

All right. Well, good afternoon. I want to thank you all for taking a moment in your day to learn a little bit about graduate school. My name is Angela Barlow and I am Dean of the Graduate School here, at UCA. And really appreciate this opportunity to have a chat with you this afternoon around three big ideas that I had related to graduate education. So, let's see, if we advance that. So the first idea or the first question involves just why go to graduate school. There's obviously a lot of people who don't go to graduate school. So why should you be thinking about that at this time? And I came up with three reasons to think about graduate school. And I'll start with number three. And that is to enhance your education. And when you think about graduate school, one of the ways that it enhances your education is it is an opportunity to develop specialized knowledge in a field. So in your undergraduate degree, you started off with like broad, general ideas in the core curriculum and then you narrowed that down to your major field of study. And then when you get into graduate school, you're really specializing in an area. So that's one way to enhance your education. And that's true regardless of whether you are studying like science in a lab, or maybe your area or your background is more of an art background or music. And even like business or teaching like all of these areas, provide a space where you can specialize your knowledge. Another way that it enhances your education is that it opens up opportunities for career advancement. Oftentimes, if you're in different fields, you need a graduate degree in order to advance in that field. Through advanced, enhancing your education, it provides opportunity for career advancement. Also. Achieving a graduate degree, oftentimes can expand your options. So oftentimes we'll have someone who may have an undergraduate degree in one field, but then by combining that with a graduate degree in a different field, that opens up new opportunities that perhaps were not there before. A lot of times I'll see people who combine their undergraduate, which may be in psychology or art or something along those nature, and then combine it with an MBA. And that really changes the options that they have for their career. Then let's see, there we are. The fourth way that I thought about how a graduate degree enhances your education is so the development of a professional network. So by the time you enter a master's program or a doctoral program, and you've really narrowed down your field that you're studying. It opens up opportunities to interact with others who are also interested in that same field. And so graduate education provides that opportunity to build a professional network, starting probably with the faculty members that you would be working with, but then also other faculty and other business folks that you meet in other places. So these are all ways that graduate education can enhance your knowledge of your field. The second reason that I thought about in terms of why to go to Graduate School is really around the money, right? It's about greater earning power. So I want to share some numbers with you that I pulled these probably a year or so ago. So they, probably the numbers would be higher now I would hope. But you can see on this column here, all of the different salaries that were listed, starting out with a bachelor's degree in different fields. And these are the comparable salaries when you start with a master's degree. And in each case, the master's degree is causing an increase in salary when you start. Sometimes these increases are more than others. Obviously, on this last row, journalism and mass communication, we see a difference of just a couple of thousand dollars. But as you go up on different fields, something like nursing, that's a big difference between those two degrees in terms of starting salary. So obviously money is a consideration for thinking about going to graduate school. And then finally, the top reason that I came up with for going to graduate school is accessing your career. So not everybody's aware, but depending on your field, a graduate degree may be required. So I put this picture in here. Athletic training is one of these fields that up until recently you could enter athletic training as with a bachelor's degree. And I believe that has just changed to where you are required to get a master's degree. So that's, you have to get a graduate

degree to become that professional. Similarly, speech pathology is another field that you have to have a master's degree here at UCA, speech pathology falls under our communication and sciences disorders. And so we, you know, we think about okay, I've got to get my undergraduate degree and go straight into that master's program if I want to be that speech pathologist. Similarly, a librarian, before I came to UCA, I didn't really think about it, but librarians are required to have that master's degree here in Arkansas. So if you're talking to a librarian, they have at least a master's degree. And then of course, many of our health fields like physical therapy, occupational therapy, which historically you can go back in time and they didn't require a graduate degree. And now not only do those fields require a graduate degree, they also require a doctorate degree in those fields. So this is probably the top reason that you would want to go undergraduate education is that your field requires it. The second question that I thought about or key idea to talk about this afternoon is what you can be doing now. So I'm not sure, like what year you are in college, whether you're a freshman, a sophomore, even a senior. But there are things that you can be doing now, even if you're a freshman. Because you're thinking about going to graduate school. And of course perhaps the one word that would describe what you should be doing is basically studying, and studying, and studying because grades play a huge role in being able to access graduate education. All universities will have some type of guidelines in terms of a requirement for GPA. These I've listed these as typical. These are actually the minimum