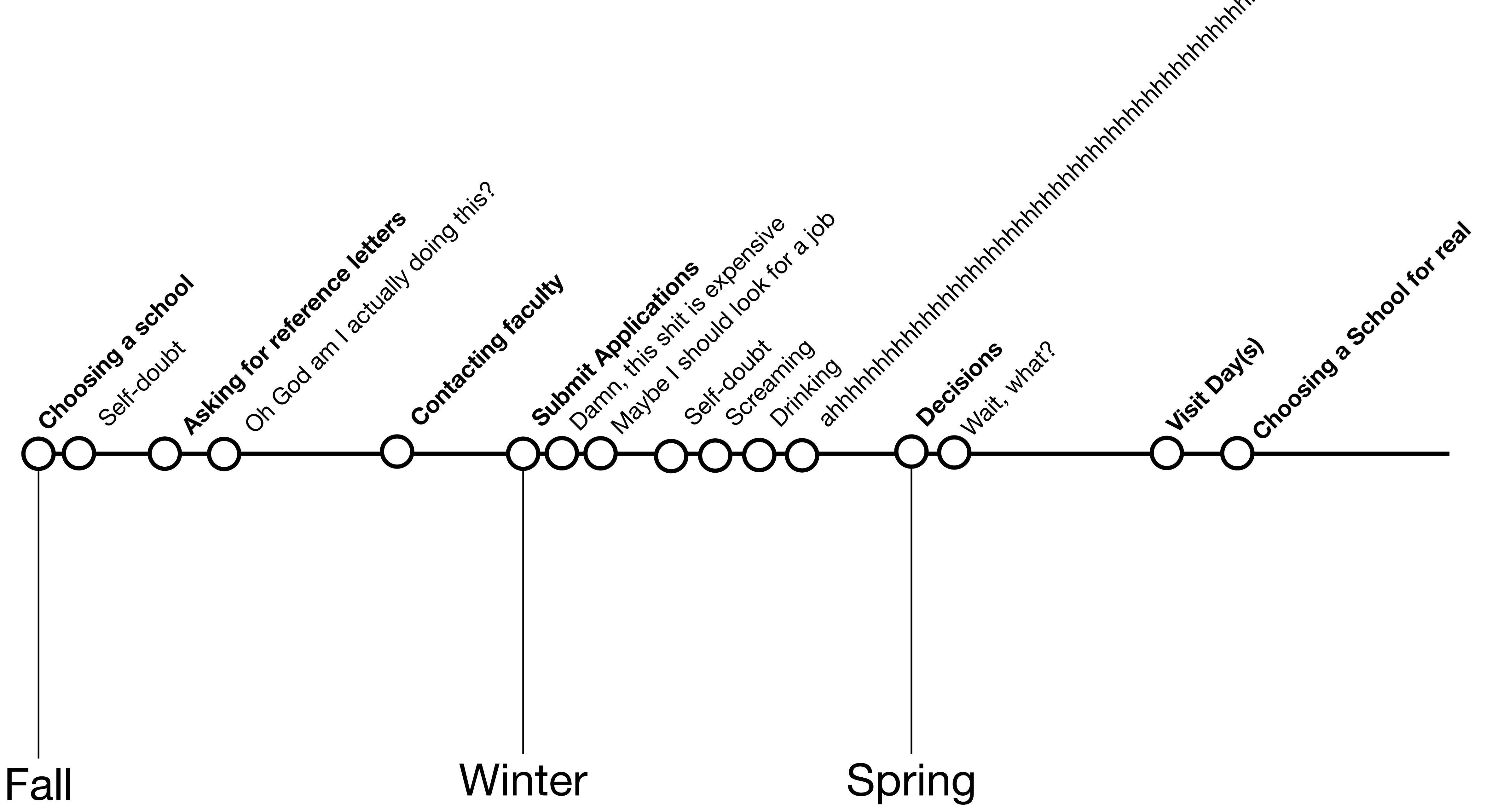


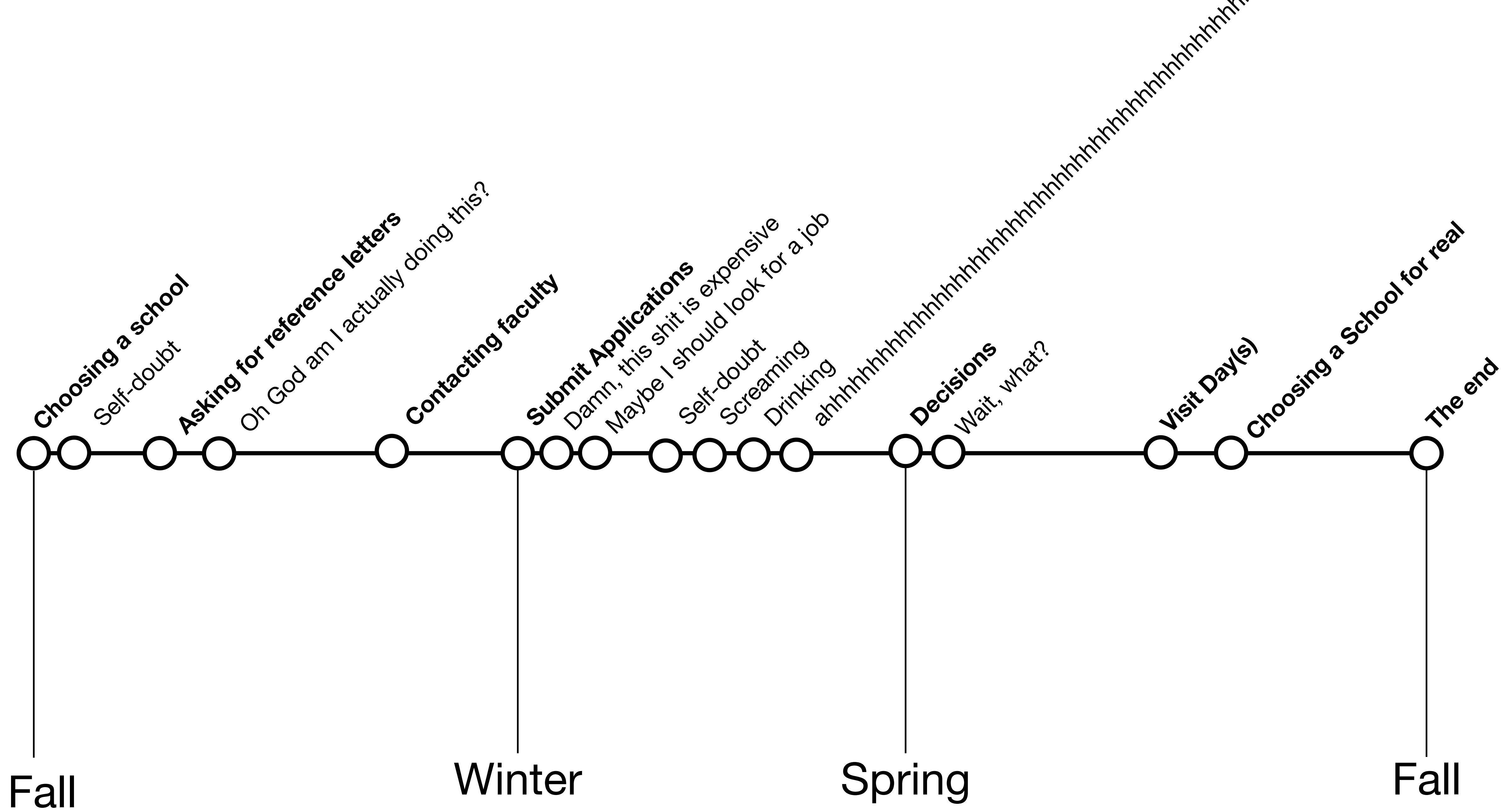












# Choosing a school

Hedge your bets! Just remember:

