

Next Steps: Planning a Grad School Event to Help Transition Your University's Undergrads

Presented by Texas Iota Chapter

Texas State University

Alpha Chi National Convention 2015

Session Overview:

- How can Alpha Chi chapters help their members successfully enter graduate school
- Suggestions from students' perspective
- Survey of other chapters
- Group brainstorming session
- Wrap-up session to share best ideas

Are your members thinking about graduate school?

- Are they asking:
 - Why would I attend?
 - How does graduate school differ from my undergraduate education?
 - How do I choose a program?
 - How do I apply?
 - How do I finance my education?
 - Will there be a return on my investment?

How can Alpha Chi chapters help:

- Texas Iota hosts annual scholarly events
 - Small-scale
 - Large-scale
- Send email invitation to undergraduate students
 - Alpha Chi members
 - Juniors and Seniors with 3.0 or higher GPA
 - Honor College students
 - All undergraduate students
- Campus newspaper advertisement
- Fliers

Is Graduate School the next step?

- Reasons to attend:
 - Increased earning power
 - Gain qualifications for employment

- Desire to expand knowledge
- Contributions in research
- Love of the subject
- Personal achievements

Selecting a Graduate Program:

- Identify your goals then find the right graduate school for you
 - Know what you want to study
 - Discuss programs with current faculty and peers
 - Search the web
- Ask yourself
 - Does it fit my goals?
 - Do I think I will be accepted?
 - Relocation – am I willing?
 - Cost – can I afford it?

Application Process:

- Determine what is required for application
 - Transcripts (GPA)
 - GRE scores
 - Personal statement
 - Letters of recommendation
 - Commitment from faculty member to serve as research advisor
- Determine all deadlines
 - Application, scholarships, financial aid, request for assistantship
- Make application competitive
- Submit application materials
- Follow-up

Now that you have been accepted:

- Evaluate the offer
 - Financial support and benefits
 - Type of assistantship and time commitment for employment
 - Scholarships
 - Tuition
 - Out-of-state tuition
 - Cost of living

Financing Graduate Education:

- Master's students:
 - 44% student loans

- 26% employer support
- 18% assistantship/fellowship
 - Average \$7,600
- Ph.D. students:
 - 32% student loans
 - 77% assistantship/fellowship
 - Average \$11,600

Trends in Financial Debt:

- Students with no debt at graduation:
 - 42% master's degree and 45% Ph.D. students
- Students with debt at graduation
 - Master's students
 - \$40,208 average total debt
 - Ph.D. students
 - \$58,967 average total debt

Return on investment:

- Job market projections
 - 22% increase in jobs requiring master's degree
 - 20% increase in jobs requiring Ph.D. degree
- Earning power
 - Increases in lifetime earnings
 - For those with master's degrees
 - 18% increase over a bachelor's degree
 - For those with Ph.D. degrees
 - 43% increase over a bachelor's degree
- Compares median debt accrued by people pursuing specific degrees and median salaries earned by people in professions with those degrees
- Ph.D. in biological sciences and working as a postsecondary teacher (life sciences field)
 - Median debt = \$35,114
 - Median annual salary = \$80,250
- Ph.D. in arts and humanities and working as a postsecondary teacher (non-STEM field)
 - Median debt = \$60,000
 - Median annual salary = \$63,130

Graduate Programs Event:

- Social to meet faculty and graduate students



- Door prizes given away

Survey of chapters:

- Sent survey to 327 chapter advisors
- Survey consisted of four program questions
- Identified region and whether the institution was public or private

Chapter survey results:

- Sent survey to 327 chapter advisors
 - 39 responded (12% response rate)
- Question 1: Does your Alpha Chi chapter currently offer any programs for undergraduate students interested in attending graduate school?
 - 27 responded yes
 - 12 responded no
- Question 2: If you do offer programs, what is the approximate number of undergraduates that typically attend a program?
 - 23% stated that 51-100 students attended
 - 15% stated that 26-50 students attended
 - 62% stated that 11-25 students attended
- Question 3: If you do offer programs, do you partner with any of the following offices on campus to help with the program?
 - McNair Program: 1
 - Honors College: 5
 - Graduate College: 2
 - Career Services: 6
 - Advising Center: 1
- Question 4: If your chapter does offer programs, please indicate the topics you cover?
 - All the topics covered the application process and what areas of study are the students interested in

Group brainstorming sessions:

- What kinds of activities does your chapter currently offer to prepare undergraduates for graduate school?
- What ideas for new programs have you developed by attending this session?
- What partnerships might you form on your campus to assist in offering programs?
- What partnerships might you form with nearby campuses to assist in offering programs?
- How might you seek funding for programs?