

Why GPS: Apply now and figure it out later



As part of an ongoing series, we give students the creative liberty to opine on their favorite memories from the School and “why GPS” is a solid fit to pursue their graduate education

By Frederick P. Hemans, 2018 MIA candidate | GPS News



Truth Time: unlike most students at the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS), I did not have any idea of what type of graduate school and career I was looking for. I had zero criteria, nor an idea even what constituted a quality graduate program in the first place.

Why did I apply to GPS? Because it is in San Diego, where I was also located. Was

it serendipity? Probable random chance, aided by the Google search algorithm likely directed me to the GPS website. I then signed up to take the GRE one afternoon after work, and over the next few weeks I completed the necessary steps for the application process.

However, I don't want to give the impression that I'm just some schlub off the street with no qualifications. UC San Diego, from what I am told, has high admissions standards. I have a long and diverse background that must have looked decent enough for the admissions officers to put their stamp of approval on my humble application, and for that I am eternally grateful.

I come from a tiny blue-collar town in upstate New York, and have always had to work full time to support myself while attending college. I worked as a dishwasher in a Japanese restaurant, barista, museum security guard, roofer, printing press operator and a few other strange jobs in between. But while working, I also made time to graduate with a decent GPA, serve on my university's school paper editorial board and taught English in Beijing, China for two years - all which must have looked good enough to secure the opportunity to attend GPS.

A few obstacles remained in my way as I started graduate school. I did not receive any scholarship or fellowship support, which if there are any GPS officials reading this, there is still time to rectify this situation! Also, for those of us who are older than the standard age for graduate students, there is the worry about feeling old and decrepit compared to some of our more youthful colleagues. Luckily, except for the fact that I still don't really know how to use Instagram, this hasn't been an issue.

Looking back to a year or more ago, my life is infinitely richer and more fulfilling after taking the plunge to go to graduate school. It has been an absolute privilege to attend school alongside so many incredibly talented fellow students from around the globe. The faculty has been outstanding as well, especially the ones who actually answer their emails.



What excites me the most about coming to school each day? Well, mostly being able to play unlimited ping pong and pool in the student lounge. But apart from that, it is getting to attend classes and learn a little bit more about how the world works each day, and then use this knowledge on various projects both inside and outside GPS. For this coming school year, I may actually start to get an idea of what to do once I graduate, but let's not rush things yet.