

# Affordable Graduate Schools

*Get a Top-Quality Graduate Education at a Price You Can Afford*

By Graciela Sholander

**T** rue or false: The more expensive a university, the better its graduate programs. The answer? False. Cost is not a good measure of excellence. Great news for you – it means you can get a quality graduate-level education without going broke or getting deep into debt.

**So what factors determine a quality program?** One major factor is the faculty. Are the professors well-known in their fields? Are they committed to helping students succeed? Are they accessible? Professors who are leaders in their areas of expertise, and who know how to motivate

students to become leaders, help make a graduate program great.

**What about class size?** The smaller the average class size on campus, the more individual attention you'll receive from professors. In addition, schools that encourage a mentoring partnership between faculty members and grad students end up cultivating a cooperative environment where students won't fall through the cracks. Typically, student satisfaction is very high at these universities.

**What about the particular program of study you're interested in – what reputation does it have?** If it's the university's flagship program, it can easily attract top-

notch professors, unique partnerships with businesses, and outstanding research opportunities, all of which make it a quality program. Some highly affordable universities even offer innovative, one-of-a-kind graduate programs you won't find elsewhere.

One more place to check out is the graduate school's office of financial aid. Is the school willing to help you get scholarships, grants, part-time jobs, and assistantships to help you pay for your education? A college motivated to help you financially puts your education and advancement first.

Read on to learn about ten excellent choices for affordable graduate schools.

## University of Florida

[www.ufl.edu](http://www.ufl.edu)

**T** he historic red-brick buildings on campus certainly convey an Old World charm. But you'll find that the University of Florida's (UF) graduate programs are recognized internationally for their real-world relevance. This is Florida's largest and oldest university, its rich heritage dating back to 1853. UF's renowned "Gator Spirit" always turns college games into fun and lively events.

Located in Gainesville, the cultural hub of north central Florida, UF has 16 colleges to choose from including medicine, law, journalism, and engineering. Here you can earn a master's or doctoral degree in one of many disciplines. Take your pick from education, public health, business, languages, music, life sciences, zoology, and many other fields.

The world's largest citrus research center operates at UF, giving graduate students the chance to solve issues that impact the citrus industry. In the Canary Islands, UF is helping to build one of the largest telescopes yet. Did you know that the sports drink Gatorade was developed at UF?

To date, UF is the only campus in the U.S. to offer a Doctor of Plant Medicine (D.P.M) degree. "Graduate students are drawn to the University of Florida Plant Medicine Program because of its broad multidisciplinary scope and practical nature," program director Dr. Robert J. McGovern explains. "It attracts students who wish to take a holistic approach to preventing and managing plant health problems. Our graduates are currently contributing to agriculture locally,



nationally, and internationally as crop consultants, extension agents, agricultural regulators, agricultural instructors, and plant health managers of large companies and public gardens."



### University of Florida Grad Student

*Georgene Johnson*

**I** wanted to learn more about plant health, and this program seemed to offer a wide educational base that would help me understand the subject better," explains graduate student Georgene Johnson about her decision to join the Plant Medicine program at the University of Florida. "Plus, we are the first university in the U.S. to carry the program, so it's nice to be into something that's new and upcoming."

Georgene earned her Bachelor and Master degrees in Botany at UF and is now working towards her Doctor of Plant Medicine degree. Her future goals include working for an agrichemical company dealing in the turf and ornamental industry and teaching biology or botany at the university level. "And I want to start a science program for underprivileged youth in my community, which would expose children to the fascinating world of science and let them know that they can aspire to be whatever they want to be," she adds.

## Binghamton University – State University of New York

[www.binghamton.edu/](http://www.binghamton.edu/)



**D**ubbed the crown jewel of New York State's public university system, Binghamton University (BU) is widely recognized for giving its students a top-rate education at a great price. Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine rated BU number two in the category of best value in public universities for out-of-state students.