admission requirements that we have for graduate school here at UCA. The first bullet is a 2.7 cumulative undergraduate GPA. So that means we look at every undergraduate class that you've taken and find the overall GPA that you have is an undergraduate. If you took classes like at a community college and then transferred to UCA, we take all of those grades together and look at what we call the cumulative undergraduate GPA. And here at UCA we are looking for a 2.7. Sometimes students who are applying to graduate school did not have that 2.7. And so in those instances we say, okay, well, let's look at what they did in the last 60 hours of coursework. So everybody might mess up in a freshman and sophomore year. So, about at this point we'll say, okay, let's just look at the junior, senior year. But then, the expectations a little bit higher. You'll notice that we have a 3.0 is required on the last 60 hours of coursework. And please note that these are our minimums in the graduate school here at UCA. But some programs will require higher GPA's. And other universities may have different thresholds for that. What else can you be doing? I think part of this is to really think about what your professional goal is. Sometimes I talk with students and they'll say, well, I want to go to graduate school. What programs do you have to offer? And really, the next step, the question I pose is, what is your professional goal? Because that's really where you need to start the conversation, is thinking about what do you want to be doing in the future. And then once you have that goal set, then you identify the graduate degrees that you need. So if someone comes to me and says, you know, what programs do you have to offer? They're not really thinking about what it is that's going to advance them in their field. So I need to hear what is the graduate degree that you're looking for? Sometimes students will say things like, I really want to be a social worker, so I'm looking for a master's program in social work. And unfortunately I'll have to say, well, we don't have that at UCA. We have other programs that are slightly related to that. But seriously, if you're looking for a master's in social work, you'll need to look at some other institutions. However, if a student comes to me and says, you know, I'm looking to get my certification as a teacher. Well, we've got a program for you. Or if you're thinking about physical therapy or biology, or computer science or an MBA, we've got a program for you. But it starts with you knowing what graduate degree or degrees you need, to meet your professional goal. And then again, once you know those find the institutions that offer the program. So again, letting your goals drive where you're looking and not necessarily, "I like UCA", and I want to stay

here. It's really about where do you need to go so that you can excel in the field of your choice. Once you've looked at these institutions and let's say you've got two or three in mind that have the program that you're interested in, then your next step is to learn more about those programs. And there's really two areas to be learning about now. Those involve admission requirements, as well as some of the key program attributes. So I'm going to take just a minute to talk about both of those. So in terms of the admission requirements, two areas that I would encourage you to learn more about would be the type of application deadline that the program has, and then specific requirements for the application. So when we talk about applications in graduate schools, there's typically two types of deadlines. One is what I would call a rolling deadline, and that means that they are looking at students applications and admitting all the time. So they don't have a set deadline. And pretty much if you apply at any point, they will consider it. And if there's time to get you in before that next semester, we will get you admitted and get you registered and started. However, there are some programs that have a specific deadline and you'll need to know what that specific, specific deadline is and whether it's a hard deadline or soft deadline. So for example, in the biology department here at UCA, they have a specific deadline. I believe it's sometime in March, but it's a soft deadline. And that means that if you miss it, you still have a chance of being considered as long as there are spots available. But we have other programs like, for example, psychology. Psychology has a January deadline, and if you miss it and you do not have all of your application materials in by that deadline, then you're out of luck and you won't be considered for admission. So knowing whether you have a rolling deadline or a specific deadline, and then whether that specific deadline is a hard deadline or a soft deadline are key pieces of information that you should be aware of when you're considering the different programs that you're interested in. The other thing I have listed here under admission requirements or the application requirements, we actually are in a period of time where many programs are doing away with the GRE, the Graduate Record Exam, or the GMAT, and instead opting for other pieces of information as a part of your application. But those programs that require those tests are going to be expecting you to have those scores. So for example, if you're a senior and you're wanting to start graduate school next fall. And your program that you're interested in requires the GRE, well You should be studying for that now and taking that test probably in December, if not before, so that your scores will, you will have time for your scores to come in to the university and be considered by that program. These tests, similar to when you took the ACT when you came out of high school and came to college, these tests are similar to that. You sign up for them, you pay for it, you go and take it. I would encourage you though, to also study for it. If for no other reason than to be familiar with the test components. But definitely studying will pay off. And then you probably won't have to take it again. Although some students do take those tests multiple times to try