

## **2 parallel steps in selecting a graduate program:**

- 1) Choosing a program
- 2) Choosing a thesis mentor

## **Here are some helpful links for comparing programs...**

- <http://neuroscience.wustl.edu/admissions/faqs.html>
- <http://www.gradschools.com/Subject/Neuroscience/272.html>
- <http://www.andp.org/>

## **I don't believe in absolute rankings, but these provide a nice list of top schools for a PhD in Neuroscience...**

- <http://graduate-school.phds.org/rankings/neuroscience>
- <http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-biological-sciences-programs/neurosciences>

## **Here is a helpful page for choosing a lab/mentor:**

- <https://dbbs.wustl.edu/dbbs/website.nsf/WV/F7130726921F84D7862572F0005A46BF?OpenDocument>

Later, **questions** to ask...

### **... the faculty**

1. Is your lab accepting graduate students?
2. What are some exciting directions for the future of your field?
3. What kinds of projects are available for a rotating or joining graduate student?
4. Does your lab collaborate/publish with other labs here and/or other institutions?
5. Does your lab have federal funding?
6. Do you encourage or expect your students to apply for/obtain federal funding?
7. What are the major strengths of this program?
8. What are potential weaknesses of the program?
9. Are there opportunities for additional training/certifications/outreach? For example, in addition to the PhD, some programs have Pathways or Certificates.
10. Are the classes team-taught or taught by one individual?
11. How would you describe the academic environment here compared with other schools?
12. What attributes does a graduate student need to be successful at this school/in this program?
13. Do you see any common characteristics in students who have quit this doctoral degree program?
14. May I see your research facilities?
15. What have recent graduates of the same program done with their degrees?
16. What unique features are offered by this school compared to other schools?

### **... yourself. Do I want...**

1. a big or small lab? More graduate students? More postdocs? More undergrads?
2. a more senior PI or a younger PI?
3. a lab that is setting up or an established lab?
4. a lab focused on technique development, hypothesis testing or something else?
5. to live in this city?
6. Weekly lab meetings?
7. A journal club?

8. A gap year before starting graduate school?
9. To list my goals for graduate school?

**...a current student**

1. What do you see as the strengths of the program?
2. What do you see as the weaknesses of the program?
3. How accessible are the program faculty?
4. What are the research facilities like—does there seem to be adequate funding, supplies, and equipment?
5. If you had it to do over, would you select this graduate school again? Why? Why not?
6. What are the surroundings of the school campus like? Are there leisure activities, good housing, and other amenities?
7. What is campus life like—do you have an opportunity to become involved and/or take on leadership roles?
8. Do you feel that there is an adequate level of financial and academic support to complete your studies?
9. How competitive and difficult are the academic standards here?
10. Is there anyone else I might talk to who could help provide an accurate picture of the program?

best,  
dr. h