**School > Research lab/cohort > Advisor**

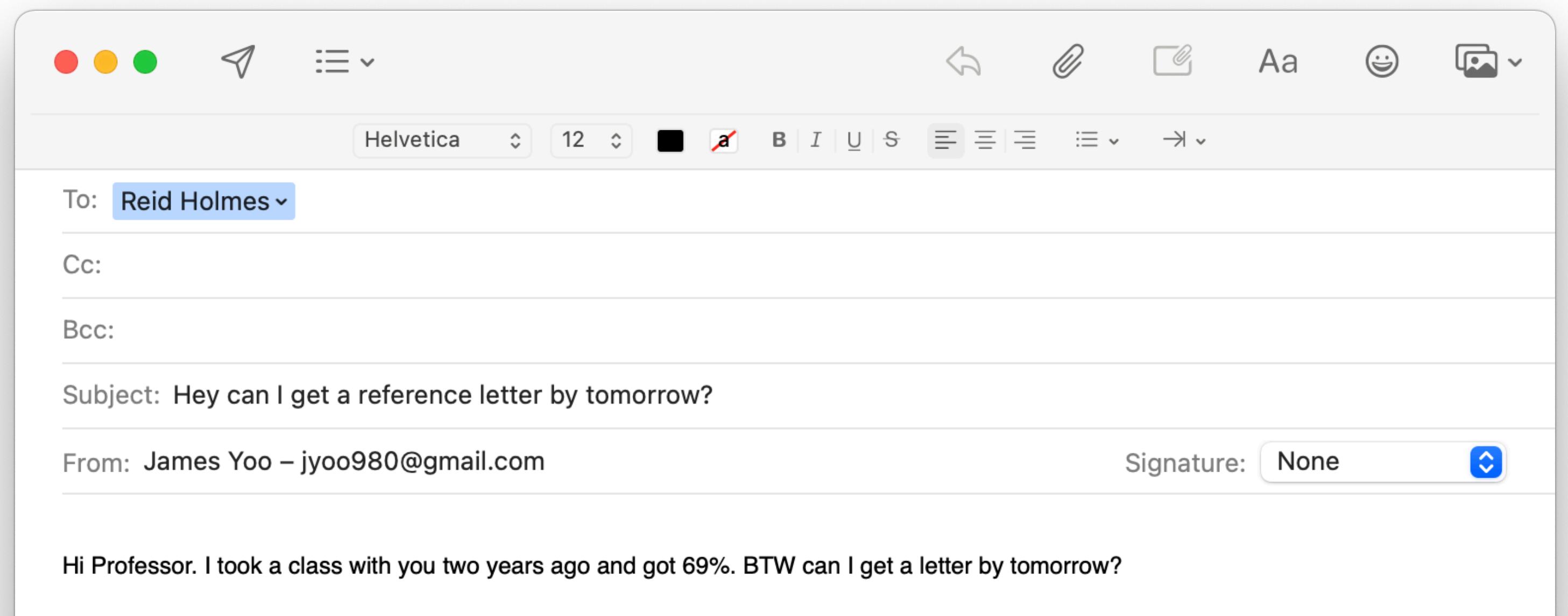


**SIMON FRASER  
UNIVERSITY**  
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# Reference letters

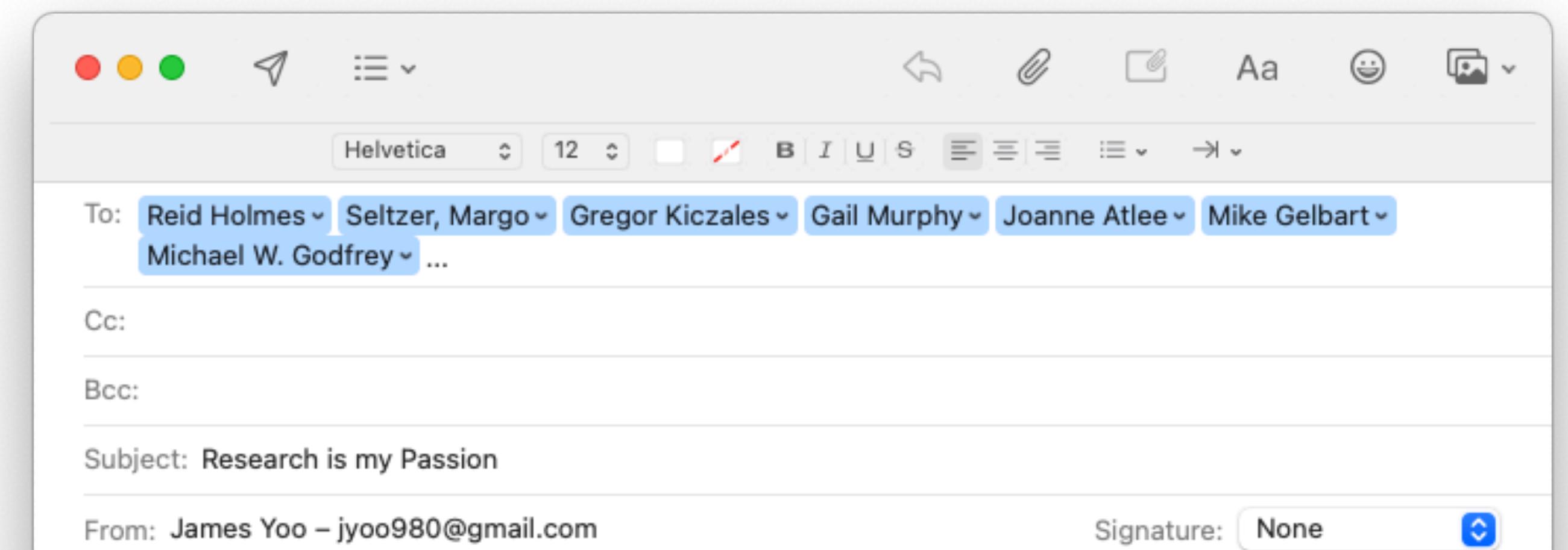
- Ask professors you *barely* know
- Ask no earlier than two (2) days before the deadline
- Provide *zero* information, keep them on their toes!



# Contacting faculty (Part 1)

a.k.a. the ***copypasta*** method

- Remember your SE classes, ***generics are good***
- Follow the DRY principle
- Tell a *story* with your emails
- The longer the better!



# Contacting faculty (Part 2)



**gail** 9:04 AM

G'morning. Are we meeting now?



**james** 9:05 AM

oh **FUCK**

# The statement of intent (Part 1)

- Practice your fiction skills!
  - Most papers are fictional these days anyway
  - *CONS should not Evaluate its Arguments ???*
  - *Threesomes, With and Without Blame ??!!!*

# The statement of intent (Part 1)

- Practice your fiction skills!
  - Most papers are fictional these days anyway
  - *CONS should not Evaluate its Arguments ???*
  - *Threesomes, With and Without Blame ??!!!*
- Elucidate your superior comprehension of your intended field by utilizing substantial combinations of characters with pre-designated semantic meaning determined by society
  - “use” → “utilize”
  - “graph with data” → “machine learning”
  - “make easier” → “mechanize”

# The statement of intent (Part 2)

- Do *not* state your intent!
  - Trick question!
  - Avoid at all costs!
  - Danger!

**Instead... tell your life story**

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# Statement of Intent

James Yoo (M.Sc. in Computer Science Applicant for September 2020)

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When I was 6 years old, I had a dream that I was abducted by a computer! Crazy, right? It turns out that's the entire thing that sparked my interest in software engineering! I had a nice salad this morning. To be fair, you need a very high IQ to understand software engineering. The field is extremely nonsensical, and without a solid grasp of the SOLID principles, most of the the papers will go over a typical student's head. There's also Matthias Felleisen's nihilistic outlook, which is deftly woven into his papers about the HtDP Design Recipe - his personal philosophy draws heavily from, wait. I lost my train of thought...

# Offer(s)

# Flip a coin

# Flip a coin

(No, really)

# Questions?