



# The Graduate Advisor

PERICLES ABLE PROJECT (AMERICAN BUSINESS AND LEGAL EDUCATION)

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**SPECIAL: FOCUS ON DARTMOUTH TUCK**

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## Focus on Dartmouth-Tuck: Life in A Small Town Top B-School

by *Tatiana Rybin, Tuck class of 2005*

### Application

At first I applied to Chicago, Kellogg and Insead. I don't know why I didn't include Tuck on my initial list. While I was completing the applications to the other schools, a second-year Russian student at Tuck sent me an email encouraging me to contact him to learn more about the school. [If you check the box on the GMAT that asks if you want your to be contacted by interested schools, the schools will have access your email address.] So I contacted him and immediately added Tuck to my list of schools. Tuck particularly appealed to me since the people seemed to be completely down-to-earth and genuine. Additionally, Tuck's application required only a case and four essays – quite a relief compared to what the other schools require!



*Tatiana Rubin, graduation*

I was admitted to Tuck, Chicago and Insead and rejected from Kellogg. Given that Tuck is a small school, Tuck takes a personal approach to the application process. I received a personal phone call from them, not just a standard

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*Tuck Hall, Dartmouth*

## Understanding Alphabet Soup: or “Increasing Your Admissions Testing Vocabulary”

By *Marian Dent, Dean, Pericles ABLE Project*

In the United States, a time honored tradition of kindergarten days is a luncheon meal of Alphabet Soup. Alphabet Soup is a vegetable based soup containing macaroni that is manufactured in the shape of letters of the alphabet. Moms feed this dubious delight to the kids of the neighborhood, and presumably help develop early reading skills (but more likely just satisfy kids' desires to make a mess of their food) by encouraging the children to make words from the letters in their spoons.

Little did I know that a career in education would mean that I would encounter adults who somehow left their hearts in that alphabet soup era. Those adults are the people who develop all the standardized testing that determine a student's admission to college or graduate school. The number of acronyms developed to describe the college admissions process seems to go far beyond the vocabulary of even the most devoted scrabble fan. It's bewildering to those not in the know. Thus, this article attempts to define that mess of acronyms and make some sense out of the admissions testing process.

The first acronym a Russian student is likely to encounter when applying to any US educational program is TOEFL. TOEFL stands for Test of English as a Foreign Language. That awful looking word is pronounced “tôwful;” the E is silent. Generally, TOEFL must be taken by anyone applying to a US college or graduate school program who does not

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acceptance letter like I did from the other schools. Furthermore, the admissions office was very helpful in answering all my questions about student visas and financing. And honestly, my experience with Chicago's admissions office had not been as positive.

My only concern was that I did not have confirmed financial support for the second year to meet visa application requirements. The school's policy is to only give financial support for the second year to students who meet the academic performance criteria in the first year. Therefore, the financing is conditional and doesn't appear on your I-20 form. Nonetheless, the American embassy gave me a student visa.

### Students

Tuck is an interesting school with regard to its student base. The school definitely lacks publicity and therefore the number of international students is only about 30% out of a class of about 250 people each year. The majority of international students come from India and Latin America. Unlike myself, many international students actually lived, studied or worked in the US prior to attending Tuck. There were three Russians in the class of 2005, three Russians in the class of 2004 and four people, two from Ukraine and two from Russia, in the class of 2006. Guess if it's a quota or a percentage of Russian GDP worldwide – I don't know.



*Winter in Dartmouth, New Hampshire: "Everything is connected by corridors which you will really appreciate when it is raining or snowing outside."*

I have no means of comparison to other schools, but I believe that Tuck's focus on ethics and team work fosters an environment where you will find yourself surrounded by completely normal people who give honest and helpful feedback. The students are not cut-throat and will actually help you prepare for interviews. Tuck is sometimes even blamed for it – people claim that Tuck graduates are unprepared for the "real" world.

I believe the quality of students at Tuck is very high. During my two years there,

I really learned what it means "to learn from your peers," something you don't understand by just reading a brochure and when you have grown up in a Russian education system. The quality of people at Tuck made me realize that I actually had made it to a top Ivy League MBA school.

