First Year Seminar Program at The University of Iowa Grad School—is it for you?

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Inspiration for the seminar:

- UG surveys: >80% students appreciate UI’s stature as a Research I institution
- > 100 graduate programs (74 doctoral)
- Professional programs: JD, MD, DDS, PharmD, MBA, DNP, DPT, AuD, MSW, MPH, etc.
- UG student success is a UI priority—engaged student learning, retention, degree completion
- Grad Education pipeline issue—grad ed seminars in 3rd, 4th year—earlier?
Grad School—is it for you?

- 3rd year, started in 2009
- Fall semester offering
- 13-16 students per semester (total 45 so far)
  - 12 men
  - 33 women
  - 11 URM students
- Sample post-baccalaureate interests: medicine, dentistry, law, pharmacy, film/video, psychology, math ed, political science, journalism
Course organization:

• 1 x week, 50 minute sessions (1 sh credit)

• Weekly on-line readings

• 1-3 sentence discussion board postings on “gut-response” to question

• Short 1 page web research papers on topical question

• Each session: 10 min review of readings, student led-discussions

• 5 page final paper on key aspects

• Letter grades assigned based on submitted papers, attendance, class participation, final paper
Pedagogical Strategies:

- Shared discussion board postings: students relate weekly topics to their own goals and experiences
- One page research papers: students explore weekly topics through on-line research
- Class discussions: cues from instructors promotes self-guided discussion
- Small group discussions: share & compare ideas
- Student, faculty and admission advisor panels: students assess and apply concepts through Q&A
Topics: Part 1

• Why graduate school?
• Differences between graduate and professional programs
• Admissions requirements for programs of interest
• Choosing a specific graduate program
• Choosing a university/program
• Timetable for applying
• Building your background
• Statement of purpose
• Financing your graduate education
Topics: Part 2

Based on student interests:

- Student Panel
- Faculty Panel
- Admissions advisor Panel
- Final wrap-up session
Sample Comments:

“I’m so far ahead of classmates in getting involved on campus and how to prepare for my future”

“I wish I would have had a course like this during undergrad!” (guest panelist)
Student Learning Outcomes:

- Student maturation, growth
- Students self-exam their academic goals and aspirations
- Learn how to match interests with viable career paths
- Broaden students’ awareness of career options
- Understand career choice as an evolving process, not a one-time decision
- Foster faculty relationships, additional mentors
- Students develop an outline of what to do when --- 4 year plan
- Realization that time is short!
Sample Comments:

“I learned that the faculty and deans are easy to talk to — you’re real people too!”