**WIS 2920 Wildlife Colloquium**

**Assignment 4: Graduate Degree (Due before 9:35 a.m., 2 October 2017)**

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Using ≤2 pages (typed; 12 pt font; 2.5 cm margins; single-spaced), discuss the following:

1. Do I need a graduate or professional degree (MS, PhD, or DVM/Professional Degree) to have a successful career in wildlife ecology and conservation or veterinary medicine? Why or why not?

Since I am already on my last semester, as you know, I realized that even though I don’t need to continue my education, I really want to gain more research experience while in a M.S program. I’m hoping to be accepted into a program that will be continue learning skills and techniques that I will use in my career path. At this time, I am also thinking about back up plans for when I graduate. I have been applying for naturalist, wildlife conservation, and environmentalist positions for the City of Gainesville, Alachua County, and surrounding areas. If I’m able to get into an entry level job position in my field, then I will continue my education online, while acquiring work experience. There are no certainties when I graduate, so I need to have multiple plans in place so that I have continue on my career path, whether it be education or gaining work experience. The issue with work experience is that many positions require 3+, 5+, or more years for a basic level position. So to gain that it would probably gained while earning an online an M.S degree. Many jobs require at least a B.S, but only higher level positions need an M.S + work experience, so it just depends on what positions are available and what they are looking for.

1. How do I get into graduate or professional school?

One of the first steps into getting in a graduate or professional school, starts as an undergraduate student. Normally to be competitive in graduate or professional school applications, many students require volunteering, internships, and extracurricular activities. Not only that, but if you are determined to get into a specific school and program, to see if the classes you are currently taking as an undergraduate are pre-requisite for the program you want to apply to. Many programs require a certain score for GPA, GRE, or any other test you need to take to get into the program. Making sure that you meet as least the minimum will give you a better chance of being accepted. In many programs, you would already have to look into getting an advisor to sponsor you as well. There is common, I’ve heard this a lot, that it is not advised to do your M.S program in the same university that you earn your B.S, but I would say that it might be easier to get into an M.S program under the direction of a past or current professor than a new one. Of course, that depends on the program and on the school.

1. What should I look for in a graduate or professional program?

Referencing the website - <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-graduate-schools/articles/2012/04/20/ask-7->questions-before-applying-to-graduate-school

The website above suggests many good questions about what someone should look for in a graduate or professional program.

- What type of academic or professional degree am I seeking?

This is dependent on why you want to go on and continue your education for. It could be to continue your research, or to advance into another career position if you earn another degree. Many jobs will pay for people trying to earn a degree to advance themselves within the company/organization. This could be limiting for the person, but it would allow for them to continue their education while working.

If you are thinking about continuing your education, then looking for an academic or professional degree that will help you advance in your career path is something that you should look into. For example, maybe you are thinking about a certificate in Wildlife Conservation Forensics certificate, which seems really cool, but it not something that you would need in your career path, maybe it would be better to look into another program.

**-What type of learning and student experience am I seeking?**

**Some students simply want to spend most of their time doing research, and other students want to spend their time learning about topics in the classroom, so it depends on what the student likes to do and how they best will excel in. Some programs are researched based, and normally those are the ones that require that the student submit a publication at the end of their program. The programs that are non-thesis, just require the student to complete the programs, and probably a final project, at the end of their program.**

**-Should I consider a full-time or part-time program?**

**This is a really important question because many students like me, like the flexibility. This could mean that the program is flexible in the classes that they could take and also in class availability. It depends on what the student is doing, if they are working they would probably want to do a part –time flexible M.S, or if the student doesn’t have to work, then they could go to school full-time and finish their degree faster.**