Graduate Student Recruitment
Effective Approaches and Strategies

Speakers
Jamie Baxter – Geography
Chris Ellis – Schulich
David Heap – French
Pamela Houghton – Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Paul Ragogna – Chemistry
Clare Tattersall – SGPS

Facilitator
Duncan Hunter

March 10, 2010
Promoting UWO Geography’s Graduate Program with Online Video

Jamie Baxter, Graduate Chair, Geography
Rationale for Using Online Videos

- help match between applicant needs and what programs/department has to offer
- sense of place (i.e. beyond photos and text)
- “meet” students/faculty
- may not hear about us first through web, but will likely learn more about us that way
- increase acceptance rates
“Heard About UWO Geography”
OUAC (prior to launching videos)

- 42% applicants heard about UWO Geography from the “Web” last year (2009/10 recruitment)

CITIZENSHIP AND LANGUAGE INFORMATION
Status in Canada: Study Permit
Country of Citizenship: GHANA
PERMANENT RESIDENTS ONLY: became Permanent Resident on:
First Language: English

OTHER INFORMATION
How did you learn about Western?: Web
Previously in a Western Program?: N
Previously in a Western Program (Year):
Previously in a Western Program (Student ID):
Awards/External Funding:
“Heard About UWO Geography”
OUAC (prior to launching videos)

- 57% offers accepted last year (2009/10 recruitment)
Graduate Program - Overview
The graduate degree programs in the Department of Geography are strongly research oriented, and the completion of a thesis is the main focus at both the Masters and PhD levels. The Department offers several different programs leading to MA, MSc, and PhD degrees. We have specific strengths in the areas of Environment Development and Health, Geographic Information Science, Physical Geography, and Urban Studies. We also have joint degrees in Environment and Sustainability and Migration and Ethnic Relations at the Masters and PhD levels. The Department has excellent research, analytical and computing facilities. Our large and active group of graduate students and faculty conduct research in locations all over the world - see the brochure link on our research opportunities page. See also our brochure.
UWO Geography on YouTube

“Finding a Supervisor”

Department of Geography

Graduate Research Opportunities

Finding a supervisor
It is important to find a good match between your research interests and a thesis supervisor. Our graduate program is strongly research oriented, and the completion of a thesis is the main focus of all our degree programs. Here you will find information about current faculty projects and research interests that should help you find an appropriate supervisor. We have several research opportunities for graduate research at both the Masters and Ph.D. levels. The links below provide a thematic overview of faculty research interests as well as funded projects that require students. As there is not always a perfect match between existing projects and student research interests, all faculty will consider supervising original projects that overlap with their own areas of expertise. Contact potential supervisors before applying to the program. Please also see our printer-friendly brochure.

Examples of Faculty Research
(follow links on right for a full list)

Environment, Development, and Health

Geographic Information Science

Opportunities

Environment, Development and Health

Geographic Information Science

GRADUATE PROGRAM
Overview
Finding a Supervisor
Application Process
Brochure (pdf)
Courses
Program Components
Ethics Approval
Geograph Handbook
Geograph Society
Graduate Student Directory

GRADUATE DEGREES
M.A. or M.Sc. in Geography
Ph.D. in Geography
M.A. or M.Sc. in Geography (Environment and Sustainability)
Ph.D. in Geography (Environment and Sustainability)
M.A. in Geography (Migration and Ethnic Relations)
Ph.D. in Geography (Migration and Ethnic Relations)

FUNDING
University Funding
Departmental Awards
“Heard About UWO Geography”
OUAC (after launching videos)

- 2% decrease to 40% applicants heard about UWO Geography from the “Web” this year (2010/11 recruitment…still counting…)
- YouTube videos may not increase application rates but applicants should be well informed when they apply.
Conclusion?

• 1300+ “hits” video since Nov 2009 is good?
• Application #s unchanged
• Acceptance rates post-YouTube not yet known
• Value added – too early to tell
  – Ongoing discussions with students about why they do and do not come to UWO Geog.
Schulich Graduate Recruitment --
Chris Ellis

• The key relationship for recruiting any student is between the student and potential supervisor.
• The graduate program plays an important role in creating the culture and environment that contributes to the students experience.
• What can we do as a Faculty to contribute to recruiting graduate students?
Schulich Graduate Recruitment

Started with

• Open Houses (fall & winter) showcasing grad programs
• Schulich Communications developed brochures, postcards, newspaper ads, email ads, Penguin Banners… and
• Monthly Graduate Program meetings
Schulich Graduate Recruitment

But to develop a strategy one must

• understand the needs and limitations of the
graduate programs and
• what the barriers exist for students.

Approach

• Learned about graduate programs through
  *monthly* grad program meetings
• Learned about students through discussion with
  undergrad students at *Open Houses* and
discussions with *existing* graduate students.
Schulich Graduate Recruitment

• WGRS from SGPS
  – Each program had own policy for distribution of scholarships, policies varied year to year and graduate chairs very stressed about balancing budget while making best use of money.
  – Grad students stressed every term trying to ensure they had enough money to pay tuition.