Tuck is all about teamwork. During the first year, all teams are assigned, meaning you do not choose who you work with. It doesn't seem to make much sense except that they want to prepare you to be able to work with anybody in your after-school life. My study group experienced a lot of funny dramas but in the end the team-spirit really differentiates Tuck from other schools. Read the employers' comments – they definitely notice this.

### Housing/Life in Hanover

The campus is very old and beautiful and it is such a blast to just walk around. Tuck has two dorms. One dorm is a great four-star hotel, while another dorm (where I lived) wasn't even close. But honestly – who cares? Ironically, both cost about the same amount in rent. So if you want to live on-campus, you would have to participate in a lottery.

The best thing about living on-campus is that you can get to your classes, the cafeteria or anywhere without leaving  
**continues . . .**



the school building. Everything is connected by corridors which you will really appreciate when it is raining or snowing outside. The classes for first-year students start at 8:20.

The dorms are for the first-years only. All second-year students are required to live off-campus. There is a plenty of off-campus housing. You can find a room for about \$500-600/month in the nearby towns. Hanover will be a bit more expensive as housing there is limited. An apartment would cost you around \$1,000 and you will also need a car. There are a number of very nice houses that are traditionally rented out to Tuckies and you can arrange to share a house with your friends.

Hanover is a small town with a Main Street that has 2-3 bars and restaurants. So if you are looking for other Tuck students to hang out with – you always know where to find them. You should be prepared for this type of social life – it is very different compared to the big city! Apparently, it is supposed to help you concentrate on your studies. There is an arts center with decent exhibitions and performances and a fantastic sport facility. So, if you are the kind of person who loves sports, skiing (Hanover is close to some great ski resorts) and likes an intimate community, Tuck is the right place for you. You will know all your classmates by name, and they and the faculty will know you. During your second year, when people live in houses, there are a plenty of parties, dinners, etc., to go to and make even more friends.

I am from St. Petersburg and lived in Moscow for three years prior to business



*Tuck's back yard*

school. I never missed the city life while living in Hanover and in fact I don't even want to live in a city anymore. Besides, I don't think I would be able to cope with the MBA workload and hit a gym once or twice a day anywhere else.

### **Workload - Second-Year Versus First Year**

The difference in workload between the first and the second year is striking. During the first year, it feels like they push you to your limit to see if you can survive. You will be sprinting from one class to another, running around like a madman between study groups, and doing tons of reading and homework. On top of this, you will need to search for an internship. During first year, you take only core classes. You can take a class of your choice only if you manage to test out of a core class. During second year, you take all elective courses. That is when you are able to balance your schedule and forget about going to bed

at 3AM and having to wake up at 7AM to get to class.

### **Internship and Job Search**

At the end of the day, your ultimate goal is to find a job. The companies that come on campus within the traditional consulting/banking sectors are the same at all top-MBA schools. There is very little differentiation between schools. If your search is less traditional (anything that is not consulting or banking), getting a work visa can be a huge issue. Most companies state from the very beginning that they do not interview international students. There are, however, companies that will. You need to focus on those companies. Though it is not easy for an international student to seek a non-traditional position, it is possible to find a company that will sponsor you.

During the summer between first and second years in business school, I had a marketing internship at Time Warner in NYC. After graduation, I accepted a full-time position in strategic planning at Cadbury Schweppes. 240 of my classmates have already found jobs, and very good ones. Tuck historically has great placement statistics. If you go to school in New Hampshire, you have to be extremely pro-active, and all Tuck students are. To my knowledge, many people, including myself, had a choice between two or more offers. I hope this year will be even better for you guys and I wish everyone the best of luck.

