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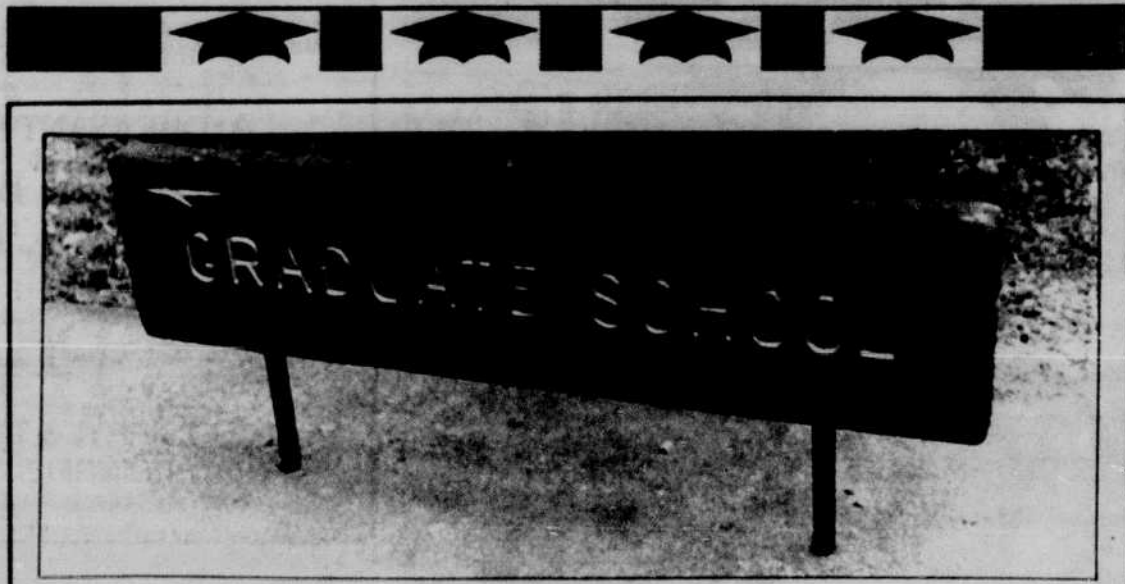
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Attending graduate school is a deep commitment that shouldn't be taken lightly

## Graduate school is hard work

Researching schools and programs and keeping in contact with potential recommendation writers, such as instructors and employers, are the most important aspects of preparing for graduate school.

A sincere interest and dedication to a certain field is also essential for students planning to go on to graduate study, because graduate school involves specialized knowledge and concentrated study in one area.

"If a student has to ask the question whether or not to go to graduate school, they probably shouldn't go," said Marliis Strange, associate director of Academic Advising and Student Services. "Students should go because they love the discipline."

Applying to graduate school is a long and complicated process, which should start in the junior year. The first step is to make an honest evaluation of career objectives. Strange said a junior should create and maintain contacts with potential reference writers through classroom work, volunteer work, research and employment.

Research is very important in applying to graduate school and a school should be chosen on the merits of the specific, specialized program desired, not on the general rankings of the department or school. Students should do research carefully to choose a school that will best suit their needs and talents.



Students looking to extend their education should start looking at programs their junior year.

"Researching a graduate school should be done with the same seriousness as applying for a job," Strange said. "You need to ask the right questions, dress appropriately and realize that it takes time."

Students need to work closely with faculty in their department and area of interest for advice and guidance on where to go. The University's Graduate School also helps steer students in the right direction and is a good place to begin getting information on schools and programs, said Lisa Duba-Biedermann, student affairs program coordinator at the graduate school. From there a student can look at school catalogs in the library

and then should follow up directly with the department at the schools of interest.

A solid bachelor's degree in virtually any field may serve as a prerequisite to most professional degree programs but tests, applications and letters of recommendation are also required.

"The Graduate Record Exam is required by approximately 90 percent of graduate schools," Strange said. "Students should prepare for it during their junior year and take the test early in their senior year, if possible."

She also said students usually score relative to their learn-

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