

UO offers help with exams, careers

GRADUATE: Several on-campus services can smooth students' paths toward graduate school

By Chris Cunningham
Freelance Reporter

For many students considering graduate school, just the thought of entrance exams causes a case of the jitters.

But, there is a way to reduce some of the anxiety, and it's located on campus.

Academic Learning Services is just one of several programs located on campus that can help prepare students for graduate school exams, including the GRE, LSAT, MCAT and GMAT.

Susan Lesyk, director of Academic Learning Services and Teaching Effectiveness Program, said the center offers tips on visualization and teaches relaxation techniques.

"The principle way to prepare is to rehearse," Lesyk said.

While ALS purchases the actual test questions of previous tests from exam agencies, commercial-test-preparation programs compose imitation practice tests, she said.

ALS workshops are also less expensive than the commercial programs. The campus workshops range in price from \$95 for the GRE and GMAT to \$225 for the MCAT — considerably less than commercial programs, Lesyk said.

The ALS workshops are taught by University faculty who are specialists in their fields. The instructors make themselves available for drop-in assistance and follow-up.

Lesyk said students experi-

ence test anxiety because they aren't comfortable or accustomed to the standardized testing format.

"Students will make mistakes because they don't know the answers or are distracted by other attractive answers," she adds.

Lesyk said the professors teach the students how to pace themselves, to use "guessing" strategies and to approach exams with less anxiety.

If a student doesn't do as well as expected, Lesyk said, he or she may take the test over again and review the workshops on tape at no additional cost.

While ALS helps students prepare for the test, the Testing Office registers the student and administers the tests.

The campus Testing Office serves as the University administrator for Education Testing Service, which oversees the national standardized admissions tests for graduate schools. All national standardized exams, except medical school exams, are administered through the Testing Office. The Testing Office provides material and information for students who need to register for tests, said David Espinoza, Testing Office supervisor.

However, they try to be more than just a source that passes out booklets, he said.

"We ask a lot of questions of people to make sure they know what they need. We take our charge of student services seriously," Espinoza said.

Espinoza said Education Testing Service is moving from pencil and paper toward computerized testing, one

advantage of which is faster turnaround of test results. Computer-based testing is currently available through Sylvan Learning Center.

The University's Testing Office also serves as the vehicle for administering the fifth-year teaching education program entrance exam. The Teacher Standards and Practice Commission require test scores prior to the attainment of a credential.

"The whole idea behind test planning and preparation services is to help students maximize their scores," Espinoza said.

Some individuals may need further information before deciding if they need to go to graduate school. For these students, the Career Center may be the starting point to begin looking at future education needs.

The Career Center has a resource library with information on graduate schools and assessment tests that assist students in determining whether their plans require a graduate degree.

Computer programs are available to help students decide if their qualifications match with their desired career path, said Doug Anders, career center counselor.

Career advisors are available for drop-in from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

For more information on dates and times for test preparation, students can contact Academic Learning Services at 346-3226 or the Testing Office at 346-3230. The Career Center can be reached at 346-3235.

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Workshop explains graduate school mysteries

By Nicole Turley
Freelance Reporter

University students gained valuable advice on preparing for their future education during Tuesday's Graduate School Workshop in the EMU Walnut Room.

A small group gathered at noon for the workshop led by instructors Donna Wong and Kelly Vie of the Educational Opportunities Program. Wong and Vie offered students general information on topics such as locating schools and programs, obtaining letters of recommendation, writing personal statements and financial aid.

"The real purpose of this meeting is to talk about generalities, and we encourage you to make individual appointments with us," Wong explained.

Wong and Vie said the Knight

Library has a reference table that contains books on graduate programs across the country. It can be used to begin the search for a graduate program, and students can look up schools based on categories such as location and quality of programs.

Financial aid information is also available in the Knight Library and the Graduate Student Funding Library in Chapman Hall.

The Academic Learning Center offers workshops aimed at preparing students for graduate school entrance exams. These workshops offer test-taking strategies and give students a chance to take a practice test to strengthen weak areas.

The instructors also identified the University Career Center, in 244 Hendricks, and the Internet as additional sources of infor-

mation. Students can access a graduate school information home page at <http://nww.jobtrak.com>.

Wong and Vie identified two valuable tools in preparing for graduate school: networking and internships. "Internships are the way to go; they help you get into grad school and help you get a job," Wong said.

Positive relationships with professors can also help. "Wherever you go, if you develop a rapport with a faculty member, he or she can network with you and help you when you apply for jobs," Wong said.

Today, Wong and Vie will conduct a workshop on constructing the resumes and statements of intent needed to complete graduate school applications. The meeting will take place from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the EMU Walnut Room.

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