*(See Tuck Statistics Next Page)*



## **Pericles ABLE Project** American Business and Legal Education

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Focus On Tuck—The Statistics		
(Sources Forbes, Business Week, Tuck Admissions Office, inter alia)		
Rankings:	Bus Week	10
	Forbes	4
	Fin Times	8
	U.S. News	6
	Wall St. Journ	3
Program Duration		2 year
Application Deadline		April 10, 2006
Average GMAT Score		700
Range of GMAT Scores		640-740
Wait between application and acceptance		5 weeks
Number of applications for 2005 class		3,266
Number of admittees who enrolled in 2005		241
Foreign students		30% from 33 countries
Female Students		32%
Average age of entering class		28 years old, range 23-37 years old
Average experience of entering class		5 years, range 3-8 years
Tuition cost for 2005		\$32,490 first year - \$34,500 2 <sup>nd</sup> year
Average room & board cost		\$10,000 a year.
Strongest market nich		consulting (31%), finance (30%)
Average entering (pre-MBA) salary		\$50,000
Average leaving (after graduation) salary		\$87,000 base, \$30,000 bonuses
Representative major employers	Bain & Co., Goldman Sachs	
Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, 100 Tuck Hall, Hanover, NH 03755		
Admissions Director: <a href="mailto:Dawna.M.Clarke@Dartmouth.edu">Dawna.M.Clarke@Dartmouth.edu</a>		
<a href="http://www.tuck.dartmouth.edu">www.tuck.dartmouth.edu</a> Switchboard phone: 8-101-603-646-2369		

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have a previous high school or college degree from an English speaking country. The exam is designed to test reading, writing, grammar and listening ability for those planning to study in English speaking countries. The TOEFL is sometimes called the TOEFL-CBT or Computer Based Test. It was transferred from paper to computer in the late 1990s, and thus everyone's old 600 point based scores suddenly became based on 300 points. However, as if that weren't enough confusion, the test is in the process of being revamped yet once

again. The new acronym TOEFL- iBT or TOEFL Internet Based Test, which is slowly being introduced throughout the world (and which started this month in Moscow) is a BFD (big f...ing deal) because it is much more challenging than the current TOEFL, and it also tests speaking ability. Yet again, there are revamping the grading system too, the top score is now 120 points, and every school has to figure out all over again which minimum score it wants to see. Rest assured either TOEFL-CBT or TOEFL-IBT will still be valid scores from two years after the date you take the test.

While TOEFL is required for everyone heading for the American educational system, and is accepted by many other English speaking colleges throughout the world, a British equivalent you might hear about is commonly called IELTS. IELTS actually means International English Language Testing Service, so strictly speaking one should say "IELTS Test" because otherwise you are talking about the administrators and not about the

exam. But IMHO (in my humble opinion) nobody cares about this distinction—just call the test IELTS. IELTS is a similar test to the TOEFL, but is only accepted by British and some Canadian schools. Whether you take IELTS or TOEFL simply depends on where you want to apply.

TOEFL is required for any foreign student, ranging from 17 year-olds applying for their first college educations, to 30-year-old businesspeople applying for E-MBA's (Executive Masters of Business Administration—oh come on, you knew that one didn't you!). But after completing the TOEFL hurdle, the next standardized test you will face when entering the American educational system depends on the type of studying you want to do. You will find the SAT for undergraduate students (those applying for first college degrees), the GMAT for MBA hopefuls, the LSAT for law students, the MCAT for medical students, and the GRE for other graduate students.

Starting with the needs of the youngest students first, the SAT stands for Scholastic Aptitude Test and is required of all entering students in almost every college in the United States. The SAT actually consists of two parts. SAT I, which tests reading, logic, writing and math, and SAT Subject Tests, which might test anything from foreign language to biology, depending on what subject tests you want to take. Most students take the SAT I in December or January, and might take the subject tests at any time.

SAT I is universally required, but most colleges do not require the subject tests unless you want to study a particular major that has such a test. Now here's the trick—unlike Russian universities, most US universities accept students into the university as a whole rather than into a particular department. Students are not generally required to decide their "major" area of study until they have completed the first two years of college. As a result, most of the time particular subject tests are not required. Those colleges who do ask for SAT subject tests usually ask the students to complete two or three subject tests of their own choice.