to increase their score. The other application requirement that you should be aware of is any specific coursework that you may need to take. For example, I actually talked to my nephew the other day he's looking at wanting to go to physical therapy school. So although he's graduating in May with his undergraduate degree, he has two more science classes to take next summer because they're required to enter physical therapy school. So knowing what specific coursework you need so that perhaps you could take it during your undergraduate degree instead of after like he's doing, will be very important. In terms of program attributes, and by attributes I just mean characteristics or things to think about with regard to that program. I want to talk for just a second about program type and also graduate assistantships. So in terms of program type, I think it's important for you to think about what type of program are you looking for? Are you looking for a traditional program that offers everything on campus face-to-face classes, maybe with a few online classes. But for the most part, the program is considered traditional

and you're going to have to go to campus for your classes? Or are you interested in online program where you can complete everything in an online setting? Or are you interested in a hybrid program where you have the options of face-to-face or online classes as you build out your degree plan. These are questions that most program coordinators should be able to answer, but they also should be found on program websites. And that you have to think about your own personal circumstances as to which one is better. So I can't say out loud something like oh an online program is better than a hybrid program. That's just not true. Every program varies. Every program has its strengths, every program has its areas that it needs to improve. But in terms of the program type, you have to think about what is going to meet your needs, given your context. Similarly, you want to know whether the program you're interested in is a full-time program or a part-time program. We do have some programs that are full-time. And that means you are here on campus, you're taken at least 9 hours every semester in, that you're not, probably not going to be able to have a job outside of the university because of the demands of the program. So you're a full-time student. But then we also have programs that are part-time programs. So they're designed for you to take one or two classes a semester and probably you're working full-time on top of that. This is an important question, particularly if you're someone who needs, for example, to be a full-time student. Sometimes I talk to athletes and they are on an athletic scholarship, and therefore they need to be full-time enrolled in courses. And then some of our programs won't support that. So that means we have to be really careful about what programs they're looking to apply to. Because not all programs will allow them that opportunity to study full-time. The second piece of the program attribute to mention is falls under this category of graduate assistantships. A lot of times I'll have potential graduate students ask me about scholarship opportunities. And to be quite honest, we just really don't have a lot of scholarship opportunities, but instead, we talk about graduate assistantships. So graduate assistantships are often offered by departments and they allow you the opportunity to work within your discipline in a very meaningful way, whether it's research or perhaps you're teaching for the department. They usually require if you're on a full-time assistantship, they will require that you work 20 hours a week. So the idea is that you're full-time assistantship, so you're also full-time student. So your courses plus the work should add up to the 40 hours a week. Graduate assistant, assistantships always come with a stipend so that you're paid some type of salary. They don't make a lot of money, but they are paid a stipend. But the big question for graduate assistantships is, does this assistantship come with tuition remission? I'd like to believe that one day it'll be the case that all assistantships cover your tuition. But they don't. In fact here at UCA, only 20% of our assistantships come with tuition remission. So what that means is about 20% of our GA's don't have to worry about paying their tuition. The university is covering it. While the other 80% are paying their tuition. So I think it's an important question when you're looking at different programs. If you have two programs that are basically comparable and you're wanting to be a graduate assistantship. If one covers the tuition and the other doesn't, I mean, I think the smart thing would be to go to the one that's going to cover your tuition. But circumstances differ. And it could be that tuition is not the key to making that decision. But you definitely should be aware of that as you're having those conversations. So the third question that I came up with, for this afternoon is, around this notion of I've decided to go to graduate school, so now what do I do? So you've thought through all the different reasons you've decided to go, you've identified the school or schools that you're interested in. So what's your next step? First? And we've sort of already said this, but first is to identify the program and the university and learn what application materials are needed. So where do you find that information? Typically, universities will have a graduate bulletin. And in that graduate bulletin, you will find the field of study that you're interested in and all the