Located in upstate New York in the midst of gentle rolling hills and a lively cultural scene, BU employs a successful model where faculty members serve as graduate students' mentors and research partners. You'll find just the right balance here of challenging academic programs and accessible professors who care about your success. The university offers more than 55

graduate degree programs ranging from accounting to geology to mathematical sciences to translation research.

"BU graduates value the education they receive here," according to Dr. Nancy Stamp, Dean of BU's Graduate School. "In the course of thanking Binghamton University for the opportunities provided," she says, "one of its graduates said, 'I live in a world where it is still shocking to see an African American with a PhD. I want to add one more [myself] to the list.'"

"At Binghamton," Dr. Stamp continues, "graduate students work with world-class researchers on a daily basis and get good jobs when they graduate. And Binghamton has graduate 'diversity' fellowships that help support underrepresented minorities."

### Binghamton University Grad Student

*Juan Carlos Corona*

"I was always intrigued with natural processes," reflects Juan Carlos Corona, a Binghamton University graduate student working towards his Ph.D. in Geology. "Even as a little kid I was always interested in nature, stars, the moon. I remember that one of my favorite birthday presents was a



telescope when I was 10 years old, so I figured that studying geology was the closest field to my interests."

Juan has found plenty of opportunities to explore his interests at Binghamton. He's studied how minerals form in laboratory environments and has had his work published in two scientific journals. "The Geology department here at Binghamton has some very good scientists, people who are very well recognized in the geologic world," he notes. "It is a small department, but it is well recognized." He also appreciates the fact that a ten-minute drive away from Binghamton brings him to beautiful countryside, the perfect setting for a budding geologist to contemplate the nature of things.

## Howard University

[www.howard.edu](http://www.howard.edu)



**W**hat do Pulitzer Prize-winning author Toni Morrison, actress Phylicia Rashad, and former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall all have in common? They're Howard University graduates. This world-renowned, Historically Black College & University (HBCU) in exciting Washington, D.C. has a long and proud history. Established in 1867, just after the end of the Civil War, it started out with a College of Arts and Sciences. Over the years, new schools and colleges were added. Today, graduate school offerings include atmospheric science, engineering, education, African studies, political science, foreign languages, astronomy, computer science, economics, life sciences, and many others.

Walking across campus, you'll see beautiful African art and monuments honoring African-American achievements. You'll find groups of students – activists, artists, scholars, fraternity and sorority members – engaged in lively conversations. Five of the nine national historically black fraternities and sororities started here.

Howard attracts high achievers in part because of its solid core values. Three qualities set Howard apart: excellence in instruction, research and service; commitment to its students, and a global perspective that strives to find solutions to social problems throughout the world. Howard University focuses on developing outstanding leaders in all disciplines. That's why leadership workshops and retreats are offered, and any student can check out materials from the Leadership Resource Center on campus.

### **Howard University Grad Student**

*Kenneth Byrd*

When engineering major Kenneth Byrd visited Howard University in his search for a good graduate school, it just "felt right." So right that he completed his Master of Science in Electrical Engineering here and

is now a fourth year doctoral student with the Department of Electrical Engineering. "What attracted me to Howard University was its legacy as the nation's premier historically Black university," he says. "It had a well documented and world revered legend as a leader in the area of five-year Ph.D. graduation rate, not to mention its ranking as the largest producer of African-American Ph.D.'s."

Kenneth was awarded a teaching assistantship and later a prestigious fellowship, both of which covered tuition and paid him a stipend. Last summer he traveled to Beijing, China, to conduct research for eight weeks through a grant from the National Science Foundation. "I had the opportunity to give talks at three major Chinese Universities on my research activities in the United States," he says.



# Clemson University

[www.clemson.edu](http://www.clemson.edu)



"We're very excited about some of our innovative new graduate programs, such as those in Automotive Engineering; International Family and Community Studies; and Rhetorics, Communication and Information Design," says Dr. J. Bruce Rafert, Dean of Clemson University's Graduate School. "We've more than doubled research funds and contracts in the past five years. Our faculty is world-class. We're improving our financial packages for graduate study every year by increasing the health insurance subsidy, further reducing the tuition paid by graduate assistants, and increasing stipends."