But SAT isn't the only acronym entering college students need to know. Some students take the PSAT which is **continues . . .**

just Pre-SAT, a shorter version designed for younger students. Frankly we can't see any reason to take the PSAT unless you are really a GFP (glutton for punishment).

Another one you might run into is ACT—the American College Testing Service. Again it's a service, but the test is also called ACT. The ACT is an alternative test to the SAT, but despite the patriotic American label, it is administered mainly in the Southern United States. Nationwide, more students take the SAT. If you see a university catalog that mentions a certain ACT score as required, don't worry, almost all major schools will accept the SAT instead.

You also might run into the initials AP, which stand for Advanced Placement exams. The AP exams are like the SAT subject tests but are designed to help students avoid those boring Freshmen (1<sup>st</sup> year) level courses, and jump right to the more challenging stuff. Don't worry, schools only require AP exams for determining whether a student must start with a class like "English Grammar Review," or like "Creative Writing for Journalism Majors." These tests are not generally required to determine college entry in the first place. Students who live abroad usually don't take AP exams unless the counselor suggests it after they actually are admitted to and arrive at a US college.

The SAT and most of those other acronyms were invented by an organization called the College Board. Good heavens, it is the only organization in this whole article that doesn't have an acronym! If the test is above the high school level, though, you are likely to run into an organization called ETS, or

Educational Testing Service, which wrote and managed the GMAT, and still writes and manages the LSAT and GRE. ETS, aka (also known as) one of the richest non-profit organizations in the world, collects fees ranging from \$100-\$250 for each test administered. In the educational testing world, well, let's just say it arouses about as strong love-hate feelings as Microsoft does in the computer world. But actually ETS is SOL (sh. .t out of luck) because, beginning in January 2006, ETS lost its contract for one of its biggest selling tests, the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test), and instead the ACT people will be writing that exam with Pearson VUE (Virtual University Enterprises) becoming the ATC (authorized testing center). Pearson VUE already has a lot of experience administering computer based exams, so there shouldn't be too much of a learning curve for them to become as efficient as the previous folks, but there have been a few SNAFUs (US army term meaning "situation normal, all fouled up") during the switch over, and there might be a few more in the early months of 2006. By the way, since the switch over, the number you need to use for your ACU (Automated Calling Unit, US Army acronym for "phone") is different. So if you are reading any old GMAT materials, look elsewhere for the updated phone number.

Concentrating now on the older students, the first thing you will encounter as a graduate school applicant is the acronym CAT. While to most of the world this means an annoying little four-legged creature that drinks cream, licks its whiskers and rubs against your leg for food, in the educational testing world CAT means Computer Adaptive Test.

A CAT test is one that is given on computer and adjusts in difficulty according to your answers to each previous question. The ostensible reason is to be able to judge an applicant's ability more quickly and accurately, without the need for the applicant to complete a number of questions at the easy, medium and difficult levels. What the CAT computer does is gives you a couple of questions, and, assuming you get them right, says "OK, now let's give you some tougher ones." It keeps getting tougher and tougher until you start to miss questions or die from exhaustion—kind of like the army drill sergeant from hell. "OK, you think you can run that obstacle course, now try this one." AFAIC (as far as I'm concerned) I like the CATs because they do test your abilities rather quickly, and you also get your score back the same day, which is a big advantage for those of us who tend to leave things till the last minute. But expect to feel challenged and tired when completing a CAT test; because since it adjusts to your level most of the questions will feel hard to you. (FYI: The TOEFL-iBT is no longer a CAT but is still a CBT, or Computer Based Test, which means that it is given on computer but does not get harder as you get questions right.)

Since most Russian graduate level students (ie: most of our readers) are trying to apply to MBA (Master of Business Administration) programs, the CAT most of you are going to have to master is the GMAT, or Graduate Management Admissions Test, that we mentioned briefly above. This is pronounced "Djç-Mat," not "gmat." The GMAT tests logical reasoning, reading comprehension, grammar, writing and mathematics. Yes, that's right, it sounds like the SAT. But, given the older test takers, as you can expect, it's a lot harder.