materials that are required for admission. Also, graduate programs, typically, definitely at UCA and typically at other universities as well, have a faculty member that's called the Program Director. And that person can also help you to know what application materials are needed. So I would reach out to that program director to ask questions about the program. We've already covered some things that you'd probably want to know about. But then to ask what are the application materials? Typically all of your undergraduate transcripts so will have to be sent, they have to be official, so they'll have to be sent from the university. Lots, there's lots of variation in terms of what different programs require. Some will ask for a letter of support, maybe a recommendation letter. Some will ask for statements of purpose, some may require interviews. I mean, it is just all over the place in terms of what they require. So asking that program director is a very useful step for finding out what you're going to need. And then of course, as I've already said, find out whether you need the GRE or some other standardized exam. Because if that's the case, you need to be working on that now knowing that you are, you know, perhaps a year away from wanting to start graduate school. Next step is to apply to the program via the graduate school website. So typically, the place to start, regardless of the university, is to go to the graduate school website. And there will be links related to apply. From our own uca.edu. You go to the graduate school and I think I'm going to go there in just a second and I'll show that for you, maybe. And it leads you to different places and you sign in and you start your application. And you can always ask the graduate school for help to navigate that. And then the third step is to pay the application fee. Of course, you knew we were going to have to take some of your money, if you are applying to graduate school. And I can tell you at UCA, our application fee for graduate school is \$45. For domestic students, international students pay \$50. About a year ago, I did ran around, our Peer and institutions to see what they were charging for an application fee. And \$45 is right there. It's the median of the set. So there's a whole cluster of colleges that are charging about \$45. The most I saw was \$90 in the least I saw was \$25. So we're right in the middle of that in terms of the amount to pay. But you should be aware that for each application you file at a university, you'll have to pay the application fee. And then once that's done, you submit your application materials. And some universities that may be that you're sending your materials to an individual. At other universities. It might be part of an online application system. And I'm very proud to say that we just launched, UCA just launched our online application system last week. So it will be, it's a system where you go in, you upload your materials and it helps you to keep track of what all has been received and where your application is in the process. And of course, if you have questions during this part of the application process, all universities are going to have what's called a graduate admissions specialist in their graduate school. And that person is there to answer your questions. So you can always look them up on a website, on their name, email, phone number, reach out to them. They are more than willing to help you navigate this process. And then of course, the program director, remember I mentioned a second ago that all graduate programs have a faculty member that kinda oversees that program. They are also there to help you to navigate that application system. So I encourage you to check out the UCA website. I'm going to try to click on this and see if it'll show you that hopefully Y'all can see our site. The way I navigate to the graduate school page is to hover. Right there over academics, and then you see graduate school on the left. And when we click here, if you click on prospective students, there's lots of information here, including, for example, our list of graduate programs and whether their on-campus hybrid or online, as well as applying to graduate school. And so here we are. And you can see right here is the link to the online application where you get started by creating an account. So with that, go back here. I am ready for questions and I think I will stop sharing my screen. And then hopefully we got some questions that I can answer for you. All of this time. So if

you use the chat feature, you can ask a question. When you attempted to show the website for the grad school a few minutes ago, it stayed on the screen for the powerpoint. Okay. Okay. Well, let me try that again. Let's see, do I still have it up? Yes I do. Okay. All right, so I'll share my screen. And I'll click right here. Okay. Let me go back. Ok. So I'll repeat what I said before. And the way I get to the graduate school page is I'm on the UCA homepage, I hover over academics and I go to the graduate school. Alternatively, you could use the A to Z index if you like, or you can type it in. There's our web address, it's just Graduate School. For prospective students, we have a link here with lots of information. For example, UCA graduate programs here, we have them broken out in terms of the type of program that it is. So if you were looking for a masters or a specialist program, that's a hybrid program. You could click there and you see the different programs that we have to offer. Also on this tab, applying to graduate school. There's a lot of information in here, for example, where do you send your college transcripts? So there's our address. Minimum requirements. All of this is down here, but the online application is right here at the top. And so if you were ready to start applying, you could begin by creating an account. And you don't have to use a UCA email, it's any email address. You put that information in there, continue and you've started the application process. So just that simple. So now I'll stop sharing and I'll pause to see if we have any brave souls that want to ask a question. Okay, so we have one question in the chat. And the question is, where can we find the GRE exam, how to register? Also, how do we apply for the program here and for graduate school? So the GRE exam is offered by ETS Educational Testing Services, ETS. So you can go to their website, which I am betting is ETS.org, but ETS. And you're going to find all the information you need with regard to how to sign up to take the GRE. You will need to know the university's code number so that we get your scores. If you're applying to UCA, if you're not applying to UCA, you'll need to know the