• Solution
  – Pool resources and create full tuition scholarship for all students with 80% or greater for all programs
  – “Get you next degree for free” a key component of all recruitment literature
Schulich Graduate Recruitment

• Application Deadlines
  – Each program had own deadline or accepted applications to last possible moment

• Consequence
  – Faculty hesitated to accept students immediately – chance a better student may apply later
  – Students accepted offers at other universities before we organized interviews

• Solution
  – Set *early first deadline for all programs* of Feb 1\textsuperscript{st} with two additional deadlines April 1\textsuperscript{st} and June 1\textsuperscript{st}.
  – *Twice as many applications in February* as in previous years with a number of exceptional students that we might have missed entirely before.
Schulich Graduate Recruitment

• For many undergraduate students
  – their first choice is a Professional School,
  – they have a difficult time distinguishing between programs, e.g. all have cancer researchers, etc.

• Solution
  – Base advertizing on Research Strengths/Disease Themes that bridge Schulich Graduate Programs, i.e. first get them interested in area of medical research then direct them to grad program that fits their background and future career.
  – Evening Research Lecture Series by researchers and graduate students based on themes – more effective and reached more students than any Open House we’ve held and for much less money. Students want information and they want to speak directly with faculty and graduate students.
Schulich Graduate Recruitment

• For many undergraduate students
  – they know very little about graduate school and potential careers with a graduate degree, and
• Solution
  – *Graduate School Orientation Lecture* in Fall for undergraduate (over 100 attended),
  – *Careers Beyond Academia* as part of Graduate Research Day (Margaret Moffat) aimed at graduate students but timed/advertised for undergraduates to attend,
  – *Contacted guidance counselors* from Schulich, Science, Social Science and Health Science
Schulich Graduate Recruitment

• Not recruiting enough PhD students and increasing competition from other Ontario Universities

• Solution
  – Sent Faculty and Graduate Student volunteers to Job/Graduate Recruitment Fairs across the Canada
  – Cost of attending 14 fairs roughly the same as a one day Open House but had face-to-face contact with ~10 times number of students. Too early to evaluate success but feedback has been extremely positive.
  – Created Six Entrance Scholarships with preference to out of Province students (20+ superb applications).
Schulich Graduate Recruitment

• Funding to Grad Programs for their own initiatives

• Successes
  – Support course based MSc in Anatomy & Cell Biology
  – Summer research training program for undergraduates in Biochemistry
Schulich Graduate Recruitment

• Philosophy

• Money we spend on recruitment is an investment. Only takes one or two additional top students to offset our recruitment costs.
Department of French Studies
David Heap
Pourquoi choisir le Département d'études françaises à Western?

- le Département vous offre une bourse compétitive pour la Maîtrise et une bourse couvrant tous les frais de scolarité au niveau du Doctorat;
- le Département comprend un grand nombre de spécialistes dans les domaines de recherche très variés, ce qui vous donne la liberté de choisir un.e directeur.trice qui correspond à votre domaine d'intérêt;
- les étudiant.e.s en Maîtrise et en Doctorat sont guidés par les professeur.e.s lors de leur formation professionnelle; discussion de projets de bourse, lecture collective des résumés pour les colloques. Les étudiant.e.s sont fortement encouragé.e.s à participer à des congrès et forums de recherche. Le Département est souvent en mesure de fournir aussi de l'aide financière aux étudiant.e.s pour ces voyages;
- l'ambiance entre les étudiant.e.s et les professeur.e.s est très conviviale : mise en scène annuelle d'une pièce de théâtre, soirées de bienvenue aux nouveaux arrivants, fêtes de célébration de divers événements au cours de l'année;
- la communauté des étudiant.e.s est enthousiaste et dynamique : atelier des cinéphiles, organisation de colloques, groupes de discussion, sorties en groupe, fêtes de fin et début de l'année universitaire;
what brought them here?
Make sure everything they need to know is clearly accessible: faculty expertise, funding, admissions requirements.

Once you get “nibbles” of interest, cultivate those contacts which seem most promising, try to determine what they need to bring them here.