FYI (for your information) your GMAT scores go to an organization called the GMAC, or Graduate Management Admissions Council, which is kind of a club of B-Schools (Business schools) that keeps track of students' test scores and puts its nose into the application process.

If you are applying to another type of masters degree program, you might instead encounter the GRE. This is pronounced Djç-are-ç and not Grrrr. The GRE is another CAT; well, at least right

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now it is. It tests mathematics, reading comprehension and vocabulary. The mathematics part of the GRE is easier than that of the GMAT, but the vocabulary part of the GRE is unique and proves particularly difficult for non-native speakers of English. It tests analogies, eg. (for example), dog is to cat as (a) cat is to mouse, (b) mouse is to house, etc. (*et cetera*-among other things). But it uses much harder words of course. It also tests antonyms (opposites), and forces you to fill in the blanks in sentences with the correct words. Some graduate programs, such as those in economics or finance, will often let students choose between taking the GMAT or the GRE. AAMOF (as a matter of fact), given the superior mathematics education in Russian schools, and the difficult vocabulary on the GRE, we would advise choosing the GMAT in almost every case.

Like the SAT, the GRE also has a variety of subject tests that you might have to take if your area of study is one of those that has a specialized subject test. So be sure to check with your graduate program to make sure you know what GREs are required.

If you are going to take the GRE we suggest you do so ASAP (as soon as possible). In October 2006 the GRE is getting rid of the CAT feature and the test is changing completely. The most significant change is that it will then be 4 hours rather than 2 ½ and it is going back to paper rather than computer. And just when you learned all those analogies they are going to replace them with something that they think will prevent students from improving their scores just by memorizing lots of vocabulary. Ugh! It's those SOB's (sons of b . . . ches) at ETS once again. So, we reiterate, take the test ASAP.

Finally, the last two common standardized tests are the LSAT, or Law School Admissions Test, and the MCAT, which is the equivalent for medical school. These are not, and never were, CAT or CBT exams but are given on paper several times a year. The Medical School exam, MCAT, stands for Medical School Admissions Test. MCAT tests physical science, biology, and verbal reasoning. It isn't an easy test, as of course it is very

competitive to be admitted to US medical schools.

Fortunately, in most cases foreign students applying for legal education in the US do not have to take the LSAT but only the TOEFL. This is because the very weird system of legal education where US students take a three year juris-doctorate (JD) program as their first degree in law, whereas foreign students usually have a degree in law from their home countries and instead of three years take a one year LL.M., Masters of Laws degree, to practice in the US. In most schools, the LSAT is not required for LL.M. programs, only for JD programs.

Well that about covers about all the major standardized testing acronyms. Of course, there are others, but hopefully this should take you from testing novice to "almost-fluent" in the language of ETS. Now, good luck with the exams! And if you need any help getting prepared, pull out your ACU and give Pericles ABLE (American Business & Legal Education Project) a call. 495-692-5188



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specific examples of how decisions back then affected the outcome today;

- Be sure that you are aware of those values that define you as a person, that constitute the most important essence of you. Don't be afraid to get personal; there is nothing that is more boring than hearing pat and pre-fabricated answers to these questions. Those who come across as individuals are those with vivid stories and concrete conclusions about how those stories have created the individual who will one day have the tools to influence

the lives of many people;

- Understand what your personal assets are (your positive baggage, one might say), the strengths in your personality, as well as the weaknesses that will make you better as you try to overcome them. Analyze the role that various people have played in helping you to form as an individual – parents, teachers, mentors, friend, siblings – and make those stories stand out. Don't bombard the interviewers with information or try to write a machine-gun essay that puts too much information on the page so that nothing is remembered: focus on what snapshots you want to show and put them in clear focus.

