

# APS National Mentoring Community Conference 2020

In Partnership with  
National Society of Black Physicists  
and National Society of Hispanic Physicists

## Grad School 102: Applying and Thriving

February 7, 2020

# Our panelists

**Tommy Boykin**



University of Central Florida

**Lance Cooper**



University of Illinois, Urbana  
Champaign

**Abdelkader Kara**



University of Central Florida

# Should I apply for grad school?

Is it what I want to do?

How is graduate school different than undergrad?

Financially, what does graduate school entail?

Is it what I want to do?  
How is graduate school different than undergrad?  
Financially, what does graduate school entail?

## **What is a PhD?**

- Pursuing a PhD is an academic, scientific and personal journey
- It is also a job!
  - Usually 5-7 years
  - Salary 20-25k a year depending on the program
  - Taking courses, carrying out research projects, sometimes teaching

Is it what I want to do?  
How is graduate school different than undergrad?  
Financially, what does graduate school entail?

## **Why pursue a PhD? Why not to pursue a PhD?**

- What type of job do I see myself in on the long term?
  - Do I want to work in industry? Academia? National lab? Other?
  - Do I want to lead teams?
  - Do I want to write? ...
- Pursuing a PhD comes with challenges
  - Relocation
  - Financial situation
  - Uncertainty
  - Stress

I have decided  
to apply for grad school.

What is a good timeline to  
prepare/submit my applications?

Below is a sample timeline for fall graduate school applications.



I have decided  
to apply for grad school.

How do I decide on the  
schools/programs to apply to?



# What should I think about when preparing my application?

How are applications reviewed by admission committees?

What makes an effective application?

What makes an effective personal statement?

How to select and approach recommendation letter writers?

What are good study habits for the GRE?

How are applications reviewed by admission committees?

What makes an effective application?

What makes an effective personal statement?

How to select and approach recommendation letter writers?

What are good study habits for the GRE?

Applications include:

- **Personal statement or Statement of purpose** (*show that you have the potential to conduct scientific research, show you know the program, identify your research interest and potential advisors in the department, address any points you want to clarify such as a bad grade*)
- **CV** (*clearly list any internships, research experience, presentations, papers, teaching experience, outreach*)
- **Letters of recommendations** (*from research advisors and teachers preferably*)
- **Transcripts**
- **GRE** (can depend on the program)

How are applications reviewed by admission committees?

What makes an effective application?

What makes an effective personal statement?

How to select and approach recommendation letter writers?

What are good study habits for the GRE?

## Some tips:

- Start early
- Find templates of other personal statements
- Get feedback from your teachers and mentors

# I'm admitted to grad school! Now what?

How to decide if you have several offers?

How to find a group/advisor once you're admitted?

What are the expectations academically and research-wise?

What does it mean to be successful in grad school?

What's next?

Time for questions!