

Grad school hopefuls battle exams

BY CHARLOTTE KEENAN
Staff Reporter

Junior Josh Hallows has been preparing for the GRE since this summer by participating in a 10-week prep course through the McNair Research Program and independently taking two practice tests.

"I probably would have never studied for it unless I was made to," he said.

Hallows, a psychology major, said he will be applying to graduate programs in personality and social psychology this fall and needs to take the GRE and the GRE psychology subject test.

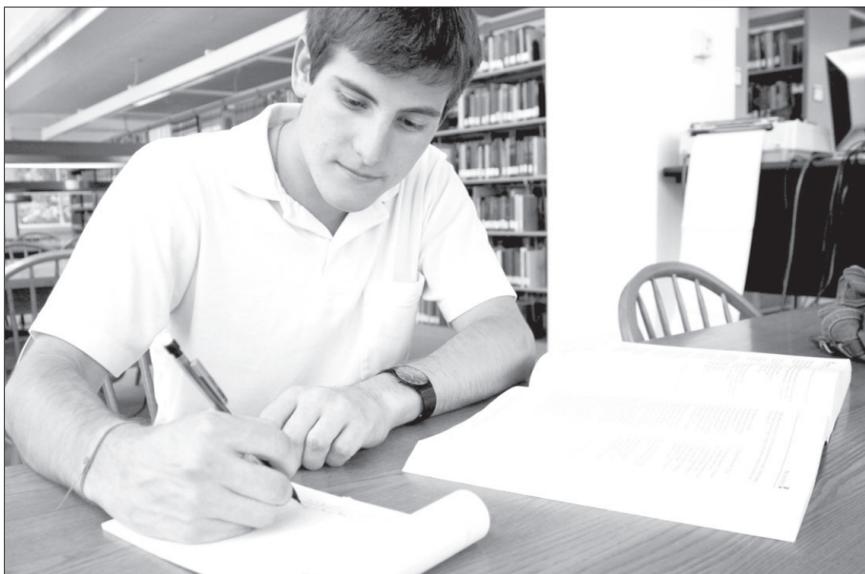
"With most graduate schools, if you have a good GPA and you're in middle-to-upper percentile in the GRE, then you meet basic requirements," he said. "So I'm not worried, but I'm sure I will be when I take the test."

Like Hallows, many seniors considering graduate programs in various fields have been preparing for tests like the GRE, MCAT or LSAT.

These test scores will help determine where college graduates will be accepted for graduate-level education. But a score's importance is limited, Truman alumnus Eric Ewing said.

Having a good MCAT score will get your foot in the door, Ewing said, but medical school admission panels also look at professional clinical experience, research jobs and volunteer work.

Ewing took the MCAT in June 2007 and now has a research job at A. T. Still University in preparation



Amy Gleaves/Index
Junior Josh Hallows studies for the GRE in Pickler Memorial Library, a place where he spends a lot of time. Hallows said he is most nervous about the essay portion of the graduate test, which he plans to take in October.

for medical school.

"I probably could have taken [the MCAT] again and gotten a few more points," he said. "Because then I could have gotten into a better school, something on the East Coast, but it's a lot of work."

Ewing prepared for the MCAT with as many as 50 hours of studying and taking practice tests, he said.

"The best thing you can do is take the practice tests," he said.

Ewing said he also enrolled in a Kaplan test preparation course.

"It was really expensive, and it wasn't really worth it," he said.

But the program did provide practice tests and study materials in addition to instruction in each of the three LSAT test sections: biological sciences, physical sciences and verbal reasoning.

"Really, the MCAT is a lot of hype," he said. "... It's hyped up

that you need to study, study, study, and you need to know everything, but the vast majority of the answers are in the test itself."

Ewing said that being a smart reader and knowing what subjects the test will include are critical to MCAT test preparation.

"It's weird how they focus on some materials and not others," he said. "For instance, in the biological sciences [section] they always

ask two or three questions on the endocrine system, ... and they might not ask anything about the digestive system."

To study for the MCAT, Ewing said he recommends practicing with prep books, flashcards and tests.

He said staying relaxed during the test also is crucial.

"That's one of the biggest things with taking any test," he said. "Being freaked out with the MCAT, with this type of test, can really hurt your chances of doing well."