### 2) The "Why do you love me?" Predicament:

Have you ever been confronted with a situation where you are sitting in a café or restaurant with a person you've been dating for awhile and, after an evening of fun, the person gets very serious and suddenly asks: Why do you love me? Answering this question is a pretty treacherous business at best...if you say "I don't know," you sound mushy and noncommittal, if you say "I love you because you're beautiful," you sound shallow and superficial. If you say "I love you because of your personality," the person might think that their looks are not up to par, and if you say "I love you because you are you," you come across as patronizing and evasive. In short, it's a no win situation. This situation is analogous to one of the tasks that you must deal with any essay or interview: the question of why, out of all of the wonderful schools in the world, do you want to come to OUR school – why do you love us? Here are some tips:

- **Meeting of the minds:** after reading materials that are geared towards an understanding of each individual school's culture (numbers vs. leadership vs. people vs. teamwork), you find a basis for why you will be happy and successful in the kind of environment the school provides. Beware however of the "golden bullet approach" where you make it seem like the first thing you said after coming out of your mother's womb was "Harvard" – this is definitely going overboard and will not be appreciated by the admissions people;

continues . . .

- **Focus on the course of study:** Some people find a good approach to answering the question by commenting in depth on what they have studied, mentioning that there is a professor at their school of choice who works in the same field and has even written on the same topic in order to ultimately prove that the school can give you exactly what you need to get you from where you are to where you want to be. This approach also proves that you have done your background work, you've gone out of your way to contact faculty members, you have studied the course offerings and have put a lot of thought into what you want to study, when, with whom, and what you ultimately want to write about;

- **Keeping your eye on the future:** Another approach to this may be to focus on what your plans are after receiving your degree and to show that the student body, school culture, objectives and mission will help you to accomplish what you ultimately want to do: to help your country, your people, and to use the knowledge that you get from studying at this particular place to do that. Your argument should be convincing, the plan of action must be very concrete, you must show that you are motivated to do something that goes beyond the simple desire for earthly pleasures, but that can affect things in a much deeper sense.

**Some final hints to consider:**

- Don't just tell the admissions people what they want to hear – show them how you have proven your skills in terms of being a leader who is dynamic, capable of motivating others, concerned with professional ethics and integrity,
- Show them that you are a whole person, not a stuffed shirt or a talking head. Explain how sports, hobbies and the other things that occupy your time have benefited you in your career. Demonstrate how you have developed your skills and qualities outside of the boardroom as well as inside.
- Understand that your interview can be application-based, CV-based – you should know these documents inside out and be able to answer the most general to the most specific questions about them.
- Not all candidates are created equal – you need to show how you are different from the other applicants from your

home country...how experience has shaped you into someone who has gone beyond their circumstances to become a global player.

Stay tuned for the next six month installment in the next JOURNEY continuing saga.



**NOTES,  
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done in one team. That was a mistake. All my classes are with the same small group of people, and all my grades depend on how well our group does. But really I don't like this way of working.

My experience of teamwork at my company really never was teamwork because actually I was always the team leader. My application wasn't completely false because I really did lead my team to success, but actually it wasn't so much a team as just a bunch of people under me who had to do what I said if they wanted to keep their jobs. When I applied I thought B-school would be the same way, that teamwork meant that I would learn to lead people. What I didn't expect is that everyone on my team wants to be the leader and no one can agree on anything.

When I arrived at the school I was placed in a team of 6 people (whose real names I won't tell you). Just for your understanding, I'm going to call them Joe, Jane, Wanita, Nguyen and Utpal. You get the idea I think. I think that in an American school I should be learning American business and how to work in a team with Americans. Instead there are only two Americans on the team, plus me—I'm Russian, a girl from Mexico, someone from India who want to look for a job in the US more than to work in the class, and someone from South Korea who doesn't speak English. I didn't think that when I was applying to a school with a "great international reputation and high percentage of foreign students" that this might not mean that I would meet both Americans and Europeans, but might mean I would have to spend a year with people mainly from countries I don't really care about doing business with. And I especially don't want to learn the business styles of those countries. If I had it to do over again, I would choose a school for its American students and not its international reputation.

Plus everyone's styles are so different that we can't agree on much. On our first case assignment we tried to discuss everything the way they tell you team work should work. The result was that we didn't get the assignment finished on time. Me and Wanita ended up finishing it alone with everyone else just taking the credit.