There is no replacement for the “human touch”: once offers are made (as early as you can practically manage), e-mail and phone your best prospects, put them in touch with faculty in their area and current grad students.
Graduate Program in Health & Rehabilitation Sciences

Pamela Houghton
Western
Health Sciences

Western provides the best student experience among Canada's leading research-intensive universities
Communication Sciences & Disorders
- Master of Clinical Science in Audiology
- Master of Clinical Science in Speech-Language Pathology

School of Health Sciences
- Bachelor of Honors Specialization; Specialization; Major; Minor

School of Nursing
- Collaborative BScN; Compressed Time Frame BScN; BScN for Registered Nurses; MScN; PhD

School of Occupational Therapy
- Master of Science in Occupational Therapy

School of Physical Therapy
- Master of Physical Therapy

School of Kinesiology
- Honors Specialization-BA; Honors Specialization-BSc; Major; MA; MSc; PhD

School of Rehabilitation Sciences
- Master of Science; PhD
Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Graduate Programs

• Provides an opportunity at the Masters and PhD to explore issues in health and rehabilitation sciences from a multi-disciplinary perspective
• Established in 2006
• Graduate program for 4 of 6 Schools in Faculty of Health Sciences
10 Fields of Study

INTERDISCIPLINARY
Measurement and Methods
Health Promotion
Health Professional Education
Child and Youth Health
Health and Aging
Rehabilitation Science

DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC
Physical Therapy
Occupational Science
Speech Language Sciences
Hearing Sciences
2005/2007 GPSS Results: PhD Students

Rate the quality: your academic experience at this university

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Number of Applications

- 2006-2007: Masters 60, PhD 30
- 2007-2008: Masters 90, PhD 40
- 2008-2009: Masters 100, PhD 50
- 2009-2010: Masters 110, PhD 60
- 2010-2011: Masters 70, PhD 30
Recruitment Strategies -1

- Personal contact will potential supervisors
  - Supervisor in place before starting program
- Phone calls: administrative support
- Webpage:
  - “ask a question”
- University Fairs: Graduate Students
Recruitment Strategies -2

• Link with Bachelor’ Health Science Program (half of current students)

• Innovative programs
  – Interdisciplinary
  – Combined degrees: e.g., MPT/PhD
  – Clinical Specialization
    • MCISc (Manipulative therapy, Wound Healing)
    • Distributed Education (on-line)
For Further Information...

Dr. Pamela E Houghton,
Chair, Graduate Program in Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

phoughto@uwo.ca

(519) 661-2111 ext. 80310
Graduate Student Recruitment
Department of Chemistry
Perspective

Paul Ragogna
Graduate Student Recruitment - Department of Chemistry Perspective

Initiatives participated in:

University recruitment events  

Faculty of Science recruitment events  

Recruitment initiatives at National and Local discipline specific conferences /  

Department specific events - organized by other chemistry departments i.e. targeting only chemists  

Department specific faculty visiting other departments and giving a research plus a recruitment lecture  

Inviting potential graduate students to visit Western and meet potential supervisors
Where should we focus?

Meaning, what are we interested in getting across to potential graduate students?

What is important to them (us?) in getting new students to join our programs?

- Research projects
- Facilities
- Supervisor
- Student life
- Surrounding area (i.e. London)
Issues to consider?

Who best can put this information out there? Departments or Faculties/University?

What about a recruitment budget?

Growing the graduate program is a great idea.

Who does this in practice? The researchers.

Is recruitment really our problem? What about research space, funding?

(Typical graduate student in chemistry costs approx. $16,000)

How do we increase/bolster space and funding issues?
Why Graduate School?

Clare Tattersall
School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Emphasize Your Programs Key Strengths:
• While a number of different factors can play a role in deciding which university to attend, the most important ones tend to centre around the nature and reputation of the department and the program that students are considering.
Why Graduate School?

Strategic Messaging About Funding:
- One-third of graduate students at Western who named a different university as their first choice indicate that funding and/or employment opportunities were the main reason that they chose to attend Western. Overall, 6-in-10 graduate students at Western say that the funding package they received was an important factor in their decision to attend; among those who received a funding package, this proportion rises to 78%.
Why Graduate School?

Importance of Program Website:
• University websites are typically the first (and sometimes only) point of contact for prospective graduate students who are researching their options. For instance, 87% of 4th year undergraduate students at Western who intend to pursue a graduate-level degree indicate that they have visited university websites. This compares to 53% who have looked at university brochures or books.

What prospective student want to see on your site:
• Admission requirements (including grade cut-offs);
• Pre-requisites;
• Course offerings and typical schedules;
• Information about co-op/placement opportunities;
• Faculty profiles, research interests, awards, publication;
• Student/graduate profiles and experiences;
Why Graduate School?

Career Opportunities:
Asked their own personal reasons for pursuing a graduate-level degree, students are most likely to cite a career-related reason, such as it will help them get their job of choice (92% of Western undergraduates who intend to pursue graduate studies say this describes their reasons), it will help them get a better paying job (86% of Western undergraduates), or that their job of choice requires further education (78% of Western undergraduates)

• Holders of graduate degrees have the lowest unemployment rate and the highest average weekly income of any other category
• Employer demand for holders of master’s and doctoral degrees exceeds the Canadian supply of graduates with these degrees, and this demand is growing
• Employment for those with graduate degrees has increased by 65% between 1990 and 2002 – four times faster than the overall rate of growth in the Canadian labour market