



# Navigating the Ph.D. Application Process, Part One

Presentation for The PhD Project  
by Grad School Road Map  
April 8, 2020

# Dr. Don Martin

## Founder and CEO

- 28 years in enrollment/student services (Columbia, Chicago Booth School of Business, Northwestern)
- Two earned graduate degrees (M.A. & Ph.D.)
- Published *Road Map for Graduate Study: A Guide for Prospective Graduate Students* (now in second printing)
- Speaker, consultant and coach



# Kevin Kiley

## Managing Director

- 🌐 Former admissions director at Washington University in St. Louis' Olin Business School; earned MBA at WashU
- 🌐 20+ years of professional experience, nearly all in leadership roles
- 🌐 10+ years of successful coaching experience
- 🌐 Nationally recognized communicator; spent 8+ years as a professional editor



# Today's three major **themes**

1. Getting started with your **Ph.D. research**
2. The difference(s) between **a resume and a CV**
3. The critical importance of **faculty contact**

# A reminder from The PhD Project Conference:

“You don’t choose a program  
because of *brand*;  
you choose a program  
because of *fit* and a *sense of community*.”

# Dr. Don's

## Ph.D. application experience

- 🌐 Was **first in my family** to go to college
- 🌐 Was **denied** on first attempt
- 🌐 Was **admitted** on second attempt
- 🌐 Was one of the **most rewarding experiences of my life**

# 1. Getting started with your **Ph.D. research**

- 🌐 The biggest mistake prospective graduate students make: Not doing adequate research ***before*** applying
- 🌐 Spreading the net wide: Start with at least 10 to 20 options, and ***without*** any initial rank ordering
- 🌐 The Ph.D. application spreadsheet: Take the time to evaluate ***many*** criteria before narrowing list down
- 🌐 Allow time to prepare: Make this a ***priority*** on your schedule
- 🌐 A word about ***prep/consulting*** resources

# A **reminder** from Grad School Road Map:

“Earning a Ph.D. is as much,  
if not more,  
about ***persistence and determination***  
as it is about ***intelligence.***”

## 2. The differences between a resume and a CV

- For every application, you will need to convey what you feel makes you qualified for study there
  - Credentials
  - Activities
  - Accomplishments
- A critical document that summarizes these is the **resume** or **CV**
- As always: **Follow directions**. Submit the kind of document the program asks for!

## 2. The differences between a resume and a CV



### Resume



Length: 1-2 pages



Focuses primarily on your professional history



Current & past jobs and your professional skills



Primary uses:



Professional jobs outside of academics and research



**Grad school**

## 2. The differences between a resume and a CV

### CV

-  Length: Multiple (more than 2) pages
-  Focuses primarily on your academic & research history
-  Primary uses:
  -  Academic jobs
  -  Research jobs
  -  Scientific or medical jobs
  -  Academic fellowship & grant applications
  -  **Grad school**

## 2. The differences between a resume and a CV

### Typical **resume** sections:

- Professional summary
- Work experience
- Education
- Certifications
- Skills
- Leadership experience
- Extracurriculars
- Volunteer work
- Awards/honors

### Typical **CV** sections:

- Everything from the resume list, plus:
  - Research experience
  - Teaching experience
  - Publications
  - Conferences
  - Speaking engagements
  - Professional memberships

## 2. The differences between a resume and a CV

- **Additional tips** for both CVs & resumes
  - Use a common, professional font
  - Consistently use bold, underline & italics
  - Have someone else proofread it
  - Things to **NOT** include:
    - Private/personal info (i.e., DOB, marital status, etc.)
    - A photo of yourself
    - Multiple-colored text
    - Anything related to secondary school (i.e., high school)
    - Irrelevant experiences, jobs or details
    - Anything that'll reflect negatively on you
    - "References available upon request"

# A reminder from The PhD Project Conference:

“Earning a Ph.D. is about learning to handle  
*criticism and rejection.*”

You need to remember:

“In most instances, *this is not personal.*”

# 3. The critical importance of faculty contact

 Why is this so important?

1. Because *faculty members* usually make admission decisions
2. Because you will most likely work very closely with one or two faculty members throughout your program

# 3. The critical importance of faculty contact

## Additional tips for contacting faculty

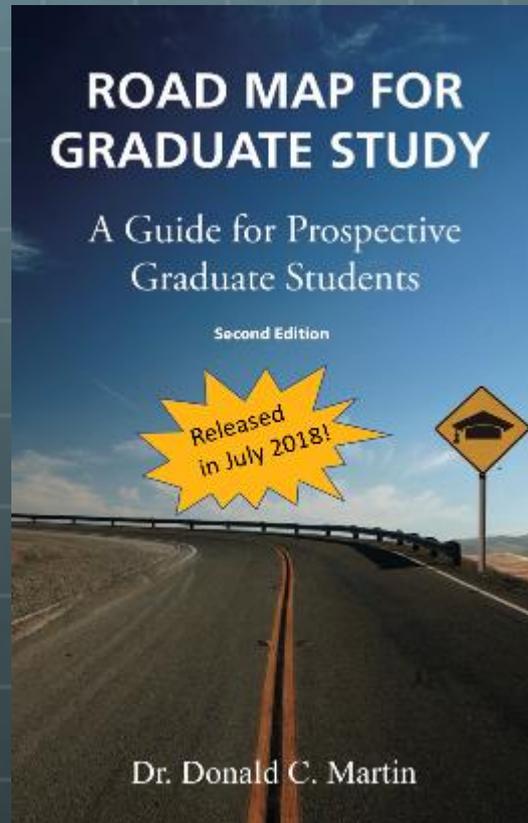
- 🌐 Do some very *thorough research* on each professor **to determine if you would be interested in working with her/him**
- 🌐 Ideally, reach out to each professor **approximately four to six months before applying**
- 🌐 Be *professional* and follow *proper etiquette*

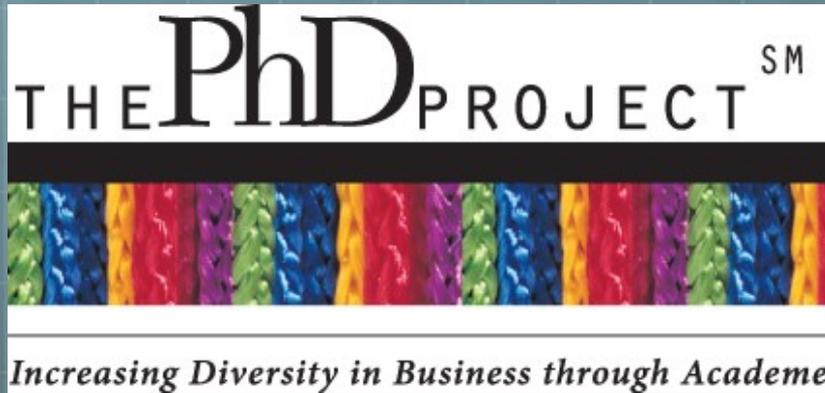
# 3. The critical importance of faculty contact

What to include in your **initial message to faculty**

- 🌐 Let them know about your **thorough research, and some takeaways** from what you have discovered
- 🌐 Ask if they will be taking on any **student assistants** in the coming year
- 🌐 Ask if you can **meet or speak** with them

# The book





**OUR NEXT WEBINAR:**  
**Navigating the Ph.D.**  
**Application Process, Part Two**

Presentation for The PhD Project  
by Grad School Road Map  
October 21, 2020  
3:00 PM EST

# One-on-one coaching



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