



## Message from the Dean

Historically, many students who graduate from MJI have moved on to their career paths via full-time employment. Others have successfully applied for and gone on to graduate and professional studies.

MJI alumni have been accepted into such law schools as Wayne State University (also in the Detroit area), Cordoza in New York, Temple and University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania and Yale University (In at least one instance, MJI alumni have received full three-year scholarships for their law school tuition!)

MJI alumni have received MBAs from Wayne State and Duke University. At least one student was accepted to Nursing School and we have had an alumnus go on to medical school at Einstein College of Medicine in NY. A MJI graduate has gone on to earn a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Michigan and of course a number of other graduates have continued their educations in the computer sciences, earning advanced degrees. Other MJI graduates are now college professors, having earned advanced degrees in Business, Computers and Education. There are many more such success stories.

All of these successful MJI alumni had one thing in common: they understood that acceptance to graduate or professional school is not solely determined by achieving a bachelor degree, from MJI or anywhere else for that matter. They understood that students are accepted into advanced educational programs based on a variety of factors and that there is never any guarantee that any particular student will be accepted into any particular professional school.

Unfortunately, not all students are so informed or prepared. Some have heard and accepted the hearsay that previous graduates were not admitted into certain programs solely on the basis of their undergraduate degree source. Others have applied for admissions to graduate study without proper preparation and therefore have not been admitted. And finally, some were just evaluated as not having the appropriate educational successes and skills required by a particular advanced program and were therefore rejected.

Although it is beyond the scope of a newsletter article to fully describe what is necessary for successful admissions to a graduate program, the following are some basics that all students should be aware of if they plan on continuing with advanced programs after graduating from MJI.

1. **Completion of an undergraduate degree program:** While there are some exceptions, the vast majority of advanced educational programs require that all applicants have achieved an undergraduate degree. However, at the risk of being

redundant, earning a BA, BS or BAS degree is not an automatic guarantee of acceptance into graduate or professional programs. Virtually every advanced educational program has a number of additional acceptance criteria. It is up to you, the potential applicant to be completely familiar with all the acceptance criteria of the graduate schools in which you are interested. We discuss some of the more common ones, next.

2. **Grade Point Average (GPA):** In today's highly competitive environment for acceptance into advanced degree programs, it is essential that you maintain a very high undergraduate GPA. It is not unusual for some advanced programs to receive 4 or 5 times as many applications from students who have better than 3.5 GPAs for the limited number of students they will accept. Keep your undergraduate GPA high.
3. **Prerequisite Courses:** Depending on the advanced program you are considering, you may be required to have taken certain undergraduate courses. Some graduate schools call these "foundational" courses. You must find out early on what these courses are and you must take them while at MJI. For example, if you are interested in earning a MBA degree from the ABC University, find out what they require of undergraduates. Many MBA programs expect to see that their applicants have already taken certain undergraduate business courses (such as Accounting, Business Statistics and Marketing). If you plan on attending ABC U. in the future, take your foundational courses while at MJI! Otherwise, your application may not be considered for acceptance. You may have to go back to an undergraduate program and take the required prerequisites.
4. **Entrance Examinations:** Very many graduate schools require that you achieve a certain score or better on specific entrance exams. Even though you have a bachelor degree with a high GPA and with appropriate prerequisites, again if you do not take the required entrance exams and achieve the necessary scores on these exams, your application to the graduate school will simply not be reviewed. It is incumbent upon you to find out what your intended advanced program requires by way of examinations and to take these examinations prior to applying to the program. Some of the more common examinations required by advanced programs include: GREs (for many graduate programs in the arts and sciences), GMATs (for many business schools), MCATs (for medical schools), and LSATs (for law schools).
5. **Exhibited interest in your chosen field:** A very powerful factor in successfully gaining admission into an advanced program is documented previous interest and experience in your proposed field of study. If a graduate school of Psychology has to choose between two students who are similarly prepared academically, the one with voluntary work in a special ed program as an undergraduate will likely get the "nod". Applicants to law schools with undergraduate internships at law firms will score more admissions points than those who have never exhibited any interest in the law. Most importantly, these

preparatory efforts during your undergraduate years will provide you with the next criterion as well.

6. **Letters of Recommendation:** All good students can get boiler-plate letters of recommendation from professors who gave them A grades. These are nice but generally pretty weak in terms of influencing an acceptance decision. All undergraduates with a 3.5+ GPA can get a handful of them. On the other hand, undergraduates who spent a year volunteering with a special ed program or working in a law firm will generally get very influential letters from their supervisors. Letters from these people will contain much more personalized information about the student's actual skills and interest in the field. Often times, these letter writers may also be connected to the graduate school of choice or are distinctive in their fields. Imagine the decision of a law school considering accepting only one of two otherwise academically equal applicants. The first applicant has a three paragraph recommendation letter from a professor indicating that the student earned an A and contributed to class discussions. The second applicant has a three page letter from a Judge specifically describing all the excellent legal research the applicant did for the Judge during the previous two summer school vacations. Which of the two students would you accept into your law school?
7. **Proper completion of ALL application documents and requirements:** Applicants who do not complete all the application forms and requirements of any advanced program will not be considered. If you are required to provide a biographical statement, do so, and do it well! If you are asked to provide three (3) letters of recommendation send in three and not two or one. If you must take a particular entrance examination before being considered, properly prepare for it and take it. Enough said.
8. **The “Interview”:** If you are one of the lucky few applicants to be invited for an interview, prepare for it. Try to find out about the person who will be interviewing you and the types of questions they ask. If you are applying to a business school, you may want to wear business attire. If you are applying to a computer school more casual clothing may be a better selection for you. The point is, do not assume anything. Learn what is appropriate and follow through. By all means, be clean and on time! This is your final opportunity to score those essential additional points in your bid to be accepted for one of those limited number of seats in the advanced program. Don't mess it up by being late or worse, a “no-show”.

Finally, we have had previous experience with a few MJI alumni who claimed they did not get into a desired program because of their "MJI degree". After much time consuming research on our part, we ultimately learned that these students were not accepted because of: poor scores on entrance exams; failure to complete the application process properly; poor showing at the interview; or more simply, there were many more qualified applicants than available slots and so were not chosen to be amongst “the select few”.

Although MJI counselors do what they can to assist MJI students in preparing for the competitiveness of admissions into advanced programs of study, students too must take responsibility for preparing themselves and their applications. If **you** have not personally followed through on meeting **all criteria** for admissions, please do not expect that MJI personnel will otherwise be able to assist you in being admitted.