

## 1. Academics Don't Work Very Hard

Describe all the steps required to complete the Ph.D. program with appropriate framing:

- Gain expertise in broad fields and particular specialty.
- Pass qualifying exams (most people would blanch at having to write a six-hour exam or face cross-examination for three hours on 18th century French drama).
- Develop a unique project, secure funding, manage a diverse committee of busy and often exacting faculty experts, and research and write a book-length manuscript while also teaching UCSD undergraduates.

## 2. High Performers Don't Come from The Academy

- Highlight your track record of achievement (i.e., GPA, Phi Beta Kappa).
- Emphasize the extreme competition to get into elite graduate programs like UCSD and to secure fellowships/grants from national funding sources.
- Explain your ability to perform at a high level for national/international experts in your field. (Silicon Valley, biotechs, and increasingly management consulting are prominent professional realms that are full of high performers with academic backgrounds.)

## 3. Ph.D.'s Are Just Overgrown College Students

- The difference between your analytical and communication skills and theirs is not one of degree but of kind -- the quantum leap kind.
- You have been selected to teach one of the strongest student bodies in the nation (hundreds of high school students with 4.0s can't even get into UCSD).
- As a TA, you provide students with the skills and training these same firms target when they aggressively recruit UCSD undergrads.

## 4. If You Don't Go Into Academia, There's Something Wrong With You

- My career goals fit better with industry than in the confines of the academy.
- want to use my energy and talents to effect change directly, to have an impact.
- I am looking to use my skills & abilities in a more applied setting.
- I have taken the time to make a considered, thoughtful choice.
- These days most talented people have multiple careers.

## 5. You're Just Marking Time Until An Academic Job Comes Along

- Explain your interest in the position/ organization in terms of your personal goals.
- Explain that you've done significant research on the organization and can clearly articulate why you are sincerely interested; that you are not there out of dire necessity or on a whim.
- Link the job you are applying for to analogous prior experience as a means of demonstrating your prior interest in the field or type of organization.
- Consider doing an internship or volunteer stint to show your willingness to invest in the kind of work they do before asking them to invest in you.

## 6. We'll Have To Pay You More

- Ph.D.'s offer enhanced value and a track record of achievement and accomplishments.
- You bring to their work not just the specialized knowledge of an academic domain, but advanced skills and experience (see skills chart in this booklet).
- You have demonstrated entrepreneurship (think about the parallels between a dissertation and a start-up), initiative, and ability to complete complex projects with minimal supervision.
- Ph.D.'s are used to working long hours to meet deadlines with high-quality work.

## 7. Ph.D. = Elitist, Anti-Social, Abstract

- Emphasize role as teachers demystifying material for diverse student population.
- Tone down your vocabulary; avoid the use of academic jargon.
- Stress collaborative experience you have had and your desire to work in more of a team setting where your work will have more of an impact.

## 8. Ph.D.'s Lack Management/Collaborative Skills

- Explain the concrete management tasks involved in shepherding your project to completion in a complex bureaucratic environment (the necessity to sell the idea; to balance input and expectations from multiple sources; to organize research, writing, travel, presentations all while working to earn income).
- Illustrate your experience in project management: moderating discussions/ meetings, mentoring/training as a TA, organizing a panel/conference, running a study/lab group, being a departmental representative, etc.

## 9. Your Type Of Ph.D. Is Irrelevant

- Emphasize the process; skills and experience, rather than the end product.
- Describe your research as a series of puzzles you have solved and search for analogies to the kind of problems/puzzles they confront in their work.

## 10. Ph.D.'s Will Correct Others' Grammar; Be Prissy & Precise

- Eliminate the use of jargon, even if asked to describe your academic work.
- Use humor, empathy, open body language, and active listening.

*\* Courtesy of UC Berkeley Career Center \**