The next assignment we decided just to divide up and we each worked alone. Well that was maybe a little better, but actually the presentation we did didn't make much sense because two of the team members didn't pay attention to our conclusion and two more didn't agree. So we are trying to say X with others on our team saying Y and Z. It didn't look very professional and the professor told us so.

It has been like that the whole semester—usually two against four. On practically every assignment we have four people who go off and do their own thing, interviewing for jobs, sightseeing, just wasting time, and the work falls on me or me and one other person. I'm sick of it. If I were actually working with these people I would have fired them a long time ago.

Before the end of the semester, I went to one of our professors and talked about our teamwork problems. I didn't like the way the professor responded "Finding ways of working through personal and cultural differences to create the strongest product is what B-school is all about." Yeah fine, but they don't tell you how to do that when you have a team full of free riders who are just happy to take credit for your work. I am hating this whole experience. I don't think it's realistic practice for business. Most businesses don't actually have people from 5 different nationalities and 6 different backgrounds working together. And most businesses have ways to incentivize team members that B-school pseudo-teams don't have.

My advisor says that maybe we can change teams at the end of the semester, but the more I'm here the more I realize that what this team work is teaching isn't for me. I don't want to learn to be a team player, I want to learn business skills. Probably next semester I will see if I can transfer to a Masters in Finance program where everyone isn't so team crazy.



# Roadmap to Graduate and B-School - The Journey Continues

(Part 2 of a continuing article on grad-school application and preparation.)

By Elena Schachter, Associate Dean, Pericles, graduate study, University of Michigan.

## Essays & Interviews: Creating a Picture of You

The B-School and Graduate School applications are products of the “you” that is paper-based (scores, grades), and the projected you, the person that is not just a number on a page, a synthesis of TOEFL and GMAT/GRE scores, but a fleshed-out whole individual with your very personal and exclusive story to tell. Your test prep success will take you from the frying pan to the fire...you leave the pool of applicants that are from your country alone and are then dealing with the worldwide pool of applicants. The essay, recommendation and interview phase (Phase 2) is one that requires much preparation and repeated self-critique and self-assessment to determine your strengths and weaknesses, and match what you can do to what the school

specializes in. If the fit is right and you manage to create that snapshot of a RECRUITABLE candidate, who is going to be successful during the study process and to pave the way for innovative change after getting your degree, your chances of getting an acceptance letter will improve dramatically.

### First Steps – Putting your past in focus and making it work for you

1) **Think of your memories as snapshots, creating a web of stories and narratives that give insight into how you developed from a student with only choices in front of you to a person with concrete goals and ideas of how the goals should be achieved:**

- Work on “chunking” time – make a timeline or outline of the major periods

in your life and write what accomplishments took place during that time (don’t forget the science competitions, swimming races, all of your successes), and focus especially on the moments of time we call “noetic”, moments when you know that something has changed in your life and you will never be the same again;

- Make concrete connections between your childhood or teenage years, your school years, etc. and the field that you have chosen – you need to find the best narratives to describe a connection between your past and how it influenced the present, with very

See **JOURNEY, Page 6**

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## Notes from the Underground: Advice from Our Students: Confessions of a Non-Team Player (by an anonymous student at a top-20 B-school)

When Pericles contacts our alumni and asks them to write for this column, we are used to getting helpful advice, but usually they tell us good things about their experiences. This student, however, who wants to remain anonymous about his name and his school, had a very different experience that he wrote about three-quarters of the way through his first B-school semester:

When I applied to business school I wrote my applications about how great team work was, how I had made a team succeed, how I was looking forward to learning from my peers, all the things that all the magazines and experts tell you to write. Actually it was all lies. I never really thought too deeply about what teamwork was like before I got into B-school. And guess what, now that I’m here, I hate it!

I was so sold on the teamwork idea that they talk about so much in B-school literature, that I applied to schools where the whole first year of business school is

8 See **NOTES, Page 7**

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