What started out as a technical and scientific institution in South Carolina has grown over the past century into a comprehensive university offering challenging programs in over 70 fields of study. Clemson's five colleges encompass agriculture, forestry, life sciences, architecture, arts and humanities, business, behavioral science, engineering, science, health, education, and human development. Master's and doctoral degrees are offered in all these areas.



Automotive engineering, offered by the department of mechanical engineering, starts up in the fall of 2007; both master's and Ph.D. programs are available.

Rhetorics, Communication, and Information Design is a unique interdisciplinary doctoral program. And if your goal is to learn and apply effective techniques to strengthen communities, then the International Family and Community Studies doctoral program could be just what you're looking for.

## **Clemson University Grad Student**

*Michelle Dacus*

After meeting a representative from Clemson University's Graduate School at a recruitment fair and spending a weekend on campus to take a closer look at the Rhetoric, Communication, and Information Design (RCID) program, Michelle Dacus was hooked. "RCID is

an interdisciplinary program based upon the ancient Greek tradition of rhetoric, or communications," she explains. "Today the field encompasses studies in all aspects of information design."

Previously, Michelle served as director of a Writing Across The Curriculum program. Feeling that Rhetoric is a field that speaks to the needs of such programs, she enrolled in Clemson's RCID program to better prepare herself to serve in that area. Michelle has a Bachelor of Arts in English/Mass Communication and a Master of Fine Arts in Poetry; she's now working towards her Doctorate in Rhetoric. "The fact that the university was willing to fund my education as part of my graduate teaching assistant responsibilities, in addition to a one-year fellowship, was definitely a factor in my decision to attend Clemson," she says.

## Florida A&M University

[www.famu.edu](http://www.famu.edu)



Located in Florida's capital city of Tallahassee, Florida A&M University (FAMU) is one of the nation's premier Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) dating back to 1887 when it started with just two instructors and 15 students. Today, it's one of the eminent universities in the state, its primary goal being that of "excellence with caring." Here you can choose from graduate programs leading to 42 master's degrees, 11 doctoral degrees, and two professional degrees.

FAMU's Small Business Development Center is a joint venture between the university and the U.S. Small Business Administration. The center offers campus students and local businesses exciting opportunities to interact. This means plenty of real-world, hands-on learning for business majors.

Other quality graduate programs are offered at FAMU's various schools and colleges, including the School of Journalism and Graphic Design, the College of Arts and Science, the School of Allied Health, the College of Law, and the School of Nursing. On-campus professional student organizations, such as the FAMU Entrepreneur's Club and the Future Public Health Professionals, give you the chance to gather with others in your chosen field.

"FAMU prepares the next generation of scholars, teachers, researchers and professionals in a student-centered environment that is challenging and engaging," says Chanta M. Haywood, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. "While the students are trained to enhance their professions, they also leave FAMU with a commitment to give back to and improve their community and society at large."

### **Florida A&M University Grad Student**

*Trenton J. Davis*

"The Broadcast Journalism program at FAMU is fantastic," beams graduate student Trenton J. Davis. "It gives me the opportunity to learn the craft of reporting hands on." He has a Bachelor of Science in Business Communication and now is work-

ing towards his Master of Science in Journalism at Florida A&M University.

His goal is to become a reporter for one of the major network stations. What started out as a job as a videographer, which Trenton obtained with help from FAMU's School of Journalism, has evolved into a reporter position. "I have worked every day of graduate school as a reporter or a videographer," he says. In addition to the valuable real-life experience he's getting here, Trenton also appreciates having financial help in the form of a graduate assistantship. He feels that class size is just right and that the journalism program here provides the necessary technology to learn his craft well.