other university scores. And typically that's found on websites. And if you can't find it, then just call the Graduate School of the University you are interested in and they can tell you their school code. And then you register pay and go take it. Now I will say during Covid, start, so starting back in March, ETS has been working to give the GRE from home. So students have been able to sign up and take it at home. And I believe they're still continuing that. So do check that out. I believe now they are offering both so you could sign up to go somewhere and take it as well as take it at home, which your ETS website is going to provide you with that information. And then the second part of this question, how do we apply for the program here and for the graduate school? So here at UCA, when you apply to the graduate school you are simultaneously applying to the program. So as a part of that application, you put your name in and you put all your information in. And then the next thing is you're going to select your program. So in that way you are applying to both at the same time. And what happens is we your, all of your application materials are collected. The Graduate School reviews them. Specifically, we pay attention to your GPA, make sure you made the GPA requirements. We also make sure that you get all the application materials turned in. And once we have that, then we send that application to the program faculty. And the program director who I mentioned earlier is the person who meets with faculty and they review your application and they decide whether to admit you to the program or not. And once they have that decision, they give it to us. And then we communicate that back to you. That's the general process for application. Some programs that process may take one week or two weeks, particularly if they are a program that has a rolling deadline. Those programs that have deadlines like a hard deadline of say, January 15th, that's probably going to take them four to six weeks or even up to two months to make that decision because they are looking at probably a lot of applications and trying to make a decision of how to narrow down, say, 40 people and choose 10. So some programs are going to be more competitive than others and it just takes time to review those

applications. That was a good question. Let's say what's our next question? If we have over 120 hours, do they still look at our entire GPA or do they take your last 60? So we actually start by looking at the overall undergraduate GPA. So the whole shebang, okay? And therefore transcripts have to come from all the different places that you took undergraduate classes. And and so that total number of hours could be 120, it might be 130, 150 just, all the undergraduate hours. If you made the 2.7 requirement with that, then we stop. You're good. If for some reason you don't. So maybe you have a, let's say a 2.5. That's when we look at the last 60. So if for some reason you've completed a 150 hours at the undergraduate level, then we do the most recent 60 hours that you've had to see if you have a 3.0. Let's see. Here's the next question, are your chances of being accepted to graduate school lowered if you take a few years between the end of college and beginning of graduate school to save up some money for tuition. You know, I have never had an instance where a program or a faculty member said we're not taking this person because they took a break. I've never had that. So I would not say that it is a disadvantage to do that. In fact, probably if you were if, you know, took a year off and as a part of your application, you had to write a letter or maybe a statement of purpose, something like that. That might actually work to your advantage because you would talk about how you've matured in that year, how you're better situated to begin graduate education, et cetera. So you could definitely take that and put a positive spin on it and work it to your advantage as a part of the application process. Let's see. The next question says for programs like occupational therapy where we apply on the OT CAS website, we still need to apply on the UCA graduate school website. Okay. So if you're applying to occupational therapy or physical therapy or any of those others that have a CAS system, then you apply in the CAS system first. So they do their review of the application materials and everything within that CAS system. And then if they say, yes, we want to admit you, that is when you apply to the graduate school. So I don't I'm not familiar with the numbers for occupational therapy, so I'm going to use physical therapy as an example. But physical therapy would probably have over 300 people apply in the CAS system. And they'll review those and they'll pick 60. And so then they tell those 60 people to now apply to the UCA graduate school. And that's when they come to our website, fill out the application, submit the, pay the fee, and then we admit them into the school. We also pull all the application materials out of the CAS system so that a student does not have to submit those to us twice. So that's a really good question. These are all great questions. Are there other questions out there that I can answer for you all? I'll just wait just a second. I wish I had like the little three dots to see if somebody was typing, but this is obviously not my iPhone. I will say that um, you know, the folks here in the graduate school are very eager to answer your questions. We respond to emails all the time. We have phone ours though that so if you call, we don't answer the phone all the time because we're understaffed. But if you call between 9:30 and 11 in the morning or 1:30 and 3:00 in the afternoon, we answer the phone and we will respond to your questions and work with you. And outside of that, time, please email us. Also after this, if you have questions, please feel free to email me and I'll be happy to answer your questions. I should've put it in the slides, but I didn't do it. My email is abarlow5, so you have to have the number five on there @uca.edu. And I'll be happy to either get you to answer your question or get you the answers that you need.