Senior Jesse Badoe said that for him, staying calm and focused was key to completing the LSAT.

"You just take one question at a time and just try to keep moving forward and remember that you can always go back," he said.

Badoe said he tried to answer less-challenging questions first.

"I felt like because I skipped the first couple questions until I found one that I really knew about, I was getting off on the right foot," he said. "And because of that mindset I was more confident with my answers, which is half the battle."

Badoe took the LSAT in June and completed the GRE last week. As a justice systems major, he wants to keep his options open, he said.

Badoe said that although the test-taking made him nervous, what comes next is more nerve-racking.

"There's a lot that goes into getting accepted [into graduate school] rather than just your test scores," he said. "This is the part where everything is out of my hands, and I guess I really didn't prepare for that."

On-campus seniors share reasons to stay

BY MICHELLE MARTIN
Staff Reporter

On-campus seniors are a rare breed, but they do exist.

Although some couldn't imagine living in the residence halls all four years of college, there are others who return year after year.

Stephen Barnes, a 2008 Truman graduate, said he lived on campus all four years because of his scholarship. Barnes said on-campus living was the most financially viable option for him, and that he also enjoyed the experience.

"I think that the community that it builds is really important," he said. "I really feel bad for people who come to college, and let's say they have an upper-class sibling and let's say they decide to live in an apartment with them and never do the dorm thing. I think that's really robbing yourself."

The sheer convenience of living on campus was another strong incentive for Barnes to stay in the residence halls, he said.

"On-campus life removes a lot of the stresses of off-campus life," he said. "You don't have to deal with bills and making your own meals and figuring out how you're going to get to campus every day."

On the other hand, Barnes said he never had the opportunity to learn how to take care of his own place.

"The only thing I missed out on, really, was the experience of having an apartment and learning how to take care of it and dealing with bills and things like that," he said. "And that's not even a college experience. That's a life experience, and I feel like I will get it now that I've graduated anyway."

Senior Abigail Temple said a big plus of living on campus is the convenience with which she can change roommates when dodgy situations arise.

"In my sophomore year I had a really bad situation, and I was able to move rooms and room with another girl on the same floor," she said. "If I thought I knew someone else well enough

to rent a house with them and something went wrong, it would be a huge hassle. Lots of money, with the lease and everything."

Because Temple studied abroad for seven months before her senior year, she said she never had time to worry about renting a place, so living on campus was the easiest option.

"In fall of '07 I was focusing on my studies and on making sure everything went smoothly when I left the country in January," she said. "I wouldn't have known who I would live with, and it would have taken a lot of effort to find a house."

The possible expenses and hassles of living off campus were other deterrents for Temple.

"It could potentially be less expensive to move off campus, but it could also be more expensive," Temple said. "I've seen some of the houses to rent around Kirksville, and I'm sure they're very nice, but I'm sure they're out of my price range, whereas here, I can have a nicer place and still have it be in my price range."

Missouri Hall Director Zac Burden said he sees more upperclassmen staying on campus because of the atmosphere that residence hall life promotes. Often, students miss living in the residence halls after moving off campus.

"Students who leave after their freshman or sophomore year who have lived in Missouri Hall and have moved off campus, oftentimes they'll come by and say, 'I really enjoy living off campus, but I really miss my time at Missouri Hall. ... If I could have a chance to do this year again I probably would have come back for another year,'" he said.

Since Missouri Hall was renovated in 2006-07, Burden said he has seen more seniors choosing to stay in the residence halls than before the renovation.

"I think we see a lot more students continuing to live on campus as we continue to increase the amenities and the quality of life on campus," he said. "I'm really excited about the University's commitment to reno-



Mayank Dhungana/Index
Senior Abigail Temple talks with her roommate Junior Kelly Merritt. The two live in the newly renovated Blanton, Nason, Brewer complex.

vate all of the residence halls. ... I think what it's done is it's encouraged a lot of students to continue living on campus."

Although off-campus life might be right for some students, the residence hall community completes the college experience for

others, Burden said.

"Everyone who I've ever talked to who's lived on for all four years, they've done it because they really like the experience," he said. "... They couldn't imagine their college career without having that live-in component to it."

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