TIPS FOR SURVIVING THE
GRAD SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS

(Collected from Class of 2012 - University of Pittsburgh)

1. **Learn About Audiology and Speech/Language Pathology**
   - Get involved in extracurricular activities
     - Shadow professionals in different settings
     - Volunteer in people-related fields
     - Join NSSLHA and be an active member (e.g., committee head; officer position)
   - Take time to **get to know your professors & advisor**.
     - It's easier for them to write a letter of recommendation when they have interacted with you outside of class
     - Seek options to volunteer on research projects with a professor
   - **Study to learn**, while it is tempting to memorize content in each class, the undergraduate courses focus on developing an important foundation for graduate studies
     - Work hard to learn all you can
     - Do well in all of your courses – your GPA will count when you apply to graduate school

2. **Advance Preparation**
   - **Use resources** developed to help students apply to SLP and AuD programs
     - Explore Ed Find on the ASHA website for info on AuD and SLP graduate degree programs: [http://www.asha.org/students/academic/EdFind/](http://www.asha.org/students/academic/EdFind/)
     - Explore AAA info on AuD degree programs (links on left provide info on all programs) [http://www.audiology.org/education/students/programs/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.audiology.org/education/students/programs/Pages/default.aspx)
     - Read materials designed to help guide you through the application process at [http://www.asha.org/students/academic/Graduate-School.htm](http://www.asha.org/students/academic/Graduate-School.htm)
   - **Gather information about programs** (spring of your junior year) to determine the best options for your interests, needs, and abilities
     - Consider the range of geographic areas open to you
     - Identify programs that fit your profile in terms of GPA and GRE Scores (on EdFind)
     - Look for schools that offer opportunities in disorder areas/settings that are of interest
     - Talk to your academic advisor and professors to get their input on programs to consider
     - Contact professors of universities of interest to learn more
       - Set up a time to visit and talk with members of the faculty
       - Find out when Open Houses are held and make arrangements to attend if possible
       - Ask for the names of some current grad students you could talk to. Find out from them what do they like and what do they wish was different
   - **Take the GREs early** (spring junior year or summer between junior & senior years). This will give you the opportunity to re-take the exam if needed
   - **Contact professors early** to initiate a request for grad school letters of support.
     - Find out what materials they need from you and how early they need the items
   - **Send for an official transcript** of all colleges you have attended – that will be helpful when completing applications
   - Begin brainstorming about your **personal statement** and start drafting it
   - **Save your money** – the application process will require some funds
2. **The Application Process**

- **Get organized** – work on your applications a little each day to decrease the stress and **don't procrastinate**
  - Finalize the list of programs you will apply to. Be realistic – apply to schools you believe you have a chance of getting in to – include some reach schools and “safety” schools.
  - Create a spreadsheet summarizing info on each school (due dates; application format – CSDCAS, on-line, paper; contact person; items requested, etc)
  - Make a folder for each school and a checklist to help you track which items you have completed and which still need to be completed
  - Create a checklist of what each professor wants in terms of materials to allow them to write your letters of support. Track when each item is done.
  - Consider other events in your life (i.e., midterms; job responsibilities) as you plan out your timeline for completing the application process

- **Complete your personal statement**
  - In most cases you’ll do the same personal statement for all programs
  - Have family and friends proofread it and give you feedback
  - Use the Writing Center on campus

- **Prepare a resume** – some applications require one

- **Take time to breathe and remember why you love this field!** Don’t lose sight of why you are going through the stress of applying to graduate school.

- **Complete the applications**
  - Trust the CSDCAS process – they take your application process seriously
  - Make sure you have all necessary items completed for each application

- **Have transcripts sent**

- **Deliver an organized packet to the recommenders early** - most faculty write letters for many students, so get your materials to them at least 4-6 weeks **before** you need the letters sent out
  - Send reminders 10-14 days before you need the letters to arrive, to help ensure that letters are sent

- **Call each school after your application is submitted** and your transcripts are sent to ensure that your application is complete