

# **Ten Steps to an Amazing Application: A Practical Guide to Applying to Graduate School**

## GENERAL ADVICE

- 1) Get to know your professors. Not just because this will help them to write more compelling recommendations, but also because they are wonderful people and there is so much that you can learn by talking to them and interacting with them outside of class. Professors at UD are generally very open to helping you with personal projects, so if you want to read more Horace or Thucydides than is being covered in class, don't be shy – ask your professor if he or she can help you out!
- 2) Explore all your interests. If Philosophy or Politics fascinates you (or English or History or Modern Languages or Art and so forth), don't be afraid to take electives or complete concentrations outside of the Classics Department. This will make you happier, and it will also make your eventual graduate application more unique and thus more likely to be successful. One of the wonderful things about Classics is that it is an inherently interdisciplinary major, and your other interests will guide you toward finding your own niche in the classical world.
- 3) Get involved on campus. Clubs not only look good on your resume, but they also help you to make new friends and broaden your knowledge. Classics Club is an obvious choice for a Classics major, but there are dozens of other fascinating and upstanding clubs, from Sailing Club to Crusaders for Life to Philosophy Club. Student government and RHA are also great ways of getting involved.
- 4) Take advantage of your summers. There are many programs with scholarships that you can apply for, and summer is a great time to get new experiences and build your resume (remember – explore your other interests, as well; your summer adventures do not have to be confined to Classics). Even if you do not participate in any specific program, use your added free time to expand your knowledge of Classics. Read the major classical texts in English – you should be comfortable talking about the work of Homer, Vergil, Thucydides, Livy, and the other ancient authors – and, of course, don't let your Latin and Greek get rusty.

## SPECIFIC TIPS

- 5) Take as many upper-level language courses as you can. One of the great strengths of UD's Classics program is the emphasis on reading courses in the original Latin and Greek, and if you have experience with advanced courses in both languages, this is very attractive to graduate programs.

- 6) Become a Classics tutor. This is a good way to earn money *and* improve your language skills, since – as so many people will tell you – you will learn so much by teaching. Not to mention that this tutoring experience looks great on your resume, especially given that so many graduate programs require their students to TA or even teach courses. If you would like to become a tutor, talk to Dr. Sweet as soon as you can! Tutors are typically upper-classmen, but it is never too early to let Dr. Sweet know you are interested.
- 7) Go on an archaeological excavation. There is lots of funding available for undergraduates, and having archaeological experience will give your application a real edge.
- 8) Take the junior paper seriously. This paper will make an excellent writing sample once you start applying to graduate schools in the fall of senior year, and having a writing sample ready to go will save you a lot of stress during application season. Take your time on the paper and consult with your adviser as much as you can.
- 9) Present at a conference. Not many undergraduates present their work at conferences, so this is invaluable experience as well as an advantage to your resume. In fact, your junior paper would make a good conference paper – so write up an abstract, submit it, and see what happens. If your paper is accepted, you can then apply for the UD Experience Award, which will fund your travel and other expenses related to the conference.
- 10) Consult with the Office of Personal and Career Development. The OPCD is especially useful when it comes to resumes. They know how to make your skills and experience stand out, so email Julie Jernigan ([jjernigan@udallas.edu](mailto:jjernigan@udallas.edu)) and set up an appointment. You won't regret it! The OPCD can also help you out in other ways, such as setting up mock interviews and giving you a quiet Skyping space with a reliable internet connection.